Arguing Through Writing
Arguing Through Writing

JOSHUA DICKINSON AND LUMEN LEARNING
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About Arguing Through Writing

About Arguing Through Writing

Arguing Through Writing is heavily adapted from the Lumen Learning English Composition 2 book on the SUNY OER list of texts. The original version of this book was released under a CC-BY license and is copyright by Lumen Learning.

It was then developed in March 2020 by Joshua Dickinson, Associate Professor of English at Jefferson Community College in Watertown, NY. The changes to this book listed are released under a CC-BY-SA license and are copyright by Joshua Dickinson of Jefferson Community College in Watertown, NY.

Note that titles of essays or articles in MLA normally appear in quotes. However, the software used to create the books does not allow for the use of quotes within title.

List of Changes

- Added a reader section containing various links and text documents. While these are organized chronologically, they could as easily be used thematically. Most of the introductory composition courses feature a blend of fiction and nonfiction sources.
- Added sample essay assignments.
- Added Instructor Resources in private view: FAQs for Online Composition Courses, Sample Learning Contract, Sample ENG 101 Grading Rubric, and Are Online English Courses Right for You?
- Added section entitled Playing the Game: Critical Reading and Writing.
- Added the Determining Audience and Purpose section, moving two Lumen resources into it: Audience, and Discussion: Establishing Intended Audience (the latter in private view).
- Added Prewriting section with my lectures.
- Created What is Argument? section.
- Added Causal Arguments section lectures Avoid Relativism (Because I Think So); Cause/Effect Tie in With Most Readings; Argue Without Filtering Through the Self; What is Academic Writing by L. Lennie Irvin; Sample Causal Argument; Ta-Nehisi Coates, “The First American President”; and Robert Kubey, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, “Television Addiction is no Mere Metaphor”; and Plato, The Symposium.
- Added Definition chapter.
- In Rhetorical Analysis, added Troubleshoot Your Reading; Sample Rhetorical Analysis Essay; Jonathan Swift, “A Modest Proposal”; Mark Twain, “Two Ways of Seeing a River”; and James Gleick, What Defines a Meme?
- Added The Research Project section, moving in several resources from the original text and then adding my lectures: Essay 4: Persuasion; Audiences Know the Topic Well. . . Alter Their Actions; Avoid Oversimplifying in Essays; Diotima’s Ladder Video: Check Out the Forms; and Charles Pierce, “Greetings From Idiot America.”
- In Research Proposal, added Persuasive Writing Differs Markedly From Previous Assignments.
- In Evaluating Sources, added Anatomy of a Journal Article and Library Research as Problem-Solving.
- In Integrating Sources, added Introduction of Borrowed Material; A Typical Body Paragraph Pattern; Transition Placemats; The Paragraph Body: Supporting Your Ideas; Signal Phrases; Integration Tips in Preparation for Peer Editing or Editing; and Proper Source Use in Paragraphs.
- In Citing Sources, added Academic Integrity Tutorial, MLA Checklist, Paragraph Settings Use No Extra Vertical Spaces, Avoid Word Templates for Citations, and Works Cited Entries: What to Include.
- In Annotated Bibliographies, added Annotated Bibliographies lecture, as well as Annotated Bibliography Assignment.
- In Structure & Outlining, added Synthesizing and Supporting Refutals, Logical Fallacies, Logical Fallacies Handlist.
Academic Writing Review, and How Does “The Witch Sketch” Work Logically?

• In Revising & Editing, added Revision Strategies, Peer Editing, “Breaking Up is Hard to Do,” and Page One in an Essay Abounds in Pitfalls for Errors.
• In Final Drafts, added Sample Definition Essay (MLA Style).

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PLAYING THE GAME: CRITICAL READING AND WRITING
Connecting Reading & Writing The Voice You Hear

Response

Too often, reading is viewed as a passive act where the information is poured into static readers’ minds. To succeed at the college level, a reworking of the way one reads may be necessary. Read the following passage from reading researcher Katherine McCormick and jot down your interpretation of its meaning:

Tony slowly got up from the mat, planning his escape. He hesitated a moment and thought. Things were not going well. What bothered him the most was being held, especially since the charge against him had been weak. He considered his present situation. The lock that held him was strong but he thought he could break it . . . . He was being ridden unmercifully . . . . He felt that he was ready to make his move.

From the two possible interpretations here, it seems clear that 1) readers use their previous experiences to make meaning out of a text, and 2) context influences meaning. After all, if we knew we were reading a short story on wrestling, our understanding of the passage would differ. Reading needs to be recognized as an active process. Read the following poem by Thomas Lux and answer all of the questions below in complete sentences. The questions appear after the poem.

The Voice You Hear When You Read Silently

is not silent, it is a speaking-out-loud voice in your head;

it is spoken,a voice is saying it as you read.

It's the writer's words, of course, in a literary sense his or her “voice”

but the sound of that voice is the sound of your voice.

Not the sound your friends know or the sound of a tape played back

but your voice

caught in the dark cathedral of your skull, your voice heard by an internal

ear informed by internal abstracts

and what you know by feeling, having felt.

It is your voice saying, for example, the word “barn” that the writer wrote

but the “barn” you say is a barn you know or knew.

The voice in your head, speaking as you read, never says anything

neutrally–some people hated the barn they knew,

some people love the barn they know

so you hear the word loaded and a sensory constellation is lit:

horse-gnawed stalls, hayloft, black heat tape wrapping a water pipe,

a slippery spilled chirr of oats from a split sack,

the bony, filthy haunches of cows . . .
And “barn” is only a noun—no verb or subject has entered into the sentence yet!

The voice you hear when you read to yourself is the clearest voice: you speak its speaking to you.

1. When you hear the word barn, what barn or barns from your own life do you first see? What feelings and associations do you have with this word? How do you think the barn in your head is different from the barns in your classmates’ heads?

2. When you hear the word cathedral, what images and associations from your own life come into your head? Once again, how might your classmates’ internal images and associations with the word cathedral differ from yours?

3. Now reread the poem and consider the lines “Not the sound your friends know or the sound of a tape played back / but your voice / caught in the dark cathedral of your skull.” What do you think Lux means by the metaphor “dark cathedral of your skull”? What seems important about his choice of the word cathedral (rather than, say, house or cave or gymnasium or mansion)? How does skull work (rather than mind or brain or head)? Freewriting for several minutes, create your interpretation of “dark cathedral of the skull.”

4. Finally, reflect for a moment about your thinking processes in trying to interpret “cathedral of the skull.” Did you go back and reread the poem, looking for how this line fits other lines of the poem? Did you explore further your own ideas about cathedrals and skull? See if you can catch yourself in the act of interacting with the text—or actively constructing meaning.

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Not Taking Sides is Like That Beetlejuice Waiting Room Scene. . .

It is important that we recognize the benefits and limitations of methodology. Likely, you know your major discipline’s approaches well. There are ways of being recognized or not. For instance, in Jeopardy contests, one has to phrase the answer in the form of a question. In discussion postings, many instructors require the post subject to be in sentence form. In Fast Times at Ridgemont High, Jeff Spicoli, the surfer doesn't recognize his little brother: “Curtis, you know I don’t hear you unless you knock. . .” (Heckerling). In science, hypotheses have to be provable. In academic writing, thesis claims must be both provable and arguable.

I’m reminded of the notion of Purgatory, an invention of Dante in his La Divina Commedia (Divine Comedy). This gets played up famously in Beetlejuice and its waiting room scene:

- https://youtu.be/ei-2xTsyL8w

What’s interesting is that this echoes Dante, who puts people who failed to distinguish themselves into Hell. For Dante’s Italians, not choosing was worse than choosing an opposite side to one’s preferred side. Strangely enough, we are often more knowledgeable of our opponents—more tolerant of them, even—than of those who never choose. He even puts the neutral angels into Hell. In that era (1300 Florence), he even put living people into Hell, claiming that these people were so bad that demons inhabited their bodies and they were already in hell.

So these ideas can receive dogmatic answers. They get recognized or not, but over time they accrete meaning, slow down, and become concrete. (No Dogma references necessary. . .)

What I find interesting is that we’re often struggling with the miniscule rules of MLA style in the same way.

As with science, though, we can essentialize this a bit: We are always already entering ongoing conversations. We do have to be for or against something. Likely ways of being against something are going to lead to tone issues and assumptions about audience agreement.

As the Beetlejuice move states, “Take a number!” and “It’s showtime!” (Burton).

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Analyze This

You now learned about some of the many different forms an argument can take. It doesn’t have to be presented in a traditional essay with a thesis and topic sentences for your paragraphs. Arguments can come in many forms, even stories.

In the following video that you’d click on once linked to the OWL Excelsior “Analyze This” page, watch as a student analyzes a narrative argument, pointing to the key elements of narrative and demonstrating how a story can make for a very persuasive argument.

- http://owl.excelsior.edu/argument-and-critical-thinking/argumentative-purposes/argumentative-purposes-analyze-this/

To read the full essay reviewed in the video, follow this link: http://www.rd.com/advice/excuses-excuses-an-excerpt-from-teacher-man/

With Analysis, Focus Upon Functions or Effects

At the college level, putting in the right-sounding quotes in the right-looking spots of a body paragraph is insufficient. Writers are expected to use the quotes as excuses to argue their points. Close reading is a crucial skill which helps the writer make sense of how something makes sense. Literature courses largely aim to enhance or bring about readers’ abilities to handle complex, indirect texts that demand multiple responses.

Close reading is an analytical activity where the writer picks parts of larger whole and discusses how they function. This can be done while annotating or deciding what to say about an annotated chunk of text. Because your audience often knows the text and has ideas about how it works, it is up to you to do more than simply point out the existence of an important line, phrase, or word. Within the line, the critic must move from pointing out an idea to arguing how it functions. What effect is created by that phrase? How does this word affect readers? These questions get proved after careful setup and cited quotation work.

Once you have dissected a speech, description, or dialogue, remember that you have committed a fairly aggressive, destructive act. You yanked a part from the whole. Remember to use the late portions of paragraphs to put the pieces back together. (“Pick up your toys when you are done with them!”)

What You Might Look For

Focus on an author’s use of complexity by discussing the effects of any of the following:

- word choice (diction) word order (syntax)
- connotation denotation
- irony (dramatic, situational, verbal) symbolism
- mood tone
- paradox (seeming contradiction) how words fit/bring about character
- rhetorical appeals (logos, ethos, pathos) logical patterns (valid or not)
- Rhetorical modes (description, narration, definition, process, illustration, comparison/contrast, classification/division, cause/effect, argument) Basically, looking for moves of any sort is a good starting point with analysis.
Relating Text with Citations

If you do not name the author in your text, you include the name in parentheses.

If you do name the author in your text, you do not include the name in parentheses.

One researcher concludes that “women impose a distinctive construction on moral problems, seeing moral dilemmas in terms of conflicting responsibilities” (Gilligan 105).

One researcher, Carol Gilligan, concludes that “women impose a distinctive construction on moral problems, seeing moral dilemmas in terms of conflicting responsibilities” (105).
Use Present Tense When Discussing Texts

Employ present tense when discussing the essays. When analyzing writing moves, Friedman makes one. . . made changes the tone and focus a bit. We use present tense even when discussing history.

This is not to say that one cannot use past tense. The consistent tense we use in academic writing, however, is present tense.
The Excelsior OWL is a tremendous living resource for reading and writing matters. Its “Online Reading Comprehension Lab” page is especially helpful. It is available at: https://owl.excelsior.edu/orc/

“No orcs were harmed in the making of this link!

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Transitions

The word transition literally means movement from one piece of information to another. In writing, transition means moving from one sentence to another or one paragraph to another smoothly without abrupt shifts in logic or subject. To accomplish this smooth movement of thoughts, a writer will sometimes use certain words or phrases that act as bridges to carry readers into a new sentence or paragraph. Without these transitional elements, an essay can read like a list, or at best a group of loosely connected statements. Transitional elements prepare readers for each new idea and relate each new statement to the preceding ones.

Transitions can be

- Single words, phrases, clauses, or even whole sentences
- Repetitions of key words, ideas, or phrases
- Using pronouns such as this, these, and them
- Combining short sentences into compound and complex ones

Examples of Transitions

Use the list below as a guide only. Be creative and use words, phrases, clauses and even whole sentences to bridge the gaps between ideas. Don’t use the same transitional device over and over. Vary the devices to avoid monotony and redundancy.

Transitions that Signal Chronological Order

First, second, third . . . next, then, after, before, during, meanwhile, at first, when, as soon as

Transitions that Signal Spatial Order

Nearby, near to, beside, over, far from, next to, under, around, through, in front of, behind, surrounding, alongside, away from, on top of, around, toward, at

Transitions that Signal Adding a Point Order (Random Order)

In addition, moreover, furthermore, too, finally, lastly

Transitions that Signal Contrast

However, nevertheless, on the other hand, on the contrary, even though, despite, in spite of

Transitions that Signal General Example

Sometimes, on certain occasions, often, many times, frequently, in some cases, in a few instances (Always follow general examples with specific ones.)

Transitions that Signal Specific Example

To illustrate, for example, for instance, as an illustration, in particular, especially in fact

Transitions that Signal Order of Importance

More important, most important, of least importance, of less importance, most of all, best of all, of greatest significance, least of all, even better, foremost, especially

Transitions that Signal Clarification of Point

That is, in other words, in effect, put simply, stated briefly
Transitions that Signal Summing up or Restating Central Point

In sum, to sum up, in summary, to conclude, as you can see, in short, in conclusion

Transitions that Signal Stages in a Process

First, second, third . . ., initially, at the outset, to begin with, first of all, up to now, so far, thus far, next after, finally, last of all

Transitions that Signal Cause/Effect Relationship

As a result, consequently, because, in consequence

Transitions that Signal Attitude

Fortunately, unfortunately, naturally, in a sense, luckily

Transitions that Signal Reference

The former, the latter, the following
Binary Patterns: A Western Obsession

This or that? Me or you? I or thou? Subject or object?

Along with these basic either/or questions, Western thought is built on other key binaries.

A binary is an either/or choice like the zeroes and ones making up DVDs or other digital codes. While some things lend themselves to “this or that” choices, we know that the world is often much more complicated. The answer “Pepsi or Coke?” might define a person privately, but whether you like one or the other may not carry much public meaning. Ironically, it did carry meaning in the 80s during the Cola Wars.

These either/or choices often have strange histories. For instance, the tragedy/comedy binary informs genres on television and in literature. It is based on a thinker, Aristotle, who was not even approving of literature. Dig into the history of tragedy and comedy and you will find some strangeness. For instance, tragedy was supposed by Aristotle to feature someone making a choice which leads inevitably to their downfall, which we witness and feel catharsis, a sense of purging out of both ends. . .! Weird enough for you? It makes a certain amount of sense, just as listening to a blues song makes us feel happy, but it's what we’d call contingent: based on a quirky, particular set of happenings that did not have to occur. So binaries are contingent. (Call this the non-tragic theory of approaching binaries.) And comedy was supposed to involve a mating and joining offstage in early Greek comedies—which were held at the festival of the god Dionysus, at which, originally, his devotees called Maenads were said to mate with willing victims on mountainsides, after which they would rend apart the sacrificial victim. And this is what informs our genres—and has done so for 2,500 years. So I’d add necessary vs. contingent as a binary that can be useful.

For more on the strangeness of binaries, you might do a search for humor theory or look at the history of academia (gowns, gavels, graduations. . .). Or if you’re talking good or evil, one might look at how evil always comes back (Sauron, Voldemort). Weirdly enough, this even contributes to a type of cannibalism whereby an enemy’s body is eaten so that his soul can be erased—for a time—from the eternal battlefield. As the cliche goes, “The truth is stranger than fiction.” In fields like literary analysis, there is no “capital-T Truth.” That idea of there being one would go back to Plato and his theory of Forms.

So these issues have histories of which we should become aware. As a critical reader, it is important for you to take note of binaries and gauge their effects. Though they may exclude other choices, it is the case that humans notice contrasts and oppositions.

Binaries are crutches, tools. They can work but can put blinders on what we notice. Early in stages of the writing or critical thinking processes, they can be useful.

Which side of a binary does the author notice or value more?
Which views are portrayed as negative?
What is undervalued or missing from a given text?

In a writing course, then, you might create a persuasive essay that argues one side against another. We contribute to these ongoing debates most thoughtfully if we realize that they arguments will continue, however well we write about them! Just don’t fall into the trap of thinking that the world is either/or, comforting as that notion may be.
Michael Shermer, The Pattern Behind Self-Deception

<table>
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<td>What heuristics (method of checking) can we use on ourselves?</td>
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<td>Why is believing in something strongly <em>not</em> a good measure of believability in a writer?</td>
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The following TED Talk is by Michael Shermer, a skeptic and author who presents ideas about critical thinking in ways that continue to fascinate me. Watch for the ways he includes examples and definitions, moving between particular and general.

What does it mean to be a skeptic? How does Shermer’s definition of critical thinking differ from what you might have thought before watching the video?

- [https://www.ted.com/talks/michael_shermer_the_pattern_behind_self_deception](https://www.ted.com/talks/michael_shermer_the_pattern_behind_self_deception)
Michael Shermer, Why People Believe Weird Things

This video offers a humorous look and insightful at our patterns of thinking. Apply it to yourself, as well as to media patterns and the news flow coming out of political organizations.

You may laugh at the video’s examples, but we actually used to listen to records (The Beatles, Black Sabbath, Judas Priest, Frank Zappa, for instance) for these hidden messages or peer into the images of ice cubes in drink ads (or the camel in the cigarette ad) for symbols. And you thought that this all started with Dan Brown’s books!

- https://www.ted.com/talks/michael_shermer_why_people_believe_weird_things
DETERMINING AUDIENCE AND PURPOSE
Audience

What this handout is about

This handout will help you understand and write for the appropriate audience when you write an academic essay.

Audience matters

When you're in the process of writing a paper, it's easy to forget that you are actually writing to someone. Whether you've thought about it consciously or not, you always write to an audience: sometimes your audience is a very generalized group of readers, sometimes you know the individuals who compose the audience, and sometimes you write for yourself. Keeping your audience in mind while you write can help you make good decisions about what material to include, how to organize your ideas, and how best to support your argument.

To illustrate the impact of audience, imagine you're writing a letter to your grandmother to tell her about your first month of college. What details and stories might you include? What might you leave out? Now imagine that you're writing on the same topic but your audience is your best friend. Unless you have an extremely cool grandma to whom you're very close, it's likely that your two letters would look quite different in terms of content, structure, and even tone.

Isn’t my instructor my audience?

Yes, your instructor or TA is probably the actual audience for your paper. Your instructors read and grade your essays, and you want to keep their needs and perspectives in mind when you write. However, when you write an essay with only your instructor in mind, you might not say as much as you should or say it as clearly as you should, because you assume that the person grading it knows more than you do and will fill in the gaps. This leaves it up to the instructor to decide what you are really saying, and she might decide differently than you expect. For example, she might decide that those gaps show that you don’t know and understand the material. Remember that time when you said to yourself, “I don’t have to explain communism; my instructor knows more about that than I do” and got back a paper that said something like “Shows no understanding of communism”? That’s an example of what can go awry when you think of your instructor as your only audience.

Thinking about your audience differently can improve your writing, especially in terms of how clearly you express your argument. The clearer your points are, the more likely you are to have a strong essay. Your instructor will say, “He really understands communism—he’s able to explain it simply and clearly!” By treating your instructor as an intelligent but uninformed audience, you end up addressing her more effectively.

How do I identify my audience and what they want from me?

Before you even begin the process of writing, take some time to consider who your audience is and what they want from you. Use the following questions to help you identify your audience and what you can do to address their wants and needs.

- Who is your audience?
- Might you have more than one audience? If so, how many audiences do you have? List them.
- Does your assignment itself give any clues about your audience? What does your audience need? What do they want?
  - What do they value?
  - What is most important to them?
- What are they least likely to care about?
- What kind of organization would best help your audience understand and appreciate your arguments?
- What do you have to say (or what are you doing in your research) that might surprise your audience?
- What do you want your audience to think, learn, or assume about you? What impression do you want your writing or your
How much should I explain?

This is the hard part. As we said earlier, you want to show your instructor that you know the material. But different assignments call for varying degrees of information. Different fields also have different expectations. For more about what each field tends to expect from an essay, see the Writing Center handouts (http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/) on writing in specific fields of study. The best place to start figuring out how much you should say about each part of your paper is in a careful reading of the assignment. We give you some tips for reading assignments and figuring them out in our handout on how to read an assignment (http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/understanding-assignments/). The assignment may specify an audience for your paper; sometimes the instructor will ask you to imagine that you are writing to your congressperson, for a professional journal, to a group of specialists in a particular field, or for a group of your peers. If the assignment doesn’t specify an audience, you may find it most useful to imagine your classmates reading the paper, rather than your instructor.

Now, knowing your imaginary audience, what other clues can you get from the assignment? If the assignment asks you to summarize something that you have read, then your reader wants you to include more examples from the text than if the assignment asks you to interpret the passage. Most assignments in college focus on argument rather than the repetition of learned information, so your reader probably doesn’t want a lengthy, detailed, point-by-point summary of your reading (book reports in some classes and argument reconstructions in philosophy classes are big exceptions to this rule). If your assignment asks you to interpret or analyze the text (or an event or idea), then you want to make sure that your explanation of the material is focused and not so detailed that you end up spending more time on examples than on your analysis. If you are not sure about the difference between explaining something and analyzing it, see our handouts on reading the assignment (http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/understanding-assignments/) and argument (http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/argument/).

Once you have a draft, try your level of explanation out on a friend, a classmate, or a Writing Center tutor. Get the person to read your rough draft, and then ask her to talk to you about what she did and didn’t understand. (Now is not the time to talk about proofreading stuff, so make sure she ignores those issues for the time being). You will likely get one of the following responses or a combination of them:

- If your listener/reader has tons of questions about what you are saying, then you probably need to explain more. Let’s say you are writing a paper on piranhas, and your reader says, “What’s a piranha? Why do I need to know about them? How would I identify one?” Those are vital questions that you clearly need to answer in your paper. You need more detail and elaboration.
- If your reader seems confused, you probably need to explain more clearly. So if he says, “Are there piranhas in the lakes around here?” you may not need to give more examples, but rather focus on making sure your examples and points are clear.
- If your reader looks bored and can repeat back to you more details than she needs to know to get your point, you probably explained too much. Excessive detail can also be confusing, because it can bog the reader down and keep her from focusing on your main points. You want your reader to say, “So it seems like your paper is saying that piranhas are misunderstood creatures that are essential to South American ecosystems,” not, “Uh… piranhas are important?” or, “Well, I know you said piranhas don’t usually attack people, and they’re usually around 10 inches long, and some people keep them in aquariums as pets, and dolphins are one of their predators, and…a bunch of other stuff, I guess?”

Sometimes it’s not the amount of explanation that matters, but the word choice and tone you adopt. Your word choice and tone need to match your audience’s expectations. For example, imagine you are researching piranhas; you find an article in National Geographic and another one in an academic journal for scientists. How would you expect the two articles to sound? National Geographic is written for a popular audience; you might expect it to have sentences like “The piranha generally lives in
shallow rivers and streams in South America.” The scientific journal, on the other hand, might use much more technical language, because it’s written for an audience of specialists. A sentence like “*Serrasalmus piraya* lives in fresh and brackish intercoastal and proto-arboreal sub-tropical regions between the 45th and 38th parallels” might not be out of place in the journal.

Generally, you want your reader to know enough material to understand the points you are making. It’s like the old forest/trees metaphor. If you give the reader nothing but trees, she won’t see the forest (your thesis, the reason for your paper). If you give her a big forest and no trees, she won’t know how you got to the forest (she might say, “Your point is fine, but you haven’t proven it to me”). You want the reader to say, “Nice forest, and those trees really help me to see it.” Our handout on paragraph development (http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/paragraphs/) can help you find a good balance of examples and explanation.

**Reading your own drafts**

Writers tend to read over their own papers pretty quickly, with the knowledge of what they are trying to argue already in their minds. Reading in this way can cause you to skip over gaps in your written argument because the gap-filler is in your head. A problem occurs when your reader falls into these gaps. Your reader wants you to make the necessary connections from one thought or sentence to the next. When you don’t, the reader can become confused or frustrated. Think about when you read something and you struggle to find the most important points or what the writer is trying to say. Isn’t that annoying? Doesn’t it make you want to quit reading and surf the web or call a friend?

**Putting yourself in the reader’s position**

Instead of reading your draft as if you wrote it and know what you meant, try reading it as if you have no previous knowledge of the material. Have you explained enough? Are the connections clear? This can be hard to do at first. Consider using one of the following strategies:

- Take a break from your work—go work out, take a nap, take a day off. This is why the Writing Center and your instructors encourage you to start writing more than a day before the paper is due. If you write the paper the night before it’s due, you make it almost impossible to read the paper with a fresh eye.
- Try outlining after writing—after you have a draft, look at each paragraph separately. Write down the main point for each paragraph on a separate sheet of paper, in the order you have put them. Then look at your “outline”—does it reflect what you meant to say, in a logical order? Are some paragraphs hard to reduce to one point? Why? This technique will help you find places where you may have confused your reader by straying from your original plan for the paper.
- Read the paper aloud—we do this all the time at the Writing Center, and once you get used to it, you’ll see that it helps you slow down and really consider how your reader experiences your text. It will also help you catch a lot of sentence-level errors, such as misspellings and missing words, which can make it difficult for your reader to focus on your argument.

These techniques can help you read your paper in the same way your reader will and make revisions that help your reader understand your argument. Then, when your instructor finally reads your finished draft, he or she won’t have to fill in any gaps. The more work you do, the less work your audience will have to do—and the more likely it is that your instructor will follow and understand your argument.

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With Analysis, Focus Upon Functions or Effects

At the college level, putting in the right-sounding quotes in the right-looking spots of a body paragraph is insufficient. Writers are expected to use the quotes as excuses to argue their points. Close reading is a crucial skill which helps the writer make sense of how something makes sense. Humanities courses largely aim to enhance or bring about readers’ abilities to handle complex, indirect texts that demand multiple responses.

Close reading is an analytical activity where the writer picks parts of larger whole and discusses how they function. This can be done while annotating or deciding what to say about an annotated chunk of text. Because your audience often knows the text and has ideas about how it works, it is up to you to do more than simply point out the existence of an important line, phrase, or word. Within the line, the critic must move from pointing out an idea to arguing how it functions. What effect is created by that phrase? How does this word affect readers? These questions get proved after careful setup and cited quotation work.

Once you have dissected a speech, description, or dialogue, remember that you have committed a fairly aggressive, destructive act. You yanked a part from the whole. Remember to use the late portions of paragraphs to put the pieces back together. (“Pick up your toys when you are done with them!”)

**What You Might Look for in a Text**

Focus on an author’s use of complexity by discussing the effects of any of the following:

- word choice (diction)
- word order (syntax)
- connotation
- denotation
- irony (dramatic, situational, verbal)
- symbolism
- mood
- tone
- paradox (seeming contradiction)
- how words fit/bring about character
- rhetorical appeals (logos, ethos, pathos)
- logical patterns (valid or not)
- Rhetorical modes (description, narration, definition, process, illustration, comparison/contrast, classification/division, cause/effect, argument)

Basically, looking for moves of any sort is a good starting point with analysis.
Discussion: Establishing Intended Audience

Material in this web article, “Determining Audience/Readership” (http://www.studygs.net/writing/audience.htm) from Study Guides and Strategies, will prove helpful in completing this assignment, as will other readings in this module.

In the discussion below, identify at least 3 potential groups of people who would be concerned about the topic you’ve chosen. For each of the three, tell us a bit about who they are, and what motivations they have. (It’s always helpful to include a reminder about what your topic/thesis is, too).

For instance, in my CheezIts argument, there are a variety of potential groups affected. One is consumers, who care about getting good values, low costs, and high quality products. They want to be sure the money they spend is worthwhile. Another group is retail outlets. They, too, are motivated by money, and making sure they keep the customer coming back to purchase the products they offer. A third potential group are health-food advocates, who would see snack foods like CheezIts as a bad alternative to other options because of their fat and salt contents.

End your post by telling us which of the potential audience groups you’re going to focus your own essay on, and why. What can you do to target your supporting claims to address the concerns of this particular group?

Your post should be at least 150-200 words. It doesn’t have to be grammatically perfect, but should use standard English (no text-speak, please) and normal capitalization rules.

You will also need to return to this Discussion to reply to at least two of your classmates’ posts. Content could include, but is not limited to, any of the following: Comment on the audience groups they’ve identified. If you can think of others, suggest who they would be and what their motivations are. Try to put yourself in the place of the group your colleague has chosen, and advance potential counter-arguments a person in that group would make.

Responses are weighed as heavily as your initial posting, and should be roughly as long (150-200 words) when combined. Responses should indicate you’ve read your classmate’s post carefully. Include specific details from the post you’re responding to in your reply.

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Analysis is the Breaking Down of a Whole into its Parts

Part-to-whole relationships and breaking those down into their functions is what we do when we analyze. We argue about how the parts function.

For practice, look at the following image. It is Edward Hicks’s *The Cornell Farm*. The image has a fascinating composition, so watch the way one’s eyes are directed from area to area in the painting. Are there any symbols? Signs? (Do you know the difference between a sign and a symbol?)

When we write, we analyze most of the time. Whether we are reading a student post or model essay, we look over each text and think about how we are looking. It’s a composition, so some of the vocabulary we use in its analysis is shared with other humanities courses like art appreciation or music appreciation.

Consider how the whole is broken down. If its artful, then there’s a guiding of one’s eyes as well as a frustration of easy expectations. See what you see and share that! Again, italicize the artworks’ titles.

Clearly, we can argue the parts and how they function. Analysis is all about functions in the structure and effects upon the viewer/reader. It’s worth remembering that the act is destructive (*lysis* meaning just that), sort of like taking apart a watch and seeing if it will function without this or that gear. And, no, don’t use the creationist blind watchmaker argument here just because I mentioned watches. Their idea that something as sophisticated as an eye could not have evolved is easily-enough refuted (http://darwiniana.org/eyes.htm).
“Dulce Et Decorum Est”

We have been reading about bioethical issues a lot recently and I thought of this old (and out-of-copyright) poem from high school that ties in.

This is Wilfred Owen’s WWI poem “Dulce Et Decorum Est” (“It is sweet and fitting to die for one’s country.) Owen died mere months (weeks?) after writing this and near the end of WWI’s fighting.

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,
Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge,
Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs,
And towards our distant rest began to trudge.

Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots,
But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame; all blind;
Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots
Of gas-shells dropping softly behind.

Gas! GAS! Quick, boys!—An ecstasy of fumbling
Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time,
But someone still was yelling out and stumbling
And flound’ring like a man in fire or lime.—

Dim through the misty panes and thick green light,
As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.
In all my dreams before my helpless sight,
He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

If in some smothering dreams you too could pace
Behind the wagon that we flung him in,
And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,
His hanging face, like a devil’s sick of sin;

Notes: Latin phrase is from the Roman poet Horace: “It is sweet and fitting to die for one’s country.”

Source: Poems (Viking Press)

I suppose it’s easier to throw this at people than to field papers on some of the more bias-prone of topics like ritual castration, assisted suicide, and the like.

How might this relate to our readings from the text?
Heather Pringle, Beyond the Palace Walls

This 2014 *Archaeology* article by Heather Pringle is fascinating both for its content and for how we can read it to infer audience and purpose. Access it either through the JCC Library Databases or through this permalink. If you lack our library access, use your institution’s library databases. (I used *Academic Search Complete* to locate this piece.)

The essay has images which are important to see, so try and access the PDF version.

WHAT IS ARGUMENT?
View The Argument Clinic, by Monty Python's Flying Circus

We often take tones toward annotation, reading and writing. I thought I’d add a funny bit of text: Monty Python’s sketch “The Argument Clinic.” Check out this hilarious bit of coverage. These were guys who had been educated at the best English universities, so they often dealt with the same stuff we happen to be taking on.

If you like this, I recommend the following follow-ups:

“Confuse-a-Cat”

“The Witch Sketch”

“Novel Writing” (google it with Thomas Hardy and you’ll find it)

“The Cheese Shop Sketch”

“The Village Idiot Sketch”

In each, you’ll notice that heavy-duty logic or philosophy ideas are being sent up in ways relevant to our reading and writing.

“No, they’re not!”
# Pro and Con Practice

Using pro and con lists is a helpful prewriting technique, since any topic worth arguing has many sides. Writers need to capitalize on their side’s strengths, proving that they are valid. Conversely, writers need to turn the other side’s arguments against it. This is called refuting the opposition. In an even tone, the writer shows how the other side’s arguments are invalid to some extent. Still, don’t go too far... none of us likes being told that our ideas are useless. Listing the points of argument can help (it's sort of like picking teams in phys ed class). Through listing, careful writers find that each side is more complicated than they had thought.

**Directions: Follow the alphabetized directions. Do all parts of the assignment.** Imagine that you have been asked to write an objective essay for a prominent journal.

1. Pick one of the statements in the topic bank, and decide which side you take on the statement.
2. Then, create a list of 8-10 strong points for your side. Label it according to the issue. For example: “My side: against separate male/female military units”
3. Label the opposition’s side, too. For example: “The opposition’s side: for separate male/female military units.”
4. After you have set up your side, create a list of 8-10 arguments made by the opposition. This means you’ll think of the best points for each side. You may find that many of the points directly oppose arguments made by the other side.

Remember to narrow and focus the topic as necessary

**Topic Bank** (stick to these topics, and “make a withdrawal”):

1) Students should/should not work throughout the school year.
2) Televisted instant replays should/should not be used to call plays in football and other sports.
3) Off-road recreational vehicles should/should not be banned from our national parks.
4) Persons over 14 charged with crimes should/should not be tried as adults.
5) Controversial names or symbols of athletic teams (“Redskins” the Confederate flag, the tomahawk chop) should/should not be changed or displayed.
6) During peacetime, students should/should not serve in a youth corps for two years following high school.
7) The math requirement at JCC should/should not be changed.

Here's an example: “Homeschooled athletes should be allowed to play on the public school teams of the district in which they live.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My side: Against including homeschooled students on public school teams</th>
<th>Opposition’s side: In favor of including these homeschooled athletes on public school teams.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Could you brainstorm 8-10 reasons for and against the claim? How do those pros tend to line up with their respective cons?
• What ideas might you delete?
• Are there a couple of ideas that might work better if they were merged into one?
• If you had to write about the topic, how would you order or emphasize these points?
• What sort of thesis could you “spin out” of your points? (Remember the summarizing function of the thesis statement.)
Here are Some Dos and Don'ts Graders Think Through

What we want and what we get are often wildly variant. Adults all know this. Even so, I can be surprised by some combinations of elements sometimes. That’s why I like to troubleshoot papers with you beforehand!

Problem: Paragraphs lacking topic sentences. These work in fiction, but not in explicit writing like ours. Even if it is not first, the topic sentence ought to be connected in obvious ways to your claim. We often defer to sources here or have paragraphs which only exist in the paper because of a source. It should be that the supporting role fits what you do, not vice versa.

One source for the first or last third (or any third) of a paper is a problem. We often see such overuse of one source: Great source? Great! Not great, however, if that source is the only voice in the paper or if, when it is used, the writer never questions it. Think of how ventriloquists’ dummies only exist to parrot the words of someone else:

Statistics which get plagiarized, unused, treated as impressive, or passed off as if they are unbiased are likely to backfire, turning a possibly-good move into a definitely-bad move. I’m not phased by statistics—particularly if the writer fails to quote properly, doesn’t look at the fact that the sample size was seventeen people paid by the company, or if the “citizens’ group” spouting them turns out to be a hate group with a nice-sounding name or if that source actually ripped them off from a second source. As Mark Twain stated aptly, there are “lies, damned lies, and statistics.”

Long quotes? They are often areas where summaries would work better, be shorter, and might actually receive interpretation. Filler long quotes nearly never get interpreted. Look at it as I do: the more a quote drones on, the more expectation it sets up that I would get something for it—some interpretation, anything! (I mean, people get free vacations in our country for sitting through two-day seminars . . . they obviously got something from the long setup.) We only quote if it’s well-worded, the strongly-held opinion of a thinker, or a thought at variance with the widely-held opinion in that field of study. Otherwise, summarize or paraphrase.

Examples can often be scarce, appearing only by page six. By then, it’s too late for readers. Don’t overuse or under use examples. According to the Goldilocks Principle, there has to be a “just right” zone for source use, detail, even sentence and word length.

Lastly, the new game is to play with formatting. I know the trick of putting the punctuation in 16-point font to puff the piece. I have seen papers go from 10 to 3 pages because of ridiculous formatting tricks. That time is best spent writing, in my opinion. Some people have plagiarized by throwing in a source’s bibliography and citations, figuring I wouldn’t check or couldn’t see that move. That’s another bad one, since plagiarism requires that we look at intent and it takes intent to do something like that.

I hope that helps!
PREWRITING
Finding Your Voice

In writing, just as in life, you’re selective when choosing words and the tone of voice you use in various situations. When writing a thank-you to Great-Aunt Millie for the socks she sent you for your birthday, you probably use a polite, respectful voice. When you are having a fight with your partner or are gossiping with a friend, both your vocabulary and tone will be quite different. Likewise, you’ll use a more formal voice in a research paper compared to a personal essay, an email, or a journal entry.

Deciding what kind of voice to use in writing depends entirely on who will be reading what you write and what your purpose is in writing. Are you writing about the first time you ever drove a car? Explaining your theory about why yoga is such a popular exercise regimen and spiritual practice? Putting forth your informed opinion of why hybrid cars are problematic for the environment despite their increased gas mileage?

What creates voice is simply the words you choose and the way you use them. What kind of voice you use in a paper depends on the assignment and the audience, as well as the effect you want to create. By making conscious choices about the words you use to communicate to your reader, you establish a voice.

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- Finding Your Voice. **Authored by:** OWL Excelsior Writing Lab. **Provided by:** Excelsior College. **Located at:** http://owl.excelsior.edu/writing-process/finding-your-voice/. **Project:** ENG 101. **License:** CC BY: Attribution
Prewriting Strategies

The term “pre-writing” conjures up a lot of strange activities and practices. You’ve probably tried many different prewriting strategies in the past, and may have a good idea of what works for you and what doesn’t. Keep in mind, that the KIND of writing project you’re working on can impact how effective a particular technique is to use in a given situation.

Some resources for additional prewriting activities are listed here.

**FREEWRITING**

Setting a goal for a short amount of time (5 minutes or 10 minutes are good options), just write anything that comes to mind related to your topic. The goal is to not worry about what comes out of your pen, if handwriting, or keyboard, if typing. Instead, just free your mind to associate as it wishes. It’s amazingly productive for rich ideas, and it’s nice not to have to worry about spelling and grammar.

Additional information: About.com’s “How to FreeWrite” http://fictionwriting.about.com/od/writingexercises/ss/freewriteex.htm

**LIST-MAKING**

If you’re a list-maker by nature, there’s no reason not to harness that for academic writing purposes. Jot notes about major ideas related to the subject you’re working with. This also works well with a time limit, like 10 minutes. Bonus points—after you’ve had time to reflect on your list, you can rearrange it in hierarchical order, and create a basic outline quite simply.


**CLUSTERING**
Also known as “mapping,” this is a more visual form of brainstorming. It asks you to come up with topic ideas, and draw lines to connect ideas and figure out sub-categories and related ideas. You can end up with a quite extensive “bubble cloud” as a result. This also works well within a time limit, like 10 minutes.


**QUESTIONING**

The way to find answers is to ask questions—seems simple enough. This applies to early-stage writing processes, just like everything else. When you have a topic in mind, asking and answering questions about it is a good way to figure out directions your writing might take.

Additional Information: Paradigm’s The Journalists’ Questions (7 pages) — http://www.powa.org/index.php/invent/journalists-questions

Other prewriting strategies exist. Do you have a favorite method?

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Academic Voice

Assuming that your audience is a teacher of some sort, your main purpose is to demonstrate your ability to articulate knowledge and experience. When writing a research paper and other academic writing (what is called academic discourse) you’ll want to use what is called the academic voice, which is meant to sound objective, authoritative, and reasonable. While a research paper will be based on your opinion on a topic, it will be an opinion based on evidence (from your research) and one that has been argued in a rational manner in your paper.

You use the academic voice because your opinion is based on thinking; in your paper you’re revealing your thought process to your reader. Because you’ll be appealing to reason, you want to use the voice of one intellectual talking to another intellectual.

If the subject matter for your academic writing isn’t personal, as in the case of a formal research paper, you would take on a more detached, objective tone. While you may indeed feel strongly about what you’re writing about, you should maintain a professional tone, rather than a friendly or intimate one.

However, it’s important to note that even the most formal academic voice does not need to include convoluted sentence structure or abstract, stilted language, as some believe. As with all writing, you should strive to write with clarity and an active voice that avoids jargon. All readers appreciate a vigorous, lively voice.

Instead of:
The utilization of teams as a way of optimizing our capacity to meet and prioritize our goals will impact the productivity of the company.

Write:
Teams will execute the goals and enhance the company’s output.

Of course, the decision about whether you use a specialized vocabulary depends entirely on who your audience is and the purpose of the paper.

REMEMBER: Some academic writing will require a more personal tone, such as when you are writing a formal narrative essay or perhaps an ethnography (study of a culture) essay. In general, the academic voice is a formal one, but there will be variations based on the situation.

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When is it Okay to use I in Academic Essays?

There's no set answer as to whether one can use I in essays, always check with the professor.

In our essay, while it’s fine to use it in a limited usage—without filtering everything through the self—the audience is often best engaged by moving toward a use of readers. The latter gives us a recognition that, yes, there is in fact an audience out there. Everyone has a limited point of view, so it can be a problem having too many sentences starting with I. Even so, I work with many students who share their relevant experiences. If we are writing an essay about war’s impacts and the soldier-student has been deployed six times from Ft. Drum, they are subject experts with credibility. Blended with other voices, their views can be credibly powerful.
Tips on Academic Voice

When using the academic voice you won’t usually use first personal pronouns.

Instead of:
I think anyone who becomes a parent should have to take a parenting class.

Write:
Parenting classes should be mandatory for any biological or adoptive parents.

NOTE: There are exceptions for certain types of writing assignments.

Avoid using second person pronouns.

Instead of:
When you read “Letter from a Birmingham Jail,” you will realize that King was writing to people besides the ministers who criticized him.

Write:
Upon reading “Letter from a Birmingham Jail,” readers will note that King was addressing a wider audience than the clergy who condemned his actions.

Avoid contractions in more formal writing.

Instead of:
It shouldn’t be difficult to record what we feel, but many of us just can’t get our feelings down on paper.

Write:
It should not be difficult to record feelings, but many people are unable to do so.

Avoid informal language.

Instead of:
It’s obvious that she’s a feminist because she makes a big deal about women who were into the suffrage movement.

Write:
Because of her focus on the suffragists, one can assume she is a feminist.
Abbreviations for common terms should not be used in academic writing

Instead of:
Smith was declared the official winner at the P.O. last Mon. on Jan. 6th.

Write:
Smith was declared the official winner at the post office last Monday, on January 6.

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REFLECTIVE LEARNING
Reflection

Sometimes the process of figuring out who you are as writers requires reflection, a “looking back” to determine what you were thinking and how your thinking changed over time, relative to key experiences. Mature learners set goals, and achieve them by charting a course of action and making adjustments along the way when they encounter obstacles. They also build on strengths and seek reinforcement when weaknesses surface. What makes them mature? They’re not afraid to make mistakes (own them even), and they know that struggle can be a rewarding part of the process. By equal measure, mature learners celebrate their strengths and use them strategically. By adopting a reflective position, they can pinpoint areas that work well and areas that require further help—and all of this without losing sight of their goals.

You have come to this course with your own writing goals. Now is a good time to think back on your writing practices with reflective writing, also called metacognitive writing. Reflective writing helps you think through and develop your intentions as writers. Leveraging reflective writing also creates learning habits that extend to any discipline of learning. It’s a set of procedures that helps you step back from the work you have done and ask a series of questions: Is this really what I wanted to do? Is this really what I wanted to say? Is this the best way to communicate my intentions? Reflective writing helps you authenticate your intentions and start identifying places where you either hit the target or miss the mark. You may find, also, that when you communicate your struggles, you can ask others for help! Reflective writing helps you trace and articulate the patterns you have developed, and it fosters independence from relying too heavily on an instructor to tell you what you are doing.

Throughout this course, you have been working toward an authentic voice in your writing. Your reflection on writing should be equally authentic or honest when you look at your purposes for writing and the strategies you have been leveraging all the while.
Reflective learning is a powerful learning tool. As we have seen throughout this course, proficient readers are reflective readers, constantly stepping back from the learning process to think about their reading. They understand that just as they need to activate prior knowledge at the beginning of a learning task and monitor their progress as they learn, they also need to make time during learning as well as at the end of learning to think about their learning process, to recognize what they have accomplished, how they have accomplished it, and set goals for future learning. This process of “thinking about thinking” is called metacognition. When we think about our thinking—articulating what we now know and how we came to know it—we close the loop in the learning process.

How do we engage in reflection? Educator Peter Pappas modified Bloom’s Taxonomy of Learning to focus on reflection:

This “taxonomy of reflection” provides a structure for metacognition. Educator Silvia Rosenthal Tolisano has modified Pappas’s taxonomy into a pyramid and expanded upon his reflection questions:

Use Pappas’s and Tolisano’s taxonomies of reflection to help you reflect on your learning, growth and development as a reader, writer, and thinker in this course.
Assessment: Personal Reflection

The previous page in this module, Reflective Learning, suggests two alternate ways of viewing our own progression in comprehension and skill development. The last line in the document presents a task:

“Use Pappas’s and Tolisano’s taxonomies of reflection to help you reflect on your learning, growth and development as a reader, writer, and thinker in this course.”

Consider questions like these as you work: Do you feel that one or both of these models speaks to your progress in this course? Where would you have placed yourself on either scale at the beginning of the quarter? Here, at the end of the quarter? How might you use this same process to create writing in future courses or in your personal/professional life?

This reflection should consist of 2-3 paragraphs of developed, edited prose. Make clear reference to one or both of the taxonomies in your reflection.

Want to see a sample of what this submission might look like? View 2 student samples available here (Google Doc link): https://docs.google.com/document/d/1aaNDu0nEMcuyp69y5hndjH6C4NfQ50-rc6UDS7Eglc/edit?usp=sharing

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- Composition II. **Authored by:** Elisabeth Ellington, Ph.D.  **Provided by:** Chadron State College.  **Located at:** http://www.csc.edu/.  **Project:** Kaleidoscope Open Course Initiative.  **License:** CC BY: Attribution
THESIS STATEMENTS
Thesis Hints

Function of the Thesis

As a writer, everything you do sends a message to readers. Your thesis should be the best sentence in your paper. Everything else should be related to the thesis. If it isn’t, then it doesn’t belong there. Here’s an interesting definition: “The thesis is a provable opinion about which others may disagree.” A well-worded thesis sets out what you will prove and offers a glimpse at your logic. It may show the other side, too, if that’s what your task calls for.

What most Writers Fail to Do

Most people write essays where the body paragraphs don’t match up with what they say they’ll do in the paper. They have not reworded the working thesis that got them through the prewriting and drafting stages. Refine the thesis as you get a clearer idea of what you’ll be able to prove. Make sure that the thesis reflects what the paper actually does.

Another weak point occurs when writers string together several questions in their introduction—and then hit readers with their thesis. They haven’t answered the questions fully, and they are probably copying the questioning tactic from something they saw on television or read in a newspaper. Academic writing is a more formal situation, so “dress up” your style and the amount of previewing you will do. If you structure the introduction properly, the thesis will appear later in the introduction after it has been set up.

Preview what you will do in the paper. It’s always necessary. However, it can be as easy as listing your major paragraph topics. I’ll expect you to improve the introduction beyond these basic expectations. Preview at the start, though—and review with care at the end. If you don’t, we won’t care or remember.

Definition of Thesis

A thesis is a provable opinion about which reasonable people may disagree. You’re familiar with writing these. It is helpful to remember a few things about good thesis statements:

A thesis is an opinion, not a fact. It’s not useful to write a five-page paper with the thesis: “I really, strongly, vehemently believe that the Civil War was most likely fought between 1861 and 1865.” Prove something about which people disagree.

Using my famous “Goldilocks principle,” decide whether your thesis is appropriate to the scale of the assignment. Is it too large, too specific, or “just right” for your task? The answer depends on your audience, purpose, and assignment information, so read it!

Tone

Keep the tone confident. It’s a thesis statement, not a thesis question. You are the person answering questions, not just asking them (so don’t overuse rhetorical, unanswered questions). Avoid using “I” as well. For example, if I say, “Alice, close the door,” my statement assumes “I want you to close the door, Alice.” I didn’t need to say “I” to communicate here, right? The same usually goes with academic writing. Avoid “I” or “you.” (There’s nothing like me getting a paper with the writer carelessly mentioning “When you are pregnant. . .”)

Where it Goes

Placement? Put the thesis near/at the end of the paragraph. Lead up to it with careful setup.
Finally, expect that you’ll rework the thesis as you go along. You might create a working thesis out of a question, turning it into an answer as you prewrite. Sharpen it as you proceed!

**Editing Checklist**

To help your editing and drafting, here are some questions you can ask/answer about the thesis:

- Is the thesis limited enough for a short paper? How so?
- Have you included enough strong points to prove your thesis?
- What is the pattern your essay follows? List argument's sides and rhetorical modes (i.e., definition, narration, compare and contrast, etc.).
- Do you do enough to prove a number of points that support your thesis? (Remember that proving a point to doubting readers takes more time than you might expect.)
- Where could you include additional information to make the argument more persuasive?
- Did you refute at least one major opposing argument? Which one?
- Describe two of the tones you adopted at different places in the essay, and tell why they are appropriate.
- List your restated thesis that you put in the conclusion paragraph. (If you didn’t put one in, then write one here, copy it in your notes, and put it into the paper.)
Formulating a Thesis

You need a good thesis statement for your essay but are having trouble getting started. You may have heard that your thesis needs to be specific and arguable, but still wonder what this really means.


You take a first pass at writing a thesis:

*Sixteen Candles* is a romantic comedy about high school cliques.

Is this a strong thesis statement? Not yet, but it’s a good start. You’ve focused on a topic—high school cliques—which is a smart move because you’ve settled on one of many possible angles. But the claim is weak because it’s not yet arguable. Intelligent people would generally agree with this statement—so there’s no real “news” for your reader. You want your thesis to say something surprising and debatable. If your thesis doesn’t go beyond summarizing your source, it’s descriptive and not yet argumentative.

The key words in the thesis statement are “romantic comedy” and “high school cliques.” One way to sharpen the claim is to start asking questions.

For example, how does the film represent high school cliques in a surprising or complex way? How does the film reinforce stereotypes about high school groups and how does it undermine them? Or why does the film challenge our expectations about romantic comedies by focusing on high school cliques? If you can answer one of those questions (or others of your own), you’ll have a strong thesis.

**Tip**: Asking “how” or “why” questions will help you refine your thesis, making it more arguable and interesting to your readers.

Take 2. You revise the thesis. Is it strong now?

*Sixteen Candles* is a romantic comedy criticizing the divisiveness created by high school cliques.

You’re getting closer. You’re starting to take a stance by arguing that the film identifies “divisiveness” as a problem and criticizes it, but your readers will want to know how this plays out and why it’s important. Right now, the thesis still sounds bland – not risky enough to be genuinely contentious.

**Tip**: Keep raising questions that test your ideas. And ask yourself the “so what” question. Why is your thesis interesting or important?

Take 3. Let’s try again. How about this version?

Although the film *Sixteen Candles* appears to reinforce stereotypes about high school cliques, it undermines them in important ways, questioning its viewers’ assumptions about what’s normal.

Bingo! This thesis statement is pretty strong. It challenges an obvious interpretation of the movie (that is just reinforces stereotypes), offering a new and more complex reading in its place. We also have a sense of why this argument is important. The film’s larger goal, we learn, is to question what we think we understand about normalcy.
What’s a Strong Thesis?

As we’ve just seen, a strong thesis statement crystallizes your paper’s argument and, most importantly, it’s arguable.

This means two things. It goes beyond merely summarizing or describing to stake out an interpretation or position that’s not obvious, and others could challenge for good reasons. It’s also arguable in the literal sense that it can be argued, or supported through a thoughtful analysis of your sources. If your argument lacks evidence, readers will think your thesis statement is an opinion or belief as opposed to an argument.

Exercises for Drafting an Arguable Thesis

A good thesis will be focused on your object of study (as opposed to making a big claim about the world) and will introduce the key words guiding your analysis.

To get started, you might experiment with some of these “mad libs.” They’re thinking exercises that will help propel you toward an arguable thesis.

By examining ________________ [topic/approach], we can see ________________[thesis—the claim that’s surprising], which is important because ________________[1]

Example:

“By examining Sixteen Candles through the lens of Georg Simmel’s writings on fashion, we can see that the protagonist’s interest in fashion as an expression of her conflicted desire to be seen as both unique and accepted by the group. This is important because the film offers its viewers a glimpse into the ambivalent yearnings of middle class youth in the 1980s.

Although readers might assume ________________ [the commonplace idea you’re challenging], I argue that ________________ [your surprising claim].

Example:

Although viewers might assume the romantic comedy Sixteen Candles is merely entertaining, I believe its message is political. The film uses the romance between Samantha, a middle class sophomore, and Jake, an affluent senior, to reinforce the fantasy that anyone can become wealthy and successful with enough cunning and persistence.

Still Having Trouble? Let’s Back Up...
It helps to understand why readers value the arguable thesis. What larger purpose does it serve? Your readers will bring a set of expectations to your essay. The better you can anticipate the expectations of your readers, the better you’ll be able to persuade them to entertain seeing things your way.

Academic readers (and readers more generally) read to learn something new. They want to see the writer challenge commonplaces—either everyday assumptions about your object of study or truisms in the scholarly literature. In other words, academic readers want to be surprised so that their thinking shifts or at least becomes more complex by the time they finish reading your essay. Good essays problematize what we think we know and offer an alternative explanation in its place. They leave their reader with a fresh perspective on a problem.

We all bring important past experiences and beliefs to our interpretations of texts, objects, and problems. You can harness these observational powers to engage critically with what you are studying. The key is to be alert to what strikes you as strange, problematic, paradoxical, or puzzling about your object of study. If you can articulate this and a claim in response, you’re well on your way to formulating an arguable thesis in your introduction.

**How do I set up a “problem” and an arguable thesis in response?**

All good writing has a purpose or motive for existing. Your thesis is your surprising response to this problem or motive. This is why it seldom makes sense to start a writing project by articulating the thesis. The first step is to articulate the question or problem your paper addresses.

Here are some possible ways to introduce a conceptual problem in your paper’s introduction.

1. **Challenge a commonplace interpretation (or your own first impressions).**

   How are readers likely to interpret this source or issue? What might intelligent readers think at first glance? (Or, if you’ve been given secondary sources or have been asked to conduct research to locate secondary sources, what do other writers or scholars assume is true or important about your primary source or issue?)

   What does this commonplace interpretation leave out, overlook, or under-emphasize?
2. Help your reader see the complexity of your topic.

Identify and describe for your reader a paradox, puzzle, or contradiction in your primary source(s).

What larger questions does this paradox or contradiction raise for you and your readers?

3. If your assignment asks you to do research, piggyback off another scholar’s research.

Summarize for your reader another scholar’s argument about your topic, primary source, or case study and tell your reader why this claim is interesting.

Now explain how you will extend this scholar's argument to explore an issue or case study that the scholar doesn't address fully.
4. If your assignment asks you to do research, identify a gap in another scholar’s or a group of scholars’ research.

Summarize for your reader another scholar’s argument about your topic, primary source, or case study and tell your reader why this claim is interesting. Or, summarize how scholars in the field tend to approach your topic.

Next, explain what important aspect this scholarly representation misses or distorts. Introduce your particular approach to your topic and its value.

5. If your assignment asks you to do research, bring in a new lens for investigating your case study or problem.

Summarize for your reader how a scholar or group of scholars has approached your topic.

Introduce a theoretical source (possibly from another discipline) and explain how it helps you address this issue from a new and productive angle.

Tip: your introductory paragraph will probably look like this:

Testing Your Thesis

You can test your thesis statement’s arguability by asking the following questions:

Does my thesis only or mostly summarize my source?

If so, try some of the exercises above to articulate your paper’s conceptual problem or question.
Is my thesis arguable—can it be supported by evidence in my source, and is it surprising and contentious?

If not, return to your sources and practice the exercises above.

Is my thesis about my primary source or case study, or is it about the world?

If it’s about the world, revise it so that it focuses on your primary source or case study. Remember you need solid evidence to support your thesis.

“Formulating a Thesis” was written by Andrea Scott, Princeton University

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5 Ways of Looking at a Thesis

1. A thesis says something a little strange.

Consider the following examples:

A: By telling the story of Westley and Buttercup's triumph over evil, *The Princess Bride* affirms the power of true love.

B: Although the main plot of *The Princess Bride* rests on the natural power of true love, an examination of the way that fighting sticks—baseball bats, tree branches, and swords—link the frame story to the romance plot suggests that the grandson is being trained in true love, that love is not natural but socialized.

I would argue that both of these statements are perfectly correct, but they are not both strange. Only the second one says something, well, weird. Weird is good. Sentence A encourages the paper to produce precisely the evidence that *The Princess Bride* presents explicitly; sentence B ensures that the paper will talk about something new.

*Romeo and Juliet* concerns the dangers of family pride, *Frankenstein* the dangers of taking science too far. Yup. How can you make those things unusual? Good papers go out on a limb. They avoid ugly falls by reinforcing the limb with carefully chosen evidence and rigorous argumentation.

2. A thesis creates an argument that builds from one point to the next, giving the paper a direction that your reader can follow as the paper develops.

This point often separates the best theses from the pack. A good thesis can prevent the two weakest ways of organizing a critical paper: the pile of information and the plot summary with comments. A paper that presents a pile of information will frequently introduce new paragraphs with transitions that simply indicate the addition of more stuff. (“Another character who exhibits these traits is X,” for instance.) Consider these examples:

A: The Rules and Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* both tell women how to act.

B: By looking at The Rules, a modern conduct book for women, we can see how Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* is itself like a conduct book, questioning the rules for social success in her society and offering a new model.

Example A would almost inevitably lead to a paper organized as a pile of information. A plot summary with comments follows the chronological development of a text while picking out the same element of every segment; a transition in such a paper might read, "In the next scene, the color blue also figures prominently." Both of these approaches constitute too much of a good thing. Papers must compile evidence, of course, and following the chronology of a text can sometimes help a reader keep track of a paper's argument. The best papers, however, will develop according to a more complex logic articulated in a strong thesis. Example B above would lead a paper to organize its evidence according to the paper's own logic.


The MTS: By looking at _____, we can see _____, which most readers don’t see; it is important to look at this aspect of the text because ______.
Try it out with the examples from the first point:

A: By telling the story of Westley and Buttercup’s triumph over evil, The Princess Bride affirms the power of true love.

B: Although the main plot of The Princess Bride rests on the natural power of true love, an examination of the way that fighting sticks—baseball bats, tree branches, and swords—link the frame story to the romance plot suggests that the grandson is being trained in true love, that love is not natural but socialized.

Notice that the MTS adds a new dimension to point number one above. The first part of the MTS asks you to find something strange (“which most readers don’t see”), and the second part asks you to think about the importance of the strangeness. Thesis A would not work at all in the MTS; one could not reasonably state that “most readers [or viewers] don’t see” that film’s affirmation of true love, and the statement does not even attempt to explain the importance of its claim. Thesis B, on the other hand, gives us a way to complete the MTS, as in “By looking at the way fighting sticks link the plot and frame of The Princess Bride, we can see the way the grandson is trained in true love, which most people don’t see; it is important to look at this aspect of the text because unlike the rest of the film, the fighting sticks suggest that love is not natural but socialized.” One does not need to write out the MTS in such a neat one-sentence form, of course, but thinking through the structure of the MTS can help refine thesis ideas.

4. A thesis says something about the text(s) you discuss exclusively.

If your thesis could describe many works equally well, it needs to be more specific. Let’s return to our examples from above:

A: By telling the story of Westley and Buttercup’s triumph over evil, The Princess Bride affirms the power of true love.

B: Although the main plot of The Princess Bride rests on the natural power of true love, an examination of the way that fighting sticks—baseball bats, tree branches, and swords—link the frame story to the romance plot suggests that the grandson is being trained in true love, that love is not natural but socialized.

Try substituting other works:

A: By telling the story of Darcy and Elizabeth’s triumph over evil, Pride and Prejudice affirms the power of true love.

Sure, that makes sense. Bad sign.

B: Although the main plot of Pride and Prejudice rests on the natural power of true love, an examination of the way that fighting sticks—baseball bats, tree branches, and swords—link the frame story to the romance plot suggests that the grandson is being trained in true love, that it is not natural but socialized.

Um, nope. Even if you have never read Pride and Prejudice, you can probably guess that such a precise thesis could hardly apply to other works. Good sign.
5. A thesis makes a lot of information irrelevant.

If your thesis is specific enough, it will make a point that focuses on only a small part of the text you are analyzing. You can and should ultimately apply that point to the work as a whole, but a thesis will call attention to specific parts of it. Let’s look at those examples again. (This is the last time, I promise.)

A: By telling the story of Westley and Buttercup’s triumph over evil, *The Princess Bride* affirms the power of true love.

B: Although the main plot of *The Princess Bride* rests on the natural power of true love, an examination of the way that fighting sticks—baseball bats, tree branches, and swords—link the frame story to the romance plot suggests that the grandson is being trained in true love, that love is not natural but socialized.

One way of spotting the problem with example A is to note that a simple plot summary would support its point. That is not of true example B, which tells the reader exactly what moments the paper will discuss and why.

If you find that your paper leads you to mark relevant passages on virtually every page of a long work, you need to find a thesis that helps you focus on a smaller portion of the text. As the MTS reminds us, the paper should still strive to show the reader something new about the text as a whole, but a specific area of concentration will help, not hinder, that effort.

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52  |  Arguing Through Writing
Process: Writing a Thesis Statement

Thesis statements are easy to construct if you: 1. can condense your secondary sources—that you’ve read and understood—into a “main idea and argument” grid (explained below); and 2. answer a framework of organizational questions (also below). These two steps can help to ensure that your thesis simultaneously situates an idea within a particular “conversation” and specifies a unique perspective/makes a new argument/contribution to the conversation.

1. Condensing secondary sources:

   a. Include some brief information each of your secondary sources (books, journal articles, etc.) on a grid so that you can organize the authors’ main ideas and perspectives in one space. For instance,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Main Idea</th>
<th>Argument</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jones</td>
<td>Climate change policy</td>
<td>Climate change policy is at a standstill because the government is concerned about economic growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smith</td>
<td>Climate change policy</td>
<td>Climate change policy ought to be communicated as an ethical imperative because that will motivate the public to respond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taylor</td>
<td>Climate change policy</td>
<td>Climate change policy needs to be communicated to the public by interdisciplinary teams of academics and politicians</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   b. Once you’ve created an organizational table, you’ll want to examine it for commonalities/linkages among the authors’ ideas and arguments. In the example above, all authors have written about climate change policy, so now you know that you’ll need to include something like this phrase, “climate change policy,” in your thesis statement. Regarding the authors’ arguments, Jones argues about how climate change policy is affected by the government's concern with economic growth; Smith argues that it needs to be communicated as an ethical imperative; and Taylor argues that it needs to be communicated by interdisciplinary teams.

   c. Given this information, the first half of your thesis – which explains the specific topic – needs to explain to the audience/reader that you are writing specifically about climate change policy. The second half of your thesis – which contextualizes the argument – needs to explain to the audience/reader your interpretation of these authors’ arguments. For instance, you may choose to argue that:

   i. climate change policy regarding the effect of government policies about economic growth is the greater imperative for accomplishing more effective climate change policies in the U.S.

   ii. ethical imperatives are the motivating factor for encouraging the public to respond – causing academic institutions to work with government officials/decision-makers in responding to the public's opinion/support of climate change policy as an ethical concern

   d. The examples above are hypothetical; and only two of the many, creative possibilities for interpreting an argument out of a specific topic. Whereas an argument seeks to persuade an audience/reader about a way of interpreting others’ information, a topic simply describes how to categorize/identify where the argument “fits” (i.e. which generalized group of people would be concerned with reading your writing)
e. Hint: oftentimes, the authors of academic journal articles conclude their arguments by suggesting potential research questions that they believe ought to be addressed in future scholarship. These suggestions can potentially provide some really excellent information about how to begin articulating a unique argument about a specific topic.
Assessment: Topic and Working Thesis

Time to commit! By now you’ve explored several ideas, and probably ruled out a few easily. Now, though, I’m asking you to pick one particular topic to use for the final research essay project. You can change your mind later, if you’d like—but will have to get permission from me to do so.

For this assignment, I’d like you to do the following:

• Identify which particular topic you’ve decided on
• Describe a specific controversy that exists within this topic. Identify what the sides are (and there may be more than just 2 sides), and why each believes what it does.
• Define what side you agree with, and why.
• State the overall claim that you want your essay to prove beyond a shadow of a doubt. (This will be your working thesis, and it’s welcome to change as you progress in later weeks. It’s okay to start simple, for now, and build in more complexity later. I suggest looking at the Thesis statement websites in this module to get started).

A (Silly) Sample:

I have decided to focus on Cheezits for my research project. There are a number of serious controversies when the matter of cheese-flavored snack crackers is discussed, but I’d like to focus specifically on how they compare with their primary rival, Cheese Nips. Supporters of Cheese Nips believe their product to be superior because of the flavor, nutritional value, and cost; supporters of Cheezits use the same criteria to claim the better product. I personally find Cheezits to be preferable in every way, but primarily when it comes to taste. Cheese Nips taste oily to me, and leave a bad taste on my tongue, while the taste and texture of Cheezits is a perfect consistency.

Cheezits are a better food product than Cheese Nips.
Assessment: Reading Notebook Entry #2

Now that you've got an initial topic and viewpoint in mind, find ONE source that gives you helpful information about this topic. This source can come from anywhere, be any length, and can be the same source you consulted for the 3 Research Topic Ideas task earlier, if you’d like.

Create an entry for your Reading Notebook that includes any or all of the following:

- questions you had while reading
- emotional reactions to the text
- key terms that seem important to you
- what you think the thesis or main idea of this source is
- what you think the intended audience for this source is
- how effective you think this source is
- anything else that comes to mind

This is an informal assignment. Your writing can be in complete sentences, or bullet points or fragments, as you see appropriate. Editing isn’t vital for this work, though it should be proofread to the point that obvious typos or misspellings are addressed and corrected. Target word count is 150-300 words for this entry.

Please do include the web link URL to the source you’ve chosen. You do not have to cite it with MLA or APA citation, though you are welcome to if you want the practice.

Though it isn't mandatory that this reading notebook entry be about the same source you choose for the Source Evaluation Essay, you may find it very useful later on if it is.
VISUAL ARGUMENTS
Photos and Illustrations

Photos are used in professional documents as tools for communicating a message that a writer feels can be strengthened through the use of proper imagery. Photographs can do many things to enhance a message, some examples can be seen here:

Illustration Checklist

Planning

• What kinds of illustrations are your audience familiar with?
• Do you have information that could be more easily or quickly communicated to your audience visually or in a combination of words and graphics?
• Do you have definitions that could be displayed visually in whole or in part?
• Do you have any processes or procedures that could be depicted in a flowchart?
• Do you have information on trends or relationships that could be displayed in tables and graphics?
• Do you have masses of statistics that could be summarized in tables?
• Do you need to depict objects? If so, what do you need to display about the objects? Do you need to focus attention on specific aspects of the objects? Do you require the realism of photographs?
• What are the design conventions of your illustrations?
• Are there suitable illustrations you could borrow or adapt? Or will you need to create them yourself?

Revising

• Are your illustrations suited to your purpose and audience?
• Do your illustrations communicate information ethically?
• Are your illustrations effectively located and easy to find?
• Are your illustrations numbered and labeled?
• Do your verbal and visual elements reinforce each other?
• Are your illustrations genuinely informative instead of simply decorative?
• When necessary, have you helped your readers to interpret your illustrations with commentary or annotations?
• Have you acknowledged the sources for borrowed or adapted tables and figures?

How To Perform an Action

Pictures are an effective tool for giving visual representation of how to do something. They can stand alone or work in conjunction with the given text, and they can enhance a message if used properly.

If you are using pictures in conjunction with text: As in a set of instructions, the imagery increases understanding of the task, in addition to decreasing confusion that may arise from text that stands alone. When using a picture to help portray how to perform a task, it is your responsibility to make sure the picture matches up with the text. You must explain the picture using text, and vice versa, explain the text using a picture. Also, the viewer will accomplish the task more often when the picture looks how it would if they were watching the task, not necessarily if they were experiencing it.

An example would be: if your task was doing a cartwheel, you wouldn’t want the pictures at an angle where the person is looking through the eyes of the one doing the cartwheel. You would want the pictures to be from someone
watching the event, so that the viewer isn’t confused by what they can’t see (such as where their feet are when they’re looking at their hands). It’s the simple things that make or break a document when using pictures. Think and re-think the pictures you are using and how someone seeing them for the first time will react to them.

How a Finished Product Should Look

When textual information does not capture the essence of what your trying to describe, try putting an actual photo of what your trying to describe in the document. This type of picture enables you to come as close to reality as possible. Make sure your pictures are in color and of high quality. Black and white photos tend to blur easily on paper and lack the detail needed to fully understand a photo. Images cut down on excessive use of describing words. “A picture is worth a thousand words” relates to this situation.

Be sure to use the text wrap abilities of most word processors. A well placed picture with clean text wrapping can make an otherwise overwhelming block of text seem reasonably approachable. Looking at 25 pages of block, justified alignment, plain black text is one of the most boring ways to see a report. A picture can liven up a report, make it more memorable, and help clarify the report all in one motion.

Map Out an Object, Place, or Process

An example of these types of pictures can be found in an automotive manual or a science textbook. This can be anything from a picture of a machine to an example of how photosynthesis works. Arrows and labels can be used in order to show where everything is and how the process takes place. The picture should include a big enough background so that the reader can
locate the area in relation to things around it.

Photographs can also play a major role in connecting with the audience. They are useful in multi-cultural situations when a shared written language may not exist. Pictures can speak louder than words, and usually portray the message quicker. It is very important to keep the first initial reaction in mind when choosing the image you will place within your document. Be sure to avoid photos that may have several meanings, or the true meaning may be unclear. In order to avoid this type of situation, put yourself in the audience that you are writing for and try to be unbiased when you view the image. Better yet, test the image on someone who does not know much about your photo’s topic and ask them what message the photo sends to them. Clarity is essential in conveying your message.

Do not rely too heavily on pictures though. Pictures and text should be used simultaneously in order to give the audience the most accurate direction. Pictures can make a great break in words, but are not always as useful to get a point across as words are.

**Software Can Tremendously Increase Photograph Effectiveness**

There are a great deal of photo editing programs for computers that can be utilized to bring out the right angle, zoom, view, and color of a photo. Some of the most popular photo editing software includes Photoshop, Corel, and Image Smart. Many computers now come with basic image editing software, which allows one to adjust color, brightness, crop, and other basic edits.

**Cropping** is an essential key feature that allows you to enlarge the area of the photo you want the reader to see, while omitting the background and obsolete area of the background. Cropping is equivalent to looking at an image under a microscope where you can focus on the areas you want the readers to see the clearest. However, this can decrease image quality and make the image hard to see. When possible, it is best to use images that need little to no editing.

When using imagery make sure it is of high image resolution (300 dpi for print, 72 dpi for screen) and the proper format to be inserting into your document. Typically, sticking with images from original sources, such as a camera or other .jpg or .tif file are best.

If you find your photograph is not using the right coloring, computer programs such as Photoshop, Corel, etc. will allow you to adjust the color balance and light in many different variations. This is an important feature, especially when the photograph was not professionally taken or lacks the appropriate lighting for the setting. Be careful not to over or under expose the photography.

**Labeling** is also another feature you can do in a computer program. You can insert boxes with text and arrows into a photograph in order to label key details. Labeling your photographs keeps the information you are trying to convey to the reader clear.

These computer programs may take some time to become familiar with how they work. It might be necessary to take a course or tutorial on how to use them to their full advantages, but it's worth it for all the features these programs have. There are some free tutorials available on the internet or through the actual program.

**Using Graphics From the Artists, Internet, and Other Misc. Sources**

Graphics can be found for just about any topic relatively easily if you know how to search for them and cite the artist properly. Like any written material, pictures are also property of the original artist in many cases. It is important to use good ethics and cite artists when necessary. The internet and your computer's clip art file have countless pictures and graphics as well. Knowing how to use these techniques and tools will make finding and using images easier.

**Citing Images**

In order to use or manipulate an image or graphic not your own, from either the Internet or any other source, you must obtain permission from whoever created or has rights to that image. Usually some type of arrangement between you and this person
or organization will have to be negotiated. This could be anything from paying for the rights to use the image, or citing the image in the way that is expressed by the owner. Sometimes graphics will be considered public domain. Studying the copyright information of an image is one way to determine whether or not it is public domain. Images belonging to a government agency or even to your employer would typically be considered public domain. Even so, these images should still be cited. A quick guide to citing images from books and internet can be found at [1]

**Finding Images on the Internet**

If you are looking for a high resolution image from the internet, you can select in the Google header bar that you want it only to search for “large images, or extra large images”. If you are not finding what you are looking for, there are many stock photography sites out there that allow you to have the image, royalty free for very little of your own money. Some sites to consider would be: Stock.XCHNG (this is a free site, with some restrictions), Stock Xpert, Corbis, Getty, or others, just type in stock photography in the search bar.

**Clip Art/Illustrations**

Illustrations are a great way to convey information easily and effectively to an audience of all ages. However, when using illustrations be sure that there is relevance from the illustration to the topic your discussing. Illustrations can serve as tangents if they have no relevance to the topic being discussed. Illustrations must be chosen to highlight the topic you are discussing and not to distract readers from it.

Graphics can portray ideas more easily than a picture. They give a different type of quality than text in the document. However, when presenting the ideas to well-educated and technologically savvy professionals, clip art may not present the information efficiently. Illustrations that have a low image resolution can take away from the details you are trying to portray to your audience. If this is the case then photos may be a better choice because they are more clear and may get you point across better.

**Headline text**

Headline text is used to introduce or even explain graphics. It is expected that you label all of your graphics in one way or another so that when you reference them in you document the reader knows which graphic you are talking about. Headline text can be as simple as a title for a graph or as complex as a short paragraph below a photo explaining the origin and context of the image. Your images and text may seem to go together logically without headlines to you, but your readers will not have your same familiarity.

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Visual Elements: Play, Use, and Design

So far you have examined how primarily written arguments work rhetorically. But visuals (symbols, paintings, photographs, advertisements, cartoons, etc.) also work rhetorically, and their meaning changes from context to context. Here’s an example:

Imagine two straight lines intersecting each other at right angles. One line runs from north to south. The other from east to west. Now think about the meanings that this sign evokes.

What came to mind as you pondered this sign? Crossroads? A first aid sign? The Swiss flag? Your little brother making a cross sign with his forefingers that signals “step away from the hallowed ground that is my bedroom”?

Now think of a circle around those lines so that the ends of the lines hit, or cross over, the circumference of the circle. What is the image’s purpose now?

What did you come up with? The Celtic cross? A surveyor’s target? A pizza cut into really generous sizes?

Did you know that this symbol is also the symbol for our planet Earth? And it’s the symbol for the Norse god, Odin. Furthermore, a quick web search will also tell you that John Dalton, a British chemist who lead the way in atomic theory and died in 1844, used this exact same symbol to indicate the element sulfur.17

Recently, however, the symbol became the subject of a fiery political controversy. Former Alaska governor (and former vice-presidential candidate) Sarah Palin’s marketing team placed several of these symbols—the lines crossed over the circumference of the circle in this case—on a map of the United States. The symbols indicated where the Republican Party had to concentrate their campaign because these two seemingly innocuous lines encompassed by a circle evoked, in this context, the symbol for crosshairs—which itself invokes a myriad of meanings that range from “focus” to “target.”

However, after the shooting of Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords in Arizona in January 2011, the symbol, and the image it was mapped onto, sparked a vehement nationwide debate about its connotative meaning. Clearly, the image’s rhetorical effectiveness had transformed into something that some considered offensive. Palin’s team withdrew the image from her website.18

How we understand symbols rhetorically, and indeed all images, depends on how the symbols work with the words they accompany, and on how we understand and read the image’s context, or the social “landscape” within which the image is situated. As you have learned from earlier chapters, much of this contextual knowledge in persuasive situations is tacit, or unspoken.

Like writing, how we use images has real implications in the world. So when we examine visuals in rhetorical circumstances, we need to uncover this tacit knowledge. Even a seemingly innocuous symbol, like the one above, can denote a huge variety of meanings, and these meanings can become culturally loaded. The same is true for more complex images—something we will examine at length below.

In this chapter, then, we will explore how context—as well as purpose, audience, and design—render symbols and images rhetorically effective. The political anecdote above may seem shocking but, nevertheless, it indicates how persuasively potent visuals are, especially when they enhance the meaning of a text’s words or vice versa. Our goal for this chapter, then, is to come to terms with the basics of visual analysis, which can encompass the analysis of words working with images or the analysis of images alone. When you compose your own arguments, you can put to use what you discover in this chapter when you select or consider creating visuals to accompany your own work.
Visual Analysis

Let’s start with by reviewing what we mean by analysis. Imagine that your old car has broken down and your Uncle Bob has announced that he will fix it for you. The next day, you go to Uncle Bob’s garage and find the engine of your car in pieces all over the driveway; you are further greeted with a vision of your hapless uncle greasily jabbing at the radiator with a screwdriver. Uncle Bob (whom you may never speak to again) has broken the car engine down into its component parts to try and figure out how your poor old car works and what is wrong with it.

Happy days are ahead, however. Despite the shock and horror that the scene above inspires, there is a method to Uncle Bob’s madness. Amid the wreckage, he finds out how your car works and what is wrong with it so he can fix it and put it back together.

Analyzing, then, entails breaking down a text or an image into component parts (like your engine). And while analyzing doesn’t entail fixing per se, it does allow you to figure out how a text or image works to convey the message it is trying to communicate. What constitutes the component parts of an image? How might we analyze a visual? What should we be looking for? To a certain extent we can analyze visuals in the same way we analyze written language; we break down a written text into component parts to figure out just what the creator’s agenda might be and what effect the text might have on its readers.

When we analyze visuals we do take into account the same sorts of things we do when we analyze written texts, with some added features. We thus analyze visuals in terms of the following concepts—concepts that count for our component parts. Some of them you may recognize.

Genre

Genres that use visuals tell us a lot about what we can and can’t do with them. Coming to terms with genre is rather like learning a new dance—certain moves, or conventions, are expected that dictate what kind of dance you have to learn. If you’re asked to moonwalk, for instance, you know you have to glide backwards across the floor like Michael Jackson. It’s sort of the same with visuals and texts; certain moves, or conventions, are expected that dictate what the genre allows and doesn’t allow.

Below is a wonderful old bumper sticker from the 1960s. A bumper sticker, as we will discover, is a genre that involves specific conventions.

Bumper stickers today look quite a bit different, but the amount of space that a sticker’s creator has to work with hasn’t really changed. Bumper stickers demand that their creators come up with short phrases that are contextually understandable and accompanied by images that are easily readable—a photograph of an oil painting trying to squeeze itself on a bumper sticker would just be incomprehensible. In short, bumper stickers are an argument in a rush!

A bumper sticker calls for an analysis of images and words working together to create an argument. As for their rhetorical content, bumper stickers can demand that we vote a certain way, pay attention to a problem, act as part of a solution, or even recognize the affiliations of the driver of the car the sticker is stuck to. But their very success, given that their content is minimal, depends wholly on our understanding of the words and the symbols that accompany them in context.
Context/The Big Picture

Thinking about context is crucial when we are analyzing visuals, as it is with analyzing writing. We need to understand the political, social, economic, or historical situations from which the visual emerges. Moreover, we have to remember that the meaning of images change as time passes. For instance, what do we have to understand about the context from which the Kennedy sticker emerged in order to grasp its meaning? Furthermore, how has its meaning changed in the past 50 years?

First, to read the bumper sticker at face value, we have to know that a man named Kennedy is running for president. But president of what? Maybe that’s obvious, but then again, how many know who the Australian prime minister was 50 years ago, or, for that matter, the leading official in China? Of course, we should know that the face on the bumper sticker belongs to John F. Kennedy, a US Democrat, who ran against the Republican nominee Richard Nixon, and who won the US presidential election in 1960. (We hope you know that anyway.)

Now think how someone seeing this bumper sticker, and the image of Kennedy on it, today would react differently than someone in 1960 would have. Since his election, JFK's status has transformed from American president into an icon of American history. We remember his historic debate with Nixon, the first televised presidential debate. (One wonders how much of a role this event played in his election given that the TV [a visual medium] turned a political underdog into a celebrity.20) We also remember Kennedy for his part in the Cuban missile crisis, his integral role in the Civil Rights Movement and, tragically, we remember his assassination in 1963. In other words, after the passage of 50 years, we might read the face on the bumper sticker quite differently than we did in 1960.

While we examine this “text” from 50 years ago, it reminds us that the images we are surrounded by now change in meaning all the time. For instance, we are all familiar with the Apple logo. The image itself, on its own terms, is simply a silhouette of an apple with a bite taken out of it. But, the visual does not now evoke the nourishment of a Granny Smith or a Golden Delicious. Instead, the logo is globally recognized as an icon of computer technology.

Purpose

Words and images can work together to present a point of view. But, in terms of visuals, that point of view often relies on what isn’t explicit—what, as we noted above, is tacit.

The words on the sticker say quite simply “Kennedy For President.” We know now that this simple statement reveals that John F. Kennedy ran for president in 1960. But what was its rhetorical value back then? What did the bumper sticker want us to do with its message? After all, taken literally, it doesn’t really tell us to do anything.

For now, let’s cheat and jump the gun and guess that the bumper sticker’s argument in 1960 was “Vote to Elect John F Kennedy for United States President.”

Okay. So knowing what we know from history, we can accept that the sticker is urging us to vote for Kennedy. It’s trying to persuade us to do something. And the reason we know what we know about it is because we know how to read its genre and we comprehend its social, political, and historical context. But in order to be persuaded by its purpose, we need to know why voting for JFK is a good thing. We need to understand that its underlying message, “Vote for JFK,” is that to vote for JFK is a good thing for the future of the United States.

So, to be persuaded by the bumper sticker, we must agree with the reasons why voting for JFK is a good thing. But the bumper sticker doesn’t give us any. Instead, it relies on what we are supposed to know about why we should vote for Kennedy. (JFK campaigned on a platform of liberal reform as well as increased spending for the military and space travel technology.21); Moreover, we should be aware of the evidence for why we should vote that way.22 Consequently, if we voted for JFK, we accepted the above claim, reasons, and evidence driving the bumper sticker's purpose without being told any of it by the bumper sticker. The claim, reasons and evidence are all tacit.
What about the image itself? How does that further the bumper sticker's purpose? We see that the image of JFK's smiling face is projected on top of the words “Kennedy for President.” The image is not placed off to the side; it is right in the middle of the bumper sticker. So for this bumper sticker to be visually persuasive, we need to agree that JFK, here represented by his smiling face, located right in the middle of the bumper sticker, on a backdrop of red, white, and blue, signifies a person we can trust to run the country.

Nowadays, JFK's face on the bumper sticker—or in any other genre for that matter—might underscore a different purpose. It might encompass nostalgia for an era gone by or it might be used as a resemblance argument, in order to compare President Kennedy with President Obama for example.23

Overall then, when we see a visual used for rhetorical purposes, we must first determine the argument (claim, reasons, evidence) from which the visual is situated and then try to grasp why the visual is being used to further its purpose.

**Audience and Medium**

In their book *Picturing Texts*, Lester Faigley et al.24 claim that, when determining the audience for a visual, we must “think about how an author might expect the audience to receive the work” (104). Medium, then, dominates an audience’s reception of an image. (So does modality. See below.) For instance, Faigley states that readers will most likely accept a photograph in a newspaper as news—unless of course one thinks that pictures in the tabloids of alien babies impersonating Elvis constitute news. Alien babies aside, readers of the news would expect that the picture on the front page of the *New York Times*, for instance, is a “faithful representation of something that actually happened” (105). An audience for a political cartoon in the newspaper, on the other hand, would know that the pictures they see in cartoons are not faithful representations of the news but opinions about current events and their participants, caricatured by a cartoonist. The expectations of the audience in terms of medium, then, determine much about how the visual is received.

As for our bumper sticker then, we might argue that the image of JFK speeding down the highway on the bumper of a spiffy new Ford Falcon would be persuasive to those who put their faith in the efficacy of bumper stickers, as well as the image of the man on the bumper sticker. Moreover, given that the Falcon is speeding by, we might assume that the bumper sticker would mostly appeal to those folks who are already thinking of voting for JFK—otherwise there’s a chance that the Falcon’s driver would be the recipient of some 1960s-style road rage.

Today, the audience for our bumper sticker has changed considerably. We might find it in a library collection. Indeed, Kansas University has a considerable collection of bumper stickers.25 Or we might find it collecting bids on eBay. Once again, the audience for this example of images and words working together rhetorically depends largely on its contextual landscape.

**Design**

Design actually involves several factors.

**Arrangement**

Designers are trained to emphasize certain features of a visual text. And they are also trained to compose images that are balanced and harmonized. Faigley et al suggest that we look at a text that uses images (with or without words) and think about where our eyes are drawn first (34).26 Moreover, in Western cultures, we are trained to read from left to right and top to bottom—a pattern that often has an impact on what text or image is accentuated in a visual arrangement.

Other arrangements that Faigley et al discuss are **closed and open forms** (105).27 A closed-form image means that, like our bumper sticker, everything we need to know about the image is enclosed within its frame. An open form, on the other hand, suggests that the visual’s narrative continues outside the frame of the visual. Many sports ads employ open-frame visuals that suggest the dynamic of physical movement.
Another method of arrangement that is well known to designers is the **rule of thirds**. Here's an example of that rule in action:

Note how the illustration above has been cordoned off into 9 sections. The drawings of the sun and the person, as well as the horizon, coincide with those lines. The rule of thirds dictates that this compositional method allows for an interesting and dynamic arrangement as opposed to one that is static. Now, unfortunately, our bumper sticker above doesn't really obey that rule. Nevertheless, our eye is still drawn to the image of JFK's head. Many modern bumper stickers do, however, obey the rule of thirds. Next time you see a bumper sticker on a parked car, check if the artist has paid attention to this rule. Or, seek out some landscape photography. The rule of thirds is the golden rule in landscape art and photography and is more or less a comprehensive way to analyze arrangement in design circles because of its focus on where one's eye is drawn.

Rhetorically speaking, what is accentuated in a visual is the most important thing to remember about arrangement. As far as professional design is concerned, it is never haphazard. Even a great photo, which might be seem to be the result of serendipity, can be cropped to highlight what a newspaper editor, for instance, wants highlighted.

**Texts and Image in Play**

Is the visual supported by words? How do the words support the visual? What is gained by the words and what would be lost if they weren't in accompaniment? What if we were to remove the words “Kennedy for President” from our bumper sticker? Would the sticker have the same rhetorical effect?

Moreover, when examining visual rhetoric, we should pinpoint how font emphasizes language. How does font render things more or less important, for instance? Is the font playful, like Comic Sans MS, or formal, like Arial? Is the font blocked, large, or small? What difference does the font make to the overall meaning of the visual? Imagine that our JFK bumper sticker was composed with a swirly-curl font. It probably wouldn't send the desired message. Why not, do you think?

Alternately, think about the default font in Microsoft Word. What does it look like and why? What happens to the font if it is bolded or enlarged? Does it maintain a sense of continuity with the rest of the text? If you scroll through the different fonts available to you on your computer, which do you think are most appropriate for essay writing, website design, or the poster you may have to compose?

Lastly, even the use of **white (or negative) space** in relation to text deserves attention in terms of arrangement. The mismanagement of the relation of space to text and/or visual can result in visual overload! For instance, in an essay, double spacing is often advised because it is easier on the reader’s eye. In other words, the blank spaces between the lines of text render reading more manageable than would dense bricks of text. Similarly, one might arrange text and image against the blank space to create a balanced arrangement of both.

While in some situations the arrangement of text and visual (or white space) might not seem rhetorical (in an essay, for example), one could make the argument that cluttering one’s work is not especially rhetorically effective. After all, if you are trying to persuade your instructor to give you an ‘A’, making your essay effortlessly readable seems like a good place to start.
Visual Figures

Faigley et al also ask us to consider the use of figures in a visual argument (32). Figurative language is highly rhetorical, as are figurative images. For instance, visual metaphors abound in visual rhetoric, especially advertising (32). A visual metaphor is at play when you encounter an image that signifies something other than its literal meaning. For instance, think of your favorite cereal: which cartoon character on the cereal box makes you salivate in anticipation of breakfast time? Next time, when you see a cartoon gnome and your tummy start to rumble in anticipation of chocolate-covered rice puffs, you’ll know that the design folks down at ACME cereals have done their job. Let’s hope, however, that you don’t want to chow down on the nearest short fat fellow in a red cap that comes your way.

Visual rhetoric also relies on synecdoche, a trope in which a part of something represents the whole. In England, for instance, a crown is used to represent the British monarchy. The image of JFK’s face on the bumper sticker, then, might suggest his competency to head up the country.

Color

Colors are loaded with rhetorical meaning, both in terms of the values and emotions associated with them and their contextual background. Gunther Kress and Theo Van Leeuwen show how the use of color is as contextually bound as writing and images themselves. For instance, they write, “red is for danger, green for hope. In most parts of Europe, black is for mourning, though in northern parts of Portugal, and perhaps elsewhere in Europe as well, brides wear black gowns for their wedding day. In China, and other parts of East Asia, white is the color of mourning; in most of Europe it is the color of purity, worn by the bride at her wedding. Contrasts like these shake our confidence in the security of meaning of colour and colour terms” (343).

So what colors have seemingly unshakeable meaning in the US? How about red, white, and blue? Red and blue are two out of the three primary colors. They evoke a sense of sturdiness. After all, they are the base colors from which others are formed.

The combined colors of the American flag have come to signal patriotism and American values. But even American values, reflected in the appearance of the red, white, and blue, change in different contexts. To prompt further thought, Faigley shows us that the flag has been used to lend different meaning to a variety of magazine covers—from American Vogue (fashion) to Fortune magazine (money) (91). An image of the red, white and blue on the cover lends a particularly American flavor to each magazine. And this can change the theme of each magazine? For instance, with what would you acquaint a picture of the American flag on the cover of Bon Appetit or Rolling Stone? Hot dogs and Bruce Springsteen perhaps?

What then does the red, white, and blue lend our bumper sticker? A distinctly patriotic flavor, for sure. Politically patriotic. And that can mean different things for different people. Thus, given that meanings change in a variety of contexts, we can see that the meaning of color can actually be more fluid than we might have originally thought.

Alternately, if our JFK sticker colors were anything other than red, white, and blue, we might read it very differently; indeed, it might seem extremely odd to us.

Modality

Kress and Van Leeuwen ask us to consider the modality in which an image is composed. Very simply, this means, how “real” does the image look? And what does this “realness” contribute to its persuasiveness? They write, “visuals can represent people, places, and things as though they are real, as though they actually exist in this way . . . or as though they do not” (161). As noted above in the “Audience and Medium” section, photographs are thus considered a more naturalistic representation of the world than clip art, for instance. We expect photographs to give us a representation of reality. Thus, when a photograph is manipulated to signify something fantastic, like a unicorn or a dinosaur, we marvel at its ability to construct something that looks “real.” And when a visual shifts from one modality to another, it takes on additional meaning.
For instance, how might we read a cartoon version of JFK compared to the photograph that we see on our bumper sticker? Would the cartoon render the bumper sticker less formal? Less significant perhaps? Would a cartoon, given its associative meanings, somehow lessen the authenticity of the sticker’s purpose? Or the authority of its subject?

**Perspective/Point of View**

Imagine standing beneath a wind turbine. Intimidating? Impressive Overwhelming? Now envision that you are flying over it in airplane. That very enormous thing seems rather insignificant now—a wind turbine in Toyland.

Now imagine the same proportions depicted in a photograph. One might get the same sense of power if the photo was taken from the bottom of the turbine, the lens pointed heavenward. Then again, an aerial photograph might offer us a different perspective. If the landscape presents us with an endless array of turbines stretching into the distance, we might get a sense that they are infinite—as infinite as wind energy.

Our Kennedy sticker offers neither of the above-described senses of perspective. Coming face to face with Kennedy, we neither feel overwhelmed nor superior. In fact, it’s as if Kennedy’s gaze is meeting ours at our own level. The artist is still using his powers of perspective; it’s just that our gaze meets Kennedy’s face to face. Consequently, Kennedy is portrayed as friendly and approachable.

Differently, a photo that artist Shepherd Fairey manipulated into the now iconic “Hope” poster from a 2006 Associated Press photograph of our current president (and got into all sorts of copyright infringement trouble for), makes subtle use of perspective: the visual positions the viewer slightly beneath Obama’s gaze. As a result of Fairey’s use of perspective, and as Joshuah Bearman puts it, Obama is portrayed with “the distant, upward gaze of a visionary leader.”

**Social distance**

Kress and Van Leeuwen include social distance in the components of design. Social distance accounts for the “psychology of people’s use of space” (Van Leeuwen and Jewitt, 29). In short, a visual artist can exploit social distance to create a certain psychological effect between a person in an image and the image’s audience.

To illustrate, imagine a photograph of a handsome man, head and shoulders only, smiling straight at you with warm eyes. He advertises chocolate, cigars, expensive cologne. A beautiful woman tosses her hair, smiling seductively at the camera. She looks straight at you. “Look at me,” both seem to say, “buy this product; we invite you.” Likewise, Kennedy smiles into the camera. “Vote for me,” he encourages. “I’m a nice guy.” Depicting head and shoulders only, we are given a sense of what Van Leeuwen and Carey Jewitt call “Close Personal Distance.” The result is one of intimacy.

Alternately, a visual of several people, or a crowd, would suggest far less intimacy.

**Mood and Lighting**

Have you ever put a flashlight under your chin and lit your face from underneath? Maybe we aren’t all budding scary movie makers, but jump out of the closet on a dark night with all the lights turned off and the flashlight propped under your chin and you’re sure to give at least the cat a fright. What you have experimented with is mood and lighting. In short, the lighting as described eerily captures facial features that aren’t usually accentuated. It can be quite offputting. Thus the position of the light has created a creepy face; it’s created a visual mood. And, the mood combines with other elements of the visual to create an effect, which of course is rhetorical.

The next time you watch a movie, note how the filmmaker has played with lighting to create a mood. In the illustration below, we can see how Film Noir, for instance, capitalizes on techniques of mood and lighting to create an uncanny effect.
Finally

In this chapter, we have introduced the basics of rhetoric and visual analysis. During the course of your semester, and throughout your academic career, you might be asked to use visuals in support of your own writing. For instance, you may be asked to construct a web page, a poster, or a pamphlet.

You may also be asked to represent data with graphs and charts. Lisa Ede offers a selection of visuals (as well as a description of their purpose) that you might need to include in some of your academic compositions. These do not include pictures, but arrange text visually to convey information specifically:

1. A table arranges text visually, in columns for example, to compare information.
2. A pie chart arranges text within a circle to show relationships of quantity, for instance.
3. A bar graph is typically used to show changes in data over a period of time.
4. A map calls attention to “spatial relationships and locations.”

Whatever the type of visual you use, whether it is a pie chart or a photograph, it is vital that you interrogate the genre, purpose, audience and design conventions suitable to the context within which you are working. Understanding these components will help you select the appropriate visual that works rhetorically in this context. In other words, and as an illustration, if you are working in the sciences and compiling visual data in a line graph, you need to be aware of all of the above in order to meet the expectations of your professor and your academic community. In short, even the most seemingly innocuous choices are rhetorical given the expectations of your audience. The components of the analysis listed above, then, offer a set of guidelines to think about when we are composing with visuals.

To Do

1. Can you think of any bumper stickers you have seen lately that capitalize on your external knowledge of an issue? What do you have to know for instance to be able to read and understand a peace sign on a bumper sticker? Or a picture of a cell phone with the words “Hang Up and Drive” next to it? What cultural, unspoken or tacit knowledge do these symbols demand that you have?

2. Go to your favorite search engine and type in the words “political cartoons.” Choose a website and browse through the cartoons. You might notice that some of them you will laugh at, some of them you will grimace at, and for some of them, you may stop and think, “huh?” Pick a cartoon that makes you go “Huh?” In other words, pick a cartoon for which you don’t get the punch line. Research the political context to which the cartoon refers. After your research, think about the tacit knowledge the cartoon taps into. Now how do you react? Why?

3. Can you think of how audiences have changed with regards to a particular image—like the Apple image? A further illustration might help: my students and I looked at an ad for a particular brand of jeans recently, and they told me that “no one wore those jeans anymore” and that they “were for old people.” I was shocked and amazed (and emptied my closet of those jeans). Recently, the brand has been targeting a teen demographic, which leads me to marvel at the company’s rhetorical astuteness—as well as to wonder exactly what jeans one should be wearing nowadays.
4. Find an image using your favorite search engine. Analyze it in terms of the elements of design listed above. How does a corroboration of these elements work in favor of the image’s overall effect?


19 http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1960_Kennedy_for_President_Campaign_Bumper_Sticker.gif


22 In terms of Space travel, the Soviet Union beat the US to the space punch, by sending Sputnik into orbit in 1957. This caused the U.S government great embarrassment given the implications of the Cold War. Evidence of the Sputnik launch fueled reasons why the US should send an American into space.


34 http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:BigComboTrailer.jpg


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How to Write a Summary

Summarizing consists of two important skills:

1. identifying the important material in the text, and
2. restating the text in your own words.

Since writing a summary consists of omitting minor information, it will always be shorter than the original text.

How to Write a Summary

- A summary begins with an introductory sentence that states the text's title, author and main thesis or subject.
- A summary contains the main thesis (or main point of the text), restated in your own words.
- A summary is written in your own words. It contains few or no quotes.
- A summary is always shorter than the original text, often about 1/3 as long as the original. It is the ultimate “fat-free” writing. An article or paper may be summarized in a few sentences or a couple of paragraphs. A book may be summarized in an article or a short paper. A very large book may be summarized in a smaller book.
- A summary should contain all the major points of the original text, but should ignore most of the fine details, examples, illustrations or explanations.
- The backbone of any summary is formed by critical information (key names, dates, places, ideas, events, words and numbers). A summary must never rely on vague generalities.
- If you quote anything from the original text, even an unusual word or a catchy phrase, you need to put whatever you quote in quotation marks ("").
- A summary must contain only the ideas of the original text. Do not insert any of your own opinions, interpretations, deductions or comments into a summary.
- A summary, like any other writing, has to have a specific audience and purpose, and you must carefully write it to serve that audience and fulfill that specific purpose.
Research and Critical Reading

Introduction

Good researchers and writers examine their sources critically and actively. They do not just compile and summarize these research sources in their writing, but use them to create their own ideas, theories, and, ultimately, their own, new understanding of the topic they are researching. Such an approach means not taking the information and opinions that the sources contain at face value and for granted, but to investigate, test, and even doubt every claim, every example, every story, and every conclusion. It means not to sit back and let your sources control you, but to engage in active conversation with them and their authors. In order to be a good researcher and writer, one needs to be a critical and active reader.

This chapter is about the importance of critical and active reading. It is also about the connection between critical reading and active, strong writing. Much of the discussion you will find in this chapter in fundamental to research and writing, no matter what writing genre, medium, or academic discipline you read and write in. Every other approach to research writing, every other research method and assignment offered elsewhere in this book is, in some way, based upon the principles discussed in this chapter.

Reading is at the heart of the research process. No matter what kinds of research sources and, methods you use, you are always reading and interpreting text. Most of us are used to hearing the word “reading” in relation to secondary sources, such as books, journals, magazines, websites, and so on. But even if you are using other research methods and sources, such as interviewing someone or surveying a group of people, you are reading. You are reading their subjects” ideas and views on the topic you are investigating. Even if you are studying photographs, cultural artifacts, and other non-verbal research sources, you are reading them, too by trying to connect them to their cultural and social contexts and to understand their meaning. Principles of critical reading which we are about to discuss in this chapter apply to those research situations as well.

I like to think about reading and writing as not two separate activities but as two tightly connected parts of the same whole. That whole is the process of learning and making of new meaning. It may seem that reading and writing are complete opposite of one another. According to the popular view, when we read, we “consume” texts, and when we write, we “produce” texts. But this view of reading and writing is true only if you see reading as a passive process of taking in information from the text and not as an active and energetic process of making new meaning and new knowledge. Similarly, good writing does not come from nowhere but is usually based upon, or at least influenced by ideas, theories, and stories that come from reading. So, if, as a college student, you have ever wondered why your writing teachers have asked you to read books and articles and write responses to them, it is because writers who do not read and do not actively engage with their reading, have little to say to others.

We will begin this chapter with the definition of the term “critical reading.” We will consider its main characteristics and briefly touch upon ways to become an active and critical reader. Next, we will discuss the importance of critical reading for research and how reading critically can help you become a better researcher and make the research process more enjoyable. Also in this chapter, a student-writer offers us an insight into his critical reading and writing processes. This chapter also shows how critical reading can and should be used for critical and strong writing. And, as all other chapters, this one offers you activities and projects designed to help you implement the advice presented here into practice.
What Kind of Reader Are You?

You read a lot, probably more than you think. You read textbooks, lecture notes, your classmates’ papers, and class websites. When school ends, you probably read some fiction, magazines. But you also read other texts. These may include CD liner notes, product reviews, grocery lists, maps, driving directions, road signs, and the list can go on and on. And you don’t read all these texts in the same way. You read them with different purposes and using different reading strategies and techniques. The first step towards becoming a critical and active reader is examining your reading process and your reading preferences. Therefore, you are invited to complete the following exploration activity.

**WRITING ACTIVITY: ANALYZING YOUR READING HABITS**

List all the readings you have done in the last week. Include both “school” and “out of school” reading. Try to list as many texts as you can think of, no matter how short and unimportant they might seem. Now, answer the following questions.

- What was your purpose in reading each of those texts? Did you read for information, to pass a test, for enjoyment, to decide on a product you wanted to buy, and so on? Or, did you read to figure out some complex problem that keeps you awake at night?
- You have probably come up with a list of different purposes. How did each of those purposes influence your reading strategies? Did you take notes or try to memorize what you read? How long did it take you to read different texts? Did you begin at the beginning and read till you reached the end, or did you browse some texts? Consider the time of day you were reading. Consider even whether some texts tired you out or whether you thought they were “boring.” Why?
- What did you do with the results of your reading? Did you use them for some practical purpose, such as buying a new product or finding directions, or did you use them for a less practical purpose, such as understanding some topic better or learning something about yourself and others?

When you finish, share your results with the rest of the class and with your instructor.

Having answered the questions above, you have probably noticed that your reading strategies differed depending on the reading task you were facing and on what you planned to do with the results of the reading. If, for example, you read lecture notes in order to pass a test, chances are you “read for information,” or “for the main” point, trying to remember as much material as possible and anticipating possible test questions. If, on the other hand, you read a good novel, you probably just focused on following the story. Finally, if you were reading something that you hoped would help you answer some personal question or solve some personal problem, it is likely that you kept comparing and contrasting the information that you read with your own life and your own experiences.

You may have spent more time on some reading tasks than others. For example, when we are interested in one particular piece of information or fact from a text, we usually put that text aside once we have located the information we were looking for. In other cases, you may have been reading for hours on end taking careful notes and asking questions.

If you share the results of your investigation into your reading habits with your classmates, you may also notice that some of their reading habits and strategies were different from yours. Like writing strategies, approaches to reading may vary from person to person depending on our previous experiences with different topics and types of reading materials, expectations we have of different texts, and, of course, the purpose with which we are reading.
Life presents us with a variety of reading situations which demand different reading strategies and techniques. Sometimes, it is important to be as efficient as possible and read purely for information or “the main point.” At other times, it is important to just “let go” and turn the pages following a good story, although this means not thinking about the story you are reading. At the heart of writing and research, however, lies the kind of reading known as critical reading. Critical examination of sources is what makes their use in research possible and what allows writers to create rhetorically effective and engaging texts.

**Key Features of Critical Reading**

Critical readers are able to interact with the texts they read through carefully listening, writing, conversation, and questioning. They do not sit back and wait for the meaning of a text to come to them, but work hard in order to create such meaning. Critical readers are not made overnight. Becoming a critical reader will take a lot of practice and patience. Depending on your current reading philosophy and experiences with reading, becoming a critical reader may require a significant change in your whole understanding of the reading process. The trade-off is worth it, however. By becoming a more critical and active reader, you will also become a better researcher and a better writer. Last but not least, you will enjoy reading and writing a whole lot more because you will become actively engaged in both.

One of my favorite passages describing the substance of critical and active reading comes from the introduction to their book *Ways of Reading* whose authors David Bartholomae and Anthony Petrosky write:

> Reading involves a fair measure of push and shove. You make your mark on the book and it makes its mark on you. Reading is not simply a matter of hanging back and waiting for a piece, or its author, to tell you what the writing has to say. In fact, one of the difficult things about reading is that the pages before you will begin to speak only when the authors are silent and you begin to speak in their place, sometimes for them—doing their work, continuing their projects—and sometimes for yourself, following your own agenda (1).

Notice that Bartholomae and Petrosky describe reading process in pro-active terms. Meaning of every text is “made,” not received. Readers need to “push and shove” in order to create their own, unique content of every text they read. It is up the you as a reader to make the pages in front of you “speak” by talking with and against the text, by questioning and expanding it.

Critical reading, then, is a two-way process. As reader, you are not a consumer of words, waiting patiently for ideas from the printed page or a web-site to fill your head and make you smarter. Instead, as a critical reader, you need to interact with what you read, asking questions of the author, testing every assertion, fact, or idea, and extending the text by adding your own understanding of the subject and your own personal experiences to your reading.

The following are key features of the critical approach to reading:

- No text, however well written and authoritative, contains its own, pre-determined meaning.
- Readers must work hard to create meaning from every text.
- Critical readers interact with the texts they read by questioning them, responding to them, and expanding them, usually in writing.
• To create meaning, critical readers use a variety of approaches, strategies, and techniques which include applying their personal experiences and existing knowledge to the reading process.
• Critical readers seek actively out other texts, related to the topic of their investigation.

The following section is an examination of these claims about critical reading in more detail.

**Texts Present Ideas, Not Absolute Truths**

In order to understand the mechanisms and intellectual challenges of critical reading, we need to examine some of our deepest and long-lasting assumptions about reading. Perhaps the two most significant challenges facing anyone who wants to become a more active and analytical reader is understanding that printed texts do not contain inarguable truths and learning to questions and talk back to those texts. Students in my writing classes often tell me that the biggest challenge they face in trying to become critical readers is getting away from the idea that they have to believe everything they read on a printed page. Years of schooling have taught many of us to believe that published texts present inarguable, almost absolute truths. The printed page has authority because, before publishing his or her work, every writer goes through a lengthy process of approval, review, revision, fact-checking, and so on. Consequently, this theory goes, what gets published must be true. And if it is true, it must be taken at face value, not questioned, challenged, or extended in any way.

Perhaps, the ultimate authority among the readings materials encountered by college belongs to the textbook. As students, we all have had to read and almost memorize textbook chapters in order to pass an exam. We read textbooks “for information,” summarizing their chapters, trying to find “the main points” and then reproducing these main points during exams. I have nothing against textbook as such, in fact, I am writing one right now. And it is certainly possible to read textbooks critically and actively. But, as I think about the challenges which many college students face trying to become active and critical readers, I come to the conclusion that the habit to read every text as if they were preparing for an exam on it, as if it was a source of unquestionable truth and knowledge prevents many from becoming active readers.

Treating texts as if they were sources of ultimate and unquestionable knowledge and truth represents the view of reading as consumption. According to this view, writers produce ideas and knowledge, and we, readers, consume them. Of course, sometimes we have to assume this stance and read for information or the “main point” of a text. But it is critical reading that allows us to create new ideas from what we read and to become independent and creative learners.

Critical reading is a collaboration between the reader and the writer. It offers readers the ability to be active participants in the construction of meaning of every text they read and to use that meaning for their own learning and self-fulfillment. Not even the best researched and written text is absolutely complete and finished. Granted, most fields of knowledge have texts which are called “definitive.” Such texts usually represent our best current knowledge on their subjects. However, even the definitive works get revised over time and they are always open to questioning and different interpretations.

**Reading is a Rhetorical Tool**

To understand how the claim that every reader makes his or her meaning from texts works, it is necessary to examine what is know as the rhetorical theory of reading. The work that best describes and justifies the rhetorical reading theory is Douglas Brent’s 1992 book Reading as Rhetorical Invention: Knowledge, Persuasion, and the Teaching of Research-Based Writing. I like to apply Brent’s ideas to my discussions of critical reading because I think that they do a good job demystifying critical reading’s main claims. Brent’s theory of reading is a rhetorical device puts significant substance behind the somewhat abstract ideas of active and critical reading, explaining how the mechanisms of active interaction between readers and texts actually work.
Briefly explained, Brent treats reading not only as a vehicle for transmitting information and knowledge, but also as a means of persuasion. In fact, according to Brent, knowledge equals persuasion because, in his words, “Knowledge is not simply what one has been told. Knowledge is what one believes, what one accepts as being at least provisionally true.” (xi). This short passage contains two assertions which are key to the understanding of mechanisms of critical reading. Firstly, notice that simply reading “for the main point” will not necessarily make you “believe” what you read. Surely, such reading can fill our heads with information, but will that information become our knowledge in a true sense, will we be persuaded by it, or will we simply memorize it to pass the test and forget it as soon as we pass it? Of course not! All of us can probably recall many instances in which we read a lot to pass a test only to forget, with relief, what we read as soon as we left the classroom where that test was held. The purpose of reading and research, then, is not to get as much as information out of a text as possible but to change and update one’s system of beliefs on a given subject (Brent 55-57).

Brent further states: “The way we believe or disbelieve certain texts clearly varies from one individual to the next. If you present a text that is remotely controversial to a group of people, some will be convinced by it and some not, and those who are convinced will be convinced in different degrees. The task of a rhetoric of reading is to explain systematically how these differences arise—how people are persuaded differently by texts” (18).

Critical and active readers not only accept the possibility that the same texts will have different meanings for different people, but welcome this possibility as an inherent and indispensable feature of strong, engaged, and enjoyable reading process. To answer his own questions about what factors contribute to different readers’ different interpretations of the same texts, Brent offers us the following principles that I have summarized from his book:

- Readers are guided by personal beliefs, assumptions, and pre-existing knowledge when interpreting texts. You can read more on the role of the reader’s pre-existing knowledge in the construction of meaning later on in this chapter.
- Readers react differently to the logical proofs presented by the writers of texts.
- Readers react differently to emotional and ethical proofs presented by writers. For example, an emotional story told by a writer may resonate with one person more than with another because the first person lived through a similar experience and the second one did not, and so on.

The idea behind the rhetorical theory of reading is that when we read, we not only take in ideas, information, and facts, but instead we “update our view of the world.” You cannot force someone to update their worldview, and therefore, the purpose of writing is persuasion and the purpose of reading is being persuaded. Persuasion is possible only when the reader is actively engaged with the text and understands that much more than simple retrieval of information is at stake when reading.

One of the primary factors that influence our decision to accept or not to accept an argument is what Douglas Brent calls our “repertoire of experience, much of [which] is gained through prior interaction with texts” (56). What this means is that when we read a new text, we do not begin with a clean slate, an empty mind. However unfamiliar the topic of this new reading may seem to us, we approach it with a large baggage of previous knowledge, experiences, points of view, and so on. When an argument “comes in” into our minds from a text, this text, by itself, cannot change our view on the subject. Our prior opinions and knowledge about the topic of the text we are reading will necessarily “filter out” what is incompatible with those views (Brent 56-57). This, of course, does not mean that, as readers, we should persist in keeping our old ideas about everything and actively resist learning new things. Rather, it suggests that the reading process is an interaction between the ideas in the text and our own ideas and pre-conceptions about the subject of our reading. We do not always consciously measure what we read according to our existing systems of knowledge and beliefs, but we measure it nevertheless. Reading, according to Brent, is judgment, and, like in life where we do not always consciously examine and analyze the reasons for which we make various decisions, evaluating a text often happens automatically or subconsciously (59).

Applied to research writing, Brent’s theory of reading means the following:
• The purpose of research is not simply to retrieve data, but to participate in a conversation about it. Simple summaries of sources is not research, and writers should be aiming for active interpretation of sources instead.
• There is no such thing as an unbiased source. Writers make claims for personal reasons that critical readers need to learn to understand and evaluate.
• Feelings can be a source of shareable good reason for belief. Readers and writers need to use, judiciously, ethical and pathetic proofs in interpreting texts and in creating their own.
• Research is recursive. Critical readers and researchers never stop asking questions about their topic and never consider their research finished.

Active Readers Look for Connections Between Texts

Earlier on, I mentioned that one of the traits of active readers is their willingness to seek out other texts and people who may be able to help them in their research and learning. I find that for many beginning researchers and writers, the inability to seek out such connections often turns into a roadblock on their research route. Here is what I am talking about.

Recently, I asked my writing students to investigate some problem on campus and to propose a solution to it. I asked them to use both primary (interviews, surveys, etc.) and secondary (library, Internet, etc.) research. Conducting secondary research allows a writer to connect a local problem he or she is investigating and a local solution he or she is proposing with a national and even global context, and to see whether the local situation is typical or a-typical.

One group of students decided to investigate the issue of racial and ethnic diversity on our campus. The lack of diversity is a “hot” issue on our campus, and recently an institutional task force was created to investigate possible ways of making our university more diverse.

The students had no trouble designing research questions and finding people to interview and survey. Their subjects included students and faculty as well as the university vice-president who was charged with overseeing the work of the diversity task force. Overall, these authors have little trouble conducting and interpreting primary research that led them to conclude that, indeed, our campus is not diverse enough and that most students would like to see the situation change.

The next step these writers took was to look at the websites of some other schools similar in size and nature to ours, to see how our university compared on the issue of campus diversity with others. They were able to find some statistics on the numbers of minorities at other colleges and universities that allowed them to create a certain backdrop for their primary research that they had conducted earlier.

But good writing goes beyond the local situation. Good writing tries to connect the local and the national and the global. It tries to look beyond the surface of the problem, beyond simply comparing numbers and other statistics. It seeks to understand the roots of a problem and propose a solution based on a local and well as a global situation and research. The primary and secondary research conducted by these students was not allowing them to make that step from analyzing local data to understanding their problem in context. They needed some other type of research sources.

At that point, however, those writers hit an obstacle. How and where, they reasoned, would we find other secondary sources, such as books, journals, and websites, about the lack of diversity on our campus? The answer to that question was that, at this stage in their research and writing, they did not need to look for more sources about our local problem with the lack of diversity. They needed to look at diversity and ways to increase it as a national and global issue. They needed to generalize the problem and, instead of looking at a local example, to consider its implications for the issue they were studying overall. Such research would not only have allowed these writers to examine the problem as a whole but also to see how it was being solved in other places. This, in turn, might have helped them to propose a local solution.
Critical readers and researchers understand that it is not enough to look at the research question locally or narrowly. After conducting research and understanding their problem locally, or as it applies specifically to them, active researchers contextualize their investigation by seeking out texts and other sources which would allow them to see the big picture.

Sometimes, it is hard to understand how external texts which do not seem to talk directly about you can help you research and write about questions, problems, and issues in your own life. In her 2004 essay, “Developing ‘Interesting Thoughts’: Reading for Research,” writing teacher my former colleague Janette Martin tells a story of a student who was writing a paper about what it is like to be a collegiate athlete. The emerging theme in that paper was that of discipline and sacrifice required of student athletes. Simultaneously, that student was reading a chapter from the book by the French philosopher Michel Foucault called Discipline and Punish. Foucault’s work is a study of the western penitentiary system, which, of course cannot be directly compared to experiences of a student athlete. At the same time, one of the leading themes in Foucault’s work is discipline. Martin states that the student was able to see some connection between Foucault and her own life and use the reading for her research and writing (6). In addition to showing how related texts can be used to explore various aspects of the writer’s own life, this example highlights the need to read texts critically and interpret them creatively. Such reading and research goes beyond simply comparing of facts and numbers and towards relating ideas and concepts with one another.

From Reading to Writing

Reading and writing are the two essential tools of learning. Critical reading is not a process of passive consumption, but one of interaction and engagement between the reader and the text. Therefore, when reading critically and actively, it is important not only to take in the words on the page, but also to interpret and to reflect upon what you read through writing and discussing it with others.

Critical Readers Understand the Difference Between Reacting and Responding to A Text

As stated earlier in this chapter, actively responding to difficult texts, posing questions, and analyzing ideas presented in them is the key to successful reading. The goal of an active reader is to engage in a conversation with the text he or she is reading. In order to fulfill this goal, it is important to understand the difference between reacting to the text and responding to it.

Reacting to a text is often done on an emotional, rather than on an intellectual level. It is quick and shallow. For example, if we encounter a text that advances arguments with which we strongly disagree, it is natural to dismiss those ideas out of hand as not wrong and not worthy of our attention. Doing so would be reacting to the text based only on emotions and on our pre-set opinions about its arguments. It is easy to see that reacting in this way does not take the reader any closer to understanding the text. A wall of disagreement that existed between the reader and the text before the reading continues to exist after the reading.

Responding to a text, on the other hand, requires a careful study of the ideas presented and arguments advanced in it. Critical readers who possess this skill are not willing to simply reject or accept the arguments presented in the text after the first reading right away. To continue with our example from the preceding paragraph, a reader who responds to a controversial text rather than reacting to it might apply several of the following strategies before forming and expressing an opinion about that text.

- Read the text several times, taking notes, asking questions, and underlining key places.
- Study why the author of the text advances ideas, arguments, and convictions, so different from the reader’s own. For example, is the text’s author advancing an agenda of some social, political, religious, or economic group of which he or she is a member?
- Study the purpose and the intended audience of the text.
• Study the history of the argument presented in the text as much as possible. For example, modern texts on highly controversial issues such as the death penalty, abortion, or euthanasia often use past events, court cases, and other evidence to advance their claims. Knowing the history of the problem will help you to construct meaning of a difficult text.

• Study the social, political, and intellectual context in which the text was written. Good writers use social conditions to advance controversial ideas. Compare the context in which the text was written to the one in which it is read. For example, have social conditions changed, thus invalidating the argument or making it stronger?

• Consider the author’s (and your own) previous knowledge of the issue at the center of the text and your experiences with it. How might such knowledge or experience have influenced your reception of the argument?

Taking all these steps will help you to move away from simply reacting to a text and towards constructing informed and critical response to it.

To better understand the key differences between reacting and responding and between binary and nuanced reading, consider the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reacting to Texts</th>
<th>Responding to Texts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Works on an emotional level rather than an intellectual level</td>
<td>• Works on an intellectual and emotional level by asking the readers to use all three rhetorical appeals in reading and writing about the text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Prevents readers from studying purposes, intended audiences, and contexts of texts they are working with</td>
<td>• Allows for careful study of the text’s rhetorical aspects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fails to establish dialog between the reader and the text by locking the reader in his or her pre-existing opinion about the argument</td>
<td>• Establishes dialog among the reader, text, and other readers by allowing all sides to reconsider existing positions and opinions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Binary Reading</th>
<th>Nuanced Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Provides only “agree or disagree” answers</td>
<td>• Allows for a deep and detailed understanding of complex texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Does not allow for an understanding of complex arguments</td>
<td>• Takes into account “gray areas” of complex arguments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Prevents the reader from a true rhetorical engagement with the text</td>
<td>• Establishes rhetorical engagement between the reader and the text</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Critical Readers Resist Oversimplified Binary Responses**

Critical readers learn to avoid simple “agree-disagree” responses to complex texts. Such way of thinking and arguing is often called “binary” because is allows only two answers to every statement and every questions. But the world of ideas is complex and, a much more nuanced approach is needed when dealing with complex arguments.

When you are asked to “critique” a text, which readers are often asked to do, it does not mean that you have to “criticize” it and reject its argument out of hand. What you are being asked to do instead is to carefully evaluate and analyze the text’s ideas, to understand how and why they are constructed and presented, and only then develop a response to that text. Not every text asks for an outright agreement or disagreement. Sometimes, we as readers are not in a position to either simply support an argument or reject it. What we can do in such cases, though, is to learn more about the text’s arguments by carefully considering all of their aspects and to construct a nuanced, sophisticated response to them. After you have done all that, it will still be possible to disagree with the arguments presented in the reading, but your opinion about the text will be much more informed and nuanced than if you have taken the binary approach from the start.

**Two Sample Student Responses**

To illustrate the principles laid out in this section, consider the following two reading responses. Both texts respond to a very well known piece, “A Letter from Birmingham Jail,” by Martin Luther King, Jr. In the letter, King responds to criticism from other clergymen who had called his methods of civil rights struggle “unwise and untimely.” Both student writers were given the same response prompt:
“After reading King’s piece several times and with a pen or pencil in hand, consider what shapes King’s letter. Specifically, what rhetorical strategies is he using to achieve a persuasive effect on his readers? In making your decisions, consider such factors as background information that he gives, ways in which he addresses his immediate audience, and others. Remember that your goal is to explore King’s text, thus enabling you to understand his rhetorical strategies better.”

Student “A”

Martin Luther King Jr’s “Letter from Birmingham Jail” is a very powerful text. At the time when minorities in America were silenced and persecuted, King had the courage to lead his people in the struggle for equality. After being jailed in Birmingham, Alabama, King wrote a letter to his “fellow clergymen” describing his struggle for civil rights. In the letter, King recounts a brief history of that struggle and rejects the accusation that it is “unwise and untimely.” Overall, I think that King’s letter is a very rhetorically effective text, one that greatly helped Americans to understand the civil rights movement.

Student “B”

King begins his “Letter from Birmingham Jail” by addressing it to his “fellow clergymen.” Thus, he immediately sets the tone of inclusion rather than exclusion. By using the word “fellow” in the address, I think he is trying to do two things. First of all, he presents himself as a colleague and a spiritual brother of his audience. That, in effect, says “you can trust me,” “I am one of your kind.” Secondly, by addressing his readers in that way, King suggests that everyone, even those Americans who are not directly involved in the struggle for civil rights, should be concerned with it. Hence the word “fellow.” King’s opening almost invokes the phrase “My fellow Americans” or “My fellow citizens” used so often by American Presidents when they address the nation.

King then proceeds to give a brief background of his actions as a civil rights leader. As I read this part of the letter, I was wondering whether his readers would really have not known what he had accomplished as a civil rights leader. Then I realized that perhaps he gives all that background information as a rhetorical move. His immediate goal is to keep reminding his readers about his activities. His ultimate goal is to show to his audience that his actions were non-violent but peaceful. In reading this passage by King, I remembered once again that it is important not to assume that your audience knows anything about the subject of the writing. I will try to use this strategy more in my own papers.

In the middle of the letter, King states: “The purpose of our direct-action program is to create a situation so crisis-packed that it will inevitably open the door to negotiation.” This sentence looks like a thesis statement and I wonder why he did not place it towards the beginning of the text, to get his point across right away. After thinking about this for a few minutes and rereading several pages from our class textbook, I think he leaves his “thesis” till later in his piece because he is facing a not-so-friendly (if not hostile) audience. Delaying the thesis and laying out some background information and evidence first helps a writer to prepare his or her audience for the coming argument. That is another strategy I should probably use more often in my own writing, depending on the audience I am facing.

Reflecting on the Responses

To be sure, much more can be said about King’s letter than either of these writers have said. However, these two responses allow us to see two dramatically different approaches to reading. After studying both responses, consider the questions below.

• Which response fulfills the goals set in the prompt better and why?
Critical Readers Do not Read Alone and in Silence

One of the key principles of critical reading is that active readers do not read silently and by themselves. By this I mean that they take notes and write about what they read. They also discuss the texts they are working with, with others and compare their own interpretations of those texts with the interpretations constructed by their colleagues.

As a college student, you are probably used to taking notes of what you read. When I was in college, my favorite way of preparing for a test was reading a chapter or two from my textbook, then closing the book, then trying to summarize what I have read on a piece of paper. I tried to get the main points of the chapters down and the explanations and proofs that the textbooks” authors used. Sometimes, I wrote a summary of every chapter in the textbook and then studied for the test from those summaries rather than from the textbook itself. I am sure you have favorite methods of note taking and studying from your notes, too.

But now it strikes me that what I did with those notes was not critical reading. I simply summarized my textbooks in a more concise, manageable form and then tried to memorize those summaries before the test. I did not take my reading of the textbooks any further than what was already on their pages. Reading for information and trying to extract the main points, I did not talk back to the texts, did not question them, and did not try to extend the knowledge which they offered in any way. I also did not try to connect my reading with my personal experiences or pre-existing knowledge in any way. I also read in silence, without exchanging ideas with other readers of the same texts. Of course, my reading strategies and techniques were dictated by my goal, which was to pass the test.

Critical reading has other goals, one of which is entering an on-going intellectual exchange. Therefore it demands different reading strategies, approaches, and techniques. One of these new approaches is not reading in silence and alone. Instead, critical readers read with a pen or pencil in hand. They also discuss what they read with others.

Strategies for Connecting Reading and Writing

If you want to become a critical reader, you need to get into a habit of writing as you read. You also need to understand that complex texts cannot be read just once. Instead, they require multiple readings, the first of which may be a more general one during which you get acquainted with the ideas presented in the text, its structure and style. During the second and any subsequent readings, however, you will need to write, and write a lot. The following are some critical reading and writing techniques which active readers employ as they work to create meanings from texts they read.

Underline Interesting and Important Places in the Text

Underline words, sentences, and passages that stand out, for whatever reason. Underline the key arguments that you believe the author of the text is making as well as any evidence, examples, and stories that seem interesting or important. Don’t be afraid to “get it wrong.” There is no right or wrong here. The places in the text that you underline may be the same or different from those noticed by your classmates, and this difference of interpretation is the essence of critical reading.
Take Notes

Take notes on the margins. If you do not want to write on your book or journal, attach post-it notes with your comments to the text. Do not be afraid to write too much. This is the stage of the reading process during which you are actively making meaning. Writing about what you read is the best way to make sense of it, especially, if the text is difficult.

Do not be afraid to write too much. This is the stage of the reading process during which you are actively making meaning. Writing about what you read will help you not only to remember the argument which the author of the text is trying to advance (less important for critical reading), but to create your own interpretations of the text you are reading (more important).

Here are some things you can do in your comments

- Ask questions.
- Agree or disagree with the author.
- Question the evidence presented in the text
- Offer counter-evidence
- Offer additional evidence, examples, stories, and so on that support the author’s argument
- Mention other texts which advance the same or similar arguments
- Mention personal experiences that enhance your reading of the text

Write Exploratory Responses

Write extended responses to readings. Writing students are often asked to write one or two page exploratory responses to readings, but they are not always clear on the purpose of these responses and on how to approach writing them. By writing reading responses, you are continuing the important work of critical reading which you began when you underlined interesting passages and took notes on the margins. You are extending the meaning of the text by creating your own commentary to it and perhaps even branching off into creating your own argument inspired by your reading. Your teacher may give you a writing prompt, or ask you to come up with your own topic for a response. In either case, realize that reading responses are supposed to be exploratory, designed to help you delve deeper into the text you are reading than note-taking or underlining will allow.

When writing extended responses to the readings, it is important to keep one thing in mind, and that is their purpose. The purpose of these exploratory responses, which are often rather informal, is not to produce a complete argument, with an introduction, thesis, body, and conclusion. It is not to impress your classmates and your teacher with “big” words and complex sentences. On the contrary, it is to help you understand the text you are working with at a deeper level. The verb “explore” means to investigate something by looking at it more closely. Investigators get leads, some of which are fruitful and useful and some of which are dead-ends. As you investigate and create the meaning of the text you are working with, do not be afraid to take different directions with your reading response. In fact, it is important resist the urge to make conclusions or think that you have found out everything about your reading. When it comes to exploratory reading responses, lack of closure and presence of more leads at the end of the piece is usually a good thing. Of course, you should always check with your teacher for standards and format of reading responses.

Try the following guidelines to write a successful response to a reading:

Remember your goal—exploration. The purpose of writing a response is to construct the meaning of a difficult text. It is not to get the job done as quickly as possible and in as few words as possible.

As you write, “talk back to the text.” Make comments, ask questions, and elaborate on complex thoughts. This part of the writing becomes much easier if, prior to writing your response, you had read the assignment with a pen in hand and marked important places in the reading.
If your teacher provides a response prompt, make sure you understand it. Then try to answer the questions in the prompt to the best of your ability. While you are doing that, do not be afraid of bringing in related texts, examples, or experiences. Active reading is about making connections, and your readers will appreciate your work because it will help them understand the text better.

While your primary goal is exploration and questioning, make sure that others can understand your response. While it is OK to be informal in your response, make every effort to write in a clear, error-free language.

Involve your audience in the discussion of the reading by asking questions, expressing opinions, and connecting to responses made by others.

**Use Reading for Invention**

Use reading and your responses to start your own formal writing projects. Reading is a powerful invention tool. While preparing to start a new writing project, go back to the readings you have completed and your responses to those readings in search for possible topics and ideas. Also look through responses your classmates gave to your ideas about the text. Another excellent way to start your own writing projects and to begin research for them is to look through the list of references and sources at the end of the reading that you are working with. They can provide excellent topic-generating and research leads.

**Keep a Double-Entry Journal**

Many writers like double-entry journals because they allow us to make that leap from summary of a source to interpretation and persuasion. To start a double-entry journal, divide a page into two columns. As you read, in the left column write down interesting and important words, sentences, quotations, and passages from the text. In the right column, right your reaction and responses to them. Be as formal or informal as you want. Record words, passages, and ideas from the text that you find useful for your paper, interesting, or, in any, way striking or unusual. Quote or summarize in full, accurately, and fairly. In the right-hand side column, ask the kinds of questions and provide the kinds of responses that will later enable you to create an original reading of the text you are working with and use that reading to create your own paper.

**Don’t Give Up**

If the text you are reading seems too complicated or “boring,” that might mean that you have not attacked it aggressively and critically enough. Complex texts are the ones worth pursuing and investigating because they present the most interesting ideas. Critical reading is a liberating practice because you do not have to worry about “getting it right.” As long as you make an effort to engage with the text and as long as you are willing to work hard on creating a meaning out of what you read, the interpretation of the text you are working with will be valid.

IMPORTANT: So far, we have established that no pre-existing meaning is possible in written texts and that critical and active readers work hard to create such meaning. We have also established that interpretations differ from reader to reader and that there is no “right” or “wrong” during the critical reading process. So, you may ask, does this mean that any reading of a text that I create will be a valid and persuasive one? With the exception of the most outlandish and purposely-irrelevant readings that have nothing to do with the sources text, the answer is “yes.” However, remember that reading and interpreting texts, as well as sharing your interpretations with others are rhetorical acts. First of all, in order to learn something from your critical reading experience, you, the reader, need to be persuaded by your own reading of the text. Secondly, for your reading to be accepted by others, they need to be persuaded by it, too. It does not mean, however, that in order to make your reading of a text persuasive, you simply have to find “proof” in the text for your point of view. Doing that would mean reverting to reading “for the main point,” reading as consumption. Critical
reading, on the other hand, requires a different approach. One of the components of this approach is the use of personal experiences, examples, stories, and knowledge for interpretive and persuasive purposes. This is the subject of the next section of this chapter.

**One Critical Reader’s Path to Creating a Meaning: A Case Study**

Earlier on in this chapter, we discussed the importance of using your existing knowledge and prior experience to create new meaning out of unfamiliar and difficult texts. In this section, I’d like to offer you one student writer’s account of his meaningmaking process. Before I do that, however, it is important for me to tell you a little about the class and the kinds of reading and writing assignments that its members worked on.

All the writing projects offered to the members of the class were promoted by readings, and students were expected to actively develop their own ideas and provide their own readings of assigned texts in their essays. The main text for the class was the anthology *Ways of Reading* edited by David Bartholomae and Anthony Petrosky that contains challenging and complex texts. Like for most of his classmates, this approach to reading and writing was new to Alex who had told me earlier that he was used to reading “for information” or “for the main point.”

In preparation for the first writing project, the class read Adrienne Rich’s essay “When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Revision.” In her essay, Rich offers a moving account of her journey to becoming a writer. She makes the case for constantly “revising” one’s life in the light of all new events and experiences. Rich blends voices and genres throughout the essay, using personal narrative, academic argument, and even poetry. As a result, Rich creates the kind of personal-public argument which, on the one hand, highlights her own life, and on the other, illustrates that her Rich’s life is typical for her time and her environment and that her readers can also learn from her experiences.

To many beginning readers and writers, who are used to a neat separation of “personal” and “academic” argument, such a blend of genres and styles may seem odd. In fact, on of the challenges that many of the students in the class faced was understanding why Rich chooses to blend personal writing with academic and what rhetorical effects she achieves by doing so. To After writing informal responses to the essay and discussing it in class, the students were offered the following writing assignment:

> Although Rich tells a story of her own, she does so to provide an illustration of an even larger story—one about what it means to be a woman and a writer. Tell a story of your own about the ways you might be said to have been named or shaped or positioned by an established or powerful culture. Like Rich (and perhaps with similar hesitation), use your own experience as an illustration of both your own situation and the situation of people like you. You should imagine that the assignment is a way for you to use (and put to the test) some of Rich’s terms, words like “re-vision,” “renaming,” and “structure.” (Bartholomae and Petrosky 648).

Notice that this assignment does not ask students to simply analyze Rich’s essay, to dissect its argument or “main points.” Instead, writers are asked to work with their own experiences and events of their own lives in order to provide a reading of Rich which is affected and informed by the writers’ own lives and own knowledge of life. This is critical reading in action when a reader creates his or her one’s own meaning of a complex text by reflecting on the relationship between the content of that text and one’s own life.

In response to the assignment, one of the class members, Alex Cimino-Hurt, wrote a paper that re-examined and reevaluated his upbringing and how those factors have influenced his political and social views. In particular, Alex was trying to reconcile his own and his parents’ anti-war views with the fact than a close relative of his was fighting in the war in Iraq as he worked on the paper. Alex used such terms as “revision” and “hesitation” to develop his piece.

Like most other writers in the class, initially Alex seemed a little puzzled, even confused by the requirement to read someone else’s text through the prism of his own life and his own experiences. However, as he drafted, revised, and discussed his writing with his classmates and his instructor, the new approach to reading and writing became clearer to him. After finishing the paper, Alex commented on his reading strategies and techniques and on what he learned about critical reading during the project:
On Previous Reading Habits and Techniques

Previously when working on any project whether it be for a History, English, or any other class that involved reading and research, there was a certain amount of minimalism. As a student I tried to balance the least amount of effort with the best grade. I distinctly remember that before, being taught to skim over writing and reading so that I found “main” points and highlighted them. The value of thoroughly reading a piece was not taught because all that was needed was a shallow interpretation of whatever information that was provided followed by a regurgitation. [Critical reading] provided a dramatic difference in perspective and helped me learn to not only dissect the meaning of a piece, but also to see why the writer is using certain techniques or how the reading applies to my life.

On Developing Critical Reading Strategies

When reading critically I found that the most important thing for me was to set aside a block of time in which I wouldn't have to hurry my reading or skip parts to “Get the gist of it”. Developing an eye for…detail came in two ways. The first method is to read the text several times, and the second is to discuss it with my classmates and my teacher. It quickly became clear to me that the more I read a certain piece, the more I got from it as I became more comfortable with the prose and writing style. With respect to the second way, there is always something that you can miss and there is always a different perspective that can be brought to the table by either the teacher or a classmate.

On Reading Rich’s Essay

In reading Adrienne Rich’s essay, the problem for me wasn’t necessarily relating to her work but instead just finding the right perspective from which to read it. I was raised in a very open family so being able to relate to others was learned early in my life. Once I was able to parallel my perspective to hers, it was just a matter of composing my own story. Mine was my liberalism in conservative environments—the fact that frustrates me sometimes. I felt that her struggle frustrated her, too. By using quotations from her work, I was able to show my own situation to my readers.

On Writing the Paper

The process that I went through to write an essay consisted of three stages. During the first stage, I wrote down every coherent idea I had for the essay as well as a few incoherent ones. This helped me create a lot of material to work with. While this initial material doesn’t always have direction it provides a foundation for writing. The second stage involved rereading Rich’s essay and deciding which parts of it might be relevant to my own story. Looking at my own life and at Rich’s work together helped me consolidate my paper. The third and final stage involved taking what is left and refining the style of the paper and taking care of the mechanics.

Advice for Critical Readers

The first key to being a critical and active reader is to find something in the piece that interests, bothers, encourages, or just confuses you. Use this to drive your analysis. Remember there is no such thing as a boring essay, only a boring reader.

- Reading something once is never enough so reading it quickly before class just won’t cut it. Read it once to get your brain comfortable with the work, then read it again and actually try to understand what’s going on in it. You can’t read it too many times.
- Ask questions. It seems like a simple suggestion but if you never ask questions you’ll never get any answers. So, while you’re reading, think of questions and just write them down on a piece of paper lest you forget them after about a line and a half of reading.
Conclusion

Reading and writing are rhetorical processes, and one does not exist without the other. The goal of a good writer is to engage his or her readers into a dialog presented in the piece of writing. Similarly, the goal of a critical and active reader is to participate in that dialog and to have something to say back to the writer and to others. Writing leads to reading and reading leads to writing. We write because we have something to say and we read because we are interested in ideas of others.

Reading what others have to say and responding to them help us make that all-important transition from simply having opinions about something to having ideas. Opinions are often over-simplified and fixed. They are not very useful because, if different people have different opinions that they are not willing to change or adjust, such people cannot work or think together. Ideas, on the other hand, are ever evolving, fluid, and flexible. Our ideas are informed and shaped by our interactions with others, both in person and through written texts. In a world where thought and action count, it is not enough to simply “agree to disagree.” Reading and writing, used together, allow us to discuss complex and difficult issues with others, to persuade and be persuaded, and, most importantly, to act.

Reading and writing are inextricably connected, and I hope that this chapter has shown you ways to use reading to inform and enrich you writing and your learning in general. The key to becoming an active, critical, and interested reader is the development of varied and effective reading techniques and strategies. I’d like to close this chapter with the words from the writer Alex Cimino-Hurt: “Being able to read critically is important no matter what you plan on doing with your career or life because it allows you to understand the world around you.”

Sources


Avoid Relativism (Because I Think So)

So that we avoid the major problem of relativism, heed the following warnings:

- If you don’t happen to resemble an author’s audience, don’t attack the audience that writer appealed to.
- What I often see in essays based on model reading assignments is reactive rather than flexible reading. For instance, I often teach skeptic Michael Shermer’s book *The Science of Good and Evil*. In online discussion posts, I’ll see people react with “Well, he is sarcastic but people already agreeing with him would find that funny. I just find it offensive.” Then the student writer proceeds to do that Samuel L. Jackson “Allow me to retort” move from *Pulp Fiction* (Tarantino), trying to match snarkiness with Shermer or to refute him. When they get really desperate, they go to the web and find attack sites. “Allow me to retort!” is not our purpose in most academic writing. Later in the course, though, we will cover refutals, which are appropriately-handled counterarguments.
- “It’s true for me” doesn’t work here. I see this happen a lot in definition or rhetorical analysis essays that often start courses. If the writing is rhetorical analysis, cut out one’s views from this process . . . it is supposed to be about form, not content, so if you start getting too much into content, you’re not doing a formal analysis. In fact, to the extent that you go off (or gush in support) at the writer, you’re not doing your job of analyzing. And definitions—while they may not seem arguable—actually contain areas of genuine, ongoing disagreement that we would do well to recognize.
- Academic writing is public, not private. Don’t overuse *I* or *you*. Filtering this through the self is a bad idea. As Charlton Heston says of the mystery food in the movie *Soylent Green* “It’s people!” (Fleischer). Don’t serve us yourself . . . your friend Willie Wonka says “But that is called cannibalism, my dear children, and is in fact frowned upon in most societies” (Burton). I’m having fun with this, but the idea remains: The chapter is the source, not the self. Subjectivism pushes discussion only through our limited selves.

I realize I am only going against the whole of American culture by stating this . . .
This is Complex Stuff!

You have a surprising amount of choice in arguing cause and effect. In creating causal chains, which are basically links between this and that, there’s actually a dizzying variety of factors to consider. We can make errors easily, so consider the following binary, either/or choices.

Also remember that either/or is a logical fallacy; though these either/or choices below offer comforting structure as you think about your topic, do not be limited by them. For instance, below there’s the short term vs. long term binary. Can’t one argue middle term, intermediate causes or effect, too?

Think of the following types of causes and effects:

indirect vs. direct (in obviousness, the ease with which we can see something leading to something)
Example: Having polio in childhood may lead one to have a heart attack sixty years later. It may be one of many causes.

primary vs. secondary (in importance)
That childhood polio situation might be the one reason why a person has a heart attack. That’s tough to prove, though! Still, with a heart attack (or a car accident), it’s likely that there’s a primary cause that can be assigned. That cause can be direct or indirect, right?

short term vs. long term (causes or effects) This can be really tricky. There are often both types of effects, but how are they connected? How can you isolate your cause as leading to a certain effect?

positive vs. negative
Too often, people only focus on the negatives. Even with a tough issue like suicide, it’s at least possible that one could argue that some positive effects could spin out of a suicide. Though not obvious, these can be argued to exist. We need to get beyond the obvious as we structure this blend. It offers another chance at our topic.

If you’re getting distracted by the language of causal chains, think of synonyms. “Causes” can be “influences,” and “effects” might be switched to “consequences.” Maybe switching the names will help. (Sounds like some discipline plan in high school, eh?)
Argue Without Filtering Through the Self

In academic writing, we argue without filtering everything through I think statements, just as we avoid you overuse. Not only are those pronouns prone to tone problems, but also they create logical dead-ends.

"It’s true for me" is one such issue: relativism. In academic argumentation, this carries no weight. That’s why we only even allow personal examples on a limited basis. But things do change over time, since most of the time you and I had been completely omitted in past decades.

Why bring up these points? Skeptical readers do not want an argument to be filtered through "I really believe that ______" statements, even though we realize that the thesis is one’s opinion. We dress up the thesis by avoiding I. We pretend an objectivity we know is an ideal but unachievable vantage. This is typical of academic writing. Call it a game, but by now we know why this can be an important game to know how to play well.

One opening into the writing of the claim might be to argue how the term is typically viewed. Again, this can be done only if the writer is careful with wording and avoids stereotyping.

Pitfalls for argument include passivity in setup or interpretation (realize that I’m more interested in your use of a source bit than in the bit itself), tone problems, pointing out of facts masquerading as argument—since this should be an argument to alter the meaning of the term to some clear extent, and lack of examples.

Also, if the writer chooses examples, do the show the extent to which the are typical or representative? Such use of illustration is important as we move between showing and telling, concrete and abstract.

Too much generalizing and you’ll have a newspaper editorial or sermon... not what we are looking for! Do not write as if you are speaking. Do set up the sources you bring to our attention. Oh, and it also helps if the sources support what you think, such that the paragraphs are yours and not merely in the paper because they are 80% from them.

Definitional arguments are the plagiarized of the essays in the course. Knowing the traps in student tendencies, can you slip them?

Go back to the chapter material in the text about arguments of definition. There are good reminders there.

—Hope this helps! Eeeewwww! That post subject of filtering seems a bit graphic. I’m reminded of the notion that what we drink is dinosaur urine. . . check out why in the linked Tech Times article.
Primary Source: Sustaining Our Commonwealth of Nature and Knowledge

Let’s start with this phrase: “sustaining our commonwealth.” By sustaining, I don’t mean preserving inviolate; I mean using, without using up. Using with maintenance and replenishment is an important idea in economics. It’s the very basis of the concept of income, because income is the maximum that you can consume today and still be able to produce and consume the same amount tomorrow – that is, maximum consumption without depleting capital in the broad sense of future productive capacity. By commonwealth, I mean the wealth that no one has made, or the wealth that practically everyone has made. So it’s either nature – nobody made it, we all inherited it – or knowledge – everybody contributed to making it, but everyone’s contribution is small in relation to the total and depends on the contributions of others. In managing the commonwealth of nature, our big problem is that we tend to treat the truly scarce as if it were non-scarce. The opposite problem arises with the commonwealth of knowledge, in which we tend to treat what is truly not scarce as if it were.

Clarifying Scarcity

There are two sets of important distinctions about goods, and they make four cross-classifications (see figure below). Goods can be either rival or non-rival, and they can be either excludable or non-excludable. My shirt, for example, is a rival good because if I’m wearing it, you can’t wear it at the same time. The warmth of the sun is non-rival because I can enjoy the warmth of the sun, and everyone else can enjoy it at the same time. Rivalness is a physical property that precludes the simultaneous use of goods by more than one person. Goods are also excludable or non-excludable. That’s not a physical concept, that’s a legal concept, a question of property. For example, you could wear my shirt tomorrow if I let you, but that’s up to me because it’s my property. My shirt is both rival and excludable, and that’s the case with most market goods. Meanwhile, the warmth of the sun is both non-rival and also non-excludable. We cannot buy and sell solar warmth; we cannot bottle it and charge for it. Goods that are rival and excludable are market goods. Goods that are non-rival and non-excludable are public goods. That leaves two other categories. Fish in the ocean are an example of goods that are rival and non-excludable. They are rival, because if I catch the fish, you can’t catch it. But they are also non-excludable, because I can’t stop you from fishing in the open seas. The management of goods that are rival and non-excludable gives rise to the famous tragedy of the commons – or the tragedy of open-access resources, as it’s more accurately called. Now, the other problematic category consists of goods that are non-rival and excludable. If I use the Pythagorean Theorem, I don’t prevent you from using it at the same time. Knowledge is non-rival, but it often is made excludable through intellectual property and patent rights. So those are two difficult categories that create problems. One is the tragedy of the commons, and the other we could call the tragedy of artificial scarcity.

The Commonwealth of Nature

Fish in the ocean are an example of the commonwealth of nature. I’ll argue that natural goods and services that are rival and have so far remained non-excludable should be enclosed in the market in order to avoid unsustainable use. Excludability can take the form of individual property rights or social property rights – what needs to be avoided is open access. For dealing with the broad class of rival but, up to now, non-excludable goods, the so-called cap-auction-trade system is a market-based institution that merits consideration.

In addition to its practical value, the cap-auction-trade system also sheds light on a fundamental issue of economic theory: the logically separate issues of scale, distribution, and allocation. Neoclassical economics deals mainly with the question of allocation. Allocation is the apportionment of resources among competing uses: how many resources go to produce beans, how many to cars, how many to haircuts. Properly functioning markets allocate resources efficiently, more or less. Yet the concept of efficient allocation presupposes a given distribution. Distribution is the apportionment of goods and resources among different people: how many resources go to you, how many to somebody else. A good distribution is one that is fair or just – not efficient,
but fair. The third issue is scale: the physical size of the economy relative to the ecosystem that sustains it. How many of us are there and how large are the associated matter-energy flows from producing all our stuff, relative to natural cycles and the maintenance of the biosphere. In neoclassical economics, the issue of scale is completely off the radar screen.

The cap-auction-trade system works like this. Some environmental assets, say fishing rights or the rights to emit sulfur dioxide, have been treated as non-excludable free goods. As economic growth increases the scale of the economy relative to that of the biosphere, it becomes recognized that these goods are in fact physically rival. The first step is to put a cap – a maximum – on the scale of use of that resource, at a level which is deemed to be environmentally sustainable. Setting that cap – deciding what it should be – is not a market decision, but a social and ecological decision. Then, the right to extract that resource or emit that waste, up to the cap, becomes a scarce asset. It was a free good. Now it has a price. We've created a new valuable asset, so the question is: Who owns it? This also has to be decided politically, outside the market. Ownership of this new asset should be auctioned to the highest bidder, with the proceeds entering the public treasury. Sometimes rights are simply given to the historical private users – a bad idea, I think, but frequently done under the misleading label of “grandfathering.” The cap-auction-trade system is not, as often called, “free-market environmentalism.” It is really socially constrained, market environmentalism. Someone must own the assets before they can be traded in the market, and that is an issue of distribution. Only after the scale question is answered, and then the distribution question, can we have market exchange to answer the question of allocation.

Another good policy for managing the commonwealth of nature is ecological tax reform. This means shifting the tax base away from income earned by labor and capital and onto the resource flow from nature. Taxing what we want less of, depletion and pollution, seems to be a better idea than taxing what we want more of, namely income. Unlike the cap-auction-trade system, ecological tax reform would exert only a very indirect and uncertain limit on the scale of the economy relative to the biosphere. Yet, it would go a long way toward improving allocation and distribution.

The Commonwealth of Knowledge

If you stand in front of the McKeldin Library at the University of Maryland, you’ll see a quotation from Thomas Jefferson carved on one of the stones: “Knowledge is the common property of mankind.” Well, I think Mr. Jefferson was right. Once knowledge exists, it is non-rival, which means it has a zero opportunity cost. As we know from studying price theory, price is supposed to measure opportunity cost, and if opportunity cost is zero, then price should be zero. Certainly, new knowledge, even though it should be allocated freely, does have a cost of production. Sometimes that cost of production is substantial, as with the space program’s discovery that there’s no life on Mars. On the other hand, a new insight could occur to you while you’re lying in bed staring at the ceiling and cost absolutely nothing, as was the case with Renee Descartes’ invention of analytic geometry. Many new discoveries are accidental. Others are motivated by the joy and excitement of research, independent of any material motivation. Yet the dominant view is that unless knowledge is kept scarce enough to have a significant price, nobody in the market will have an incentive to produce it. Patent monopolies and intellectual property rights are urged as the way to provide an extrinsic reward for knowledge production. Even within that restricted vision, keeping knowledge scarce still makes very little sense, because the main input to the production of new knowledge is existing knowledge. If you keep existing knowledge expensive, that’s surely going to slow down the production of new knowledge.

In Summary

Managing the commonwealth of nature and knowledge presents us two rather opposite problems and solutions. I’ve argued that the commonwealth of nature should be enclosed as property, as much as possible as public property, and administered so as to capture scarcity rents for public revenue. Examples of natural commons include: mining, logging, grazing rights, the electromagnetic spectrum, the absorptive capacity of the atmosphere, and the orbital locations of satellites. The commonwealth of knowledge, on the other hand, should be freed from enclosure as property and treated as the non-rival good that it is. Abolishing all intellectual property rights tomorrow is draconian, but I do think we could grant patent monopolies for fewer “inventions” and for shorter time periods.
## Does use by one person physically preclude use by others?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do laws prohibit access to these goods?</th>
<th>Yes rival</th>
<th>No non-rival</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes excludable</td>
<td><strong>Market Goods</strong> (e.g., automobiles and fishing reels) <em>Let the market allocate these goods.</em></td>
<td><strong>Tragedy of Artificial Scarcity</strong> (e.g., patented meds and knowledge in heads) <em>Reduce patent monopolies and intellectual property rights—share these goods.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No non-excludable</td>
<td><strong>Tragedy of the Commons</strong> (e.g., old growth trees and fish in the seas) <em>Designate property rights and use cap-auction-trade to allocate these goods.</em></td>
<td><strong>Public Goods</strong> (e.g., national security and roads that are free) <em>Collect depletion and pollution taxes so that government can provide these goods.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Different types of goods and policies to achieve a sustainable, fair, and efficient economy.

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- Sustaining Our Commonwealth of Nature and Knowledge. **Authorised by:** Herman Daly. **Provided by:** CASSE. **License:** CC BY-NC-ND: Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives
Primary Source: The Zombie as Barometer of Capitalist Anxiety

The modern incarnation of the zombie, as seen strewn across pop culture horror novels and films in ever-increasing numbers, is easily recognized and radically different from its historical roots; any member of our modern Western culture can spot the gray, often rotted flesh, the black eyes, the disheveled appearance, the shuffling gait, the wretched moaning, and, of course, the bloody mouths flecked with fresh flesh and detritus. However, the zombie goes beyond cheap thrills; zombies, as well as other variations of horror monsters, represent a fear that pervades society as a whole, a collective nervousness of destruction at the hands of a seemingly invulnerable foe.

According to Peter Dendle, in his essay, "The Zombie as Barometer of Cultural Anxiety," the zombie has "...tapped into a deep-seated anxiety about society, government, individual protection, and our increasing disconnectedness from subsistence skills."1 Dendle states that the prevalence of the zombie in pop culture correlates to society’s fear that any sudden jolt of the status quo, undead or otherwise, would result in mass chaos, that people would be unable to protect themselves or to survive on their own.

Yet one may take the thought of this collective anxiety a step further to discern one of the underlying causes and major contributions to the general nervousness of the public and the widespread appearances of zombies in films and literature: capitalism.

Past to Present

According to Dendle, "the zombie, a soul-less hulk mindlessly working at the bidding of another, thus records a residual communal memory of slavery: of living a life without dignity or meaning, of going through the motions."1 Here we see the zombie’s origins, as corpses reanimated by bourgeois landowners or factory foremen through some rites of magick for the sake of performing menial labour without demanding fair wages, hours, and treatment, never tiring or making mistakes. This is one of the earliest iterations of the zombie, and the origin of the capitalist metaphor. The proto-capitalist economy of nineteenth century America was dependent on slave labour, and pro-slavery politicians of the time argued that the economy of the South would have collapsed entirely should slavery be outlawed. Here it is evident how a fear and disdain of capitalism would have been imprinted on the minds of the enslaved Africans and Haitians, from whose culture the zombie originated. They were slaves because slavery was profitable, vital to economy and thus not morally bankrupt to the slave owners, and an implicit resistance to this system would have been planted.

From here the zombie transformed from a worker drone to a bloodthirsty monster, personality vanished, flesh rotting off of bone, an insatiable hunger for long pig, and most importantly a horde—one capable of the annihilation of human society. Zombies went from a cheap work force to a full-blown apocalypse, and they had never been more popular as capitalism conquered the world.

The capitalist metaphor came to a head with George Romero’s 1978 film Dawn of the Dead, in which the main characters attempt to escape the zombie apocalypse by finding sanctuary in a shopping mall. When the survivors find temporary safety, they return to their consumer roots and ransack the mall for products, and, after observing his comrades and the encroaching zombies, one character remarks, “They’re us.”2

Later, much more subtle hints at the metaphor of consumer capitalism occur in the Resident Evil cycle and many other films and books, where the zombie outbreak is, directly or otherwise, the result of illicit business practices of faceless corporations. This possibly stems from a mistrust of large conglomerates whose GDPs began to exceed entire nations'; Wal-Mart currently has more purchasing power than Saudi Arabia does.
In Max Brooks’ World War Z, a critique of capitalism is offered in the form of Phalanx, a vaccine manufactured to prevent “rabies” and sold as a solution to the developing zombie crisis; Phalanx was pushed through the FDA by the government (and the corporations that control it) despite a lack of testing and evidence regarding the zombie virus, for the sake of keeping the populace calm while earning unprecedented profits at the expense of the victimized masses. According to Breckenridge Scott, the character responsible for Phalanx:

“It protected them from their fears. That’s all I was selling. Hell, because of Phalanx, the biomed sector started to recover, which, in turn, jump-started the stock market, which then gave the impression of a recovery, which then restored consumer confidence to stimulate an actual recovery!”

This passage shows how the bourgeois businessman Scott justified selling his snake oil to the masses, in that the mass production of Phalanx and its widespread sales led to an economic recovery, and the reader is presented with the conflicting viewpoints between economic recovery and the deaths of millions of misled humans. The reader is presented with the question of whether the economy should take precedent over the well-being of the people, and while the choice is obvious, it shows the reader that corporations will sacrifice lives for their bottom lines.

And so, as zombies enter the world of prime-time television dramas, so too does our anxiety grow.

**Anxiety Disorder**

The zombie as we know it today, by its very nature, is a mindless creature which was once a human being, a sentient individual with a name and free will, but has been warped to become a ravenous consumer without thought or emotion. It meanders through city streets, around small towns, and along highways with no thought or desire but to consume anything and everything it can—namely, human flesh.

If one listens to the cries of anti-capitalist dissenters, an eerie similarity between zombies and members of capitalist economies appears, at least in terms of behavior; the masses go out from their homes and flock to shopping centers and department stores, willingly giving away the fruits of their labour in exchange for luxury items, and often really don’t know why.

A defining feature of the zombie is the loss of the individual’s sentience once transformed into the undead, just as a loss of sentience occurs in the individual within a consumer capitalist culture, at the hands of mass marketing and advertising. On the subject of the loss of free will, author Chuck Palahniuk wittily writes:

“Experts in ancient Greek culture say that people back then didn’t see their thoughts as belonging to them. When ancient Greeks had a thought, it occurred to them as a god or goddess giving an order... Now people hear a commercial for sour cream potato chips and rush out to buy, but now they call this free will. At least the ancient Greeks were being honest.”

Here Palahniuk’s anti-capitalist sentiments can be translated to the parallel between zombies and consumers, as both experiences a loss of sentience, and of the individual. The zombie is a monster of majority, unlike its vampiric and lupine counterparts, as those in our society who are given to the consumer instinct are a majority and the few individuals who criticize capitalism from within it are persecuted and defamed in the way that zombies will swarm and attack an uninfected human. In addition, the zombie is a mechanism of annihilation; while vampires are a small minority living in the underground of a human world, feeding to survive, the zombie horde exists only for the purpose of consuming or converting all humans until the species is extinct and the paradigm shifts to a world inhabited only by zombies.

This is similar to the cries of the left wing, who accuse the right—the upholders of laissez-faire capitalism and unwavering nationalism—of demanding conformity of all to their belief systems and ways of living (if you don’t like America, well you can just get out). However, Dendle postulates that while zombie apocalypse films and novels capitalize on the anxiety of the masses, the underlying purpose of zombie culture is not to display the end of the world but to illustrate how the world may be profoundly
changed for the better by means of the old world’s destruction. Dendle states: “Post-apocalyptic zombie worlds are fantasies of liberation: the intrepid pioneers of a new world trek through the shattered remnants of the old, trudging through the shells of buildings and the husks of people.”

In World War Z, the sundering of the zeitgeist in the United States shatters the pre-existing capitalistic and highly individualized philosophy of the masses and opens up the populace, through their vulnerability, to survival only through communal life and cooperation. However, even Brooks’ profound statements regarding cooperation are contradicted within his novel, in the example of socialist Cuba becoming a booming post-war capitalist force. One can infer from the critiques of both capitalism and communism that Brooks supports neither in his writing, adding another layer to the zombie-capitalist.

I believe that the impact of Brooks’ novel regarding our economic anxiety can be summarized by this statement of a Japanese character late in the novel: “His generation wanted to rule the world, and mine was content to let the world, and by the world I mean [the United States], rule us. There has to be a better way, a middle path where we take responsibility...” This is a powerful line, as it transforms the novel from a simple metaphor for capitalism to a statement that the world must take a path between capitalism and communism in order to survive and prosper, and that this path is now available as the world has an opportunity to rebuild. This is the ultimate function of the zombie, beyond cheap thrills of a horror film and beyond a criticism of the right-wing and consumer capitalism; the zombie functions to clean the slate and enable the world to rebuild anew.

3. Ramero, George A. Dawn of the Dead. Film.
Primary Source: Zombies vs. Animals? The Living Dead Wouldn't Stand a Chance

National Wildlife Federation naturalist David Mizejewski explains how nature would deal with a zombie outbreak: brutally, and without quarter.

With *The Walking Dead*’s fourth season premiere and Halloween upon us, the living dead are back in full-force.

Zombies are scary. We humans are evolutionarily pre-programmed to abhor the dead bodies of our own species. It’s a natural reaction, helping healthy individuals avoid fatal pathogens.

The thought of being eaten alive is a natural fear, and when it’s your own species doing the eating, it’s even more terrifying.

Relax. Next time you’re lying in bed, unable to fall asleep thanks to the vague anxiety of half-rotten corpses munching on you in the dark, remember this: if there was ever a zombie uprising, wildlife would kick its ass.

To enjoy zombie horror, you suspend disbelief and put aside some of science’s rules. That said, if we assume zombies can’t spread whatever is causing them to reanimate to other species, and that they are relatively slow moving—both true (*so far!* — *Ed.*) of Walking Dead zombies—there are more than enough wild animals out there to dispatch the undead.

That’s because zombies are essentially walking carrion, and Mother Nature doesn’t let *anything* go to waste.

Carrion is on the menu for a vast number of species, from tiny micro-organisms to the largest carnivores.

Here’s just some of the North American wildlife that would make short work of a zombie horde.

**BIRDS: WINGED ZOMBIE ANNIHILATORS**

Many birds feed themselves by scavenging on dead things. The two vulture species native to North America, the turkey vulture and the black vulture, flock up to make short work of any corpses they find. Both vulture species are dwarfed by the massive California condor, whose wingspan can reach 10 feet and which relish carrion. A sluggish zombie wouldn’t stand a chance against one of these giants or a flock of vultures. California condors are endangered, so a zombie apocalypse could really give a boost to their population by providing them with an abundance of food.

This video shows a juvenile California condor ripping the heart out of a dead carcass, surrounding by ravens picking up scraps. Ravens are not small birds—just look at the size of this baby condor in comparison.

- [https://youtu.be/TuGpuxlb0dw](https://youtu.be/TuGpuxlb0dw)

*Ravens*, crows, and magpies are expert scavengers as well, in addition to being bold and extremely intelligent. Many species of *gulls*, known for their brash behavior when it comes to scoring a meal, would also gladly feed off slow-moving zombies in coastal areas. These birds usually require other animals to break through or break down the tough skin and hide of their carrion meals. So they’d have to wait until the zombies decomposed a bit, or were dismembered by others animals, before they tucked in. But once started, nothing would stop them from devouring the undead with gusto.
Despite being expert hunters, eagles are not above scavenging. Bald eagles make carrion a regular part of their diet, and with their huge talons, they’re not afraid to dispatch animals that are near-death—or undead. The slightly larger golden eagle is no stranger to scavenging, either, and has also been documented attacking and killing animals as large as deer. A torpid zombie wouldn’t pose much of a challenge.

Watch these bald eagles and crows strip a deer carcass down to nothing in 48 hours.

- [https://youtu.be/fxceV0PuSaw](https://youtu.be/fxceV0PuSaw)

### MAMMALS: ZOMBIE DISMEMBERMENT CREW

North America’s large mammal predators would be more than a match for zombies. We have two bear species, brown (or grizzly) and black bears. Male brown bears can weigh in at 1,000 pounds. They are not afraid of humans. They can deliver a bite of 1200 pounds per square inch and have long, sharp claws designed to rip open logs and flip boulders in search of insects and other small critters to eat. They would easily tear apart rotting zombie flesh. Black bears are much smaller and typically run from humans, but even a black bear, when approached or cornered, would make short work of a zombie. Both bear species have an incredible sense of smell and both love to eat carrion, so even if zombies didn’t approach them, the bears eventually would learn that these walking bags of flesh make good eating.

Like black bears, gray wolves are very shy of humans and typically run away at the first sight of us. Nor are they strangers to scavenging. They’d soon take advantage of the easy pickings presented by lumbering zombies. Coyotes are far less shy than wolves and can happily live alongside humans, including in the heart of our cities. These intelligent canids would quickly learn that they could take down zombies one by one, especially the eastern populations of coyote, which are larger and bolder due to past interbreeding with wolves and domestic dogs.

Unlike bears, wolves and coyotes, mountain lions prefer fresh meat and don’t typically feed on carrion, other than what they kill themselves. Like all cats, they hunt by stealth and are irresistibly attracted to signs of weakness in potential prey. Unlike most other North American predators, mountain lions can put humans on the menu. Any zombie shuffling through mountain lion territory (which can be surprisingly close to our cities) would trigger those feline predatory instincts, and would likely end up with one of these big cats sneak-attacking from behind and delivering a spine severing bite to the back of the neck.

Even bigger and more powerful than mountain lions are jaguars, which range through Mexico and are still sometimes found in the desert southwest of the United States. Jaguars also hunt by stealth, and have a special technique to quickly dispatch their prey: a skull crushing bite to the head, delivered with their huge canine teeth. A jaguar bite delivers 2,000 pounds of pressure per inch, the most powerful mammalian bite on the continent. That, combined with a killing technique perfect for dispatching zombies, makes the jaguar its natural predator.

Watch this video of a jaguar making short work of a caiman. A zombie wouldn’t stand a chance against these big cats.

- [https://youtu.be/DBNYwxDZ_pA](https://youtu.be/DBNYwxDZ_pA)
It's not just mammalian carnivores that would take apart zombies. On The Walking Dead, Rick's horse fell victim to a horde of zombies in season one, but I can only chalk that up to the fact that it was a domestic beast that didn't view humans (even undead ones) as a threat. Wild hoofed mammals would not be so passive as to let zombies to get close enough to swarm and overwhelm them.

In fact, hoofed mammals are more dangerous to humans than carnivores. Moose attack and kill more people than bears do every year. They consider humans a threat, but as the largest living deer species, they are not afraid of human-sized creatures. If a zombie got too close, a moose would stomp it into an immobile pile of gore without a second’s hesitation.

This video shows moose fighting technique, which involves delivering powerful blows with their sharp hooves. 
https://youtu.be/gu_zMTQkMts

And moose are nothing compared to bison. Bison are a ton of muscle, horn, and hide. They do not tolerate being approached, and would effortlessly gore and trample as many zombies as dared approached them. Watch this video of what a bison can do to a car with a flick of its head, and think about what a zombified human body would look like on the receiving end of its wrath. 
https://youtu.be/ULBuLedK2Nw

Speaking of hoofed mammals ramming cars, this video of bull elk will give you some perspective on the size of this large deer species and their aggression during the breeding season. Bull elk are armed with giant antlers with spear-like tips—perfect to impale and dismember a pack of zombies.
https://youtu.be/tEv-hwjhEiE

Mountain goats would probably not encounter too many zombies, simply due to the inaccessibility of the steep mountain slopes they call home. Every so often, however, they do head down to more manageable terrain. Even though they are not large, they can be fierce and are armed with dagger-like horns, just as this unfortunate hiker learned.

REPTILES: SCALY ZOMBIE CLEAN-UP COMMITTEE

Most North American reptiles—small lizards, turtles and snakes—wouldn’t pose much threat to zombies. Ironically, it would probably be venomous rattlesnakes that would be at most risk from zombie attack. When camouflage fails them, their survival tactic is to draw attention to themselves with a loud rattle, and then hold their ground, striking out at anything that approaches them. With no circulatory system or living tissue, snake venom wouldn’t have any effect on zombies, and they’d easily be able to pick up the snake and eat it.
That said, we do have a few reptiles particularly suited for zombie clean-up. Two crocodilian species call North America home: the American alligator and the American crocodile. American crocodiles are extremely endangered and found only in limited areas of Florida, but like California condors, they could benefit from an influx of slow-moving, half-rotten, staggering prey to their wetland habitat.

Alligators are far more numerous and are found throughout Florida, west to Texas, and along the coastal plain wetlands as far north as the Carolinas. Once almost totally wiped out, alligators are now numerous due to protections under the Endangered Species Act, and they sometimes even show up in people’s backyards. ‘Gators can grow to be 13 feet long and deliver an extremely powerful bite, with over 2,000 pounds of pressure per inch.

Both species are stealth hunters, and can burst from the water at surprising speeds to pluck large prey from the shoreline. They are quite capable of tearing a human-sized meal into bite sized chunks of meat with their toothy, vice-like mouths. Soft zombie flesh would melt in their mouths like butter.

Any zombie that lumbered into fresh water ponds, lakes streams or swamps would likely fall prey to aquatic turtles too, who, with their beak-like jaws, would feast on zombie flesh. Painted turtles, river cooters and sliders of all sorts make carrion a part of their normal diet. To the undead, it would be a second “death by a thousand bites.” The ubiquitous common snapping turtle specializes in carrion-eating. As the name suggests, it can tear off substantial chunks and swallow them whole. Snapping turtles are even used by police to find corpses underwater due to their relish for dead flesh.

Common snapping turtles are dwarfed by the alligator snapping turtle, which is the world's largest freshwater turtle. They can weigh in at more than 200 pounds. Disguised to look like rotten leaves, resting in the murky depths which they live, they are the perfect foil for any zombie that ends up in the water. Check out the massive head on this one.

DECOMPOSERS: MASTERS OF THE ZOMBIE BUFFET

Ultimately, it’s not the North America’s mega-fauna that pose the most threat to zombies. In nature, there are a whole host of tiny creatures whose main purpose is to feed upon and break down the flesh of the dead: the decomposers. Zombies, with their rotting flesh, are obviously not immune to these decomposers (what do you think causes the rotting effect?), many of which are too small to see with the bare eye. Bacteria, fungi, molds, insects such as fly maggots or flesh-eating beetles, and other invertebrates, all make up nature’s diminutive clean-up crew. And it can obliterate a dead body in surprisingly little time. The clumsy undead wouldn’t have the dexterity to pick off these decomposers, even if they could see or feel them. It would just be a matter of time. Stripped off all soft tissue, including brains, the zombies would be reduced to hollowed-out skeletons.

Not convinced? Check out this video of a rabbit being consumed down to the bone, by wildlife decomposers, in just a week.
Here is a time-lapse video showing Dermestid flesh-eating beetles consuming the flesh off a series of birds for the Natural History Museum of London. These beetles are easy to raise in captivity and only feed on (un)dead flesh, so they pose no harm to the living. Survivors of a zombie apocalypse could raise these beetles by the millions, and drop them onto zombies to do their work. It might take a few weeks per zombie, but they'd get the job done.

Here are some maggots going to town on a carcass. Flies produce millions of grotesque larvae in no time at all. There would be no way for zombies to escape these flying insects—or avoid being engulfed utterly by writhing, insatiable maggots.

ZOMBIES NO MATCH FOR WILDLIFE, WILDLIFE NO MATCH FOR HUMANS

There you have it. Even if zombies managed to feed on smaller, slow-moving animals, or mob and overtake a few individuals of the larger species, it’s pretty clear that they’re no match for much of North America’s wildlife... at least not on a one-on-one basis. In reality, however, the battle between wildlife and living humans is not going so well for the wildlife.

Sadly, much of our continent’s wildlife has disappeared, and many species continue to decline. Habitat loss, invasive species and climate change are just some of the human-induced challenges our wildlife are facing. You can get involved protecting wildlife with the National Wildlife Federation and help make sure that we have a future filled with these amazing species.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David Mizejewski is a naturalist and media personality with the National Wildlife Federation.
Causal Analysis Essay Assignment

Essay 1

Relating Supply Chains to Conflicts (750 points)

The Writing Situation

Thomas L. Friedman argues that countries participating in global supply chains become economically interdependent and are thus less likely to be involved in political conflicts. At the same time, he warns that terrorists are using similar supply chains to spread violence around the world. How can we mitigate terrorist supply chains? Write a four-page paper (not counting the works cited page) to an informed audience in which you assess how the tools that Friedman describes might be used effectively to combat global terrorism. As you focus your argument, consider these questions:

• How can we use collaboration to combat terrorism?
• Are economic incentives and growth a possible solution or part of the problem?
• Could other kinds of supply chains work against terrorism?

Include at least two sources from the JCC library databases. No websites will be considered; you must use library database articles.

To earn passing credit on the final copy, an on-time formal sentence outline is due in Discussion 1 by the due date listed in the schedule. After making significant improvements to the formal outline, you will submit only the final copy as a Word attachment within the Unit 1 Assignments folder. Times and Arial are the only accepted fonts.

Follow the steps outlined below:

1. If you haven’t done this yet, read the assigned chapters from the textbook as well as mini-lectures on Bb related to this assignment.
2. Brainstorm an arguable point of view and working thesis claim. The thesis is an arguable opinion about which others may disagree; it is neither a fact nor a question.
3. Identify at least three major reasons you will focus on in this essay. Write a provable, arguable thesis sentence and at least three topic sentences, each directly related to your thesis. The claim must be an arguable assertion, neither a question nor a statement of fact. Note that you shouldn’t follow the “one paragraph per reason” approach; a five-paragraph essay this isn’t! Your reasons may not use the wording of the bullets above! Think on one’s own here.
4. Research your selected reasons, using books, JCC databases and web sources, getting at least 2-3 database sources producing diverse forms of evidence. Evaluate the sources. Follow acceptable source guidelines listed in your syllabus. The JCC Information Literacy Tutorial is a good resource to refresh one’s skills.
5. Using ideas generated in freewriting exercise as well as researched from outside sources, write a formal sentence outline of the body ¶s (paragraphs) by integrating multiple source materials with your own commentary. Each reason should have a clear topic sentence and rich, specific and relevant details to make your writing vivid. Cite where needed. Tie your examples, stories, expert testimony, studies, statistical evidence (in other words, support) to the thesis sentence. The outline must include the working thesis and works cited page. The outline is required for a passing paper and must be a formal sentence outline; use no fragments, please!
6. Document any information from sources (whether paraphrased, summarized or quoted), using parenthetical citations. Use signal phrases to introduce outside data. Interpret.
7. Prepare a Works Cited page, using MLA format. Refer to current models at OWL at Purdue.
8. Write introductory and concluding ¶s. Refer to the text as well as my lectures for writing effective introductions and satisfying conclusions.
9. Revise and edit your essay significantly. Final copies must reflect significant improvement from the outline.

102 | Arguing Through Writing
Audience and Purpose

Your audience knows the essay and topic, so argue to establish the validity of your interpretations. Do not write an informative report. Do write an argumentative essay.

Tutoring

I am not a tutor. I am happy to look over your paper if you provide me with one or two areas to focus upon. JCC also offers tutoring services.

The proper MLA spacing appears below:

The following sites have useful models for formal sentence outlines. Just be sure you’re following the sentence outline formatting.

- https://app.shoreline.edu/doldham/102/HTML/Sentence%20Outline.html
- https://youtu.be/7cFWkV3ZCCs
DEFINITION
Definition Arguments Walk-Through

The *Excelsior OWL* site has a useful walk-through for each of the rhetorical modes. Its coverage of definition is worth looking through as you narrow your argument: http://owl.excelsior.edu/rhetorical-styles/definition-essay/

Public domain content

- Definition Arguments. **Authored by:** OWL Excelsior Writing Lab. **Provided by:** Excelsior College. **Located at:** http://owl.excelsior.edu/rhetorical-styles/definition-essay/. **Project:** ENG 101. **License:** CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike
Definition Structure

The definition argument focuses on clarifying a definition for a controversial term or concept. In other words, a definition argument is one that asserts we cannot make clear assertions or possess a clear understanding of an issue until we understand exactly what the terms mean.

The danger is that writers only point out the existence of the ideas about the term rather than establishing exigency. Another common issue is that writers will only point out an issue's importance without actually arguing anything about the best (and thus arguable) meaning of that word/phrase.

Examples of this type of argument might look something like this: An argumentative essay calling for a re-examination of the birth control requirements in the Affordable Health Care Act with a focus on explaining what birth control is, what the options are, and how they work.

An argumentative essay calling for an end to the two-party system of government in the United States with a focus on defining what a two-party system really is and what the laws are related to it.

An argumentative essay arguing for the benefits of organic foods with a focus on defining what organic really means.

Structure

Access the Excelsior OWL site’s page on “Definition Argument” here and click to see another walk-through of how to structure this type of argument. (This differs from the previous mini-lecture’s link): http://owl.excelsior.edu/argument-and-critical-thinking/argumentative-purposes/argumentative-purposes-definition/

TIPS: When writing a definition argument, it’s important to keep your essay focused. Choose an issue where there is a clear misunderstanding of a term or terms. Focus on those terms in relation to your claim.

If you’re having trouble thinking of topics for a definition argument, read a little bit about what is going on in the world. Look for issues that come up related to misunderstandings over what certain terms mean.

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When Brainstorming Definition Theses, Try the Following Moves

Getting started properly on an argument like this can be daunting, so try breaking this down using any of the following tips:

- Take some examples that might be borderline and write about them. They can be argued about and fitted to the term you’re arguing. In doing this, you might find that the term itself needs some fitting back, and that the example alters the term.
- Use both high and low culture for examples. If you clear sources with me, there’s nothing to say you cannot use a website. Video games, songs, movies and television shows can be used, as can current news. If I were writing this, I’d be looking for examples so that the essay I produce would not be too vague.
- Abstraction translates as “writing away from.” We have to remember to bring something back. What examples fit/contradict/call into question the example?
- Since we cannot expect a dictionary to have that exact phrase, we would also look for synonyms like situational ethics. Playing the “Open, sesame!” game of searches, we have to figure out which terms will get the hits.
- To properly understand________, one must _______. That’s the basic pattern, right? You’re not totally dismissing the readers but neither are you totally agreeing with them. They know the term and think that they have examples of it. You’re showing them something about the term that they didn’t realize.
- You can expand, contract, or show in which situations the term can be relevant. “While most people think provisional ethics means ‘Whatever one decides is actually right’, actually this is a childish and limited way of looking at Michael Shermer’s term. Provisional ethics requires a scientific check of one’s decisions, and is anything but the anything goes of relativism that most people think it is.” That’s a working claim that I could refine, but I’m saying that most people are wrong about something or think that they know the term when, actually, they don’t.
- For now, the key is to figure out the extent to which you’ll alter the definition and which examples work to support it.
Defining is a Process of Exposing and Arguing Boundaries

The words we read often break down in important fashion. De (away, from) and –fine are one of these. (Definire, in Latin, meant to limit or determine.) Definitions, then, have this feeling of ending things. We’ll see, though, that they actually begin debate. Since only a part of a word’s meaning is its dictionary definition—the vast complement being its many connotations, which you or I can be expected to bring—then we have a dynamic system. (Dynam means power in Greek.) We have to take seriously the idea that words matter and that they weave effects upon readers or listeners—even if the writer doesn’t know the story of the word.

Watch for boundaries between what’s left out and included. Definitions are all about borders. Like some nasty neighbors, tricky writers can try and get us to accept shifting borders. Let’s keep an eye on what is involved (literally “spun into”) the definitions in this unit and the rest of the course!
Sample Definition Argument

Now that you have had the chance to learn about writing a definition argument, it's time to see what one might look like. Linked, you’ll see a sample definition argumentative essay written following MLA formatting guidelines.


Public domain content

We Know About What Assumptions do. . . Watch the Following Willingham Video: “Learning Styles Don’t Exist”

Since definition is about broadening, narrowing, or otherwise altering the circles of meaning we put around words and ideas, why not take on a cherished chestnut of parents, product developers and students: the notion of learning styles.

Watch the Following Willingham Video

I wanted to complicate our assumption that operates with those learning styles. Check out Daniel Willingham’s “Learning Styles Don’t Exist” video (7 minutes) at:

- https://youtu.be/slV9rz2NTUk

He has some FAQs at:


Note that Willingham is making a particular distinction in his argument about these that gets right at our assumptions. Watch how he does that while metaphorically keeping us “in the room” and still watching.
For Whatever Reason, People Mess up Quoting Definitions

Some serious problems can occur if we’re placing definitions in the wrong spots or failing to quote them properly. Here are some common (and, since we’re doing definition, *common* here means 35% or higher incidence from semester to semester) errors:

- Used words matter, so we quote definitions.
- The titles of dictionaries get italicized, but those aren’t what go in the citations. Actually, the cited word would go in the parenthetical citation and would begin its works cited entry.
- Do not use italics to set off quotes.
- Callouts like *common* above get italicized.

Mostly, I’m mentioning this because of the unquoted quotes issue. Remember, anytime you fail to quote you’re indicating that the words are yours... which looks bad when that gaffe is done with the term the entire essay is built upon.
Near-Humans Freak Out Humans

If you're a gamer, you have likely heard of the uncanny valley. (Heck, it's even the name of a game.)

It's that near-humanness that can innately bother us. I think it's fascinating.

Here's a quick video on this.
  
  •  https://youtu.be/CNdAlPoh8a4

For more, check out Blade Runner in its entirety, or at least this little clip or some that follow:
  
  •  https://youtu.be/Umc9ezAyJv0

If we're in the mode of defining human, we can see the works of science fiction in a new light, since they are often about this, or about how technology affirms or denies our humanity.

And now you understand why I can never watch more than fifteen seconds of the PBS show Sid the Science Kid. . . !
Graeme Wood, What ISIS Really Wants

This March 2015 article by Graeme Wood from The Atlantic is a powerful argument of definition. Access it either through the permalink below or by accessing either your library databases or www.theatlantic.com

Be sure to get the full-color document with the images.

Steven Pinker, The Moral Instinct

Read “The Moral Instinct,” an article by Steven Pinker. I accessed it through the JCC Library databases and its Literature Resource Center, but I know it is also available as a PDF using a web search.

THE LATER POSTGLACIAL PALÆOLITHIC MEN, THE FIRST TRUE MEN

(Later Palæolithic Age)


§ 1

THE Neanderthal type of man prevailed in Europe at least for tens of thousands of years. For ages that make all history seem a thing of yesterday, these nearly human creatures prevailed. If the Heidelberg jaw was that of a Neanderthal, and if there is no error in the estimate of the age of that jaw, then the Neanderthal Race lasted out for more than 200,000 years! Finally, between 40,000 and 25,000 years ago, as the Fourth Glacial Age softened towards more temperate conditions (see Map on p. 89), a different human type came upon the scene, and, it would seem, exterminated Homo Neanderthalensis.[36] This new type was probably developed in South Asia or North Africa, or in lands now submerged in the Mediterranean basin, and, as[v1-87] more remains are collected and evidence accumulates, men will learn more of their early stages. At present we can only guess where and how, through the slow ages, parallel with the Neanderthal cousin, these first true men arose out of some more ape-like progenitor. For hundreds of centuries they were acquiring skill of hand and limb, and power and bulk of brain, in that still unknown environment. They were already far above the Neanderthal level of achievement and intelligence, when first they come into our ken, and they had already split into two or more very distinctive races.

These new-comers did not migrate into Europe in the strict sense of the word, but rather, as century by century the climate ameliorated, they followed the food and plants to which they were accustomed, as those spread into the new realms that opened to them. The ice was receding, vegetation was increasing, big game of all sorts was becoming more abundant. Steppe-like conditions, conditions of pasture and shrub, were bringing with them vast herds of wild[v1-88] horse. Ethnologists (students of race) class these new human races in one same species as ourselves, and with all human races subsequent to them, under one common specific name of Homo sapiens. They had quite human brain-cases and hands. Their teeth and their necks were anatomically as ours are.

Now here again, with every desire to be plain and explicit with the reader, we have still to trouble him with qualified statements and notes of interrogation. There is now an enormous literature about these earliest true men, the men of the Later Palæolithic Age, and it is still for the general reader a very confusing literature indeed. It is confusing because it is still confused at the source. We know of two distinct sorts of skeletal remains in this period, the first of these known as the Cro-Magnon race, and the second the Grimaldi race; but the great bulk of the human traces and appliances we find are either without human bones
or with insufficient bones for us to define their associated physical type. There may have been many more distinct races than these two. There may have been intermediate types. In the grotto of Cro-Magnon it was that complete skeletons of one main type of these Newer Palaeolithic men, these true men, were first found, and so it is that they are spoken of as Cro-Magnards.

Map showing Europe and Western Asia about the Time the True Men were Replacing the Neanderthals in Western Europe

These Cro-Magnards were a tall people with very broad faces, prominent noses, and, all things considered, astonishingly big brains. The brain capacity of the woman in the Cro-Magnon cave exceeded that of the average male to-day. Her head had been smashed by a heavy blow. There were also in the same cave with her the complete skeleton of an older man, nearly six feet high, the fragments of a child’s skeleton, and the skeletons of two young men. There were also flint implements and perforated sea-shells, used no doubt as ornaments. Such is one sample of the earliest true men. But at the Grimaldi cave, near Mentone, were discovered two skeletons also of the Later Palaeolithic period, but of a widely contrasted type, with negroid characteristics that point rather to the negroid type. There can be no doubt that we have to deal in this period with at least two, and probably more, highly divergent races of true men. They may have overlapped in time, or Cro-Magnards may have followed the Grimaldi race, and either or both may have been contemporary with the late Neanderthal men. Various authorities have very strong opinions upon these points, but they are, at most, opinions. The whole story is further fogged at present by our inability to distinguish, in the absence of skeletons, which race has been at work in any particular case. In what follows[v1-91] the reader will ask of this or that particular statement, “Yes, but is this the Cro-Magnard or the Grimaldi man or some other that you are..."
writing about?” To which in most cases the honest answer is, “As yet we do not know.” Confessedly our account of the newer Paleolithic is a jumbled account. There are probably two or three concurrent and only roughly similar histories of these newer Paleolithic men as yet, inextricably mixed up together. Some authorities appear to favour the Cro-Magnards unduly and to dismiss the Grimaldi people with as little as possible of the record.

The appearance of these truly human postglacial Paleolithic peoples was certainly an enormous leap forward in the history of mankind. Both of these main races had a human fore-brain, a human hand, an intelligence very like our own. They dispossessed Homo Neanderthalensis from his caverns and his stone quarries. And they agreed with modern ethnologists, it would seem, in regarding him as a different species. Unlike most savage conquerors, who take the women of the defeated side for their own and interbreed with them, it would seem that the true men would have nothing to do with the Neanderthal race, women or men. There is no trace of any intermixture between the races, in spite of the fact that the newcomers, being also flint users, were establishing themselves in the very same spots that their predecessors had occupied. We know nothing of the appearance of the Neanderthal man, but this absence of intermixture seems to suggest an extreme hairiness, an ugliness, or a repulsive strangeness in his appearance over and above his low forehead, his beetle brows, his ape neck, and his inferior stature. Or he—and she—may have been too fierce to tame. Says Sir Harry Johnston, in a survey of the rise of modern man in his Views and Reviews: “The dim racial remembrance of such gorilla-like monsters, with cunning brains, shambling gait, hairy bodies, strong teeth, and possibly cannibalistic tendencies, may be the germ of the ogre in folklore....”

These true men of the Paleolithic Age, who replaced the Neanderthalers, were coming into a milder climate, and although they used the caves and shelters of their predecessors, they lived largely in the open. They were hunting peoples, and some or all of them appear to have hunted the mammoth and the wild horse as well as the reindeer, bison, and aurochs. They ate much horse. At a great open-air camp at Solutré, where they seem to have had animal gatherings for many centuries, it is estimated that there are the bones of 100,000 horses, besides reindeer, mammoth, and bison bones. They probably followed herds of horses, the little bearded ponies of that age, as these moved after pasture. They hung about on the flanks of the herd, and became very wise about its habits and dispositions. A large part of these men’s lives must have been spent in watching animals.

Whether they tamed and domesticated the horse is still an open question. Perhaps they learnt to do so by degrees as the centuries passed. At any rate, we find late Paleolithic drawings of horses with marks about the heads that are strongly suggestive of bridles, and there exists a carving of a horse’s head showing what is perhaps a rope of twisted skin or tendon. But even if they tamed the horse, it is still more doubtful whether they rode it or had much use for it when it was tamed. The horse they knew was a wild pony with a beard under its chin, not up to carrying a man for any distance. It is improbable that these men had yet learnt the rather unnatural use of animal’s milk as food. If they tamed the horse at last, it was the only animal they seem to have tamed. They had no dogs, and they had little to do with any sort of domesticated sheep or cattle.

It greatly aids us to realize their common humanity that these earliest true men could draw. Both races, it would seem, drew astonishingly well. They were by all standards savages, but they were artistic savages. They drew better than any of their successors down to the beginnings of history. They drew and painted on the cliffs and cave walls that they had wrested from the Neanderthal men. And the surviving drawings come to the ethnologist, puzzling over bones and scraps, with the effect of a plain message shining through guesswork and darkness. They drew on bones and antlers; they carved little figures.

These late Paleolithic people not only drew remarkably well for our information, and with an increasing skill as the centuries passed, but they have also left us other information about their lives in their graves. They buried. They buried their dead, often with ornaments, weapons, and food; they used a lot of colour in the burial, and evidently painted the body. From that one may infer that they painted their bodies during life. Paint was a big fact in their lives. They were inveterate painters; they used black, brown, red, yellow, and white pigments, and the pigments they used endure to this day in the caves of France and Spain. Of all modern races, none have shown so pictorial a disposition; the nearest approach to it has been among the American Indians.
These drawings and paintings of the later Palæolithic people went on through a long period of time, and present wide fluctuations in artistic merit. We give here some early sketches, from which we learn of the interest taken by these early men in the bison, horse, ibex, cave bear, and reindeer. In its early stages the drawing is often primitive like the drawing of clever children; quadrupeds are usually drawn with one hindleg and one foreleg, as children draw them to this day. The legs on the other side were too much for the artist's technique. Possibly the first drawings began as children's drawings begin, out of idle scratchings. The savage scratched with a flint on a smooth rock surface, and was reminded of some line or gesture. But their solid carvings are at least as old as their first pictures. The earlier drawings betray a complete incapacity to group animals.

As the centuries progressed, more skilful artists appeared. The representation of beasts became at last astonishingly vivid and like. But even at the crest of their artistic time they still drew in profile as children do; perspective and the fore-shortening needed for back and front views were too much for them. They rarely drew themselves. The vast majority of their drawings represent animals. The mammoth and the horse are among the commonest themes. Some of the people, whether Grimaldi people or Cro-Magnon people, also made little ivory and soapstone statuettes, and among these are some very fat female figures. These latter suggest the physique of Grimaldi rather than of Cro-Magnon artists. They are like Bushmen women. The human sculpture of the earlier times inclined to caricature, and generally such human figures as they represent are far below the animal studies in vigour and veracity.

Later on there was more grace and less coarseness in the human representations. One little ivory head discovered is that of a girl with an elaborate coiffure. These people at a later stage also scratched and engraved designs on ivory and bone. Some of
the most interesting groups of figures are carved very curiously round bone, and especially round rods of deer bone, so that it is impossible to see the entire design all together. Figures have also been found modelled in clay, although no Palæolithic people made any use of pottery.

Many of the paintings are found in the depths of unlit caves. They are often difficult of access. The artists must have employed lamps to do their work, and shallow soapstone lamps in which fat could have been burnt have been found. Whether the seeing of these cavern paintings was in some way ceremonial or under what circumstances they were seen, we are now altogether at a loss to imagine.

§ 2

Archæologists distinguish at present three chief stages in the history of these newer Palæolithic men in Europe, and we must name these stages here. But it may be as well to note at the same time that it is a matter of the utmost difficulty to distinguish which of two deposits in different places is the older or newer. We may very well be dealing with the work of more or less contemporary and different races when we think we are dealing with successive ones. We are dealing, the reader must bear in mind, with little disconnected patches of material, a few score all together. The earliest stage usually distinguished by the experts is the Aurignacian (from the grotto of Aurignac); it is characterized by very well-made flint implements, and by a rapid development of art and more particularly of statuettes and wall paintings. The most esteemed of the painted caves is ascribed to the latter part of this the first of the three subdivisions of the newer Palæolithic. The second subdivision of this period is called the Solutrian (from Solutré), and is distinguished particularly by the quality and beauty of its stone implements; some of its razor-like blades are only equalled and not surpassed by the very best of the Neolithic work. They are of course unpolished, but the best specimens are as thin as steel blades and almost as sharp. Finally, it would seem, came the Magdalenian (from La Madeleine) stage, in which the horse and reindeer were dwindling in numbers and the red deer coming into Europe.[38] The stone implements are smaller, and there is a great quantity of bone harpoons, spearheads, needles, and the like. The hunters of the third and last stage of the later Palæolithic Age appear to have supplemented a diminishing food supply by fishing. The characteristic art of the period consists of deep reliefs done upon bone and line engraving upon bone. It is to this period that the designs drawn round bones belong, and it has been suggested that these designs upon round bones were used to print coloured designs upon leather. Some of the workmanship on bone was extraordinarily fine. Parkyn quotes from de Mortillet, about the Reindeer Age (Magdalenian) bone needles, that they “are much superior to those of later, even historical, times, down to the Renaissance. The Romans, for example, never had needles comparable to those of the Magdalenian epoch.”

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It is quite impossible at present to guess at the relative lengths of these ages. We are not even positive about their relative relationship. Each lasted perhaps for four or five more thousand years, more than double the time from the Christian Era to our own day.

At last it would seem that circumstances began to turn altogether against these hunting Newer Palæolithic people who had flourished for so long in Europe. They disappeared. New kinds of men appeared in Europe, replacing them. These latter seem to have brought in bow and arrows; they had domesticated animals and cultivated the soil. A new way of living, the Neolithic way of living, spread over the European area; and the life of the Reindeer Age and of the races of Reindeer Men, the Later Palæolithic men, after a reign vastly greater than the time between ourselves and the very earliest beginnings of recorded history, passed off the European stage.

§ 3

There is a disposition on the part of many writers to exaggerate the intellectual and physical qualities of these later Palæolithic men and make a wonder of them.[39] Collectively considered, these people had remarkable gifts, but a little reflection will show they had almost as remarkable deficiencies. The tremendous advance they display upon their Neanderthalian predecessors and their special artistic gift must not blind us to their very obvious limitations. For all the quantity of their brains, the quality was narrow and special. They had vivid perceptions, an acute sense of animal form, they had the real artist's impulse to render; so far they were fully grown human beings. But that disposition to paint and draw is shown to-day by the Bushmen, by Californian Indians, and by Australian black fellows; it is not a mark of all-round high intellectual quality. The cumulative effect of their drawings and paintings is very great, but we must not make the mistake of crowding all these achievements together in our minds as though they had suddenly flashed out upon the world in a brief interval of time, or as though they were all the achievements of one people. These races of Reindeer Men were in undisturbed possession of western Europe for a period at least ten times as long as the interval between ourselves and the beginning of the Christian Era, and through all that immense time they were free to develop and vary their life to its utmost possibilities. Their art constitutes their one claim to be accounted more than common savages.

They were in close contact with animals, but they never seemed to have got to terms with any animal unless it was the horse. They had no dogs. They had no properly domesticated animals at all. They watched and drew and killed and ate. They do not seem to have cooked their food. Perhaps they scorched and grilled it, but they could not have done much more, because they had no cooking implements. Although they had clay available, and although there are several Palæolithic clay figures on record, they had no pottery. Although they had a great variety of flint and bone implements, they never rose to the possibilities of using timber for permanent shelters or such-like structures. They never made hafted axes or the like that would enable them to deal with timber. There is a suggestion in some of the drawings of a fence of stakes in which a mammoth seems to be entangled. But here we may be dealing with superimposed scratchings. They had no buildings. It is not even certain that they had tents or huts. They may have had simple skin tents. Some of the drawings seem to suggest as much. It is doubtful if they knew of the bow. They left no good arrowheads behind them. Certain of their implements are said to be "arrow-straighteners" by distinguished authorities, but that is about as much evidence as we have of arrows. They may have used sharpened sticks as arrows. They had no cultivation of grain or vegetables of any sort. Their women were probably squaws, smaller than the men; the earlier statuettes represent them as grossly fat, almost as the Bushmen women are often fat to-day. (But this may not be true of the Cro-Magnards.)

They clothed themselves, it would seem, in skins, if they clothed themselves at all. These skins they prepared with skill and elaboration, and towards the end of the age they used bone needles, no doubt to sew these pelts. One may guess pretty safely that they painted these skins, and it has even been supposed,[v1-100] printed off designs upon them from bone cylinders. But their garments were mere wraps; there are no clasps or catches to be found. They do not seem to have used grass or such-like fibre for textiles. Their statuettes are naked. They were, in fact, except for a fur wrap in cold weather, naked painted savages.

These hunters lived on open steppes for two hundred centuries or so, ten times the length of the Christian era. They were, perhaps, overtaken by the growth of the European forests, as the climate became milder and damper. When the wild horse and
the reindeer diminished in Europe, and a newer type of human culture, with a greater power over food supply, a greater tenacity of settlement, and probably a larger social organization, arose, the Reindeer Men had to learn fresh ways of living or disappear. How far they learnt and mingled their strain with the new European populations, and how far they went under we cannot yet guess. Opinions differ widely. Wright lays much stress on the “great hiatus” between the Palæolithic and Neolithic remains, while Osborn traces the likeness of the former in several living populations. In the region of the Doubs and of the Dordogne in France, many individuals are to be met with to this day with skulls of the “Cro-Magnon” type. Apparently the Grimaldi type of men has disappeared altogether from Europe. Whether the Cro-Magnon type of men mingled completely with the Neolithic peoples, or whether they remained distinct and held their own in favourable localities to the north and west, following the reindeer over Siberia and towards America, which at that time was continuous with Siberia, or whether they disappeared altogether from the world, is a matter that can be only speculated about at present. There is not enough evidence for a judgment. Possibly they mingled to a certain extent. There is little to prevent our believing that they survived without much intermixture for a long time in north Asia, that “pockets” of them remained here and there in Europe, that there is a streak of their blood in most European peoples to-day, and that there is a much stronger streak, if not a predominant strain, in the Mongolian and American races.

§ 4

It was about 12,000 or fewer years ago that, with the spread of forests and a great change of the fauna, the long prevalence of the hunting life in Europe drew to its end. Reindeer vanished. Changing conditions frequently bring with them new diseases. There may have been prehistoric pestilences. For many centuries there may have been no men in Britain or Central Europe (Wright). For a time there were in Southern Europe drifting communities of some little known people who are called the Azilians. They may have been transition generations; they may have been a different race. We do not know. Some authorities incline to the view that the Azilians were the first wave of a race which, as we shall see later, has played a great part in populating Europe, the dark-white or Mediterranean or Iberian race. These Azilian people have left behind them a multitude of pebbles, roughly daubed with markings of an unknown purport (see illus., p. 94). The use or significance of these Azilian pebbles is still a profound mystery. Was this some sort of token writing? Were they counters in some game? Did the Azilians play with these pebbles or tell a story with them, as imaginative children will do with bits of wood and stone nowadays? At present we are unable to cope with any of these questions.

We will not deal here with the other various peoples who left their scanty traces in the world during the close of the New Palæolithic period, the spread of the forests where formerly there had been steppes, and the wane of the hunters, some 10,000 or 12,000 years ago. We will go on to describe the new sort of human community that was now spreading over the northern hemisphere, whose appearance marks what is called the Neolithic Age. The map of the world was assuming something like its present outlines, the landscape and the flora and fauna were taking on their existing characteristics. The prevailing animals in the spreading woods of Europe were the royal stag, the great ox, and the bison; the mammoth and the musk ox had gone. The great ox, or aurochs, is now extinct, but it survived in the German forests up to the time of the Roman Empire. It was never domesticated. It stood eleven feet high at the shoulder, as high as an elephant. There were still lions in the Balkan peninsula, and they remained there until about 1000 or 1200 B.C. The lions of Württemberg and South Germany in those days were twice the size of the modern lion. South Russia and Central Asia were thickly wooded then, and there were elephants in Mesopotamia and Syria, and a fauna in Algeria that was tropical African in character.

Hitherto men in Europe had never gone farther north than the Baltic Sea or the English midlands, but now Ireland, the Scandinavian peninsula, and perhaps Great Russia were becoming possible regions for human occupation. There are no Palæolithic remains in Sweden or Norway, nor in Ireland or Scotland. Man, when he entered these countries, was apparently already at the Neolithic stage of social development.
§ 5

Nor is there any convincing evidence of man in America before the end of the Pleistocene.[43] The same relaxation of the climate that permitted the retreat of the reindeer hunters into Russia and Siberia, as the Neolithic tribes advanced, may have allowed them to wander across the land that is now cut by Bering Strait, and so reach the American continent. They spread thence southward, age by age. When they reached South America, they found the giant sloth (the *Megatherium*), the glyptodon, and many other extinct creatures, still flourishing. The glyptodon was a monstrous South American armadillo, and a human skeleton has been found by Roth buried beneath its huge tortoise-like shell.[44]

All the human remains in America, even the earliest, it is to be noted, are of an Amer-Indian character. In America there does not seem to have been any preceding races of sub-men. Man was fully man when he entered America. The old world was the nursery of the sub-races of mankind.[v1-104]

XI

NEOLITHIC MAN IN EUROPE[45]


§ 1

The Neolithic phase of human affairs began in Europe about 10,000 or 12,000 years ago. But probably men had reached the Neolithic stage elsewhere some thousands of years earlier.[46] Neolithic men came slowly into Europe from the south or south-east as the reindeer and the open steppes gave way to forest and modern European conditions.

The Neolithic stage in culture is characterized by: (1) the presence of polished stone implements, and in particular the stone axe, which was perforated so as to be the more effectually fastened to a wooden handle, and which was probably used rather for working wood than in conflict. There are also abundant arrow heads. The fact that some implements are polished does not preclude the presence of great quantities of implements of unpolished stone. But there are differences in the make between even the unpolished tools of the Neolithic and of the Palæolithic Period. (2) The beginning of a sort of agriculture, and the use of plants and seeds. But at first there are abundant evidences that hunting was still of great importance in the Neolithic Age.[v1-105] Neolithic man did not at first sit down to his agriculture. He took snatch crops. He settled later. (3) Pottery and proper cooking. The horse is no longer eaten. (4) Domesticated animals. The dog appears very early. The Neolithic man had domesticated cattle, sheep, goats, and pigs. He was a huntsman turned herdsman of the herds he once hunted.[47] (5) Plaiting and weaving.

These Neolithic people probably “migrated” into Europe, in the same way that the Reindeer Men had migrated before them; that is to say, generation by generation and by century, as the climate changed, they spread after their accustomed food. They were not “nomads.” Nomadism, like civilization, had still to be developed. At present we are quite unable to estimate how far the Neolithic peoples were new-comers and how far their arts were developed or acquired by the descendants of some of the hunters and fishers of the Later Palæolithic Age.

Whatever our conclusions in that matter, this much we may say with certainty; there is no great break, no further sweeping away of one kind of man and replacement by another kind between the appearance of the Neolithic way of living and our own time. There are invasions, conquests, extensive emigrations and intermixtures, but the races as a whole carry on and continue to adapt themselves to the areas into which they began to settle in the opening of the Neolithic Age. The Neolithic men of Europe were white men ancestral to the modern Europeans. They may have been of a darker complexion than many of their descendants; of that we cannot speak with certainty. But there is no real break in culture from their time onward until we reach the age of coal, steam, and power-driven machinery that began in the eighteenth century.
After a long time gold, the first known of the metals, appears among the bone ornaments with jet and amber. Irish Neolithic remains are particularly rich in gold. Then, perhaps 6000 or 7000 years ago in Europe, Neolithic people began to use copper in certain centres, making out of it implements of much the same pattern as their stone ones. They cast the copper in moulds made to the shape of the stone implements. Possibly they first found native copper and hammered it into shape. Later—we will not venture upon figures—men had found out how to get copper from its ore. Perhaps, as Lord Avebury suggested, they discovered the secret of smelting by the chance putting of lumps of copper ore among the ordinary stones with which they built the fire pits they used for cooking. In China, Hungary, Cornwall, and elsewhere copper ore and tinstone occur in the same veins; it is a very common association, and so, rather through dirtiness than skill, the ancient smelters, it may be, hit upon the harder and better bronze, which is an alloy of copper and tin. Bronze is not only harder than copper, but the mixture of tin and copper is more fusible and easier to reduce. The so-called “pure-copper” implements usually contain a small proportion of tin, and there are no tin implements known, nor very much evidence to show that early men knew of tin as a separate metal. The plant of a prehistoric copper smelter has been found in Spain, and the material of bronze foundries in various localities. The method of smelting revealed by these finds carries out Lord Avebury’s suggestion. In India, where zinc and copper ore occur together, brass (which is an alloy of the two metals) was similarly hit upon.

So slight was the change in fashions and methods produced by the appearance of bronze, that for a long time such bronze axes and so forth as were made were cast in moulds to the shape of the stone implements they were superseding.

Finally, perhaps as early as 3000 years ago in Europe, and even earlier in Asia Minor, men began to smelt iron. Once smelting was known to men, there is no great marvel in the finding of iron. They smelted iron by blowing up a charcoal fire, and wrought it by heating and hammering. They produced it at first in comparatively small pieces; its appearance worked a gradual revolution in weapons and implements; but it did not suffice to change the general character of men’s surroundings. Much the same daily life that was being led by the more settled Neolithic men 10,000 years ago was being led by peasants in out-of-the-way places all over Europe at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

People talk of the Stone Age, the Bronze Age, and the Iron Age in Europe, but it is misleading to put these ages as if they were of equal importance in history. Much truer is it to say that there was:

(1) An Early Palæolithic Age, of vast duration; (2) a Later Palæolithic Age, that lasted not a tithe of the time; and (3) the Age of Cultivation, the age of the white men in Europe, which began 10,000 or at most 12,000 years ago, of which the Neolithic Period was the beginning, and which is still going on.
§ 2

We do not know yet the region in which the ancestors of the white and whitish Neolithic peoples worked their way up from the Palæolithic stage of human development. Probably it was somewhere about south-western Asia, or in some region now submerged beneath the Mediterranean Sea or the Indian Ocean, that, while the Neanderthal men still lived their hard lives in the bleak climate of a glaciated Europe, the ancestors of the white men developed the rude arts of their Later Palæolithic period. But they do not seem to have developed the artistic skill of their more northerly kindred, the European Later Palæolithic races. And through the hundred centuries or so while Reindeer Men were living under comparatively unprogressive conditions upon the steppes of France, Germany, and Spain, these more-favoured and progressive people to the south were mastering agriculture, learning to develop their appliances, taming the dog, domesticating cattle, and, as the climate to the north mitigated and the equatorial climate grew more tropical, spreading northward. All these early chapters of our story have yet to be disinterred. They will probably be found in Asia Minor, Persia, Arabia, India, or north Africa, or they lie beneath the Mediterranean waters. Twelve thousand years ago, or thereabouts—we are still too early for anything but the roughest chronology—Neolithic peoples were scattered all over Europe, north Africa, and Asia. They were peoples at about the level of many of the Polynesian islanders of the last century, and they were the most advanced peoples in the world.

§ 3

It will be of interest here to give a brief account of the life of the European Neolithic people before the appearance of metals. We get our light upon that life from various sources. They scattered their refuse about, and in some places (e.g. on the Danish coast) it accumulated in great heaps, known as the kitchen middens. They buried some of their people, but not the common herd, with great care and distinction, and made huge heaps of earth over their sepulchres; these heaps are the barrows or dolmens which contribute a feature to the European, Indian, and American scenery in many districts to this day. In connection with these mounds, or independently of them, they set up great stones (megaliths), either singly or in groups, of which Stonehenge in Wiltshire and Carnac in Brittany are among the best-known examples. In various places their villages are still traceable.

One fruitful source of knowledge about Neolithic life comes from Switzerland, and was first revealed by the very dry winter of 1854, when the water level of one of the lakes, sinking to an unheard-of lowness, revealed the foundations of prehistoric pile dwellings of the Neolithic and early Bronze Ages, built out over the water after the fashion of similar homes that exist to-day in Celebes and elsewhere. Not only were the timbers of those ancient platforms preserved, but a great multitude of wooden, bone, stone, and earthenware utensils and ornaments, remains of food and the like, were found in the peaty accumulations below them. Even pieces of net and garments have been recovered. Similar lake dwellings existed in Scotland, Ireland, and elsewhere—there are well-known remains at Glastonbury in Somersetshire; in Ireland lake dwellings were inhabited from prehistoric times up to the days when O'Neil of Tyrone was fighting against the English before the plantation of Scotch colonists to replace the Irish in Ulster in the reign of James I of England. These lake villages had considerable defensive value, and there was a sanitary advantage in living over flowing water.

Probably these Neolithic Swiss pile dwellings did not shelter the largest communities that existed in those days. They were the homes of small patriarchal groups. Elsewhere upon fertile plains and in more open country there were probably already much larger assemblies of homes than in those mountain valleys. There are traces of such a large community of families in Wiltshire in England, for example; the remains of the stone circle of Avebury near Silbury mound were once the “finest megalithic ruin in Europe.”[54] It consisted of two circles of stones surrounded by a larger circle and a ditch, and covering all together twenty-eight and a half acres. From it two avenues of stones, each a mile and a half long, ran west and south on either side of Silbury Hill. Silbury Hill is the largest prehistoric artificial mound in England. The dimensions of this centre of a faith and a social life now forgotten altogether by men indicate the concerted efforts and interests of a very large number of people, widely scattered though they may have been over the west and south and centre of England. Possibly they assembled at some particular season of the year in a primitive sort of fair. The whole community “lent a hand” in building the mounds and hauling the stones. The Swiss pile-dwellers, on the contrary, seem to have lived in practically self-contained villages.
These lake-village people were considerably more advanced in methods and knowledge, and probably much later in time than the early Neolithic people who accumulated the shell mounds, known as kitchen middens, on the Danish and Scotch coasts. These kitchen midden folk may have been as early as 10,000 B.C. or earlier; the lake dwellings were probably occupied continuously from 5000 or 4000 B.C. down almost to historic times. Those early kitchen-midden people were among the most barbaric of Neolithic peoples, their stone axes were rough, and they had no domesticated animal except the dog. The lake-dwellers, on the other hand, had, in addition to the dog, which was of a medium-sized breed, oxen, goats, and sheep. Later on, as they were approaching the Bronze Age, they got swine. The remains of cattle and goats prevail in their débris, and, having regard to the climate and country about them, it seems probable that these beasts were sheltered in the buildings upon the piles in winter, and that fodder was stored for them. Probably the beasts lived in the same houses with the people, as the men and beasts do now in Swiss chalets. The people in the houses possibly milked the cows and goats, and milk perhaps played as important a part in their economy as it does in that of the mountain Swiss of to-day. But of that we are not sure at present.

Milk is not a natural food for adults; it must have seemed queer stuff to take at first; and it may have been only after much breeding that a continuous supply of milk was secured from cows and goats. Some people think that the use of milk, cheese, butter, and other milk products came later into human life when men became nomadic. The writer is, however, disposed to give the Neolithic men credit for having discovered milking. The milk, if they did use it (and, no doubt, in that case sour curdled milk also, but not well-made cheese and butter), they must have kept in earthenware pots, for they had pottery, though it was roughly hand-made pottery and not the shapely product of the potter’s wheel. They eked out this food supply by hunting. They killed and ate red deer and roe deer, bison and wild boar. And they ate the fox, a rather high-flavoured meat, and not what any one would eat in a world of plenty. Oddly enough, they do not seem to have eaten the hare, although it was available as food. They are supposed to have avoided eating it, as some savages are said to avoid eating it to this day, because they feared that the flesh of so timid a creature might make them, by a sort of infection, cowardly.

Of their agricultural methods we know very little. No ploughs and no hoes have been found. They were of wood and have perished. Neolithic men cultivated and ate wheat, barley, and millet, but they knew nothing of oats or rye. Their grain they roasted, ground between stones and stored in pots, to be eaten when needed. And they made exceedingly solid and heavy bread, because round flat slabs of it have been got out of these deposits. Apparently they had no yeast. If they had no yeast, then they had no fermented drink. One sort of barley that they had is the sort that was cultivated by the ancient Greeks, Romans, and Egyptians, and they also had an Egyptian variety of wheat, showing that their ancestors had brought or derived
this cultivation from the south-east. The centre of diffusion of wheat was somewhere in the eastern Mediterranean region. A
wild form is still found in the neighbourhood of Mt. Hermon (see footnote to Ch. XVI, § 1). When the lake dwellers sowed their
little patches of wheat in Switzerland, they were already following the immemorial practice of mankind. The seed must have
been brought age by age from that distant centre of diffusion. In the ancestral lands of the south-east men had already been
sowing wheat perhaps for thousands of years. Those lake dwellers also ate peas, and crab-apples—the only apples that
then existed in the world. Cultivation and selection had not yet produced the apple of to-day.[v1-114]

They dressed chiefly in skins, but they also made a rough cloth of flax. Fragments of that flaxen cloth have been discovered.
Their nets were made of flax; they had as yet no knowledge of hemp and hempen rope. With the coming of bronze, their pins
and ornaments increased in number. There is reason to believe they set great store upon their hair, wearing it in large shocks
with pins of bone and afterwards of metal. To judge from the absence of realistic carvings or engravings or paintings, they either
did not decorate their garments or decorated them with plaids, spots, interlacing designs, or similar conventional ornament.
Before the coming of bronze there is no evidence of stools or tables; the Neolithic people probably squatted on their clay floors.
There were no cats in these lake dwellings; no mice or rats had yet adapted themselves to human dwellings; the cluck of the
hen was not as yet added to the sounds of human life, nor the domestic egg to its diet.[v1-115]

The chief tool and weapon of Neolithic man was his axe; his next the bow and arrow. His arrow heads were of flint, beautifully
made, and he lashed them tightly to their shafts. Probably he prepared the ground for his sowing with a pole, or a pole upon
which he had stuck a stag’s horn. Fish he hooked or harpooned. These implements no doubt stood about in the interior of the
house, from the walls of which hung his fowling-nets. On the floor, which was of clay or trodden cow-dung (after the fashion of
hut floors in India to-day), stood pots and jars and woven baskets containing grain, milk, and such-like food. Some of the pots
and pans hung by rope loops to the walls. At one end of the room, and helping to keep it warm in winter by their animal heat,
stabled the beasts. The children took the cows and goats out to graze, and brought them in at night before the wolves and
bears came prowling.[v1-115]

Since Neolithic man had the bow, he probably also had stringed instruments, for the rhythmic twanging of a bow-string seems
almost inevitably to lead to that. He also had earthenware drums across which skins were stretched; perhaps also he made
drums by stretching skins over hollow tree stems.[v1-115] We do not know when man began to sing, but evidently he was making
music, and since he had words, songs were no doubt being made. To begin with, perhaps, he just let his voice loose as one
may hear Italian peasants now behind their ploughs singing songs without words. After dark in the winter he sat in his house
and talked and sang and made implements by touch rather than sight. His lighting must have been poor, and chiefly firelight, but
there was probably always some fire in the village, summer or winter. Fire was too troublesome to make for men to be willing
to let it out readily. Sometimes a great disaster happened to those pile villages, the fire got free, and they were burnt out. The
Swiss deposits contain clear evidence of such catastrophes.

All this we gather from the remains of the Swiss pile dwellings, and such was the character of the human life that spread over
Europe, coming from the south and from the east with the forests as, 10,000 or 12,000 years ago, the reindeer and the Reindeer
Men passed away. It is evident that we have here a way[v1-116] of life already separated by a great gap of thousands of years of
invention from its original Palæolithic stage. The steps by which it rose from that condition we can only guess at. From being a
hunter hovering upon the outskirts of flocks and herds of wild cattle and sheep, and from being a co-hunter with the dog, man
by insensible degrees may have developed a sense of proprietorship in the beasts and struck up a friendship with his canine
competitor. He learnt to turn the cattle when they wandered too far; he brought his better brain to bear to guide them to fresh
pasture. He hemmed the beasts into valleys and enclosures where he could be sure to find them again. He fed them when they
starved, and so slowly he tamed them. Perhaps his agriculture began with the storage of fodder. He reaped, no doubt, before
he sowed. The Palæolithic ancestor away in that unknown land of origin to the south-east first supplemented the precarious
meat supply of the hunter by eating roots and fruits and wild grains. Man storing graminiferous grasses for his cattle might easily
come to beat out the grain for himself.

§ 4

How did man learn to sow in order that he might reap?

We may hesitate here to guess at the answer to that question. But a very great deal has been made of the fact that wherever
sowing occurs among primitive people in any part of the world, it is accompanied by a human sacrifice or by some ceremony
which may be interpreted as the mitigation and vestige of an ancient sacrificial custom. This is the theme of Sir J. G. Frazer's
Golden Bough. From this it has been supposed that the first sowings were in connection with the burial of a human being, either
through wild grain being put with the dead body as food or through the scattering of grain over the body. It may be argued
that there is only one reason why man should have disturbed the surface of the earth before he took to agriculture, and that
was to bury his dead; and in order to bury a dead body and make a mound over it, it was probably necessary for him to disturb
the surface over a considerable area. Neolithic man's chief apparatus for mound-making consisted of picks of deer's horn and
shovels of their shoulder-blades, and with this he would have[v1-117] found great difficulty in making a deep excavation. Nor do
we find such excavations beside the barrows. Instead of going down into tough sub-soil, the mound-makers probably scraped
up some of the surface soil and carried it to the mound. All this seems probable, and it gives just that wide area of bared
and turned-over earth upon which an eared grass, such as barley, millet, or primitive wheat, might have seeded and grown.
Moreover, the mound-makers, being busy with the mound, would not have time to hunt meat, and if they were accustomed
to store and eat wild grain, they would be likely to scatter grain, and the grain would be blown by the wind out of their rude
vessels over the area they were disturbing. And if they were bringing up seed in any quantity in baskets and pots to bury with
the corpse, some of it might easily blow and be scattered over the fresh earth. Returning later to the region of the mound, they
would discover an exceptionally vigorous growth of food grain, and it would be a natural thing to associate it with the buried
person, and regard it as a consequence of his death and burial. He had given them back the grain they gave him increased a
hundredfold.

At any rate, there is apparently all over the world a traceable association in ancient ceremonial and in the minds of barbaric
people between the death and burial of a person and the ploughing and sowing of grain. From this it is assumed that there was
once a world-wide persuasion that it was necessary that some one should be buried before a crop could be sown, and that out
of this persuasion arose a practice and tradition of human sacrifice at seedtime, which has produced profound effects in the
religious development of the race. There may have been some idea of refreshing the earth by a blood draught or revivifying it
with the life of the sacrificed person. We state these considerations here merely as suggestions that have been made of the way
in which the association of seedtime and sacrifice arose. They are, at the best, speculations; they have a considerable vogue at
the present time, and we have to note them, but we have neither the space nor the time here to examine them at length. The
valuable accumulations of suggestions due to the industry and ingenuity of Sir J. G. Frazer still[v1-118] await a thorough critical
examination, and to his works the reader must go for the indefatigable expansion of this idea.

§ 5

All these early beginnings must have taken place far back in time, and in regions of the world that have still to be effectively
explored by the archaeologists. They were probably going on in Asia or Africa, in what is now the bed of the Mediterranean, or
in the region of the Indian Ocean, while the Reindeer man was developing his art in Europe. The Neolithic men who drifted over
Europe and western Asia 12,000 or 10,000 years ago were long past these beginnings; they were already close, a few thousand
years, to the dawn of written tradition and the remembered history of mankind. Without any very great shock or break, bronze
came at last into human life, giving a great advantage in warfare to those tribes who first obtained it. Written history had already
begun before weapons of iron came into Europe to supersede bronze.
Already in those days a sort of primitive trade had sprung up. Bronze and bronze weapons, and such rare and hard stones as jade, gold because of its plastic and ornamental possibilities, and skins and flax-net and cloth, were being swapped and stolen and passed from hand to hand over great stretches of country. Salt also was probably being traded. On a meat dietary men can live without salt, but grain-consuming people need it just as herbivorous animals need it. Hopf says that bitter tribal wars have been carried on by the desert tribes of the Soudan in recent years for the possession of the salt deposits between Fezzan and Murzik. To begin with, barter, blackmail, tribute, and robbery by violence passed into each other by insensible degrees. Men got what they wanted by such means as they could.\[59\]

\section{6}

So far we have been telling of a history without events, a history of ages and periods and stages in development. But before we conclude this portion of the human story, we must record what was probably an event of primary importance and at first perhaps of tragic importance to developing mankind, and that was the breaking in of the Atlantic waters to the great Mediterranean valley.

The reader must keep in mind that we are endeavouring to give him plain statements that he can take hold of comfortably. But both in the matter of our time charts and the three maps we have given of prehistoric geography there is necessarily much speculative matter. We have dated the last Glacial Age and the appearance of the true men as about 40,000 or 35,000 years ago. Please bear that “about” in mind. The truth may be 60,000 or 20,000. But it is no good saying “a very long time” or “ages” ago, because then the reader will not know whether we mean centuries or millions of years. And similarly in these maps we give, they represent not the truth, but something like the truth. The outline of the land was “some such outline.” There were such seas and such land masses. But both Mr. Horrabin, who has drawn these maps, and I, who have incited him to do so, have preferred to err on the timid side.\[60\] We are not geologists enough to launch out into original research in these matters, and so we have stuck to the 40-fathom line and the recent deposits as our guides for our post-glacial map and for the map of 12,000 to 10,000 B.C. But in one matter we have gone beyond these guides. It is practically certain that at the end of the last Glacial Age the Mediterranean was a couple of land-locked sea basins, not connected—or only connected by a torrential overflow river. The eastern basin was the fresher; it was fed by the Nile, the “Adriatic” river, the “Red-Sea” river, and perhaps by a river that poured down amidst the mountains that are now the Greek Archipelago from the very much bigger Sea of Central Asia that then existed. Almost certainly human beings, and possibly even Neolithic men, wandered over that now lost Mediterranean valley.

The reasons for believing this are very good and plain. To this day the Mediterranean is a sea of evaporation. The rivers that flow into it do not make up for the evaporation from its surface. There is a constant current of water pouring into the Mediterranean from the Atlantic, and another current streaming in from the Bosphorus and Black Sea. For the Black Sea gets more water than it needs from the big rivers that flow into it; it is an overflowing sea, while the Mediterranean is a thirsty sea. From which it must be plain that when the Mediterranean was cut off from both the Atlantic Ocean and the Black Sea it must have been a shrinking sea with its waters sinking to a much lower level than those of the ocean outside. This is the case of the Caspian Sea to-day. Still more so is it the case with the Dead Sea.

But if this reasoning is sound, then where to-day roll the blue waters of the Mediterranean there must once have been great areas of land, and land with a very agreeable climate. This was probably the case during the last Glacial Age, and we do not know how near it was to our time when the change occurred that brought back the ocean waters into the Mediterranean basin. Certainly there must have been Grimaldi people, and perhaps even Azilian and Neolithic people going about in the valleys and forests of these regions that are now submerged. The Neolithic Dark Whites, the people of the Mediterranean race, may have gone far towards the beginnings of settlement and civilization in that great lost Mediterranean Valley.

Mr. W. B. Wright\[61\] gives us some very stimulating suggestions here. He suggests that in the Mediterranean basin there were two lakes, “one a fresh-water lake, in the eastern depression, which drained into the other in the western depression. It is interesting to think what must have happened when the ocean level rose once more as a result of the dissipation of the ice-sheets, and its waters began to pour over into the Mediterranean area. The inflow, small at first, must have ultimately increased to enormous dimensions, as the channel was slowly lowered by erosion and the ocean level slowly rose. If there were any
unconsolidated materials on the sill of the Strait, the result must have been a genuine debacle, and if we consider the length of
time which even an enormous torrent would take to fill such a basin as that of the Mediterranean, we must conclude\[v1-121]\ that
this result was likely to have been attained in any case. Now, this may seem all the wildest speculation, but it is not entirely so,
for if we examine a submarine contour map of the Straits of Gibraltar, we find there is an enormous valley running up from the
Mediterranean deep, right through the Straits, and trenching some distance out on to the Atlantic shelf. This valley or gorge is
probably the work of the inflowing waters of the ocean at the termination of the period of interior drainage."

This refilling of the Mediterranean, which by the rough chronology we are employing in this book may have happened
somewhen between 30,000 and 10,000 B.C., must have been one of the greatest single events in the pre-history of our race. If
the later date is the truer, then, as the reader will see plainly enough after reading the next two chapters, the crude beginnings
of civilization, the first lake dwellings and the first cultivation, were probably round that eastern Levantine Lake into which there
flowed not only the Nile, but the two great rivers that are now the Adriatic and the Red Sea. Suddenly the ocean waters began
to break through over the westward hills and to pour in upon these primitive peoples—the lake that had been their home and
friend became their enemy; its waters rose and never abated; their settlements were submerged; the waters pursued them in
their flight. Day by day and year by year the waters spread up the valleys and drove mankind before them. Many must have
been surrounded and caught by the continually rising salt flood. It knew no check; it came faster and faster; it rose over the
treetops, over the hills, until it had filled the whole basin of the present Mediterranean and until it lapped the mountain cliffs of
Arabia and Africa. Far away, long before the dawn of history, this catastrophe occurred.\[v1-122]\

XII

EARLY THOUGHT\[62]\n
\[§ 1. Primitive Philosophy. \ § 2. The Old Man in Religion. \ § 3. Fear and Hope in Religion. \ § 4. Stars and Seasons. \ § 5. Story-telling
and Myth-making. \ § 6. Complex Origins of Religion.\]

\[§ 1\]

BEFORE we go on to tell how 6000 or 7000 years ago men began to gather into the first towns and to develop something more
than the loose-knit tribes that had hitherto been their highest political association, something must be said about the things that
were going on inside these brains of which we have traced the growth and development through a period of 500,000 years
from the Pithecanthropus stage.

What was man thinking about himself and about the world in those remote days?

At first he thought very little about anything but immediate things. At first he was busy thinking such things as: “Here is a bear;
what shall I do?” Or “There is a squirrel; how can I get it?” Until language had developed to some extent there could have
been little thinking beyond the range of actual experience, for language is the instrument of thought as book-keeping is the
instrument of business. It records and fixes and enables thought to get on to more and more complex ideas. It is
the
hand of the mind to hold and keep. Primordial man, before he could talk, probably saw very vividly, mimicked very cleverly,
gestured, laughed, danced, and lived, without much speculation about whence he came or why he lived. He feared the dark,
no doubt, and thunderstorms and big animals and queer things and whatever he dreamt about, and no doubt he did things to
propitiate what he feared or to change his luck and please the imaginary powers in rock and beast and river. He made no clear
distinction between animate and inanimate things; if a stick hurt him, he kicked it; if the river foamed and flooded, he thought it
was hostile. His thought was probably very much at the level of a bright little contemporary boy of four or five. He had the same
subtle unreasonableness of transition and the same limitations. But since he had little or no speech he would do little to pass on
the fancies that came to him, and develop any tradition or concerted acts about them.

The drawings even of Late Palaeolithic man do not suggest that he paid any attention to sun or moon or stars or trees. He
was preoccupied only with animals and men. Probably he took day and night, sun and stars, trees and mountains, as being in
the nature of things—as a child takes its meal times and its nursery staircase for granted. So far as we can judge, he drew no

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fantasies, no ghosts or anything of that sort. The Reindeer Men’s drawings are fearless familiar things, with no hint about them of any religious or occult feelings. There is scarcely anything that we can suppose to be a religious or mystical symbol at all in his productions. No doubt he had a certain amount of what is called fetishism in his life; he did things we should now think unreasonable to produce desired ends, for that is all fetishism amounts to; it is only incorrect science based on guess-work or false analogy, and entirely different in its nature from religion. No doubt he was excited by his dreams, and his dreams mixed up at times in his mind with his waking impressions and puzzled him. Since he buried his dead, and since even the later Neanderthal men seem to have buried their dead, and apparently with food and weapons, it has been argued that he had a belief in a future life. But it is just as reasonable to suppose that early men buried their dead with food and weapons because they doubted if they were dead, which is not the same thing as believing them to have immortal spirits, and that their belief in their continuing vitality was reinforced by dreams of the departed. They may have ascribed a sort of were-wolf existence to the dead, and wished to propitiate them.

The Reindeer man, we feel, was too intelligent and too like ourselves not to have had some speech, but quite probably it was not very serviceable for anything beyond direct statement or matter of fact narrative. He lived in a larger community than the Neanderthaler, but how large we do not know. Except when game is swarming, hunting communities must not keep together in large bodies or they will starve. The Indians who depend upon the caribou in Labrador must be living under circumstances rather like those of the Reindeer men. They scatter in small family groups, as the caribou scatter in search of food; but when the deer collect for the seasonal migration, the Indians also collect. That is the time for trade and feasts and marriages. The simplest American Indian is 10,000 years more sophisticated than the Reindeer man, but probably that sort of gathering and dispersal was also the way of Reindeer men. At Solutré in France there are traces of a great camping and feasting-place. There was no doubt an exchange of news there, but one may doubt if there was anything like an exchange of ideas. One sees no scope in such a life for theology or philosophy or superstition or speculation. Fears, yes; but unsystematic fears; fancies and freaks of the imagination, but personal and transitory freaks and fancies.

Perhaps there was a certain power of suggestion in these encounters. A fear really felt needs few words for its transmission; a value set upon something may be very simply conveyed.

In these questions of primitive thought and religion, we must remember that the lowly and savage peoples of to-day probably throw very little light on the mental state of men before the days of fully developed language. Primordial man could have had little or no tradition before the development of speech. All savage and primitive peoples of to-day, on the contrary, are soaked in tradition—the tradition of thousands of generations. They may have weapons like their remote ancestors and methods like them, but what were slight and shallow impressions on the minds of their predecessors are now deep and intricate grooves worn throughout the intervening centuries generation by generation.

§ 2

Certain very fundamental things there may have been in men’s minds long before the coming of speech. Chief among these must have been fear of the Old Man of the tribe. The young of the primitive squatting-place grew up under that fear. Objects associated with him were probably forbidden. Every one was forbidden to touch his spear or to sit in his place, just as to-day little boys must not touch father’s pipe or sit in his chair. He was probably the master of all the women. The youths of the little community had to remember that. The idea of something forbidden, the idea of things being, as it is called, tabu, not to be touched, not to be looked at, may thus have got well into the human mind at a very early stage indeed. J. J. Atkinson, in an ingenious analysis of these primitive tabus which are found among savage peoples all over the world, the tabus that separate brother and sister, the tabus that make a man run and hide from his stepmother, traces them to such a fundamental cause as this. Only by respecting this primal law could the young male hope to escape the Old Man’s wrath. And the Old Man must have been an actor in many a primordial nightmare. A disposition to propitiate him even after he was dead is quite understandable. One was not sure that he was dead. He might only be asleep or shamming. Long after an Old Man was dead, when there was nothing to represent him but a mound and a megalith, the women would convey to their children how awful
and wonderful he was. And being still a terror to his own little tribe, it was easy to go on to hoping that he would be a terror to
other and hostile people. In his life he had fought for his tribe, even if he had bullied it. Why not when he was dead? One sees
that the Old Man idea was an idea very natural to the primitive mind and capable of great development.[64]

§ 3

Another idea probably arose early out of the mysterious visitation of infectious diseases, and that was the idea of uncleanness
and of being accursed. From that, too, there may have come an idea of avoiding particular places and persons, and persons in
particular phases of health. Here was the root of another set of tabus. Then man, from the very dawn of his mental life, may have
had a feeling of the sinister about places and things. Animals, who dread traps, have that feeling. A tiger will abandon its usual
jungle route at the sight of a few threads of cotton.[65] Like most young animals, young human beings are easily made fearful
of this or that by their nurses and seniors. Here is another set of ideas, ideas of repulsion and avoidance, that sprang up almost
inevitably in men.

As soon as speech began to develop, it must have got to work upon such fundamental feelings and begun to systematize them,
and keep them in mind. By talking together men would reinforce each other’s fears, and establish a common tradition of tabus
of things forbidden and of things unclean. With the idea of uncleanness would come ideas of cleansing and of removing a
curse. The cleansing would be conducted through the advice and with the aid of wise old men or wise old women, and in such
cleansing would lie the germ of the earliest priestcraft and witchcraft.

Speech from the first would be a powerful supplement to the merely imitative education and to the education of cuffs and blows
conducted by a speechless parent. Mothers would tell their young and scold their young. As speech developed, men would
find they had experiences and persuasions that gave them or seemed to give them power. They would make secrets of these
things. There is a double streak in the human mind, a streak of cunning secretiveness and a streak perhaps of later origin that
makes us all anxious to tell and astonish and impress each other. Many people make secrets in order to have secrets to tell.
These secrets of early men they would convey to younger, more impressionable people, more or less honestly and impressively
in some process of initiation. Moreover, the pedagogic spirit overflows in the human mind; most people like “telling other
people not to.” Extensive arbitrary prohibitions for the boys, for the girls, for the women, also probably came very early into
human history.

Then the idea of the sinister has for its correlative the idea of the propitious, and from that to the idea of making things propitious
by ceremonies is an easy step.[66]

§ 4

Out of such ideas and a jumble of kindred ones grew the first quasi-religious elements in human life. With every development of
speech it became possible to intensify and develop the tradition of tabus and restraints and ceremonies. There is not a savage
or barbaric race to-day that is not held in a net of such tradition. And with the coming of the primitive herdsman there would
be a considerable broadening out of all this sort of practice. Things hitherto unheeded would be found of importance in human
affairs. Neolithic man was nomadic in a different spirit from the mere daylight drift after food of the primordial hunter. He was
a herdsman, upon whose mind a sense of direction and the lie of the land had been forced. He watched his flock by night as
well as by day. The sun by day and presently the stars by night helped to guide his migrations; he began to find after many
ages that the stars are steadier guides than the sun. He would begin to note particular stars and star groups, and to distinguish
any individual thing was, for primitive man, to believe it individualized and personal. He would begin to think of the chief stars
as persons, very shining and dignified and trustworthy persons looking at him like bright eyes in the night. His primitive tillage
strengthened his sense of the seasons. Particular stars ruled his heavens when seedtime was due. The beginnings of agriculture
were in the sub-tropical zone, or even nearer the equator, where stars of the first magnitude shine with a splendour unknown in
more temperate latitudes.[v1-128]
And Neolithic man was counting, and falling under the spell of numbers. There are savage languages that have no word for any number above five. Some peoples cannot go above two. But Neolithic man in the lands of his origin in Asia and Africa even more than in Europe was already counting his accumulating possessions. He was beginning to use tallies, and wondering at the triangularity of three and the squareness of four, and why some quantities like twelve were easy to divide in all sorts of ways, and others, like thirteen, impossible. Twelve became a noble, generous, and familiar number to him, and thirteen rather an outcast and disreputable one.

Probably man began reckoning time by the clock of the full and new moons. Moonlight is an important thing to herdsmen who no longer merely hunt their herds, but watch and guard them. Moonlight, too, was perhaps his time for love-making, as indeed it may have been for primordial man and the ground ape ancestor before him. But from the phases of the moon, as his tillage increased, man’s attitude would go on to the greater cycle of the seasons. Primordial man probably only drifted before the winter as the days grew cold. Neolithic man knew surely that the winter would come, and stored his fodder and present his grain. He had to fix a seedtime, a propitious seedtime, or his sowing was a failure. The earliest recorded reckoning is by moons and by generations of men. The former seems to be the case in the Book of Genesis, where, if one reads the great ages of the patriarchs who lived before the flood as lunar months instead of years, Methusaleh and the others are reduced to a credible length of life. But with agriculture began the difficult task of squaring the lunar month with the solar year; a task which has left its scars on our calendar to-day. Easter shifts uneasily from year to year, to the great discomfort of holiday-makers; it is now inconveniently early and now late in the season because of this ancient reference of time to the moon.

And when men began to move with set intention from place to place with their animal and other possessions, then they would begin to develop the idea of other places in which they were not, and to think of what might be in those other places. And in any valley where they lingered for a time, they would, remembering how they got there, ask, “How did this or that other thing get here?” They would begin to wonder what was beyond the mountains, and where the sun went when it set, and what was above the clouds.

§ 5

The capacity for telling things increased with their vocabulary. The simple individual fancies, the unsystematic fetish tricks and fundamental tabus of Palæolithic man began to be handed on and made into a more consistent system. Men began to tell stories about themselves, about the tribe, about its tabus and why they had to be, about the world and the why for the world. A tribal mind came into existence, a tradition. Palæolithic man was certainly more of a free individualist, more of an artist, as well as more of a savage, than Neolithic man. Neolithic man was coming under prescription; he could be trained from his youth and told to do things and not to do things; he was not so free to form independent ideas of his own about things. He had thoughts given to him; he was under a new power of suggestion. And to have more words and to attend more to words is not simply to increase mental
power; words themselves are powerful things and dangerous things. Palæolithic man’s words, perhaps, were chiefly just names. He used them for what they were. But Neolithic man was thinking about these words, he was thinking about a number of things with a great deal of verbal confusion, and getting to some odd conclusions. In speech he had woven a net to bind his race together, but also it was a net about his feet. Man was binding himself into new and larger and more efficient combinations indeed, but at a price. One of the most notable things about the Neolithic Age is the total absence of that free direct artistic impulse which was the supreme quality of later Palæolithic man. We find much industry, much skill, polished implements, pottery with conventional designs, co-operation upon all sorts of things, but no evidence of personal creativeness. Self-suppression is beginning for men. Man has entered upon the long and tortuous and difficult path towards a life for the common good, with all its sacrifice of personal impulse, which he is still treading to-day.

Certain things appear in the mythology of mankind again and again. Neolithic man was enormously impressed by serpents—and he no longer took the sun for granted. Nearly everywhere that Neolithic culture went, there went a disposition to associate the sun and the serpent in decoration and worship. This primitive serpent worship spread ultimately far beyond the regions where the snake is of serious practical importance in human life.

§ 6

With the beginnings of agriculture a fresh set of ideas arose in men’s minds. We have already indicated how easily and naturally men may have come to associate the idea of sowing with a burial. Sir J. G. Frazer has pursued the development of this association in the human mind, linking up with it the conception of special sacrificial persons who are killed at seedtime, the conception of a specially purified class of people to kill these sacrifices, the first priests, and the conception of a sacrament, a ceremonial feast in which the tribe eats portions of the body of the victim in order to share in the sacrificial benefits.

Out of all these factors, out of the Old Man tradition, out of the desire to escape infection and uncleanness, out of the desire for power and success through magic, out of the sacrificial tradition of seedtime, and out of a number of like beliefs and mental experiments and misconceptions, a complex something was growing up in the lives of men which was beginning to bind them together mentally and emotionally in a common life and action. This something we may call religion (Lat. religare, to bind). It was not a simple or logical something, it was a tangle of ideas about commanding beings and spirits, about gods, about all sorts of “musts” and “must-nots.” Like all other human matters, religion has grown. It must be clear from what has gone before that primitive man—much less his ancestral apes and his ancestral Mesozoic mammals—could have had no idea of God or Religion; only very slowly did his brain and his powers of comprehension become capable of such general conceptions. Religion is something that has grown up with and through human association, and God has been and is still being discovered by man.
This book is not a theological book, and it is not for us to embark upon theological discussion; but it is a part, a necessary and central part, of the history of man to describe the dawn and development of his religious ideas and their influence upon his activities. All these factors we have noted must have contributed to this development, and various writers have laid most stress upon one or other of them. Sir J. G. Frazer we have already noted as the leading student of the derivation of sacraments from magic sacrifices. Grant Allen, in his *Evolution of the Idea of God*, laid stress chiefly on the posthumous worship of the “Old Man.” Sir E. B. Tylor (*Primitive Culture*) gave his attention mainly to the disposition of primitive man to ascribe a soul to every object animate and inanimate. Mr. A. E. Crawley, in *The Tree of Life*, has called attention to other centres of impulse and emotion, and particularly to sex as a source of deep excitement. The thing we have to bear in mind is that Neolithic man was still mentally undeveloped, he could be confused and illogical to a degree quite impossible to an educated modern person. Conflicting and contradictory ideas could lie in his mind without challenging one another; now one thing ruled his thoughts intensely and vividly and now another; his fears, his acts, were still disconnected as children’s are. Confusedly under the stimulus of the need and possibility of co-operation and a combined life, Neolithic mankind was feeling out for guidance and knowledge. Men were becoming aware that personally they needed protection and direction, cleansing from impurity, power beyond their own strength. Confusedly in response to that demand, bold men, wise men, shrewd and cunning men were arising to become magicians, priests, chiefs, and kings. They are not to be thought of as cheats or usurpers of power, nor the rest of mankind as their dupes. All men are mixed in their motives; a hundred things move men to seek ascendancy over other men, but not all such motives are base or bad. The magicians usually believed more or less in their own magic, the priests in their ceremonies, the chiefs in their right. The history of mankind henceforth is a history of more or less blind endeavours to conceive a common purpose in relation to which all men may live happily, and to create and develop a common consciousness and a common stock of knowledge which may serve and illuminate that purpose. In a vast variety of forms this appearance of kings and priests and magic men was happening all over the world under Neolithic conditions. Everywhere mankind was seeking where knowledge and mastery and magic power might reside; everywhere individual men were willing, honestly or dishonestly, to rule, to direct, or to be the magic beings who would reconcile the confusions of the community.

In many ways the simplicity, directness, and detachment of a later Palæolithic rock-painter appeal more to modern sympathies than does the state of mind of these Neolithic men, full of the fear of some ancient Old Man who had developed into a tribal God, obsessed by ideas of sacrificial propitiation and magic murder. No doubt the reindeer hunter was a ruthless hunter and a combative and passionate creature, but he killed for reasons we can still understand; Neolithic man, under the sway of talk and a confused thought process, killed on theory, he killed for monstrous and now incredible ideas, he killed those he loved through
fear and under direction. Those Neolithic men not only made human sacrifices at seedtime; there is every reason to suppose they sacrificed wives and slaves at the burial of their chieftains; they killed men, women, and children whenever they were under adversity and thought the gods were athirst. They practised infanticide.[69] All these things passed on into the Bronze Age.

Hitherto a social consciousness had been asleep and not even[v1-135] dreaming in human history. Before it awakened it produced nightmares.

Away beyond the dawn of history, 3000 or 4000 years ago, one thinks of the Wiltshire uplands in the twilight of a midsummer day's morning. The torches pale in the growing light. One has a dim apprehension of a procession through the avenue of stone, of priests, perhaps fantastically dressed with skins and horns and horrible painted masks—not the robed and bearded dignitaries our artists represent the Druids to have been—of chiefs in skins adorned with necklaces of teeth and bearing spears and axes, their great heads of hair held up with pins of bone, of women in skins or flaxen robes, of a great peering crowd of shock-headed men and naked children. They have assembled from many distant places; the ground between the avenues and Silbury Hill is dotted with their encampments. A certain festive cheerfulness prevails. And amidst the throng march the appointed human victims, submissive, helpless, staring towards the distant smoking altar at which they are to die—that the harvests may be good and the tribe increase.... To that had life progressed 3000 or 4000 years ago from its starting-place in the slime of the tidal beaches.
Sample Definition Essay Assignment

English 100 Essay 2: Argument of Definition (750 points)

Writing Assignment

Definition is a challenging rhetorical mode. Writing definitions, one might be asked to challenge a widely accepted definition, create a controversial definition, or try to figure out if something fits an existing definition. For this assignment, I will require you to find at least two outside sources.

Using at least two library database, book, or ebook sources other than reference works or dictionaries, write a three-page (not counting the Works Cited) definition of a term or phrase in one of the following topics:

A) How has Disney’s purchase of Lucasfilm altered the meaning of the Star Wars franchise?

B) Since Babilonia’s essay “The Celebrity Chef” has been written, argue for an expanded definition of the celebrity chef. With what added duties, concerns, activities does the contemporary celebrity chef concern herself? (Don’t use my last sentence’s wording in your essay.)

C) Using several examples, define the ideal video game protagonist (hero or heroine). You may not reuse any sources, ideas, or examples from Essay 1.

D) Write an essay analyzing how conventional definitions of good and evil are called into question in O’Connor’s “A Good Man is Hard to Find.”

E) Write an essay explaining how a group of workers you have observed, blue-collar or otherwise, appeared to understand and define some important aspect of their work. Refer in detail to individual members of the group and what they had to say. (Their ideas can be cited as personal interviews.)

F) Write a definition of Voodoo outlining the origins and traditional beliefs of this religion or cult. (Which is it, by the way? A good definition should explain.) Remember that facts which aren’t common knowledge would get cited, and so would used patterns of source thinking.

Narrow your focus so your definition is more specific than “defining chefs.” Include a thesis claim about the word being defined.

Purpose

Write to argue, since you’re redefining a term readers believe they know. Convince us that your claims about the definition are valid. Your readers have a familiarity with the topics. Do not retell them. We’re not “proving” how _____ works, either! Avoid the pitfall of writing an editorial or summarizing blandly. What does the word argue?

Audience

Your instructor and classmates are your audience, as with Essay 1.

Additional Information

You may not use dictionary.com definitions in your introduction. (Also, any cited definitions need quotes around used words—something a lot of writers neglect.) No wikis are allowed.
Decide whether your essay will expand, reduce, or alter the meaning of a term. You can adopt a surprising number of strategies for an argument of definition. You will argue that your definition is the most valid one. This means you are competing with other definitions. Some writers try and expand our accepted definition while others attempt to limit a definition’s applications.

Here are some techniques you might use:

1. Illustration
2. Comparison and contrast
3. Negation (saying what something is not)
4. Analysis
5. Explanations of a process (how something is measured or works)
6. Identifications of causes or effects
7. Simile, metaphor, or analogy
8. Reference to authority
9. Reference to the writer’s or others’ personal experience or observation
10. Etymology (word origins)

Don’t Forget . . .

- Avoid the overuse of I or you.
- Only papers in MLA format are accepted. Arial and Times are accepted fonts.
- Anticipate problems when you narrow the topic. Sharpen your focus so that you can do a three-page paper on the topic—it’s not a book or a one-page essay, either. A paper that floats around in a topic too big for it receives a poor grade.
- Focus on connotations (readers would bring) and denotations (dictionary definitions). These often clash or reveal boundaries of definitions.
- Close non-examples are ways of bringing focus to an argument of definition.
- If you use examples, make sure they connect to the definition and aren’t just used for shock effect.
RHETORICAL ANALYSIS
Basic Questions for Rhetorical Analysis

What is the rhetorical situation?

- What occasion gives rise to the need or opportunity for persuasion?
- What is the historical occasion that would give rise to the composition of this text?

Who is the author/speaker?

- How does he or she establish ethos (personal credibility)?
- Does he/she come across as knowledgeable? fair?
- Does the speaker’s reputation convey a certain authority?

What is his/her intention in speaking?

- To attack or defend?
- To exhort or dissuade from certain action?
- To praise or blame?
- To teach, to delight, or to persuade?

Who make up the audience?

- Who is the intended audience?
- What values does the audience hold that the author or speaker appeals to?
- Who have been or might be secondary audiences?
- If this is a work of fiction, what is the nature of the audience within the fiction?

What is the content of the message?

- Can you summarize the main idea?
- What are the principal lines of reasoning or kinds of arguments used?
- What topics of invention are employed?
- How does the author or speaker appeal to reason? to emotion?

What is the form in which it is conveyed?

- What is the structure of the communication; how is it arranged?
- What oral or literary genre is it following?
- What figures of speech (schemes and tropes) are used?
- What kind of style and tone is used and for what purpose?

How do form and content correspond?

- Does the form complement the content?
- What effect could the form have, and does this aid or hinder the author’s intention?

Does the message/speech/text succeed in fulfilling the author’s or speaker’s intentions?

- For whom?
- Does the author/speaker effectively fit his/her message to the circumstances, times, and audience?
- Can you identify the responses of historical or contemporary audiences?

What does the nature of the communication reveal about the culture that produced it?

- What kinds of values or customs would the people have that would produce this?
- How do the allusions, historical references, or kinds of words used place this in a certain time and location?
Troubleshoot Your Reading

Sometimes reading may seem difficult, you might have trouble getting started, or other challenges will surface. Here are some troubleshooting ideas.

Problem: “Sometimes I put my reading off or don’t have time to do it, and then when I do have time, well, I’m out of time.”

Suggestions: That’s a problem, for sure. I always suggest to students that rather than trying to do a bunch of reading at once, they try to do a little bit every day. That makes it easier.
If you’re stuck up against a deadline with no reading done, one suggestion is to do some good pre-reading. That should at least give you the idea of the main topic.
Another idea is to divide the total pages assigned by the number of available days, figuring out how many pages you’ll need to read each day to finish the assignment. Sometimes approaching the text in smaller pieces like this can make it feel more doable. Also, once you figure out how long it takes you to read, say, five pages, you can predict how much time it will take to read a larger section.

Problem: “If I don’t understand some part of the reading, I just skip over it and hope someone will explain it later in class.”

Suggestions: Not understanding reading can be frustrating—and it can make it hard to succeed on your assignments. The best suggestion is to talk with your teacher. Let them know you don’t understand the reading, and they should be able to help.
Another suggestion is to read sentence by sentence. Be sure you understand each word—if you don’t, look them up. As you read, master each sentence before going on to the next one, and then, at the end of a paragraph, stop and summarize the entire paragraph, reflecting on what you just read.
Yet another idea: use the Web and do a search for the title of the reading followed by the word ‘analysis.’ Reading what other people have said about the text may help you get past your stuck points. If you’re in a face-to-face classroom, asking a question in class will encourage discussion and will also help your fellow students, who may have the same confusions.

Problem: “I really don’t like to read that much, so I read pretty fast and tend to stick with the obvious meanings. But then the teacher is always asking us to dig deeper and try to figure out what the author really meant. I get so frustrated with that!”

Suggestions: College-level writing tends to have multiple layers of significance. The easiest way to think about this is by separating the “obvious or surface meaning” from the “buried treasure meaning.” This can actually be one of the most fun parts of a reading—you get to play detective. As you read, try to ask questions of the text: Why? Who? Where? For what reason? These questions will help you think more deeply about the text.

Problem: “Sometimes I jump to conclusions about what a text means and then later find out I wasn’t understanding it completely.”
Suggestions: This usually happens when we read too quickly and don’t engage with the text. The best way to avoid this is to slow down and take time with the text, following all the guidelines for effective and critical reading.

Problem: “When a text suggests an idea I strongly disagree with, I can’t seem to go any further.”
Suggestions: Aristotle was known for saying, “It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it.” As a college student, you must be ready to explore and examine a wide range of ideas, whether you agree with them or not. In approaching texts with an open and willing mind, you leave yourself ready to engage with a wide world of ideas—many of which you may not have encountered before. This is what college is all about.

Problem: “I’m a slow reader. It takes me a long time to read material, and sometimes the amount of assigned reading panics me.”
Suggestions: Two thoughts. One, the more you read, the easier it gets: like anything, reading improves with practice. And two, you’ll probably find your reading is most effective if you try to do a little bit every day rather than several hours of reading all at one time. Plan ahead! Be aware of what you need to read and divide it up among the available days. Reading 100 pages in a week may seem overwhelming, but reading 15 pages a day will be easier. Be sure to read when you’re fresh, too, rather than at day’s end, when you’re exhausted.

Problem: “Sometimes the teacher assigns content in an area I really know nothing about. I want to be an accountant. Why should I read philosophy or natural history, and how am I supposed to understand them?”
Suggestions: By reading a wide variety of texts, we don’t just increase our knowledge base—we also make our minds work. This kind of “mental exercise” teaches the brain and prepares it to deal with all kinds of critical and innovative thinking. It also helps train us to different reading and writing tasks, even when they’re not familiar to us.

Problem: “When I examine a text, I tend to automatically accept what it says. But the teacher is always encouraging us to ask questions and not make assumptions.”
Suggestions: What you’re doing is reading as a reader—reading for yourself and making your own assumptions. The teacher wants you to reach for the next level by reading critically. By engaging with the text and digging through it as if you’re on an archaeological expedition, you’ll discover even more about the text. This can be fun, and it also helps train your brain to explore texts with an analytic eye.

Problem: “I really hate reading. I’ve found I can skip the readings, read the Sparks Notes, and get by just fine.”
Suggestions: First, if you aren’t familiar with Sparks Notes, it’s an online site that provides summary and analysis of many literary texts and other materials, and students often use this to either replace reading or to better understand materials. You may be able to get by, at least for a while, with reading Sparks Notes alone, for they do a decent basic job of summarizing content and talking about simple themes. But Sparks isn’t good at reading texts deeply or considering deep analysis, which means a Sparks-only approach will result in your missing a lot of what the text includes.

You’ll also be missing some great experiences. The more you read, the easier reading becomes. The more you read deeply and critically and the more comfortable you become with analyzing texts, the easier that process becomes. And as your textual skills become stronger, you’ll find yourself more successful with all of your college studies, too. Reading remains a vital college (and life!) skill—the more you practice reading, the better you’ll be at it. And honestly, reading can be fun, too— not to mention a great way to relax and an almost instant stress reducer.

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Rogsonian Argument

The Rogsonian argument, inspired by the influential psychologist Carl Rogers, aims to find compromise on a controversial issue.

If you are using the Rogsonian approach your introduction to the argument should accomplish three objectives:

1. **Introduce the author and work**
   Usually, you will introduce the author and work in the first sentence, as in this example: In Dwight Okita’s “In Response to Executive Order 9066,” the narrator addresses an inevitable by-product of war – racism. The first time you refer to the author, refer to him or her by his or her full name. After that, refer to the author by last name only. Never refer to an author by his or her first name only.

2. **Provide the audience a short but concise summary of the work to which you are responding**
   Remember, your audience has already read the work you are responding to. Therefore, you do not need to provide a lengthy summary. Focus on the main points of the work to which you are responding and use direct quotations sparingly. Direct quotations work best when they are powerful and compelling.

3. **State the main issue addressed in the work** Your thesis, or claim, will come after you summarize the two sides of the issue.

The Introduction

The following is an example of how the introduction of a Rogsonian argument can be written. The topic is racial profiling.

In Dwight Okita’s “In Response to Executive Order 9066,” the narrator — a young Japanese-American — writes a letter to the government, who has ordered her family into a relocation camp after Pearl Harbor. In the letter, the narrator details the people in her life, from her father to her best friend at school. Since the narrator is of Japanese descent, her best friend accuses her of “trying to start a war” (18). The narrator is seemingly too naïve to realize the ignorance of this statement, and tells the government that she asked this friend to plant tomato seeds in her honor. Though Okita’s poem deals specifically with World War II, the issue of race relations during wartime is still relevant. Recently, with the outbreaks of terrorism in the United States, Spain, and England, many are calling for racial profiling to stifle terrorism. The issue has sparked debate, with one side calling it racism and the other calling it common sense.

Once you have written your introduction, you must now show the two sides to the debate you are addressing. Though there are always more than two sides to a debate, Rogsonian arguments put two in stark opposition to one another. Summarize each side, then provide a middle path. Your summary of the two sides will be your first two body paragraphs. Use quotations from outside sources to effectively illustrate the position of each side.

An outline for a Rogsonian argument might look like this:

- Introduction
- Side A
- Side B
- Claim
- Conclusion
The Claim

Since the goal of Rogerian argument is to find a common ground between two opposing positions, you must identify the shared beliefs or assumptions of each side. In the example above, both sides of the racial profiling issue want the U.S. A solid Rogerian argument acknowledges the desires of each side, and tries to accommodate both. Again, using the racial profiling example above, both sides desire a safer society, perhaps a better solution would focus on more objective measures than race; an effective start would be to use more screening technology on public transportation. Once you have a claim that disarms the central dispute, you should support the claim with evidence, and quotations when appropriate.

Quoting Effectively

Remember, you should quote to illustrate a point you are making. You should not, however, quote to simply take up space. Make sure all quotations are compelling and intriguing: Consider the following example. In “The Danger of Political Correctness,” author Richard Stein asserts that, “the desire to not offend has now become more important than protecting national security” (52). This statement sums up the beliefs of those in favor of profiling in public places.

The Conclusion

Your conclusion should:

• Bring the essay back to what is discussed in the introduction
• Tie up loose ends
• End on a thought-provoking note

The following is a sample conclusion:

Though the debate over racial profiling is sure to continue, each side desires to make the United States a safer place. With that goal in mind, our society deserves better security measures than merely searching a person who appears a bit dark. We cannot waste time with such subjective matters, especially when we have technology that could more effectively locate potential terrorists. Sure, installing metal detectors and cameras on public transportation is costly, but feeling safe in public is priceless.

Sources

Taken from Michael Franco’s PowerPoint Presentation Writing Essay 4: Rogerian Argument: http://www.occc.edu/mfranco/Writing_Essay_2.ppt

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Michael Shermer Successfully Proves That Humans Can Be Good Without God

In his chapter entitled “Can We Be Good Without God?” Michael Shermer’s objective is to prove that one does not need to be religious to be capable of moral behavior. Shermer has, in his previous four chapters, taken care to establish ethos by demonstrating that he is an open-minded and intelligent fellow. Judging by his use of vocabulary, he assumes his readers are also intelligent people, with whom he attempts to develop a connection through his intermittent use of humor. Shermer has already proved that his arguments are well-supported by large quantities of evidence, which lets his audience know that what he is saying is inherently trustworthy.

Taking all of this into consideration and having carefully analyzed this chapter, the reader is compelled by logic to agree with Shermer that one can have religion without morality, and morality without religion.

Shermer begins his fifth chapter with an appeal to pathos. He describes to readers the massacre perpetrated at Columbine High School by Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold (141). His description of the event along with a photograph of the black-clad, angry-looking murderers gives the reader a glimpse of the terror that must have been experienced by those unfortunate enough to have been present at the massacre. In building up to proving his argument, Shermer appeals to readers’ ability to reason by showing that outside influences do not cause a person to behave immorally. He explains that in the aftermath of the event, many theories were put forth to rationalize the cause of Harris and Klebold’s murderous rampage. Included in these causes were use of prescription drugs, cult or gang influence, a fatherless home, homosexuality, and exposure to violence in video games (143-144). Shermer uses logic to point out that none of these causes were relevant, particularly the idea that video game violence may have been the cause. He makes mention of several newspapers that make such a claim, but dismisses the articles as having been written by “wannabe social commentators” and “ad hoc social scientists” and lacking in evidence (143). Shermer shows how ridiculous the notion of video games being the causal factor is by relaying testimony of other players of violent games. They all point out that they have not been driven to violence by their gaming habits (143). By presenting these testimonies, he appeals to our common sense and ability to reason as intelligent individuals to realize that if video games caused people to behave violently, all gamers who played violent games would exhibit violent behavior, which is certainly not the case. Shermer has thus far proved to readers that outside influences do not cause a person to abandon their morality.

Having logically dismantled the previous cases, Shermer turns his focus to the subject of gun control. He quips that those in favor of more gun control took advantage of the Columbine massacre by “squawking for more legislation” (146). His use of the word ‘squawking’ brings chickens to mind, and the great amount of noise they produce at the slightest provocation. I believe creating this visual was probably the intent behind his humorous choice of words.

Liberal gun control advocates thoroughly ridiculed, Shermer notes that conservatives answered the call for more gun control by insisting that guns were not the problem. The problem, as conservatives saw it, was the evil souls of the people who used them to commit evil deeds (146). I feel that Shermer purposefully saved mentioning the gun control issue for last because it deals
with the ideas of evil, morality, and religion. He has taken much care in the preceding chapters to make it clear that he does not believe that evil exists, and that morality is not a product of religion. The issue of gun control seems a well-chosen topic from which to begin his argument of how morality is a thing separate from religion.

The first example of evidence Shermer offers in his argument is an excerpt from a letter read by Congressman Tom DeLay. He uses the excerpt to bring to readers’ attention an argument that is commonly made to explain violent acts. It implies that as science provides evidence for questions that people once looked to religion to answer, people no longer feel obligated by a higher power to behave morally (147). Shermer disputes this argument by describing the case of another perpetrator of a school shooting. Rumors of the perpetrator being an atheist were quickly dispelled by the family priest, whose explanation was that the boy was a sinner but not an atheist, to which Shermer sarcastically quips “Thank God for that” (147). This remark demonstrates his disgust that the priest would imply that being a Christian murderer was less offensive than being an atheist. With this evidence, Shermer has supported his argument and demonstrated to his audience that religious people do not necessarily have morals.

For Shermer’s next move, he takes into consideration the opinions of several credible people who believe that morality is impossible without religion. He utilizes quotes from the 103rd archbishop of Canterbury, Pope Pious XI, and the deeply religious Dostoyevsky who all fervently insist that religion is absolutely necessary for morality (149-150). Shermer then includes the religious views of Laura Schlessinger, his one-time colleague. He immediately diminishes her religious credibility by referring to her as a “self-appointed religious authority” (150). This implies to readers that although she is considered a ‘religious authority’ her opinions should not be taken too seriously. He points out that although Schlessinger claims to have grown up lacking morals due to an atheistic upbringing, she admits that her parents still managed to instill her with some degree of morality (151). This admission helps support his idea that non-religious people can have morals, but is the only part of Shermer’s paragraphs about Schlessinger that appear to be relevant to his argument. He continues on about her, however, and it becomes apparent to readers that Shermer once admired her work but was taken aback by her conversion to Judaism. He further weakens her authority by poking fun at her, and readers (this reader, at least) cannot help but wonder if he only included these paragraphs about Schlessinger because he is still disgruntled about her defection from his cause.

Shermer has, through several quotes from religious authorities, demonstrated to his audience that religious people are adamant that religion is necessary for moral behavior. In an effort to prove that they are wrong, he refutes the claims of these authorities by serving up examples of religious people that committed atrocities while zealously practicing their religion. His go-to example is Hitler and the annihilation of the Jews in Germany. He illustrates for readers the religious fervor of Hitler by quoting him as saying “I believe today that I am acting in the sense of the Almighty Creator. By warding off the Jews I am fighting for the Lord’s work” (qtd. on 153). By strategically using this quote, Shermer is proving to readers that not only did Hitler commit mass murder, he did so in the Lord’s name. This example, more than any other, is meant to show that religion and morality are not related.

In perhaps his most convincing argument that one need not be religious to behave morally, Shermer gets personal. He asks readers the question “What would you do if there was no God?” (154). Now the reader must contemplate the point Shermer has been trying to make, but on an intimate level. He forces one to admit that if it was learned that God did not exist, the vast majority of people would continue to behave morally. Most people would not, free from fear of eternal reprimal, proceed to pillage, rape, and commit murder. After this degree of self-examination, it would be illogical to disagree that morality is not a creation of religion.

In his chapter “Can We Be Good Without God?”, Shermer successfully proves that we can indeed be good without God. He appealed to readers’ emotions by describing the nightmare that was the Columbine massacre and led his audience to logically conclude that no outside influences caused the perpetrators’ behavior. Through the strategic use of quotes and examples, Shermer effectively demonstrated that contrary to the beliefs of religious authorities, deeply religious people are capable of behaving extremely immorally. Shermer ingeniously substantiated his point by asking readers to ponder what their own behavior might be like without God holding them accountable for their actions. I feel that this was his most convincing piece of evidence in support of his argument, it is hard to deny his logic when applying it to oneself. It can be assumed that most readers would continue to behave morally, and would agree with Shermer that we can be good without God.
Work Cited


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Toulmin's Argument Model

Stephen Toulmin, an English philosopher and logician, identified elements of a persuasive argument. These give useful categories by which an argument may be analyzed.

Claim

A claim is a statement that you are asking the other person to accept. This includes information you are asking them to accept as true or actions you want them to accept and enact.

For example:

"You should use a hearing aid."

Many people start with a claim, but then find that it is challenged. If you just ask me to do something, I will not simply agree with what you want. I will ask why I should agree with you. I will ask you to prove your claim. This is where grounds become important.

Grounds

The grounds (or data) is the basis of real persuasion and is made up of data and hard facts, plus the reasoning behind the claim. It is the 'truth' on which the claim is based. Grounds may also include proof of expertise and the basic premises on which the rest of the argument is built.
The actual truth of the data may be less than 100%, as much data are ultimately based on perception. We assume what we measure is true, but there may be problems in this measurement, ranging from a faulty measurement instrument to biased sampling.

It is critical to the argument that the grounds are not challenged because, if they are, they may become a claim, which you will need to prove with even deeper information and further argument.

For example:

> Over 70% of all people over 65 years have a hearing difficulty.

Information is usually a very powerful element of persuasion, although it does affect people differently. Those who are dogmatic, logical or rational will more likely to be persuaded by factual data. Those who argue emotionally and who are highly invested in their own position will challenge it or otherwise try to ignore it. It is often a useful test to give something factual to the other person that disproves their argument, and watch how they handle it. Some will accept it without question. Some will dismiss it out of hand. Others will dig deeper, requiring more explanation. This is where the warrant comes into its own.
Warrant

A warrant links data and other grounds to a claim, legitimizing the claim by showing the grounds to be relevant. The warrant may be explicit or unspoken and implicit. It answers the question ‘Why does that data mean your claim is true?’

For example:

A hearing aid helps most people to hear better.

The warrant may be simple and it may also be a longer argument, with additional sub–elements including those described below.

Warrants may be based on logos, ethos or pathos, or values that are assumed to be shared with the listener.

In many arguments, warrants are often implicit and hence unstated. This gives space for the other person to question and expose the warrant, perhaps to show it is weak or unfounded.

Backing

The backing (or support) for an argument gives additional support to the warrant by answering different questions.

For example:

Hearing aids are available locally.

Qualifier

The qualifier (or modal qualifier) indicates the strength of the leap from the data to the warrant and may limit how universally the claim applies. They include words such as ‘most’, ‘usually’, ‘always’ or ‘sometimes’. Arguments may hence range from strong assertions to generally quite floppy with vague and often rather uncertain kinds of statement.

For example:
Another variant is the reservation, which may give the possibility of the claim being incorrect. Unless there is evidence to the contrary, hearing aids do no harm to ears.

Qualifiers and reservations are much used by advertisers who are constrained not to lie. Thus they slip ‘usually’, ‘virtually’, ‘unless’ and so on into their claims.

**Rebuttal**

Despite the careful construction of the argument, there may still be counter-arguments that can be used. These may be rebutted either through a continued dialogue, or by pre-empting the counter-argument by giving the rebuttal during the initial presentation of the argument.

For example:

There is a support desk that deals with technical problems.

Any rebuttal is an argument in itself, and thus may include a claim, warrant, backing and so on. It also, of course can have a rebuttal. Thus if you are presenting an argument, you can seek to understand both possible rebuttals and also rebuttals to the rebuttals.

See also:

Arrangement, Use of Language


See more at: http://www.designmethodsandprocesses.co.uk/2011/03/toulmins-argument-model/#sthash.dwkAUTvh.dpuf

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Toulmin's Schema

Stephen Edelston Toulmin (born March 25, 1922) is a British philosopher, author, and educator. Influenced by the Austrian philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein, Toulmin devoted his works to the analysis of moral reasoning. Throughout his writings, he seeks to develop practical arguments which can be used effectively in evaluating the ethics behind moral issues. The Toulmin Model of Argumentation, a diagram containing six interrelated components used for analyzing arguments, was considered his most influential work, particularly in the field of rhetoric and communication, and in computer science.

Toulmin's Schema:

1. **Claim**: conclusions whose merit must be established. For example, if a person tries to convince a listener that he is a British citizen, the claim would be "I am a British citizen."
2. **Data**: the facts appealed to as a foundation for the claim. For example, the person introduced in 1 can support his claim with the supporting data "I was born in Bermuda."
3. **Warrant**: the statement authorizing the movement from the data to the claim. In order to move from the data established in 2, "I was born in Bermuda," to the claim in 1, "I am a British citizen," the person must supply a warrant to bridge the gap between 1 & 2 with the statement "A man born in Bermuda will legally be a British Citizen." Toulmin stated that an argument is only as strong as its weakest warrant and if a warrant isn't valid, then the whole argument collapses. Therefore, it is important to have strong, valid warrants.
4. **Backing**: facts that give credibility to the statement expressed in the warrant; backing must be introduced when the warrant itself is not convincing enough to the readers or the listeners. For example, if the listener does not deem the warrant as credible, the speaker would supply legal documents as backing statement to show that it is true that "A man born in Bermuda will legally be a British Citizen."
5. **Rebuttal**: statements recognizing the restrictions to which the claim may legitimately be applied. The rebuttal is exemplified as follows, "A man born in Bermuda will legally be a British citizen, unless he has betrayed Britain and become a spy of another country."
6. **Qualifier**: words or phrases expressing how certain the author/speaker is concerning the claim. Such words or phrases...
include "possible," "probably," "impossible," "certainly," "presumably," "as far as the evidence goes," or "necessarily." The claim "I am definitely a British citizen" has a greater degree of force than the claim "I am a British citizen, presumably."

7. The first three elements "claim," "data," and "warrant" are considered as the essential components of practical arguments, while the 4-6 "Qualifier," "Backing," and "Rebuttal" may not be needed in some arguments. When first proposed, this layout of argumentation is based on legal arguments and intended to be used to analyze arguments typically found in the courtroom; in fact, Toulmin did not realize that this layout would be applicable to the field of rhetoric and communication until later. 1

**Here are a few more examples of Toulmin’s Schema:**

Suppose you see a one of those commercials for a product that promises to give you whiter teeth. Here are the basic parts of the argument behind the commercial:

1. **Claim:** You should buy our tooth-whitening product.
2. **Data:** Studies show that teeth are 50% whiter after using the product for a specified time.
3. **Warrant:** People want whiter teeth.
4. **Backing:** Celebrities want whiter teeth.
5. **Rebuttal:** Commercial says “unless you don't want to attract guys.”
6. **Qualifier:** Fine print says “product must be used six weeks for results.”

Notice that those commercials don’t usually bother trying to convince you that you want whiter teeth; instead, they assume that you have bought into the value our culture places on whiter teeth. When an assumption—a warrant in Toulmin’s terms—is unstated, it's called an implicit warrant. Sometimes, however, the warrant may need to be stated because it is a powerful part of the argument. When the warrant is stated, it's called an explicit warrant. 2

**Another example:**

1. **Claim:** People should probably own a gun.
2. **Data:** Studies show that people who own a gun are less likely to be mugged.
3. **Warrant:** People want to be safe.
4. **Backing:** May not be necessary. In this case, it is common sense that people want to be safe.
5. **Rebuttal:** Not everyone should own a gun. Children and those will mental disorders/problems should not own a gun.
6. **Qualifier:** The word “probably” in the claim.

1. **Claim:** Flag burning should be unconstitutional in most cases.
2. **Data:** A national poll says that 60% of Americans want flag burning unconstitutional.
3. **Warrant:** People want to respect the flag.
4. **Backing:** Official government procedures for the disposal of flags.
5. **Rebuttal:** Not everyone in the U.S. respects the flag.
6. **Qualifier:** The phrase “in most cases”

Toulmin says that the weakest part of any argument is its weakest warrant. Remember that the warrant is the link between the data and the claim. If the warrant isn’t valid, the argument collapses. 2

**Sources**

1. **Stephen Toulmin**
2. **Toulmin’s Analysis**
Toulmin’s Schema

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- Image of woman with white teeth. **Authored by:** Harsha K R. **Located at:** https://flic.kr/p/5s24kK. **License:** CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike
The Purpose of Persuasive Writing

The purpose of persuasion in writing is to convince, motivate, or move readers toward a certain point of view, or opinion. The act of trying to persuade automatically implies more than one opinion on the subject can be argued.

The idea of an argument often conjures up images of two people yelling and screaming in anger. In writing, however, an argument is very different. An argument is a reasoned opinion supported and explained by evidence. To argue in writing is to advance knowledge and ideas in a positive way. Written arguments often fail when they employ ranting rather than reasoning.

TIP

Most of us feel inclined to try to win the arguments we engage in. On some level, we all want to be right, and we want others to see the error of their ways. More times than not, however, arguments in which both sides try to win end up producing losers all around. The more productive approach is to persuade your audience to consider your opinion as a valid one, not simply the right one.

The Structure of a Persuasive Essay

The following five features make up the structure of a persuasive essay:

1. Introduction and thesis
2. Opposing and qualifying ideas
3. Strong evidence in support of claim
4. Style and tone of language
5. A compelling conclusion

Creating an Introduction and Thesis

The persuasive essay begins with an engaging introduction that presents the general topic. The thesis typically appears somewhere in the introduction and states the writer’s point of view.
TIP

Avoid forming a thesis based on a negative claim. For example, “The hourly minimum wage is not high enough for the average worker to live on.” This is probably a true statement, but persuasive arguments should make a positive case. That is, the thesis statement should focus on how the hourly minimum wage is low or insufficient.

Acknowledging Opposing Ideas and Limits to Your Argument

Because an argument implies differing points of view on the subject, you must be sure to acknowledge those opposing ideas. Avoiding ideas that conflict with your own gives the reader the impression that you may be uncertain, fearful, or unaware of opposing ideas. Thus it is essential that you not only address counterarguments but also do so respectfully.

Try to address opposing arguments earlier rather than later in your essay. Rhetorically speaking, ordering your positive arguments last allows you to better address ideas that conflict with your own, so you can spend the rest of the essay countering those arguments. This way, you leave your reader thinking about your argument rather than someone else’s. You have the last word.

Acknowledging points of view different from your own also has the effect of fostering more credibility between you and the audience. They know from the outset that you are aware of opposing ideas and that you are not afraid to give them space.

It is also helpful to establish the limits of your argument and what you are trying to accomplish. In effect, you are conceding early on that your argument is not the ultimate authority on a given topic. Such humility can go a long way toward earning credibility and trust with an audience. Audience members will know from the beginning that you are a reasonable writer, and audience members will trust your argument as a result. For example, in the following concessionary statement, the writer advocates for stricter gun control laws, but she admits it will not solve all of our problems with crime:

Although tougher gun control laws are a powerful first step in decreasing violence in our streets, such legislation alone cannot end these problems since guns are not the only problem we face.

Such a concession will be welcome by those who might disagree with this writer’s argument in the first place. To effectively persuade their readers, writers need to be modest in their goals and humble in their approach to get readers to listen to the ideas. See Table 10.5 “Phrases of Concession” for some useful phrases of concession.

Table 10.5 Phrases of Concession

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EXERCISE 1

Try to form a thesis for each of the following topics. Remember the more specific your thesis, the better.

1. Foreign policy
2. Television and advertising
3. Stereotypes and prejudice
Bias in Writing

Everyone has various biases on any number of topics. For example, you might have a bias toward wearing black instead of brightly colored clothes or wearing jeans rather than formal wear. You might have a bias toward working at night rather than in the morning, or working by deadlines rather than getting tasks done in advance. These examples identify minor biases, of course, but they still indicate preferences and opinions.

Handling bias in writing and in daily life can be a useful skill. It will allow you to articulate your own points of view while also defending yourself against unreasonable points of view. The ideal in persuasive writing is to let your reader know your bias, but do not let that bias blind you to the primary components of good argumentation: sound, thoughtful evidence and a respectful and reasonable address of opposing sides.

The strength of a personal bias is that it can motivate you to construct a strong argument. If you are invested in the topic, you are more likely to care about the piece of writing. Similarly, the more you care, the more time and effort you are apt to put forth and the better the final product will be.

The weakness of bias is when the bias begins to take over the essay—when, for example, you neglect opposing ideas, exaggerate your points, or repeatedly insert yourself ahead of the subject by using I too often. Being aware of all three of these pitfalls will help you avoid them.

The Use of I in Writing

The use of I in writing is often a topic of debate, and the acceptance of its usage varies from instructor to instructor. It is difficult to predict the preferences for all your present and future instructors, but consider the effects it can potentially have on your writing.

Be mindful of the use of I in your writing because it can make your argument sound overly biased. There are two primary reasons:

1. Excessive repetition of any word will eventually catch the reader’s attention—and usually not in a good way. The use of I is no different.

2. The insertion of I into a sentence alters not only the way a sentence might sound but also the composition of the sentence itself. I is often the subject of a sentence. If the subject of the essay is supposed to be, say, smoking, then by inserting yourself into the sentence, you are effectively displacing the subject of the essay into a secondary position. In the following example, the subject of the sentence is underlined:

Smoking is bad.

I think smoking is bad.
In the first sentence, the rightful subject, smoking, is in the subject position in the sentence. In the second sentence, the insertion of I and think replaces smoking as the subject, which draws attention to I and away from the topic that is supposed to be discussed. Remember to keep the message (the subject) and the messenger (the writer) separate.

**Checklist**

Developing Sound Arguments

Does my essay contain the following elements?

- An engaging introduction
- A reasonable, specific thesis that is able to be supported by evidence
- A varied range of evidence from credible sources
- Respectful acknowledgement and explanation of opposing ideas
- A style and tone of language that is appropriate for the subject and audience
- Acknowledgement of the argument’s limits
- A conclusion that will adequately summarize the essay and reinforce the thesis

**Fact and Opinion**

Facts are statements that can be definitely proven using objective data. The statement that is a fact is absolutely valid. In other words, the statement can be pronounced as true or false. For example, 2 + 2 = 4. This expression identifies a true statement, or a fact, because it can be proved with objective data.

Opinions are personal views, or judgments. An opinion is what an individual believes about a particular subject. However, an opinion in argumentation must have legitimate backing; adequate evidence and credibility should support the opinion. Consider the credibility of expert opinions. Experts in a given field have the knowledge and credentials to make their opinion meaningful to a larger audience.

For example, you seek the opinion of your dentist when it comes to the health of your gums, and you seek the opinion of your mechanic when it comes to the maintenance of your car. Both have knowledge and credentials in those respective fields, which is why their opinions matter to you. But the authority of your dentist may be greatly diminished should he or she offer an opinion about your car, and vice versa.

In writing, you want to strike a balance between credible facts and authoritative opinions. Relying on one or the other will likely lose more of your audience than it gains.

**TIP**

The word prove is frequently used in the discussion of persuasive writing. Writers may claim that one piece of evidence or another proves the argument, but proving an argument is often not possible. No evidence proves a debatable topic one way or the other; that is why the topic is debatable. Facts can be proved, but opinions can only be supported, explained, and persuaded.
EXERCISE 2

On a separate sheet of paper, take three of the theses you formed in Note 10.94 “Exercise 1”, and list the types of evidence you might use in support of that thesis.

EXERCISE 3

Using the evidence you provided in support of the three theses in Note 10.100 “Exercise 2”, come up with at least one counterargument to each. Then write a concession statement, expressing the limits to each of your three arguments.

Using Visual Elements to Strengthen Arguments

Adding visual elements to a persuasive argument can often strengthen its persuasive effect. There are two main types of visual elements: quantitative visuals and qualitative visuals.

Quantitative visuals present data graphically. They allow the audience to see statistics spatially. The purpose of using quantitative visuals is to make logical appeals to the audience. For example, sometimes it is easier to understand the disparity in certain statistics if you can see how the disparity looks graphically. Bar graphs, pie charts, Venn diagrams, histograms, and line graphs are all ways of presenting quantitative data in spatial dimensions.

Qualitative visuals present images that appeal to the audience's emotions. Photographs and pictorial images are examples of qualitative visuals. Such images often try to convey a story, and seeing an actual example can carry more power than hearing or reading about the example. For example, one image of a child suffering from malnutrition will likely have more of an emotional impact than pages dedicated to describing that same condition in writing.

WRITING AT WORK

When making a business presentation, you typically have limited time to get across your idea. Providing visual elements for your audience can be an effective timesaving tool. Quantitative visuals in business presentations serve the same purpose as they do in persuasive writing. They should make logical appeals by showing numerical data in a spatial design. Quantitative visuals should be pictures that might appeal to your audience’s emotions. You will find that many of the rhetorical devices used in writing are the same ones used in the workplace. For more information about visuals in presentations, see Chapter 14 “Creating Presentations: Sharing Your Ideas.”

Writing a Persuasive Essay

Choose a topic that you feel passionate about. If your instructor requires you to write about a specific topic, approach the subject from an angle that interests you. Begin your essay with an engaging introduction. Your thesis should typically appear somewhere in your introduction.
Start by acknowledging and explaining points of view that may conflict with your own to build credibility and trust with your audience. Also state the limits of your argument. This too helps you sound more reasonable and honest to those who may naturally be inclined to disagree with your view. By respectfully acknowledging opposing arguments and conceding limitations to your own view, you set a measured and responsible tone for the essay.

Make your appeals in support of your thesis by using sound, credible evidence. Use a balance of facts and opinions from a wide range of sources, such as scientific studies, expert testimony, statistics, and personal anecdotes. Each piece of evidence should be fully explained and clearly stated.

Make sure that your style and tone are appropriate for your subject and audience. Tailor your language and word choice to these two factors, while still being true to your own voice.

Finally, write a conclusion that effectively summarizes the main argument and reinforces your thesis. See Chapter 15 “Readings: Examples of Essays” to read a sample persuasive essay.

**EXERCISE 4**

Choose one of the topics you have been working on throughout this section. Use the thesis, evidence, opposing argument, and concessionary statement as the basis for writing a full persuasive essay. Be sure to include an engaging introduction, clear explanations of all the evidence you present, and a strong conclusion.

**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

- The purpose of persuasion in writing is to convince or move readers toward a certain point of view, or opinion.
- An argument is a reasoned opinion supported and explained by evidence. To argue, in writing, is to advance knowledge and ideas in a positive way.
- A thesis that expresses the opinion of the writer in more specific terms is better than one that is vague.
- It is essential that you not only address counterarguments but also do so respectfully.
- It is also helpful to establish the limits of your argument and what you are trying to accomplish through a concession statement.
- To persuade a skeptical audience, you will need to use a wide range of evidence. Scientific studies, opinions from experts, historical precedent, statistics, personal anecdotes, and current events are all types of evidence that you might use in explaining your point.
- Make sure that your word choice and writing style is appropriate for both your subject and your audience.
- You should let your reader know your bias, but do not let that bias blind you to the primary components of good argumentation: sound, thoughtful evidence and respectfully and reasonably addressing opposing ideas.
- You should be mindful of the use of I in your writing because it can make your argument sound more biased than it needs to.
- Facts are statements that can be proven using objective data.
- Opinions are personal views, or judgments, that cannot be proven.
- In writing, you want to strike a balance between credible facts and authoritative opinions.
- Quantitative visuals present data graphically. The purpose of using quantitative visuals is to make logical appeals to the audience.
- Qualitative visuals present images that appeal to the audience’s emotions.
Jonathan Swift, A Modest Proposal

Access Jonathan Swift's satirical essay “A Modest Proposal” below. Read it—just not at lunchtime, fair adventurer, for then thoughts turn toward food. Answer the following questions:

1) What is the serious social problem Swift is actually trying to address? (Hint: The answer is not that there are too many Irish children!)

2) There are several details in the essay that speak to the viability of further exploiting humans—this time, as a food source. Cite one of the most effective of these examples.

3) What is the purpose of the detail in the example you noted in #2?

4) Restate Swift’s satirical thesis. Remember, satire points out flaws in society with the (quite conservative) goal of getting us to a better way of being or of doing. (Your answer should discuss the real problems and the better way of being that Swift assumes.)

5) Lastly, what makes this a funny essay?

Skills

Reading tone

Separating text from subtext

Understanding a writer’s purpose

Gauging the writer’s strategy in achieving purpose

Analysis of the impact of details upon audiences

A MODEST PROPOSAL

For preventing the children of poor people in Ireland, from being a burden on their parents or country, and for making them beneficial to the publick.

by Dr. Jonathan Swift

1729

It is a melancholy object to those, who walk through this great town, or travel in the country, when they see the streets, the roads and cabbin-doors crowded with beggars of the female sex, followed by three, four, or six children, all in rags, and importuning every passenger for an alms. These mothers instead of being able to work for their honest livelihood, are forced to employ all their time in stroling to beg sustenance for their helpless infants who, as they grow up, either turn thieves for want of work, or leave their dear native country, to fight for the Pretender in Spain, or sell themselves to the Barbadoes.

I think it is agreed by all parties, that this prodigious number of children in the arms, or on the backs, or at the heels of their mothers, and frequently of their fathers, is in the present deplorable state of the kingdom, a very great additional grievance; and therefore whoever could find out a fair, cheap and easy method of making these children sound and useful members of the common-wealth, would deserve so well of the publick, as to have his statue set up for a preserver of the nation.
But my intention is very far from being confined to provide only for the children of professed beggars: it is of a much greater extent, and shall take in the whole number of infants at a certain age, who are born of parents in effect as little able to support them, as those who demand our charity in the streets.

As to my own part, having turned my thoughts for many years, upon this important subject, and maturely weighed the several schemes of our projectors, I have always found them grossly mistaken in their computation. It is true, a child just dropt from its dam, may be supported by her milk, for a solar year, with little other nourishment: at most not above the value of two shillings, which the mother may certainly get, or the value in scraps, by her lawful occupation of begging; and it is exactly at one year old that I propose to provide for them in such a manner, as, instead of being a charge upon their parents, or the parish, or wanting food and raiment for the rest of their lives, they shall, on the contrary, contribute to the feeding, and partly to the cloathing of many thousands.

There is likewise another great advantage in my scheme, that it will prevent those voluntary abortions, and that horrid practice of women murdering their bastard children, alas! too frequent among us, sacrificing the poor innocent babes, I doubt, more to avoid the expence than the shame, which would move tears and pity in the most savage and inhuman breast.

The number of souls in this kingdom being usually reckoned one million and a half, of these I calculate there may be about two hundred thousand couple whose wives are breeders; from which number I subtract thirty thousand couple, who are able to maintain their own children, (although I apprehend there cannot be so many, under the present distresses of the kingdom) but this being granted, there will remain an hundred and seventy thousand breeders. I again subtract fifty thousand, for those women who miscarry, or whose children die by accident or disease within the year. There only remain an hundred and twenty thousand children of poor parents annually born. The question therefore is, How this number shall be reared, and provided for? which, as I have already said, under the present situation of affairs, is utterly impossible by all the methods hitherto proposed. For we can neither employ them in handicraft or agriculture; they neither build houses, (I mean in the country) nor cultivate land; they can very seldom pick up a livelihood by stealing till they arrive at six years old; except where they are of towardly parts, although I confess they learn the rudiments much earlier; during which time they can however be properly looked upon only as probationers: As I have been informed by a principal gentleman in the county of Cavan, who protested to me, that he never knew above one or two instances under the age of six, even in a part of the kingdom so renowned for the quickest proficiency in that art.

I am assured by our merchants, that a boy or a girl before twelve years old, is no saleable commodity, and even when they come to this age, they will not yield above three pounds, or three pounds and half a crown at most, on the exchange; which cannot turn to account either to the parents or kingdom, the charge of nutriments and rags having been at least four times that value.

I shall now therefore humbly propose my own thoughts, which I hope will not be liable to the least objection.

I have been assured by a very knowing American of my acquaintance in London, that a young healthy child well nursed, is, at a year old, a most delicious nourishing and wholesome food, whether stewed, roasted, baked, or boiled; and I make no doubt that it will equally serve in a fricasie, or a ragoust.

I do therefore humbly offer it to publick consideration, that of the hundred and twenty thousand children, already computed, twenty thousand may be reserved for breed, whereof only one fourth part to be males; which is more than we allow to sheep, black cattle, or swine, and my reason is, that these children are seldom the fruits of marriage, a circumstance not much regarded by our savages, therefore, one male will be sufficient to serve four females. That the remaining hundred thousand may, at a year old, be offered in sale to the persons of quality and fortune, through the kingdom, always advising the mother to let them suck plentifully in the last month, so as to render them plump, and fat for a good table. A child will make two dishes at an entertainment for friends, and when the family dines alone, the fore or hind quarter will make a reasonable dish, and seasoned with a little pepper or salt, will be very good boiled on the fourth day, especially in winter.

I have reckoned upon a medium, that a child just born will weigh 12 pounds, and in a solar year, if tolerably nursed, encreaseth to 28 pounds.
I grant this food will be somewhat dear, and therefore very proper for landlords, who, as they have already devoured most of the parents, seem to have the best title to the children.

Infant's flesh will be in season throughout the year, but more plentiful in March, and a little before and after; for we are told by a grave author, an eminent French physician, that fish being a prolific diet, there are more children born in Roman Catholic countries about nine months after Lent, the markets will be more glutted than usual, because the number of Popish infants, is at least three to one in this kingdom, and therefore it will have one other collateral advantage, by lessening the number of Papists among us.

I have already computed the charge of nursing a beggar's child (in which list I reckon all cottagers, labourers, and four-fifths of the farmers) to be about two shillings per annum, rags included; and I believe no gentleman would repine to give ten shillings for the carcass of a good fat child, which, as I have said, will make four dishes of excellent nutritive meat, when he hath only some particular friend, or his own family to dine with him. Thus the squire will learn to be a good landlord, and grow popular among his tenants, the mother will have eight shillings neat profit, and be fit for work till she produces another child.

Those who are more thrifty (as I must confess the times require) may flea the carcass; the skin of which, artificially dressed, will make admirable gloves for ladies, and summer boots for fine gentlemen.

As to our City of Dublin, shambles may be appointed for this purpose, in the most convenient parts of it, and butchers we may be assured will not be wanting; although I rather recommend buying the children alive, and dressing them hot from the knife, as we do roasting pigs.

A very worthy person, a true lover of his country, and whose virtues I highly esteem, was lately pleased, in discoursing on this matter, to offer a refinement upon my scheme. He said, that many gentlemen of this kingdom, having of late destroyed their deer, he conceived that the want of venison might be well supply’d by the bodies of young lads and maidens, not exceeding fourteen years of age, nor under twelve; so great a number of both sexes in every country being now ready to starve for want of work and service: And these to be disposed of by their parents if alive, or otherwise by their nearest relations. But with due deference to so excellent a friend, and so deserving a patriot, I cannot be altogether in his sentiments; for as to the males, my American acquaintance assured me from frequent experience, that their flesh was generally tough and lean, like that of our school-boys, by continual exercise, and their taste disagreeable, and to fatten them would not answer the charge. Then as to the females, it would, I think, with humble submission, be a loss to the publick, because they soon would become breeders themselves: And besides, it is not improbable that some scrupulous people might be apt to censure such a practice, (although indeed very unjustly) as a little bordering upon cruelty, which, I confess, hath always been with me the strongest objection against any project, how well soever intended.

But in order to justify my friend, he confessed, that this expedient was put into his head by the famous Salmanaazor, a native of the island Formosa, who came from thence to London, above twenty years ago, and in conversation told my friend, that in his country, when any young person happened to be put to death, the executioner sold the carcass to persons of quality, as a prime dainty; and that, in his time, the body of a plump girl of fifteen, who was crucified for an attempt to poison the Emperor, was sold to his imperial majesty's prime minister of state, and other great mandarins of the court in joints from the gibbet, at four hundred crowns. Neither indeed can I deny, that if the same use were made of several plump young girls in this town, who without one single groat to their fortunes, cannot stir abroad without a chair, and appear at a play-house and assemblies in foreign fineries which they never will pay for; the kingdom would not be the worse.

Some persons of a desponding spirit are in great concern about that vast number of poor people, who are aged, diseased, or maimed; and I have been desired to employ my thoughts what course may be taken, to ease the nation of so grievous an incumbrance. But I am not in the least pain upon that matter, because it is very well known, that they are every day dying, and rotting, by cold and famine, and filth, and vermin, as fast as can be reasonably expected. And as to the young labourers, they
are now in almost as hopeful a condition. They cannot get work, and consequently pine away from want of nourishment, to a degree, that if at any time they are accidentally hired to common labour, they have not strength to perform it, and thus the country and themselves are happily delivered from the evils to come.

I have too long digressed, and therefore shall return to my subject. I think the advantages by the proposal which I have made are obvious and many, as well as of the highest importance.

For first, as I have already observed, it would greatly lessen the number of Papists, with whom we are yearly over-run, being the principal breeders of the nation, as well as our most dangerous enemies, and who stay at home on purpose with a design to deliver the kingdom to the Pretender, hoping to take their advantage by the absence of so many good Protestants, who have chosen rather to leave their country, than stay at home and pay tithes against their conscience to an episcopal curate.

Secondly, The poorer tenants will have something valuable of their own, which by law may be made liable to a distress, and help to pay their landlord's rent, their corn and cattle being already seized, and money a thing unknown.

Thirdly, Whereas the maintainance of an hundred thousand children, from two years old, and upwards, cannot be computed at less than ten shillings a piece per annum, the nation's stock will be thereby increased fifty thousand pounds per annum, besides the profit of a new dish, introduced to the tables of all gentlemen of fortune in the kingdom, who have any refinement in taste. And the money will circulate among our selves, the goods being entirely of our own growth and manufacture.

Fourthly, The constant breeders, besides the gain of eight shillings sterling per annum by the sale of their children, will be rid of the charge of maintaining them after the first year.

Fifthly, This food would likewise bring great custom to taverns, where the vintners will certainly be so prudent as to procure the best receipts for dressing it to perfection; and consequently have their houses frequented by all the fine gentlemen, who justly value themselves upon their knowledge in good eating; and a skilful cook, who understands how to oblige his guests, will contrive to make it as expensive as they please.

Sixthly, This would be a great inducement to marriage, which all wise nations have either encouraged by rewards, or enforced by laws and penalties. It would encrease the care and tenderness of mothers towards their children, when they were sure of a settlement for life to the poor babes, provided in some sort by the publick, to their annual profit instead of expense. We should soon see an honest emulation among the married women, which of them could bring the fattest child to the market. Men would become as fond of their wives, during the time of their pregnancy, as they are now of their mares in foal, their cows in calf, or sow when they are ready to farrow; nor offer to beat or kick them (as is too frequent a practice) for fear of a miscarriage.

Many other advantages might be enumerated. For instance, the addition of some thousand carcasses in our exportation of barrel'd beef: the propagation of swine's flesh, and improvement in the art of making good bacon, so much wanted among us by the great destruction of pigs, too frequent at our tables; which are no way comparable in taste or magnificence to a well grown, fat yearly child, which roasted whole will make a considerable figure at a Lord Mayor’s feast, or any other publick entertainment. But this, and many others, I omit, being studious of brevity.

Supposing that one thousand families in this city, would be constant customers for infants flesh, besides others who might have it at merry meetings, particularly at weddings and christenings, I compute that Dublin would take off annually about twenty thousand carcasses; and the rest of the kingdom (where probably they will be sold somewhat cheaper) the remaining eighty thousand.

I can think of no one objection, that will possibly be raised against this proposal, unless it should be urged, that the number of people will be thereby much lessened in the kingdom. This I freely own, and 'twas indeed one principal design in offering it to the world. I desire the reader will observe, that I calculate my remedy for this one individual Kingdom of Ireland, and for no other that ever was, is, or, I think, ever can be upon Earth. Therefore let no man talk to me of other expedients: Of taxing our absentees at five shillings a pound: Of using neither cloaths, nor household furniture, except what is of our own growth and manufacture: Of utterly rejecting the materials and instruments that promote foreign luxury: Of curing the expensiveness of
pride, vanity, idleness, and gaming in our women: Of introducing a vein of parsimony, prudence and temperance: Of learning to love our country, wherein we differ even from Laplanders, and the inhabitants of Topinamboo: Of quitting our animosities and factions, nor acting any longer like the Jews, who were murdering one another at the very moment their city was taken: Of being a little cautious not to sell our country and consciences for nothing: Of teaching landlords to have at least one degree of mercy towards their tenants. Lastly, of putting a spirit of honesty, industry, and skill into our shop-keepers, who, if a resolution could now be taken to buy only our native goods, would immediately unite to cheat and exact upon us in the price, the measure, and the goodness, nor could ever yet be brought to make one fair proposal of just dealing, though often and earnestly invited to it.

Therefore I repeat, let no man talk to me of these and the like expediency, 'till he hath at least some glimpse of hope, that there will ever be some hearty and sincere attempt to put them into practice.

But, as to my self, having been wearied out for many years with offering vain, idle, visionary thoughts, and at length utterly despairing of success, I fortunately fell upon this proposal, which, as it is wholly new, so it hath something solid and real, of no expence and little trouble, full in our own power, and whereby we can incur no danger in disobliging England. For this kind of commodity will not bear exportation, and flesh being of too tender a consistence, to admit a long continuance in salt, although perhaps I could name a country, which would be glad to eat up our whole nation without it.

After all, I am not so violently bent upon my own opinion, as to reject any offer, proposed by wise men, which shall be found equally innocent, cheap, easy, and effectual. But before something of that kind shall be advanced in contradiction to my scheme, and offering a better, I desire the author or authors will be pleased maturely to consider two points. First, As things now stand, how they will be able to find food and raiment for a hundred thousand useless mouths and backs. And secondly, There being a round million of creatures in humane figure throughout this kingdom, whose whole subsistence put into a common stock, would leave them in debt two million of pounds sterling, adding those who are beggars by profession, to the bulk of farmers, cottagers and labourers, with their wives and children, who are beggars in effect; I desire those politicians who dislike my overture, and may perhaps be so bold to attempt an answer, that they will first ask the parents of these mortals, whether they would not at this day think it a great happiness to have been sold for food at a year old, in the manner I prescribe, and thereby have avoided such a perpetual scene of misfortunes, as they have since gone through, by the oppression of landlords, the impossibility of paying rent without money or trade, the want of common sustenance, with neither house nor cloaths to cover them from the inclemencies of the weather, and the most inevitable prospect of intailing the like, or greater miseries, upon their breed for ever.

I profess, in the sincerity of my heart, that I have not the least personal interest in endeavouring to promote this necessary work, having no other motive than the publick good of my country, by advancing our trade, providing for infants, relieving the poor, and giving some pleasure to the rich. I have no children, by which I can propose to get a single penny; the youngest being nine years old, and my wife past child-bearing.
Mark Twain, Two Ways of Seeing a River

As a writer, you have often done rhetorical analysis without naming it. When broken down, though, the assignment is all about noticing moves that work together. The trap is clear: Editorializing or writing about the content rather than about the form. This is not an essay about morality or violence.

Rhetorical analysis is all about form over content, moves rather than what is in the material. In our culture right now, people get a lot of mileage simply for thinking something. They believe others ought to have huge respect and a hands-off attitude just because something is believed—especially if it is believed strongly. This can stop discussion because people insist “It’s true for me!” We also think that someone’s beliefs must be more valid if they risk danger in holding those.

Both of these beliefs contain logical flaws. We’re not right “just because we think so.” What informs our reading—things we can point to, defend, and discuss—must matter. (At least, I think they should. . . get the joke?)

Your Task

Read Mark Twain’s “Two Ways of Seeing a River” and then respond in a one-page Word document to its point how some people are deluded by ignorance into creating a deceptive reality.

Two Ways of Seeing a River (1883)

Now when I had mastered the language of this water and had come to know every trifling feature that bordered the great river as familiarly as I knew the letters of the alphabet, I had made a valuable acquisition. But I had lost something, too. I had lost something which could never be restored to me while I lived. All the grace, the beauty, the poetry, had gone out of the majestic river! I still kept in mind a certain wonderful sunset which I witnessed when steamboating was new to me. A broad expanse of the river was turned to blood; in the middle distance the red hue brightened into gold, through which a solitary log came floating, black and conspicuous; in one place a long, slanting mark lay sparkling upon the water; in another the surface was broken by boiling, tumbling rings that were as many-tinted as an opal; where the ruddy flush was faintest was a smooth spot that was covered with graceful circles and radiating lines, ever so delicately traced; the shore on our left was densely wooded, and the somber shadow that fell from this forest was broken in one place by a long, ruffled trail that shone like silver; and high above the forest wall a clean-stemmed dead tree waved a single leafy bough that glowed like a flame in the unobstructed splendor that was flowing from the sun. There were graceful curves, reflected images, woody heights, soft distances, and over the whole scene, far and near, the dissolving lights drifted steadily, enriching it every passing moment with new marvels of coloring.

I stood like one bewitched. I drank it in, in a speechless rapture. The world was new to me and I had never seen anything like this at home. But as I have said, a day came when I began to cease from noting the glories and the charms which the moon and the sun and the twilight wrought upon the river’s face; another day came when I ceased altogether to note them. Then, if that sunset scene had been repeated, I should have looked upon it without rapture and should have commented upon it inwardly after this fashion: “This sun means that we are going to have wind tomorrow; that floating log means that the river is rising, small thanks to it; that slanting mark on the water refers to a bluff reef which is going to kill somebody’s steamboat one of these nights, if it keeps on stretching out like that; those tumbling ‘boils’ show a dissolving bar and a changing channel there; the lines and circles in the slick water over yonder are a warning that that troublesome place is shoaling up dangerously; that silver streak in the shadow of the forest is the ‘break’ from a new snag and he has located himself in the very best place he could have found to fish for steamboats; that tall dead tree, with a single living branch, is not going to last long, and then how is a body ever going to get through this blind place at night without the friendly old landmark?”

No, the romance and beauty were all gone from the river. All the value any feature of it had for me now was the amount of usefulness it could furnish toward compassing the safe piloting of a steamboat. Since those days, I have pitied doctors from my heart. What does the lovely flush in a beauty’s cheek mean to a doctor but a “break” that ripples above some deadly disease?
Are not all her visible charms sown thick with what are to him the signs and symbols of hidden decay? Does he ever see her beauty at all, or doesn’t he simply view her professionally and comment upon her unwholesome condition all to himself? And doesn’t he sometimes wonder whether he has gained most or lost most by learning his trade?
James Gleick, What Defines a Meme?

Access the following link to read James Gleick’s essay, “What Defines a Meme?”: https://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/what-defines-a-meme-1904778/

Also read this comment on “What’s in a Meme” by Mark A. Jordan which is from from The Richard Dawkins Foundation website and available (for print users) at: https://www.richarddawkins.net/2014/02/whats-in-a-meme/

Dawkins is the biologist most closely connected with the coining of this term *meme*. 
ARGUMENTS: A READER
Egypt Chapters from Ancient Man

Egypt Chapters from Ancient Man


The History of Man is the record of a hungry creature in search of food.

Wherever food was plentiful and easily gathered, thither man travelled to make his home.

The fame of the Nile valley must have spread at an early date. From far and wide, wild people flocked to the banks of the river. Surrounded on all sides by desert or sea, it was not easy to reach these fertile fields and only the hardiest men and women survived.

We do not know who they were. Some came from the interior of Africa and had woolly hair and thick lips. Others, with a yellowish skin, came from the desert of Arabia and the broad rivers of western Asia.

They fought each other for the possession of this wonderful land.

They built villages which their neighbors destroyed and they rebuilt them with the bricks they had taken from other neighbors whom they in turn had vanquished.

Gradually a new race developed. They called themselves “remi,” which means simply “the Men.” There was a touch of pride in this name and they used it in the same sense that we refer to America as “God’s own country.”

Part of the year, during the annual flood of the Nile, they lived on small islands within a country which itself was cut off from the rest of the world by the sea and the desert. No wonder that these people were what we call “insular,” and had the habits of villagers who rarely come in contact with their neighbors.

They liked their own ways best. They thought their own habits and customs just a trifle better than those of anybody else. In the same way, their own gods were considered more powerful than the gods of other nations. They did not exactly despise foreigners, but they felt a mild pity for them and if possible they kept them outside of the Egyptian domains, lest their own people be corrupted by “foreign notions.”

They were kind-hearted and rarely did anything that was cruel. They were patient and in business dealings they were rather indifferent Life came as an easy gift and they never became stingy and mean like northern people who have to struggle for mere existence.

When the sun arose above the blood-red horizon of the distant desert, they went forth to till their fields. When the last rays of light had disappeared beyond the mountain ridges, they went to bed.

They worked hard, they plodded and they bore whatever happened with stolid unconcern and profound patience.

They believed that this life was but a short preface to a new existence which began the moment Death had entered the house. Until at last, the life of the future came to be regarded as more important than the life of the present and the people of Egypt turned their teeming land into one vast shrine for the worship of the dead.
And as most of the papyrus-rolls of the ancient valley tell stories of a religious nature we know with great accuracy just what gods the Egyptians revered and how they tried to assure all possible happiness and comfort to those who had entered upon the eternal sleep. In the beginning each little village had possessed a god of its own.

Often this god was supposed to reside in a queerly shaped stone or in the branch of a particularly large tree. It was well to be good friends with him for he could do great harm and destroy the harvest and prolong the period of drought until the people and the cattle had all died of thirst. Therefore the villages made him presents—offered him things to eat or a bunch of flowers.

When the Egyptians went forth to fight their enemies the god must needs be taken along, until he became a sort of battle flag around which the people rallied in time of danger.

But when the country grew older and better roads had been built and the Egyptians had begun to travel, the old “fetishes,” as such chunks of stone and wood were called, lost their importance and were thrown away or were left in a neglected corner or were used as doorsteps or chairs.

Their place was taken by new gods who were more powerful than the old ones had been and who represented those forces of nature which influenced the lives of the Egyptians of the entire valley.

First among these was the Sun which makes all things grow.

Next came the river Nile which tempered the heat of the day and brought rich deposits of clay to refresh the fields and make them fertile.

Then there was the kindly Moon which at night rowed her little boat across the arch of heaven and there was Thunder and there was Lightning and there were any number of things which could make life happy or miserable according to their pleasure and desire.

Ancient man, entirely at the mercy of these forces of nature, could not get rid of them as easily as we do when we plant lightning rods upon our houses or build reservoirs which keep us alive during the summer months when there is no rain.

On the contrary they formed an intimate part of his daily life—they accompanied him from the moment he was put into his cradle until the day that his body was prepared for eternal rest.

Neither could he imagine that such vast and powerful phenomena as a bolt of lightning or the flood of a river were mere impersonal things. Some one—somewhere—must be their master and must direct them as the engineer directs his engine or a captain steers his ship.

A God-in-Chief was therefore created, like the commanding general of an army.

A number of lower officers were placed at his disposal.

Within their own territory each one could act independently.

In grave matters, however, which affected the happiness of all the people, they must take orders from their master.

The Supreme Divine Ruler of the land of Egypt was called Osiris, and all the little Egyptian children knew the story of his wonderful life.
Once upon a time, in the valley of the Nile, there lived a king called Osiris.

He was a good man who taught his subjects how to till their fields and who gave his country just laws. But he had a bad brother whose name was Seth.

Now Seth envied Osiris because he was so virtuous and one day he invited him to dinner and afterwards he said that he would like to show him something. Curious Osiris asked what it was and Seth said that it was a funnily shaped coffin which fitted one like a suit of clothes. Osiris said that he would like to try it. So he lay down in the coffin but no sooner was he inside when bang!–Seth shut the lid. Then he called for his servants and ordered them to throw the coffin into the Nile.

Soon the news of his terrible deed spread throughout the land. Isis, the wife of Osiris, who had loved her husband very dearly, went at once to the banks of the Nile, and after a short while the waves threw the coffin upon the shore. Then she went forth to tell her son Horus, who ruled in another land, but no sooner had she left than Seth, the wicked brother, broke into the palace and cut the body of Osiris into fourteen pieces.

When Isis returned, she discovered what Seth had done. She took the fourteen pieces of the dead body and sewed them together and then Osiris came back to life and reigned for ever and ever as king of the lower world to which the souls of men must travel after they have left the body.

As for Seth, the Evil One, he tried to escape, but Horus, the son of Osiris and Isis, who had been warned by his mother, caught him and slew him.

This story of a faithful wife and a wicked brother and a dutiful son who avenged his father and the final victory of virtue over wickedness formed the basis of the religious life of the people of Egypt.

Osiris was regarded as the god of all living things which seemingly die in the winter and yet return to renewed existence the next spring. As ruler of the Life Hereafter, he was the final judge of the acts of men, and woe unto him who had been cruel and unjust and had oppressed the weak.

As for the world of the departed souls, it was situated beyond the high mountains of the west (which was also the home of the young Nile) and when an Egyptian wanted to say that someone had died, he said that he “had gone west.”

Isis shared the honors and the duties of Osiris with him. Their son Horus, who was worshipped as the god of the Sun (hence the word “horizon,” the place where the sun sets) became the first of a new line of Egyptian kings and all the Pharaohs of Egypt had Horus as their middle name.

Of course, each little city and every small village continued to worship a few divinities of their own. But generally speaking, all the people recognized the sublime power of Osiris and tried to gain his favor.
This was no easy task, and led to many strange customs. In the first place, the Egyptians came to believe that no soul could enter into the realm of Osiris without the possession of the body which had been its place of residence in this world. Whatever happened, the body must be preserved after death, and it must be given a permanent and suitable home. Therefore as soon as a man had died, his corpse was embalmed. This was a difficult and complicated operation which was performed by an official who was half doctor and half priest, with the help of an assistant whose duty it was to make the incision through which the chest could be filled with cedar-tree pitch and myrrh and cassia. This assistant belonged to a special class of people who were counted among the most despised of men. The Egyptians thought it a terrible thing to commit acts of violence upon a human being, whether dead or living, and only the lowest of the low could be hired to perform this unpopular task.

Afterwards the priest took the body again and for a period of ten weeks he allowed it to be soaked in a solution of natron which was brought for this purpose from the distant desert of Libya. Then the body had become a “mummy” because it was filled with “Mumiai” or pitch. It was wrapped in yards and yards of specially prepared linen and it was placed in a beautifully decorated wooden coffin, ready to be removed to its final home in the western desert. The grave itself was a little stone room in the sand of the desert or a cave in a hill-side.

After the coffin had been placed in the center the little room was well supplied with cooking utensils and weapons and statues (of clay or wood) representing bakers and butchers who were expected to wait upon their dead master in case he needed anything. Flutes and fiddles were added to give the occupant of the grave a chance to while away the long hours which he must spend in this “house of eternity.”

Then the roof was covered with sand and the dead Egyptian was left to the peaceful rest of eternal sleep.

But the desert is full of wild creatures, hyenas and wolves, and they dug their way through the wooden roof and the sand and ate up the mummy.

This was a terrible thing, for then the soul was doomed to wander forever and suffer agonies of a man without a home. To assure the corpse all possible safety a low wall of brick was built around the grave and the open space was filled with sand and gravel. In this way a low artificial hill was made which protected the mummy against wild animals and robbers.

Then one day, an Egyptian who had just buried his Mother, of whom he had been particularly fond, decided to give her a monument that should surpass anything that had ever been built in the valley of the Nile.

He gathered his serfs and made them build an artificial mountain that could be seen for miles around. The sides of this hill he covered with a layer of bricks that the sand might not be blown away.

People liked the novelty of the idea.

Soon they were trying to outdo each other and the graves rose twenty and thirty and forty feet above the ground.

At last a rich nobleman ordered a burial chamber made of solid stone.

On top of the actual grave where the mummy rested, he constructed a pile of bricks which rose several hundred feet into the air. A small passage-way gave entrance to the vault and when this passage was closed with a heavy slab of granite the mummy was safe from all intrusion.
The King of course could not allow one of his subjects to outdo him in such a matter. He was the most powerful man of all Egypt who lived in the biggest house and therefore he was entitled to the best grave.

What others had done in brick he could do with the help of more costly materials.

Pharaoh sent his officers far and wide to gather workmen. He constructed roads. He built barracks in which the workmen could live and sleep (you may see those barracks this very day). Then he set to work and made himself a grave which was to endure for all time.

We call this great pile of masonry a “pyramid.”

The origin of the word is a curious one.

When the Greeks visited Egypt the Pyramids were already several thousand years old.

Of course the Egyptians took their guests into the desert to see these wondrous sights just as we take foreigners to gaze at the Wool-worth Tower and Brooklyn Bridge.

The Greek guest, lost in admiration, waved his hands and asked what the strange mountains might be.

His guide thought that he referred to the extraordinary height and said “Yes, they are very high indeed.”

The Egyptian word for height was “pir-em-us.”

The Greek must have thought that this was the name of the whole structure and giving it a Greek ending he called it a “pyramis.”

We have changed the “s” into a “d” but we still use the same Egyptian word when we talk of the stone graves along the banks of the Nile.

The biggest of these many pyramids, which was built fifty centuries ago, was five hundred feet high.

At the base it was seven hundred and fifty-five feet wide.

It covered more than thirteen acres of desert, which is three times as much space as that occupied by the church of Saint Peter, the largest edifice of the Christian world.

During twenty years, over a hundred thousand men were used to carry the stones from the distant peninsula of Sinai—to ferry them across the Nile (how they ever managed to do this we do not understand)—to drag them halfway across the desert and finally hoist them into their correct position.

But so well did Pharaoh’s architects and engineers perform their task that the narrow passage-way which leads to the royal tomb in the heart of the pyramid has never yet been pushed out of shape by the terrific weight of those thousands and thousands of tons of stone which press upon it from all sides.

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THE MAKING OF A STATE

Nowadays we all are members of a “state.”
We may be Frenchmen or Chinamen or Russians; we may live in the furthest corner of Indonesia (do you know where that is?), but in some way or other we belong to that curious combination of people which is called the “state.”

It does not matter whether we recognize a king or an emperor or a president as our ruler. We are born and we die as a small part of this large Whole and no one can escape this fate.

The “state,” as a matter of fact, is quite a recent invention.

The earliest inhabitants of the world did not know what it was. Every family lived and hunted and worked and died for and by itself. Sometimes it happened that a few of these families, for the sake of greater protection against the wild animals and against other wild people, formed a loose alliance which was called a tribe or a clan. But as soon as the danger was past, these groups of people acted again by and for themselves and if the weak could not defend their own cave, they were left to the mercies of the hyena and the tiger and nobody was very sorry if they were killed.

In short, each person was a nation unto himself and he felt no responsibility for the happiness and safety of his neighbor. Very, very slowly this was changed and Egypt was the first country where the people were organized into a well-regulated empire.

The Nile was directly responsible for this useful development. I have told you how in the summer of each year the greater part of the Nile valley and the Nile delta is turned into a vast inland sea. To derive the greatest benefit from this water and yet survive the flood, it had been necessary at certain points to build dykes and small islands which would offer shelter for man and beast during the months of August and September. The construction of these little artificial islands however had not been simple.

A single man or a single family or even a small tribe could not construct a river-dam without the help of others.

However much a farmer might dislike his neighbors he disliked getting drowned even more and he was obliged to call upon the entire country-side when the water of the river began to rise and threatened him and his wife and his children and his cattle with destruction.

Necessity forced the people to forget their small differences and soon the entire valley of the Nile was covered with little combinations of people who constantly worked together for a common purpose and who depended upon each other for life and prosperity.

Out of such small beginnings grew the first powerful State.

It was a great step forward along the road of progress.

It made the land of Egypt a truly inhabitable place. It meant the end of lawless murder. It assured the people greater safety than ever before and gave the weaker members of the tribe a chance to survive. Nowadays, when conditions of absolute disorder exist only in the jungles of Africa, it is hard to imagine a world without laws and policemen and judges and health officers and hospitals and schools.

But five thousand years ago, Egypt stood alone as an organized state and was greatly envied by those of her neighbors who were obliged to face the difficulties of life single-handedly.

A state, however, is not only composed of citizens.
There must be a few men who execute the laws and who, in case of an emergency, take command of the entire community. Therefore no country has ever been able to endure without a single head, be he called a King or an Emperor or a Shah (as in Persia) or a President, as he is called in our own land.

In ancient Egypt, every village recognized the authority of the Village-Elders, who were old men and possessed greater experience than the young ones. These Elders selected a strong man to command their soldiers in case of war and to tell them what to do when there was a flood. They gave him a title which distinguished him from the others. They called him a King or a prince and obeyed his orders for their own common benefit.

Therefore in the oldest days of Egyptian history, we find the following division among the people:

The majority are peasants.

All of them are equally rich and equally poor.

They are ruled by a powerful man who is the commander-in-chief of their armies and who appoints their judges and causes roads to be built for the common benefit and comfort.

He also is the chief of the police force and catches the thieves.

In return for these valuable services he receives a certain amount of everybody's money which is called a tax. The greater part of these taxes, however, do not belong to the King personally. They are money entrusted to him to be used for the common good.

But after a short while a new class of people, neither peasants nor king, begins to develop. This new class, commonly called the nobles, stands between the ruler and his subjects.

Since those early days it has made its appearance in the history of every country and it has played a great role in the development of every nation.

I must try and explain to you how this class of nobles developed out of the most commonplace circumstances of everyday life and why it has maintained itself to this very day, against every form of opposition.

To make my story quite clear, I have drawn a picture.

It shows you five Egyptian farms. The original owners of these farms had moved into Egypt years and years ago. Each had taken a piece of unoccupied land and had settled down upon it to raise grain and cows and pigs and do whatever was necessary to keep themselves and their children alive. Apparently they had the same chance in life.

How then did it happen that one became the ruler of his neighbors and got hold of all their fields and barns without breaking a single law?
One day after the harvest, Mr. Fish (you see his name in hieroglyphics on the map) sent his boat loaded with grain to the town of Memphis to sell the cargo to the inhabitants of central Egypt. It happened to have been a good year for the farmer and Fish got a great deal of money for his wheat. After ten days the boat returned to the homestead and the captain handed the money which he had received to his employer.

A few weeks later, Mr. Sparrow, whose farm was next to that of Fish, sent his wheat to the nearest market. Poor Sparrow had not been very lucky for the last few years. But he hoped to make up for his recent losses by a profitable sale of his grain. Therefore he had waited until the price of wheat in Memphis should have gone a little higher.

That morning a rumor had reached the village of a famine in the island of Crete. As a result the grain in the Egyptian markets had greatly increased in value.

Sparrow hoped to profit through this unexpected turn of the market and he bade his skipper to hurry.

The skipper handled the rudder of his craft so clumsily that the boat struck a rock and sank, drowning the mate who was caught under the sail.

Sparrow not only lost all his grain and his ship but he was also forced to pay the widow of his drowned mate ten pieces of gold to make up for the loss of her husband.

These disasters occurred at the very moment when Sparrow could not afford another loss.

Winter was near and he had no money to buy cloaks for his children. He had put off buying new hoes and spades for such a long time that the old ones were completely worn out. He had no seeds for his fields. He was in a desperate plight.

He did not like his neighbor, Mr. Fish, any too well but there was no way out. He must go and humbly he must ask for the loan of a small sum of money.

He called on Fish. The latter said that he would gladly let him have whatever he needed but could Sparrow put up any sort of guaranty?

Sparrow said, "Yes." He would offer his own farm as a pledge of good faith.

Unfortunately Fish knew all about that farm. It had belonged to the Sparrow family for many generations. But the Father of the present owner had allowed himself to be terribly cheated by a Phoenician trader who had sold him a couple of "Phrygian Oxen" (nobody knew what the name meant) which were said to be of a very fine breed, which needed little food and performed twice as much labor as the common Egyptian oxen. The old farmer had believed the solemn words of the impostor. He had bought the wonderful beasts, greatly envied by all his neighbors.

They had not proved a success.

They were very stupid and very slow and exceedingly lazy and within three weeks they had died from a mysterious disease.

The old farmer was so angry that he suffered a stroke and the management of his estate was left to the son, who worked hard but without much result.

The loss of his grain and his vessel were the last straw.

Young Sparrow must either starve or ask his neighbor to help him with a loan.
Fish who was familiar with the lives of all his neighbors (he was that kind of person, not because he loved gossip but one never knew how such information might come in handy) and who knew to a penny the state of affairs in the Sparrow household, felt strong enough to insist upon certain terms. Sparrow could have all the money he needed upon the following condition. He must promise to work for Fish six weeks of every year and he must allow him free access to his grounds at all times.

Sparrow did not like these terms, but the days were growing shorter and winter was coming on fast and his family were without food.

He was forced to accept and from that time on, he and his sons and daughters were no longer quite as free as they had been before.

They did not exactly become the servants or the slaves of their neighbor, but they were dependent upon his kindness for their own livelihood. When they met Fish in the road they stepped aside and said “Good morning, sir.” And he answered them—or not—as the case might be.

He now owned a great deal of water-front, twice as much as before.

He had more land and more laborers and he could raise more grain than in the past years. The nearby villagers talked of the new house he was building and in a general way, he was regarded as a man of growing wealth and importance.

Late that summer an unheard-of-thing happened.

It rained.

The oldest inhabitants could not remember such a thing, but it rained hard and steadily for two whole days. A little brook, the existence of which everybody had forgotten, was suddenly turned into a wild torrent. In the middle of the night it came thundering down from the mountains and destroyed the harvest of the farmer who occupied the rocky ground at the foot of the hills. His name was Cup and he too had inherited his land from a hundred other Cups who had gone before. The damage was almost irreparable. Cup needed new seed grain and he needed it at once. He had heard Sparrow's story. He too hated to ask a favor of Fish who was known far and wide as a shrewd dealer. But in the end, he found his way to the Fishs' homestead and humbly begged for the loan of a few bushels of wheat. He got them but not until he had agreed to work two whole months of each year on the farm of Fish.

Fish was now doing very well. His new house was ready and he thought the time had come to establish himself as the head of a household.

Just across the way, there lived a farmer who had a young daughter. The name of this farmer was Knife. He was a happy-go-lucky person and he could not give his child a large dowry.

Fish called on Knife and told him that he did not care for money. He was rich and he was willing to take the daughter without a single penny. Knife, however, must promise to leave his land to his son-in-law in case he died.

This was done.

The will was duly drawn up before a notary, the wedding took place and Fish now possessed (or was about to possess) the greater part of four farms.

It is true there was a fifth farm situated right in between the others. But its owner, by the name of Sickle, could not carry his wheat to the market without crossing the lands over which Fish held sway. Besides, Sickle was not very energetic and he willingly hired himself out to Fish on condition that he and his old wife be given a room and food and clothes for the rest of their days. They had no children and this settlement assured them a peaceful old age. When Sickle died, a distant nephew appeared who claimed a right to his uncle’s farm. Fish had the dogs turned loose on him and the fellow was never seen again.
These transactions had covered a period of twenty years.

The younger generations of the Cup and Sickle and Sparrow families accepted their situation in life without questioning. They knew old Fish as “the Squire” upon whose good-will they were more or less dependent if they wanted to succeed in life.

When the old man died he left his son many wide acres and a position of great influence among his immediate neighbors.

Young Fish resembled his father. He was very able and had a great deal of ambition. When the king of Upper Egypt went to war against the wild Berber tribes, he volunteered his services.

He fought so bravely that the king appointed him Collector of the Royal Revenue for three hundred villages.

Often it happened that certain farmers could not pay their tax.

Then young Fish offered to give them a small loan.

Before they knew it, they were working for the Royal Tax Gatherer, to repay both the money which they had borrowed and the interest on the loan.

The years went by and the Fish family reigned supreme in the land of their birth. The old home was no longer good enough for such important people.

A noble hall was built (after the pattern of the Royal Banqueting Hall of Thebes). A high wall was erected to keep the crowd at a respectful distance and Fish never went out without a bodyguard of armed soldiers.

Twice a year he travelled to Thebes to be with his King, who lived in the largest palace of all Egypt and who was therefore known as “Pharaoh,” the owner of the “Big House.”

Upon one of his visits, he took Fish the Third, grandson of the founder of the family, who was a handsome young fellow.

The daughter of Pharaoh saw the youth and desired him for her husband. The wedding cost Fish most of his fortune, but he was still Collector of the Royal Revenue and by treating the people without mercy he was able to fill his strong-box in less than three years.

When he died he was buried in a small Pyramid, just as if he had been a member of the Royal Family, and a daughter of Pharaoh wept over his grave.

That is my story which begins somewhere along the banks of the Nile and which in the course of three generations lifts a farmer from the ranks of his own humble ancestors and drops him outside the gate but near the throne-room of the King’s palace.

What happened to Fish, happened to a large number of equally energetic and resourceful men.

They formed a class apart.

They married each other’s daughters and in this way they kept the family fortunes in the hands of a small number of people.

They served the King faithfully as officers in his army and as collectors of his taxes.

They looked after the safety of the roads and the waterways.

They performed many useful tasks and among themselves they obeyed the laws of a very strict code of honor.

If the Kings were bad, the nobles were apt to be bad too.
When the Kings were weak the nobles often managed to get hold of the State.

Then it often happened that the people arose in their wrath and destroyed those who oppressed them.

Many of the old nobles were killed and a new division of the land took place which gave everybody an equal chance.

But after a short while the old story repeated itself.

This time it was perhaps a member of the Sparrow family who used his greater shrewdness and industry to make himself master of the countryside while the descendants of Fish (of glorious memory!) were reduced to poverty.

Otherwise very little was changed.

The faithful peasants continued to work and pay taxes.

The equally faithful tax gatherers continued to gather wealth.

But the old Nile, indifferent to the ambitions of men, flowed as placidly as ever between its age-worn banks and bestowed its fertile blessings upon the poor and upon the rich with the impartial justice which is found only in the forces of nature.

THE RISE AND FALL OF EGYPT

We often hear it said that “civilization travels westward.” What we mean is that hardy pioneers have crossed the Atlantic Ocean and settled along the shores of New England and New Netherland—that their children have crossed the vast prairies—that their great-grandchildren have moved into California—and that the present generation hopes to turn the vast Pacific into the most important sea of the ages.

As a matter of fact, “civilization” never remains long in the same spot. It is always going somewhere but it does not always move westward by any means. Sometimes its course points towards the east or the south. Often it zigzags across the map. But it keeps moving. After two or three hundred years, civilization seems to say, “Well, I have been keeping company with these particular people long enough,” and it packs its books and its science and its art and its music, and wanders forth in search of new domains. But no one knows whither it is bound, and that is what makes life so interesting.

In the case of Egypt, the center of civilization moved northward and southward, along the banks of the Nile. First of all, as I told you, people from all over Africa and western Asia moved into the valley and settled down. Thereupon they formed small villages and townships and accepted the rule of a Commander-in-Chief, who was called Pharaoh, and who had his capital in Memphis, in the lower part of Egypt.

After a couple of thousand years, the rulers of this ancient house became too weak to maintain themselves. A new family from the town of Thebes, 350 miles towards the south in Upper Egypt, tried to make itself master of the entire valley. In the year 2400 B.C. they succeeded. As rulers of both Upper and Lower Egypt, they set forth to conquer the rest of the world. They marched towards the sources of the Nile (which they never reached) and conquered black Ethiopia. Next they crossed the desert of Sinai and invaded Syria where they made their name feared by the Babylonians and Assyrians. The possession of these outlying districts assured the safety of Egypt and they could set to work to turn the valley into a happy home, for as many of the people as could find room there. They built many new dikes and dams and a vast reservoir in the desert which they filled with water from the Nile to be kept and used in case of a
prolonged drought. They encouraged people to devote themselves to the study of mathematics and astronomy so that they might determine the time when the floods of the Nile were to be expected. Since for this purpose it was necessary to have a handy method by which time could be measured, they established the year of 365 days, which they divided into twelve months.

Contrary to the old tradition which made the Egyptians keep away from all things foreign, they allowed the exchange of Egyptian merchandise for goods which had been carried to their harbors from elsewhere.

They traded with the Greeks of Crete and with the Arabs of western Asia and they got spices from the Indies and they imported gold and silk from China.

But all human institutions are subject to certain definite laws of progress and decline and a State or a dynasty is no exception. After four hundred years of prosperity, these mighty kings showed signs of growing tired. Rather than ride a camel at the head of their army, the rulers of the great Egyptian Empire stayed within the gates of their palace and listened to the music of the harp or the flute.

One day there came rumors to the town of Thebes that wild tribes of horsemen had been pillaging along the frontiers. An army was sent to drive them away. This army moved into the desert. To the last man it was killed by the fierce Arabs, who now marched towards the Nile, bringing their flocks of sheep and their household goods.

Another army was told to stop their progress. The battle was disastrous for the Egyptians and the valley of the Nile was open to the invaders.

They rode fleet horses and they used bows and arrows. Within a short time they had made themselves master of the entire country. For five centuries they ruled the land of Egypt. They removed the old capital to the Delta of the Nile.

They oppressed the Egyptian peasants.

They treated the men cruelly and they killed the children and they were rude to the ancient gods. They did not like to live in the cities but stayed with their flocks in the open fields and therefore they were called the Hyksos, which means the Shepherd Kings.

At last their rule grew unbearable.

A noble family from the city of Thebes placed itself at the head of a national revolution against the foreign usurpers. It was a desperate fight but the Egyptians won. The Hyksos were driven out of the country, and they went back to the desert whence they had come. The experience had been a warning to the Egyptian people. Their five hundred years of foreign slavery had been a terrible experience. Such a thing must never happen again. The frontier of the fatherland must be made so strong that no one dare to attack the holy soil.

A new Theban king, called Tethmosis, invaded Asia and never stopped until he reached the plains of Mesopotamia. He watered his oxen in the river Euphrates, and Babylon and Nineveh trembled at the mention of his name. Wherever he went, he built strong fortresses, which were connected by excellent roads. Tethmosis, having built a barrier against future invasions, went home and died. But his daughter, Hatshepsut, continued his good work. She rebuilt the temples which the Hyksos had destroyed and she founded a strong state in which soldiers and merchants worked together for a common purpose and which was called the New Empire, and lasted from 1600 to 1300 B.C.

Military nations, however, never last very long. The larger the empire, the more men are needed for its defense and the more men there are in the army, the fewer can stay at home to work the farms and attend to the demands of trade. Within a few years, the Egyptian state had become top-heavy and the army, which was meant to be a bulwark against foreign invasion, dragged the country into ruin from sheer lack of both men and money.

Without interruption, wild people from Asia were attacking those strong walls behind which Egypt was hoarding the riches of the entire civilized world.
At first the Egyptian garrisons could hold their own.

One day, however, in distant Mesopotamia, there arose a new military empire which was called Assyria. It cared for neither art nor science, but it could fight. The Assyrians marched against the Egyptians and defeated them in battle. For more than twenty years they ruled the land of the Nile. To Egypt this meant the beginning of the end.

A few times, for short periods, the people managed to regain their independence. But they were an old race, and they were worn out by centuries of hard work.

The time had come for them to disappear from the stage of history and surrender their leadership as the most civilized people of the world. Greek merchants were swarming down upon the cities at the mouth of the Nile.

A new capital was built at Sais, near the mouth of the Nile, and Egypt became a purely commercial state, the half-way house for the trade between western Asia and eastern Europe.

After the Greeks came the Persians, who conquered all of northern Africa.

Two centuries later, Alexander the Great turned the ancient land of the Pharaohs into a Greek province. When he died, one of his generals, Ptolemy by name, established himself as the independent king of a new Egyptian state.

The Ptolemy family continued to rule for two hundred years.

In the year 30 B.C., Cleopatra, the last of the Ptolemys, killed herself, rather than become a prisoner of the victorious Roman general, Octavianus.

That was the end.

Egypt became part of the Roman Empire and her life as an independent state ceased for all time.

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CHAPTER XII——OF CONSTANCY

The law of resolution and constancy does not imply that we ought not, as much as in us lies, to decline and secure ourselves from the mischiefs and inconveniences that threaten us; nor, consequently, that we shall not fear lest they should surprise us: on the contrary, all decent and honest ways and means of securing ourselves from harms, are not only permitted, but, moreover, commendable, and the business of constancy chiefly is, bravely to stand to, and stoutly to suffer those inconveniences which are not possibly to be avoided. So that there is no supple motion of body, nor any movement in the handling of arms, how irregular or ungraceful soever, that we need condemn, if they serve to protect us from the blow that is made against us.

Several very warlike nations have made use of a retreating and flying way of fight as a thing of singular advantage, and, by so doing, have made their backs more dangerous to their enemies than their faces. Of which kind of fighting the Turks still retain something in their practice of arms; and Socrates, in Plato, laughs at Laches, who had defined fortitude to be a standing firm in the ranks against the enemy. "What!" says he, "would it, then, be a reputed cowardice to overcome them by giving ground?" urging, at the same time, the authority of Homer, who commends in Aeneas the science of flight. And whereas Laches, considering better of it, admits the practice as to the Scythians, and, in general, all cavalry whatever, he again attacks him with the example of the Lacedaemonian foot—a nation of all other the most obstinate in maintaining their ground—who, in the battle of Plataea, not being able to break into the Persian phalanx, bethought themselves to disperse and retire, that by the enemy supposing they fled, they might break and disunite that vast body of men in the pursuit, and by that stratagem obtained the victory.

As for the Scythians, 'tis said of them, that when Darius went his expedition to subdue them, he sent, by a herald, highly to reproach their king, that he always retired before him and declined a battle; to which Idanthyrses,—[Herod., iv. 127.—] for that was his name, returned answer, that it was not for fear of him, or of any man living, that he did so, but that it was the way of marching in practice with his nation, who had neither tilled fields, cities, nor houses to defend, or to fear the enemy should make any advantage of but that if he had such a stomach to fight, let him but come to view their ancient places of sepulture, and there he should have his fill.

Nevertheless, as to cannon-shot, when a body of men are drawn up in the face of a train of artillery, as the occasion of war often requires, it is unhandsome to quit their post to avoid the danger, forasmuch as by reason of its violence and swiftness we account it inevitable; and many a one, by ducking, stepping aside, and such other motions of fear, has been, at all events, sufficiently laughed at by his companions. And yet, in the expedition that the Emperor Charles V. made against us into Provence, the Marquis de Guast going to reconnoitre the city of Arles, and advancing out of the cover of a windmill, under favour of which he had made his approach, was perceived by the Seigneurs de Bonneval and the Seneschal of Agenois, who were walking upon the 'theatre aux ayenes'; who having shown him to the Sieur de Villiers, commissary of the artillery, he pointed a culverin so admirably well, and levelled it so exactly right against him, that had not the Marquis, seeing fire given to it, slipped aside, it was certainly concluded the shot had taken him full in the body. And, in like manner, some years before, Lorenzo de' Medici, Duke of Urbino, and father to the queen-mother—[Catherine de’ Medici, mother of Henry III.—]—laying siege to Mondolfo, a place in the territories of the Vicariat in Italy, seeing the cannoneer give fire to a piece that pointed directly against him, that had not the Marquis, seeing fire given to it, slipped aside, it was certainly concluded the shot had taken him full in the body. And, in like manner, some years before, Lorenzo de' Medici, Duke of Urbino, and father to the queen-mother—[Catherine de’ Medici, mother of Henry III.—]—laying siege to Mondolfo, a place in the territories of the Vicariat in Italy, seeing the cannoneer give fire to a piece that pointed directly against him, it was well for him that he ducked, for otherwise the shot, that only razed the top of his head, had doubtless hit him full in the breast. To say truth, I do not think that these evasions are performed upon the account of judgment; for how can any man living judge of high or low aim on so sudden an occasion? And it is much more easy to believe that fortune favoured their apprehension, and that it might be as well at another time to make them face the danger, as to seek to avoid it. For my own part, I confess I cannot forbear starting when the rattle of a harquebuse thunders in my ears on a sudden, and in a place where I am not to expect it, which I have also observed in others, braver fellows than I.
Neither do the Stoics pretend that the soul of their philosopher need be proof against the first visions and fantasies that surprise him; but, as to a natural subjection, consent that he should tremble at the terrible noise of thunder, or the sudden clatter of some falling ruin, and be affrighted even to paleness and convulsion; and so in other passions, provided his judgment remain sound and entire, and that the seat of his reason suffer no concussion nor alteration, and that he yield no consent to his fright and discomposure. To him who is not a philosopher, a fright is the same thing in the first part of it, but quite another thing in the second; for the impression of passions does not remain superficially in him, but penetrates farther, even to the very seat of reason, infecting and corrupting it, so that he judges according to his fear, and conforms his behaviour to it. In this verse you may see the true state of the wise Stoic learnedly and plainly expressed:—

“Mens immota manet; lachrymae volvuntur inanes.”

[“Though tears flow, the mind remains unmoved.”
—Virgil, Aeneid, iv. 449]

The Peripatetic sage does not exempt himself totally from perturbations of mind, but he moderates them.

CHAPTER XIII——THE CEREMONY OF THE INTERVIEW OF PRINCES

There is no subject so frivolous that does not merit a place in this rhapsody. According to our common rule of civility, it would be a notable affront to an equal, and much more to a superior, to fail being at home when he has given you notice he will come to visit you. Nay, Queen Margaret of Navarre further adds, that it would be a rudeness in a gentleman to go out, as we so often do, to meet any that is coming to see him, let him be of what high condition soever; and that it is more respectful and more civil to stay at home to receive him, if only upon the account of missing him by the way, and that it is enough to receive him at the door, and to wait upon him. For my part, who as much as I can endeavour to reduce the ceremonies of my house, I very often forget both the one and the other of these vain offices. If, peradventure, some one may take offence at this, I can’t help it; it is much better to offend him once than myself every day, for it would be a perpetual slavery. To what end do we avoid the servile attendance of courts, if we bring the same trouble home to our own private houses? It is also a common rule in all assemblies, that those of less quality are to be first upon the place, by reason that it is more due to the better sort to make others wait and expect them.

Nevertheless, at the interview betwixt Pope Clement and King Francis at Marseilles,—[in 1533.]—the King, after he had taken order for the necessary preparations for his reception and entertainment, withdrew out of the town, and gave the Pope two or three days’ respite for his entry, and to repose and refresh himself, before he came to him. And in like manner, at the assignation of the Pope and the Emperor,—[Charles V. in 1532.] at Bologna, the Emperor gave the Pope opportunity to come thither first, and came himself after; for which the reason given was this, that at all the interviews of such princes, the greater ought to be first at the appointed place, especially before the other in whose territories the interview is appointed to be, intimating thereby a kind of deference to the other, it appearing proper for the less to seek out and to apply themselves to the greater, and not the greater to them.

Not every country only, but every city and every society has its particular forms of civility. There was care enough to this taken in my education, and I have lived in good company enough to know the formalities of our own nation, and am able to give lessons in it. I love to follow them, but not to be so servilely tied to their observation that my whole life should be enslaved to ceremonies, of which there are some so troublesome that, provided a man omits them out of discretion, and not for want of breeding, it will be every whit as handsome. I have seen some people rude, by being overcivil and troublesome in their courtesy.

Still, these excesses excepted, the knowledge of courtesy and good manners is a very necessary study. It is, like grace and beauty, that which begets liking and an inclination to love one another at the first sight, and in the very beginning of acquaintance; and, consequently, that which first opens the door and intromits us to instruct ourselves by the example of others, and to give examples ourselves, if we have any worth taking notice of and communicating.
CHAPTER XIV——THAT MEN ARE JUSTLY PUNISHED FOR BEING OBSTINATE IN THE DEFENCE OF A FORT THAT IS NOT IN REASON TO BE DEFENDED

Valour has its bounds as well as other virtues, which, once transgressed, the next step is into the territories of vice; so that by having too large a proportion of this heroic virtue, unless a man be very perfect in its limits, which upon the confines are very hard to discern, he may very easily unawares run into temerity, obstinacy, and folly. From this consideration it is that we have derived the custom, in times of war, to punish, even with death, those who are obstinate to defend a place that by the rules of war is not tenable; otherwise men would be so confident upon the hope of impunity, that not a henroost but would resist and seek to stop an army.

The Constable Monsieur de Montmorenci, having at the siege of Pavia been ordered to pass the Ticino, and to take up his quarters in the Faubourg St. Antonio, being hindered by a tower at the end of the bridge, which was so obstinate as to endure a battery, hanged every man he found within it for their labour. And again, accompanying the Dauphin in his expedition beyond the Alps, and taking the Castle of Villano by assault, and all within it being put to the sword by the fury of the soldiers, the governor and his ensign only excepted, he caused them both to be trussed up for the same reason; as also did the Captain Martin du Bellay, then governor of Turin, with the governor of San Buono, in the same country, all his people having been cut to pieces at the taking of the place.

But forasmuch as the strength or weakness of a fortress is always measured by the estimate and counterpoise of the forces that attack it—for a man might reasonably enough despise two culverins, that would be a madman to abide a battery of thirty pieces of cannon—where also the greatness of the prince who is master of the field, his reputation, and the respect that is due unto him, are also put into the balance, there is danger that the balance be pressed too much in that direction. And it may happen that a man is possessed with so great an opinion of himself and his power, that thinking it unreasonable any place should dare to shut its gates against him, he puts all to the sword where he meets with any opposition, whilst his fortune continues; as is plain in the fierce and arrogant forms of summoning towns and denouncing war, savouring so much of barbarian pride and insolence, in use amongst the Oriental princes, and which their successors to this day do yet retain and practise. And in that part of the world where the Portuguese subdued the Indians, they found some states where it was a universal and inviolable law amongst them that every enemy overcome by the king in person, or by his lieutenant, was out of composition.

So above all both of ransom and mercy a man should take heed, if he can, of falling into the hands of a judge who is an enemy and victorious.

CHAPTER XV——OF THE PUNISHMENT OF COWARDICE

I once heard of a prince, and a great captain, having a narration given him as he sat at table of the proceeding against Monsieur de Vervins, who was sentenced to death for having surrendered Boulogne to the English, —[To Henry VIII. in 1544]—openly maintaining that a soldier could not justly be put to death for want of courage. And, in truth, 'tis reason that a man should make a great difference betwixt faults that merely proceed from infirmity, and those that are visibly the effects of treachery and malice: for, in the last, we act against the rules of reason that nature has imprinted in us; whereas, in the former, it seems as if we might produce the same nature, who left us in such a state of imperfection and weakness of courage, for our justification. Insomuch that many have thought we are not fairly questionable for anything but what we commit against our conscience; and it is partly upon this rule that those ground their opinion who disapprove of capital or sanguinary punishments inflicted upon heretics and misbelievers; and theirs also who advocate or a judge is not accountable for having from mere ignorance failed in his administration.
But as to cowardice, it is certain that the most usual way of chastising it is by ignominy and and it is supposed that this practice brought into use by the legislator Charondas; and that, before his time, the laws of Greece punished those with death who fled from a battle; whereas he ordained only that they be for three days exposed in the public dressed in woman's attire, hoping yet for some service from them, having awakened their courage by this open shame:

“Suffundere malis homins sanguinum, quam effundere.”

[“Rather bring the blood into a man’s cheek than let it out of his body.” Tertullian in his Apologetics.]

It appears also that the Roman laws did anciently punish those with death who had run away; for Ammianus Marcellinus says that the Emperor Julian commanded ten of his soldiers, who had turned their backs in an encounter against the Parthians, to be first degraded, and afterward put to death, according, says he, to the ancient laws,—[Ammianus Marcellinus, xxiv. 4; xxv. i.]—and yet elsewhere for the like offence he only condemned others to remain amongst the prisoners under the baggage ensign. The severe punishment the people of Rome inflicted upon those who fled from the battle of Cannae, and those who ran away with Aeneius Fulvius at his defeat, did not extend to death. And yet, methinks, ‘tis to be feared, lest disgrace should make such delinquents desperate, and not only faint friends, but enemies.

Of late memory,—[In 1523]—the Seigneur de Frauget, lieutenant to the Mareschal de Chatillon’s company, having by the Mareschal de Chabannes been put in government of Fuentarabia in the place of Monsieur de Lude, and having surrendered it to the Spaniard, he was for that condemned to be degraded from all nobility, and both himself and his posterity declared ignoble, taxable, and for ever incapable of bearing arms, which severe sentence was afterwards accordingly executed at Lyons.—[In 1536]—And, since that, all the gentlemen who were in Guise when the Count of Nassau entered into it, underwent the same punishment, as several others have done since for the like offence. Notwithstanding, in case of such a manifest ignorance or cowardice as exceeds all ordinary example, ‘tis but reason to take it for a sufficient proof of treachery and malice, and for such to be punished.
Emerson, Nature and Circles

NATURE

The rounded world is fair to see, Nine times folded in mystery: Though baffled seers cannot impart The secret of its laboring heart, Throb thine with Nature's throbbing breast, And all is clear from east to west. Spirit that lurks each form within Beckons to spirit of its kin; Self-kindled every atom glows, And hints the future which it owes.

1. There are days which occur in this climate, at almost any season of the year, wherein the world reaches its perfection, when the air, the heavenly bodies, and the earth, make a harmony, as if nature would indulge her offspring; when, in these bleak upper sides of the planet, nothing is to desire that we have heard of the happiest latitudes, and we bask in the shining hours of Florida and Cuba; when everything that has life gives sign of satisfaction, and the cattle that lie on the ground seem to have great and tranquil thoughts. These halcyons may be looked for with a little more assurance in that pure October weather, which we distinguish by the name of Indian Summer. The day, immeasurably long, sleeps over the broad hills and warm wide fields. To have lived through all its sunny hours, seems longevity enough. The solitary places do not seem quite lonely. At the gates of the forest, the surprised man of the world is forced to leave his city estimates of great and small, wise and foolish. The knapsack of custom falls off his back with the first step he makes into these precincts. Here is sanctity which shames our religions, and reality which discredits our heroes. Here we find nature to be the circumstance which dwarfs every other circumstance, and judges like a god all men that come to her. We have crept out of our close and crowded houses into the night and morning, and we see what majestic beauties daily wrap us in their bosom. How willingly we would escape the barriers which render them comparatively impotent, escape the sophistication and second thought, and suffer nature to entrance us. The tempered light of the woods is like a perpetual morning, and is stimulating and heroic. The anciently reported spells of these places creep on us. The stems of pines, hemlocks, and oaks, almost gleam like iron on the excited eye. The incommunicable trees begin to persuade us to live with them, and quit our life of solemn trifles. Here no history, or church, or state, is interpolated on the divine sky and the immortal year. How easily we might walk onward into opening landscape, absorbed by new pictures, and by thoughts fast succeeding each other, until by degrees the recollection of home was crowded out of the mind, all memory obliterated by the tyranny of the present, and we were led in triumph by nature.

2. These enchantments are medicinal, they sober and heal us. These are plain pleasures, kindly and native to us. We come to our own, and make friends with matter, which the ambitious chatter of the schools would persuade us to despise. We never can part with it; the mind loves its old home: as water to our thirst, so is the rock, the ground, to our eyes, and hands, and feet. It is firm water: it is cold flame: what health, what affinity! Ever an old friend, ever like a dear friend and brother, when we chat affectedly with strangers, comes in this honest face, and takes a grave liberty with us, and shames us out of our nonsense. Cities give not the human senses room enough. We go out daily and nightly to feed the eyes on the horizon, and require so much scope, just as we need water for our bath. There are all degrees of natural influence, from these quarantine powers of nature, up to her dearest and gravest ministrations to the imagination and the soul. There is the bucket of cold water from the spring, the wood-fire to which the chilled traveler rushes for safety,—and there is the sublime moral of autumn and of noon. We nestle in nature, and draw our living as parasites from her roots and grains, and we receive glances from the heavenly bodies, which call us to solitude, and foretell the remotest future. The blue zenith is the point in which romance and reality meet. I think, if we should be rapt away into all that we dream of heaven, and should converse with Gabriel and Uriel, the upper sky would be all that would remain of our furniture.

3. It seems as if the day was not wholly profane, in which we have given heed to some natural object. The fall of snowflakes in a still air, preserving to each crystal its perfect form; the blowing of sleet over a wide sheet of water, and over plains; the waving rye-fields; the mimic waving of acres of houstonia, whose innumerable florets whiten and ripple before the eye; the reflections of trees and flowers in glassy lakes; the musical steaming odorous south wind, which converts all trees to wind-harps; the crackling and spurt of hemlock in the flames; or of pine-logs, which yield glory to the walls and faces in the sitting-room,—these are the music and pictures of the most ancient religion. My house stands in low land, with limited outlook, and on
the skirt of the village.[476] But I go with my friend[477] to the shore of our little river[478] and with one stroke of the paddle, I leave the village politics and personalities, yes, and the world of villages and personalities behind, and pass into a delicate realm of sunset and moonlight, too bright almost for spotted man to enter without novitiate and probation.[479] We penetrate bodily this incredible beauty: we dip our hands in this painted element: our eyes are bathed in these lights and forms. A holiday, a villeggiatura,[480] a royal revel, the proudest, most heart-rejoicing festival that valor and [197] beauty, power and taste, ever decked and enjoyed, establishes itself on the instant. These sunset clouds, these delicately emerging stars, with their private and ineffable glances, signify it and proffer it. I am taught the poorness of our invention, the ugliness of towns and palaces. Art and luxury have early learned that they must work as enhancement and sequel to this original beauty. I am overinstructed for my return. Henceforth I shall be hard to please. I cannot go back to toys. I am grown expensive and sophisticated. I can no longer live without elegance: but a countryman shall be my master of revels. He who knows the most, he who knows what sweets and virtues are in the ground, the waters, the plants, the heavens, and how to come at these enchantments, is the rich and royal man. Only as far as masters of the world have called in nature to their aid, can they reach the height of magnificence. This is the meaning of their hanging-gardens,[481] villas, garden-houses, islands, parks, and preserves, to back their faultless personality with these strong accessories. I do not wonder that the landed interest should be invincible in the state with these dangerous auxiliaries. These bribe and invite; not kings, not palaces, not men, not women, but these tender and poetical stars, eloquent of secret promises. We heard what the rich man said, we knew of his villa, his grove, his wine, and his company, but the provocation and point of the invitation came out of these beguiling stars. In their soft glances, I see what men strove to realize in some [198] Versailles,[482] or Paphos,[483] or Ctesiphon.[484] Indeed, it is the magical lights of the horizon, and the blue sky for the background, which save all our works of art, which were otherwise baubles. When the rich tax the poor with servility and obsequiousness, they should consider the effect of man reputed to be the possessors of nature, on imaginative minds. Ah! if the rich were rich as the poor fancy riches! A boy hears a military band play on the field at night, and he has kings and queens, and famous chivalry palpably before him. He hears the echoes of a horn in a hill country, in the Notch Mountains,[485] for example, which converts the mountains into an Æolian harp,[486] and this supernatural tiraliro restores to him the Dorian[487] mythology, Apollo,[488] Diana,[489] and all divine hunters and huntresses. Can a musical note be so lofty, so haughtily beautiful! To the poor young poet, thus fabulous is his picture of society; he is loyal; he respects the rich; they are rich for the sake of his imagination; how poor his fancy would be, if they were not rich! That they have some high-fenced grove, which they call a park; that they live in larger and better-garnished saloons than he has visited, and go in coaches, keeping only the society of the elegant, to watering-places, and to distant cities, are the groundwork from which he has delineated estates of romance, compared with which their actual possessions are shanties and paddocks. The muse herself betrays her son, and enhances the gift of wealthy and well-born beauty, by a radiation out [199] of the air, and clouds, and forests that skirt the road,—a certain haughty favor, as if from patrician genii to patricians, a kind of aristocracy in nature, a prince of the power of the air.

4. The moral sensibility which makes Edens[490] and Tempes[491] so easily, may not be always found, but the material landscape is never far off. We can find these enchantments without visiting the Como Lake,[492] or the Madeira Islands.[493] We exaggerate the praises of local scenery. In every landscape, the point of astonishment is the meeting of the sky and the earth, and that is seen from the first hillock as well as from the top of the Alleghanies. The stars at night stoop down over the brownest, homeliest common,[494] with all the spiritual magnificence which they shed on the Campagna,[495] or on the marble deserts of Egypt. The uprolled clouds and the colors of morning and evening, will transfigure maples and alders. The difference between landscape and landscape is small, but there is great difference in the beholders. There is nothing so wonderful in any particular landscape, as the necessity of being beautiful under which every landscape lies. Nature cannot be surprised in undress. Beauty breaks in everywhere.

5. But it is very easy to outrun the sympathy of readers on this topic, which school-men called natura naturata, or nature passive. One can hardly speak directly of it without excess. It is as easy to broach in mixed companies what is called “the subject of religion.” A susceptible person does not like to [200] indulge his tastes in this kind, without the apology of some trivial necessity: he goes to see a wood-lot, or to look at the crops, or to fetch a plant or a mineral from a remote locality, or he carries a fowling-piece, or a fishing-rod. I suppose this shame must have a good reason. A dilettantism[496] in nature is barren and unworthy. The fop of fields is no better than his brother of Broadway. Men are naturally hunters and inquisitive of woodcraft and I suppose that such a gazetteer as wood-cutters and Indians should furnish facts for would take place in the most sumptuous drawing-
rooms of all the “Wreaths” and “Flora’s chaplets” of the book-shops; yet ordinarily, whether we are too clumsy for so subtle a topic, or from whatever cause, as soon as men begin to write on nature, they fall into euphuism. Frivolity is a most unfit tribute to Pan, who ought to be represented in the mythology as the most continent of gods. I would not be frivolous before the admirable reserve and prudence of time, yet I cannot renounce the right of returning often to this old topic. The multitude of false churches accredits the true religion. Literature, poetry, science, are the homage of man to this unfathomed secret, concerning which no sane man can affect an indifference or incuriosity. Nature is loved by what is best in us. It is loved as the city of God, although, or rather because there is no citizen. The sunset is unlike anything that is underneath it: it wants men. And the beauty of nature must always seem unreal and mocking, until the landscape has human figures, that are as good as itself. If there were good men, there would never be this rapture in nature. If the king is in the palace nobody looks at the walls. It is when he is gone, and the house is filled with grooms and gazers, that we turn from the people, to find relief in the majestic men that are suggested by the pictures and architecture. The critics who complain of the sickly separation of the beauty of nature from the thing to be done, must consider that our hunting of the picturesque is inseparable from our protest against false society. Man is fallen; nature is erect, and serves as a differential thermometer, detecting the presence or absence of the divine sentiment in man. By fault of our dulness and selfishness, we are looking up to nature, but when we are convalescent, nature will look up to us. We see the foaming brook with compunction; if our own life flowed with the right energy, we should shame the brook. The stream of zeal sparkles with real fire, and not with reflex rays of sun and moon. Nature may be as selfishly studied as trade. Astronomy to the selfish becomes astrology; psychology, mesmerism (with intent to show where our spoons are gone); and anatomy and physiology become phrenology and palmistry.

6. But taking timely warning, and leaving many things unsaid on this topic, but not longer omit our homage to the Efficient Nature, *natura naturans*, the quick cause, before which all forms flee as the driven snows, itself secret, its works driven before it in flocks and multitudes, (as the ancient represented nature by Proteus, a shepherd), and in undescribable variety. It publishes itself in creatures, reaching from particles and spicula, through transformation on transformation to the highest symmetries, arriving at consummate results without a shock or a leap. A little heat, that is, a little motion, is all that differences the bald, dazzling white, and deadly cold poles of the earth from the prolific tropical climates. All changes pass without violence, by reason of the two cardinal conditions of boundless space and boundless time. Geology has initiated us into the secularity of nature, and taught us to disuse our dame-school measures, and exchange our Mosaic and Ptolemaic schemes for her large style. We know nothing rightly, for want of perspective. Now we learn what patient periods must round themselves before the rock is formed, then before the rock is broken, and the first lichen race has disintegrated the thinnest external plate into soil, and opened the door for the remote Flora, Fauna, Ceres, and Pomona to come in. How far off yet is the trilobite! how far the quadruped! how inconceivably remote is man! All duly arrive and then race after race of men. It is a long way from granite to the oyster; farther yet to Plato and the preaching of the immortality of the soul. Yet all must come, as surely as the first atom has two sides.

7. Motion or change, and identity or rest, are the first and second secrets of nature: Motion and Rest. The whole code of her laws may be written on the thumb-nail, or the signet of a ring. The whirling bubble on the surface of a brook, admits us to the secret of the mechanics of the sky. Every shell on the beach is a key to it. A little water made to rotate in a cup explains the formation of the simpler shells; the addition of matter from year to year, arrives at last at the most complex forms; and yet so poor is nature with all her craft, that, from the beginning to the end of the universe, she has but one stuff,—but one stuff with its two ends, to serve up all her dream-like variety. Compound it how she will, star, sand, fire, water, tree, man, it is still one stuff, and betrays the same properties.

8. Nature is always consistent, though she feigns to contravene her own laws. She keeps her laws, and seems to transcend them. She arms and equips an animal to find its place and living in the earth, and, at the same time, she arms and equips another animal to destroy it. Space exists to divide creatures; but by clothing the sides of a bird with a few feathers, she gives him a petty omnipresence. The direction is forever onward, but the artist still goes back for materials, and begins again with the first elements on the most advanced stage: otherwise, all goes to ruin. If we look at her work, we seem to catch a glance of a system in transition. Plants are the young of the world, vessels of health and vigor; but they grope ever upward toward consciousness; the trees are imperfect men, and seem to bemoan their imprisonment, rooted in the ground. The animal is the novice
and probationer of a more advanced order. The men, though young, having tasted the first drop from the cup of thought, are already dissipated: the maples and ferns are still uncorrupt; yet no doubt, when they come to consciousness, they too will curse and swear. Flowers so strictly belong to youth, that we adult men soon come to feel, that their beautiful generations concern not us: we have had our day; now let the children have theirs. The flowers jilt us, and we are old bachelors with our ridiculous tenderness.

9. Things are so strictly related, that according to the skill of the eye, from any one object the parts and properties of any other may be predicted. If we had eyes to see it, a bit of stone from the city wall would certify us of the necessity that man must exist, as readily as the city. That identity makes us all one, and reduces to nothing great intervals on our customary scale. We talk of deviations from natural life, as if artificial life were not also natural. The smoothest curled courtier in the boudoirs of a palace has an animal nature, rude and aboriginal as a white bear, omnipotent to its own ends, and is directly related, there amid essences and billets-doux, to Himalaya mountain-chains and the axis of the globe. If we consider how much we are nature’s, we need not be superstitious about towns, as if that terrific or benefic force did not find us there also, and fashion cities. Nature, who made the mason, made the house. We may easily hear too much of rural influences. The [205] cool, disengaged air of natural objects, makes them enviable to us, chafed and irritable creatures with red faces, and we think we shall be as grand as they, if we camp out and eat roots, but let us be men instead of wood-chucks, and the oak and the elm shall gladly serve us, though we sit in chairs of ivory on carpets of silk.

10. This guiding identity runs through all the surprises and contrasts of the piece, and characterizes every law. Man carries the world in his head, the whole astronomy and chemistry suspended in a thought. Because the history of nature is characterized in his brain, therefore is he the prophet and discoverer of her secrets. Every known fact in natural science was divined by the presentiment of somebody, before it was actually verified. A man does not tie his shoe without recognizing laws which bind the farthest regions of nature: moon, plant, gas, crystal, are concrete geometry and numbers. Common sense knows its own, and recognizes the fact at first sight in chemical experiment. The common sense of Franklin, Dalton, Davy and Black is the same common sense which made the arrangements which now it discovers.

11. If the identity expresses organized rest, the counter action runs also into organization. The astronomers said, “Give us matter, and a little motion, and we will construct the universe. It is not enough that we should have matter, we must also have a single impulse, one shove to launch the mass, and generate the harmony of the centrifugal and centripetal forces. Once heave the ball from the hand, and we can show how all this mighty order grew.” “A very unreasonable postulate,” said the metaphysicians, “and a plain begging of the question. Could you not prevail to know the genesis of projection, as well as the continuation of it?” Nature, meanwhile, had not waited for the discussion, but, right or wrong, bestowed the impulse, and the balls rolled. It was no great affair, a mere push, but the astronomers were right in making much of it, for there is no end of the consequences of the act. That famous aboriginal push propagates itself through all the balls of the system, and through every atom of every ball, through all the races of creatures, and through the history and performances of every individual. Exaggeration is in the course of things. Nature sends no creature, no man into the world, without adding a small excess of his proper quality. Given the planet, it is still necessary to add the impulse; so, to every creature nature added a little violence of direction in its proper path, a shove to put it on its way: in every instance, a slight generosity, a drop too much. Without electricity the air would rot, and without this violence of direction which men and women have, without a spice of bigot and fanatic, no excitement, no efficiency. We aim above the mark, to hit the mark. Every act hath some falsehood of exaggeration in it. And when now and then comes along some sad, sharp-eyed man, who sees how paltry a game is played, and refuses to play, but blabs the secret,—how then? is the bird flown? O no, the wary Nature sends a new troop of fairer forms, of lordlier youths, with a little more excess of direction to hold them fast to their several aims; makes them a little wrongheaded in that direction in which they are rightest, and on goes the game again with new whirl, for a generation or two more. The child with his sweet pranks, the fool of his senses, commanded by every sight and sound, without any power to compare and rank his sensations, abandoned to a whistle or a painted chip, to a lead dragoon, or a ginger-bread dog, individualizing everything, generalizing nothing, delighted with every new thing, lies down at night overwhelmed by the fatigue, which this day of continual petty madness has incurred. But Nature has answered her purpose with the curly, dimpled lunatic. She has tasked every faculty, and has secured the symmetrical growth of the bodily frame, by all these attitudes and exertions,—an end of the first importance, which could not be trusted to
any care less perfect than her own. This glitter, this opaline luster plays round the top of every toy to his eye, to insure his fidelity, and he is deceived to his good. We are made alive and kept alive by the same arts. Let the Stoics[516] say what they please, we do not eat for the good of living, but because the meat is savory and the appetite is keen. The vegetable life does not content itself with casting from the flower or the tree a single seed, but it fills the[208] air and earth with a prodigality of seeds, that if thousands perish, thousands may plant themselves, that hundreds may come up, that tens may live to maturity, that, at least, one may replace the parent. All things betray the same calculated profusion. The excess of fear with which the animal frame is hedged round, shrinking from cold, starting at sight of a snake, or a sudden noise, protects us, through a multitude of groundless alarms, from some one real danger at last. The lover seeks in marriage his private felicity and perfection, with no prospective end; and nature hides in his happiness her own end, namely, progeny, or the perpetuity of the race.

12. But the craft with which the world is made runs also into the mind and character of men. No man is quite sane; each has a vein of folly in his composition, a slight determination of blood to the head, to make sure of holding him hard to some one point which nature had taken to heart. Great causes are never tried on their merits; but the cause is reduced to particulars to suit the size of the partisans, and the contention is ever hottest on minor matters. Not less remarkable is the overfaith of each man in the importance of what he has to do or say. The poet, the prophet, has a higher value for what he utters than any hearer, and therefore it gets spoken. The strong, self-complacent Luther[517] declares with an emphasis, not to be mistaken, that “God himself cannot do without wise men.” Jacob Behmen[518] and George Fox[519] betray their egotism in the pertinacity of their[209] controversial tracts, and James Naylor[520] once suffered himself to be worshiped as the Christ. Each prophet comes presently to identify himself with his thought, and to esteem his hat and shoes sacred. However this may discredit such persons with the judicious, it helps them with the people, as it gives heat, pungency, and publicity to their words. A similar experience is not infrequent in private life. Each young and ardent person writes a diary, in which, when the hours of prayer and penitence arrive, he inscribes his soul. The pages thus written are, to him, burning and fragrant: he reads them on his knees by midnight and by the morning star; he wets them with his tears: they are sacred; too good for the world, and hardly yet to be shown to the dearest friend. This is the man-child that is born to the soul, and her life still circulates in the babe. The umbilical cord has not yet been cut. After some time has elapsed, he begins to wish to admit his friend to this hallowed experience, and with hesitation, yet with firmness, exposes the pages to his eye. Will they not burn his eyes? The friend coldly turns them over, and passes from the writing to conversation, with easy transition, which strikes the other party with astonishment and vexation. He cannot suspect the writing itself. Days and nights of fervid life, of communion with angels of darkness and of light, have engraved their shadowy characters on that tear-stained book. He suspects the intelligence or the heart of his friend. Is there then no friend? He cannot yet credit that[210] one may have impressive experience, and yet may not know how to put his private fact into literature; and perhaps the discovery that wisdom has other tongues and ministers than we, that though we should hold our peace, the truth would not the less be spoken, might check injuriously the flames of our zeal. A man can only speak, so long as he does not feel his speech to be partial and inadequate. It is partial, but he does not see it to be so, whilst he utters it. As soon as he is released from the instinctive and particular, and sees its partiality, he shuts his mouth in disgust. For, no man can write anything, who does not think that what he writes is for the time the history of the world; or do anything well, who does not esteem his work to be of importance. My work may be of none, but I must not think it is of none, or I shall not do it with impunity.

13. In like manner, there is throughout nature something mocking, something that leads us on and on, but arrives nowhere, keeps no faith with us. All promise outruns the performance. We live in a system of approximations. Every end is prospective of some other end, which is also temporary; a round and final success nowhere. We are encamped in nature, not domesticated. Hunger and thirst lead us on to eat and to drink; but bread and wine, mix and cook them how you will, leave us hungry and thirsty, after the stomach is full. It is the same with all our arts and performances. Our music, our poetry, our language itself are not satisfactions, but suggestions. [211] The hunger for wealth, which reduces the planet to a garden, fools the eager pursuer. What is the end sought? Plainly to secure the ends of good sense and beauty, from the intrusion of deformity or vulgarity of any kind. But what an operose[521] method! What a train of means to secure a little conversation! This palace of brick and stone, these servants, this kitchen, these stables, horses and equipage, this bank-stock, and file of mortgages; trade to all the world, country-house and cottage by the water-side, all for a little conversation, high, clear, and spiritual! Could it not be had as well by beggars on the highway? No, all these things came from successive efforts of these beggars to remove friction from the wheels of life, and give opportunity. Conversation, character, were the avowed ends; wealth was good as it appeased the animal
cravings, cured the smoky chimney, silenced the creaking door, brought friends together in a warm and quiet room, and kept
the children and the dinner-table in a different apartment. Thought, virtue, beauty, were the ends; but it was known that men
of thought and virtue sometimes had the headache, or wet feet, or could lose good time, whilst the room was getting warm in
winter days. Unluckily, in the exertions necessary to remove these inconveniences, the main attention has been diverted to this
object; the old aims have been lost sight of, and to remove friction has come to be the end. That is the ridicule of rich men, and
Boston, London, Vienna, and now the governments generally of the [212] world, are cities and governments of the rich, and the
masses are not men, but poor men, that is, men who would be rich; this is the ridicule of the class, that they arrive with pains
and sweat and fury nowhere; when all is done, it is for nothing. They are like one who has interrupted the conversation of a
company to make his speech, and now has forgotten what he went to say. The appearance strikes the eye everywhere of an
aimless society, of aimless nations. Were the ends of nature so great and cogent, as to exact this immense sacrifice of men?

14. Quite analogous to the deceits in life, there is, as might be expected, a similar effect on the eye from the face of external
nature. There is in woods and waters a certain enticement and flattery, together with a failure to yield a present satisfaction. This
disappointment is felt in every landscape. I have seen the softness and beauty of the summer clouds floating feathery overhead,
enjoying, as it seemed, their height and privilege of motion, whilst yet they appeared not so much the drapery of this place
and hour, as fore-looking to such pavilions and gardens of festivity beyond. It is an odd jealousy; but the poet finds himself not
near enough to this object. The pine tree, the river, the bank of flowers before him, does not seem to be nature. Nature is still
elsewhere. This or this is but outskirt and far-off reflection[522] and echo of the triumph that has passed by, and is now at its
glancing splendor and heyday, perchance in the neighboring fields, or, if you stand in the field, then in the [213] adjacent woods.
The present object shall give you this sense of stillness that follows a pageant which has just gone by. What splendid distance,
what recesses of ineffable pomp and loveliness in the sunset! But who can go where they are, or lay his hand or plant his foot
thereon? Off they fall from the round world forever and ever. It is the same among men and women as among the silent trees;
always a referred existence, an absence, never a presence and satisfaction. Is it, that beauty can never be grasped? in persons
and in landscapes is equally inaccessible? The accepted and betrothed lover has lost the wildest charm of his maiden in her
acceptance of him. She was heaven whilst he pursued her as a star: she cannot be heaven, if she stoops to such a one as he.

15. What shall we say of this omnipresent appearance of that first projectile impulse, of this flattery and balking of so many well-
meaning creatures? Must we not suppose somewhere in the universe a slight treachery and derision? Are we not engaged to
a serious resentment of this use that is made of us? Are we tickled trout, and fools of nature? One looks at the face of heaven
and earth lays all petulance at rest, and soothes us to wiser convictions. To the intelligent, nature converts itself into a vast
promise, and will not be rashly explained. Her secret is untold. Many and many an Oedipus[523] arrives: he has the whole
mystery teeming in his brain. Alas! the same sorcery has spoiled his skill; no syllable can he shape on his lips. Her mighty orbit
vaults like the [214] fresh rainbow into the deep, but no archangel's wing was yet strong enough to follow it, and report of the
return of the curve. But it also appears, that our actions are seconded and disposed to greater conclusions than we designed.
We are escorted on every hand through life by spiritual agents, and a beneficent purpose lies in wait for us. We cannot bandy
words with nature, or deal with her as we deal with persons. If we measure our individual forces against hers, we may easily feel
as if we were the sport of an insuperable destiny. But if, instead of identifying ourselves with the work, we feel that the soul of
the workman streams through us, we shall find the peace of the morning dwelling first in our hearts, and the fathomless powers
of gravity and chemistry, and, over them, of life preëxisting within us in their highest form.

16. The uneasiness which the thought of our helplessness in the chain of causes occasions us, results from looking too much at
one condition of nature, namely, Motion. But the drag is never taken from the wheel. Wherever the impulse exceeds the Rest or
Identity insinuates its compensation. All over the wide fields of earth grows the prunella[524] or self-heal. After every foolish day
we sleep off the fumes and furies of its hours; and though we are always engaged with particulars, and often enslaved to them,
we bring with us to every experiment the innate universal laws. These, while they exist in the mind as ideas, stand around us in
nature forever embodied, a present sanity to expose and cure the insanity of men. [215] Our servitude to particulars betrays us
into a hundred foolish expectations. We anticipate a new era from the invention of a locomotive, or a balloon; the new engine
brings with it the old checks. They say that by electro-magnetism, your salad shall be grown from the seed whilst your fowl is
roasting for dinner: it is a symbol of our modern aims and endeavors,—of our condensation and acceleration of objects: but
nothing is gained: nature cannot be cheated: man’s life is but seventy salads long, grow they swift or grow they slow. In these checks and impossibilities, however, we find our advantage, not less than in impulses. Let the victory fall where it will, we are on that side. And the knowledge that we traverse the whole scale of being, from the center to the poles of nature, and have some stake in every possibility, lends that sublime luster to death, which philosophy and religion have too outwardly and literally striven to express in the popular doctrine of the immortality of the soul. The reality is more excellent than the report. Here is no ruin, no discontinuity, no spent ball. The divine circulations never rest nor linger. Nature is the incarnation of a thought, and turns to a thought again, as ice becomes water and gas. The world is mind precipitated, and the volatile essence is forever escaping again into the state of free thought. Hence the virtue and pungency of the influence on the mind, of natural objects, whether inorganic or organized. Man imprisoned, man crystallized, man vegetative, speaks to man impersonated. That power which does not respect quantity, which makes the whole and the particle its equal channel, delegates its smile to the morning, and distills its essence into every drop of rain. Every moment instructs and every object: for wisdom is infused into every form. It has been poured into us as blood; it convulsed us as pain; it slid into us as pleasure; it enveloped us in dull, melancholy days, or in days of cheerful labor; we did not guess its essence, until after a long time.

CIRCLES.[690]

The eye is the first circle; the horizon which it forms is the second; and throughout nature this primary picture is repeated without end. It is the highest emblem in the cipher of the world. St. Augustine[691] described the nature of God as a circle whose centre was everywhere and its circumference nowhere. We are all our lifetime reading the copious sense of this first of forms. One moral we have already deduced in considering the circular or compensatory character of every human action. Another analogy we shall now trace, that every action admits of being outdone. Our life is an apprenticeship to the truth that around every circle another can be drawn; that there is no end in nature, but every end is a beginning; that there is always another dawn risen on mid-noon,[692] and under every deep a lower deep opens.

This fact, as far as it symbolizes the moral fact of the Unattainable, the flying Perfect, around which the hands of man can never meet, at once the inspirer and the condemner of every success, may conveniently serve us to connect many illustrations of human power in every department.

There are no fixtures in nature. The universe[261] is fluid and volatile. Permanence is but a word of degrees. Our globe seen by God is a transparent law, not a mass of facts. The law dissolves the fact and holds its fluid. Our culture is the predominance of an idea which draws after it all this train of cities and institutions. Let us rise into another idea; they will disappear. The Greek sculpture[693] is all melted away, as if it had been statues of ice: here and there a solitary figure or fragment remaining, as we see flecks and scraps of snow left in cold dells and mountain clefts in June and July. For the genius that created it creates now somewhat else. The Greek letters[694] last a little longer, but are already passing under the same sentence and tumbling into the inevitable pit which the creation of new thought opens for all that is old. The new continents are built out of the ruins of an old planet; the new races fed out of the decomposition of the foregoing. New arts destroy the old.[695] See the investment of capital in aqueducts, made useless by hydraulics; fortifications, by gunpowder; roads and canals, by railways; sails, by steam; steam, by electricity.

You admire this tower of granite, weathering the hurts of so many ages. Yet a little waving hand built this huge wall, and that which builds is better than that which is built. The hand that built can topple it down much faster. Better than the hand and nimbler was the invisible thought which wrought through it; and thus ever, behind the coarse effect, is a fine cause, which, being narrowly seen, is itself[262] the effect of a finer cause. Everything looks permanent until its secret is known. A rich estate appears to women and children a firm and lasting fact; to a merchant, one easily created out of any materials, and easily lost. An orchard, good tillage, good grounds, seem a fixture, like a gold mine, or a river, to a citizen; but to a large farmer, not much more fixed than the state of the crop. Nature looks provokingly stable and secular, but it has a cause like all the rest; and when once I comprehend that, will these fields stretch so immovably wide, these leaves hang so individually considerable? Permanence is a word of degrees. Every thing is medial. Moons are no more bounds to spiritual power than bat-balls.
The key to every man is his thought. Sturdy and defying though he look, he has a helm which he obeys, which is the idea after which all his facts are classified. He can only be reformed by showing him a new idea which commands his own. The life of man is a self-evolving circle, which from a ring imperceptibly small, rushes on all sides outwards to new and larger circles, and that without end. The extent to which this generation of circles, wheel without wheel, will go, depends on the force or truth of the individual soul. For it is the inert effort of each thought, having formed itself into a circular wave of circumstance, as for instance an empire, rules of an art, a local usage, a religious rite, to heap itself on that ridge and to solidify and hem in the life. But if the soul is quick and strong it bursts over that boundary on all sides and expands another orbit on the great deep, which also runs up into a high wave, with attempt again to stop and to bind. But the heart refuses to be imprisoned in its first and narrowest pulses it already tends outward with a vast force and to immense and innumerable expansions.

Every ultimate fact is only the first of a new series. Every general law only a particular fact of some more general law presently to disclose itself. There is no outside, no inclosing wall, no circumference to us. The man finishes his story,—how good! how final! how it puts a new face on all things! He fills the sky. Lo, on the other side rises also a man and draws a circle around the circle we had just pronounced the outline of the sphere. Then already is our first speaker not man, but only a first speaker. His only redress is forthwith to draw a circle outside of his antagonist. And so men do by themselves. The result of to-day, which haunts the mind and cannot be escaped will presently be abridged into a word, and the principle that seemed to explain nature will itself be included as one example of a bolder generalization. In the thought of to-morrow there is a power to upheave all thy creed, all the creeds, all the literatures of the nations, and marshal thee to a heaven which no epic dream has yet depicted.

Every man is not so much a workman in the world as he is a suggestion of that he should be. Men walk as prophecies of the next age.

Step by step we scale this mysterious ladder; the steps are actions, the new prospect is power. Every several result is threatened and judged by that which follows. Every one seems to be contradicted by the new; it is only limited by the new. The new statement is always hated by the old, and, to those dwelling in the old, comes like an abyss of scepticism. But the eye soon gets wonted to it, for the eye and it are effects of one cause; then its innocency and benefit appear, and presently, all its energy spent, it pales and dwindles before the revelation of the new hour.

Fear not the new generalization. Does the fact look crass and material, threatening to degrade thy theory of spirit? Resist it not; it goes to refine and raise thy theory of matter just as much.

There are no fixtures to men, if we appeal to consciousness. Every man supposes himself not to be fully understood; and if there is any truth in him, if he rests at last on the divine soul, I see not how it can be otherwise. The last chamber, the last closet, he must feel was never opened; there is always a residuum unknown, unanalyzable. That is, every man believes that he has a greater possibility.

Our moods do not believe in each other. To-day I am full of thoughts and can write what I please. I see no reason why I should not have the same thought, the same power of expression, to-morrow. What I write, whilst I write it, seems the most natural thing in the world; but yesterday I saw a dreary vacuity in this direction in which now I see so much; and a month hence, I doubt not, I shall wonder who he was that wrote so many continuous pages. Alas for this infirm faith, this will not strenuous, this vast ebb of a vast flow! I am God in nature; I am a weed by the wall.

The continual effort to raise himself above himself to work a pitch above his last height, betrays itself in a man's relations. We thirst for approbation, yet cannot forgive the approver. The sweet of nature is love; yet if I have a friend I am tormented by my imperfections. The love of me accuses the other party. If he were high enough to slight me, then could I love him, and rise by my affection to new heights. A man's growth is seen in the successive choirs of his friends. For every friend whom he loses for truth, he gains a better. I thought as I walked in the woods and mused on any friends, why should I play with them this game of idolatry? I know and see too well, when not voluntarily blind, the speedy limits of persons called high and worthy. Rich, noble and great they are by the liberality of our speech, but truth is sad. O blessed Spirit, whom I forsake for these, they are not thee! Every personal consideration that we allow costs us heavenly state. We sell the thrones of angels for a short and turbulent pleasure.
How often must we learn this lesson? Men cease to interest us when we find their limitations. The only sin is limitation. As soon
as you once come up with a man's limitations, it is all over with him. [266] Has he talents? has he enterprises? has he knowledge?
It boots not. Infinitely alluring and attractive was he to you yesterday, a great hope, a sea to swim in; now, you have found his
shores, found it a pond, and you care not if you never see it again.

Each new step we take in thought reconciles twenty seemingly discordant facts, as expressions of one law. Aristotle and
Plato[701] are reckoned the respective heads of two schools. A wise man will see that Aristotle platonizes. By going one step
farther back in thought, discordant opinions are reconciled by being seen to be two extremes of one principle, and we can
never go so far back as to preclude a still higher vision.

Beware when the great God lets loose a thinker on this planet. Then all things are at risk. It is as when a conflagration has
broken out in a great city, and no man knows what is safe, or where it will end. There is not a piece of science but its flank may
be turned to-morrow; there is not any literary reputation, not the so-called eternal names of fame, that may not be revised and
condemned. The very hopes of man, the thoughts of his heart, the religion of nations, the manners and morals of mankind are
all at the mercy of a new generalization. Generalization is always a new influx of the divinity into the mind. Hence the thrill that
attends it.

Valor consists in the power of self-recovery, so that a man cannot have his flank turned, cannot be out-generalled, but put
him where you will, he stands. [267] This can only be by his preferring truth to his past apprehension of truth, and his alert
acceptance of it from whatever quarter; the intrepid conviction that his laws, his relations to society, his Christianity, his world,
may at any time be superseded and decease.

There are degrees in idealism. We learn first to play with it academically, as the magnet was once a toy. Then we see in the
heyday of youth and poetry that it may be true, that it is true in gleams and fragments. Then, its countenance waxes stern and
grand, and we see that it must be true. It now shows itself ethical and practical. We learn that God is; that he is in me; and
that all things are shadows of him. The idealism of Berkeley[702] is only a crude statement of the idealism of Jesus, and that
again is a crude statement of the fact that all nature is the rapid efflux of goodness executing and organizing itself. Much more
obviously is history and the state of the world at any one time directly dependent on the intellectual classification then existing
in the minds of men. The things which are dear to men at this hour are so on account of the ideas which have emerged on their
mental horizon, and which cause the present order of things, as a tree bears its apples. A new degree of culture would instantly
revolutionize the entire system of human pursuits.

Conversation is a game of circles. In conversation we pluck up the termini[703] which bound the common of silence on every
side. The parties are not [268] to be judged by the spirit they partake and even express under this Pentecost,[704] To-morrow
they will have receded from this high-water mark. To-morrow you shall find them stooping under the old pack-saddles. Yet let
us enjoy the cloven flame whilst it glows on our walls. When each new speaker strikes a new light, emancipates us from the
oppression of the last speaker to oppress us with the greatness and exclusiveness of his own thought, then yields us to another
redeemer, we seem to recover our rights, to become men. O, what truths profound and executable only in ages and orbs,
are supposed in the announcement of every truth! In common hours, society sits cold and statuesque. We all stand waiting,
empty,—knowing, possibly, that we can be full, surrounded by mighty symbols which are not symbols to us, but prose and
trivial toys. Then cometh the god and converts the statues into fiery men, and by a flash of his eye burns up the veil which
shrouded all things, and the meaning of the very furniture, of cup and saucer, of chair and clock and tester, is manifest. The
facts which loomed so large in the fogs of yesterday,—property, climate, breeding, personal beauty and the like, have strangely
changed their proportions. All that we reckoned settled shakes and rattles; and literatures, cities, climates, religions, leave their
foundations and dance before our eyes. And yet here again see the swift circumscription! Good as is discourse, silence is better,
and shames it. The length of the discourse indicates the distance of [269] thought betwixt the speaker and the hearer. If they
were at a perfect understanding in any part, no words would be necessary thereon. If at one in all parts, no words would be
suffered.
Literature is a point outside of our hodiernal circle through which a new one may be described. The use of literature is to afford us a platform whence we may command a view of our present life, a purchase by which we may move it. We fill ourselves with ancient learning, install ourselves the best we can in Greek, in Punic in Roman houses, only that we may wiselier see French, English and American houses and modes of living. In like manner we see literature best from the midst of wild nature, or from the din of affairs, or from a high religion. The field cannot be well seen from within the field. The astronomer must have his diameter of the earth’s orbit as a base to find the parallax of any star.

Therefore we value the poet. All the argument and all the wisdom is not in the encyclopaedia, or the treatise on metaphysics, or the Body of Divinity, but in the sonnet or the play. In my daily work I incline to repeat my old steps, and do not believe in remedial force, in the power of change and reform. But some Petrarch or Ariosto filled with the new wine of his imagination, writes me an ode or a brisk romance, full of daring thought and action. He smites and arouses me with his shrill tones, breaks up my whole chain of habits, and I open my eye on my own possibilities. He claps wings to the sides of all the solid old lumber of the world, and I am capable once more of choosing a straight path in theory and practice.

We have the same need to command a view of the religion of the world. We can never see Christianity from the catechism:—from the pastures, from a boat in the pond, from amidst the songs of wood-birds we possibly may. Cleansed by the elemental light and wind, steeped in the sea of beautiful forms which the field offers us, we may chance to cast a right glance back upon biography. Christianity is rightly dear to the best of mankind; yet was there never a young philosopher whose breeding had fallen into the Christian church by whom that brave text of Paul’s was not specially prized, “Then shall also the Son be subject unto Him who put all things under him, that God may be all in all.” Let the claims and virtues of persons be never so great and welcome, the instinct of man presses eagerly onward to the impersonal and illimitable, and gladly arms itself against the dogmatism of bigots with this generous word out of the book itself.

The natural world may be conceived of as a system of concentric circles, and we now and then detect in nature slight dislocations which apprise us that this surface on which we now stand is not fixed, but sliding. These manifold tenacious qualities this chemistry and vegetation, these metals and animals, which seem to stand there for their own sake, are means and methods only, are words of God, and as fugitive as other words. Has the naturalist or chemist learned his craft, who has not yet discerned the deeper law whereof this is only a partial or approximate statement, namely that like draws to like, and that the goods which belong to you gravitate to you and need not be pursued with pains and cost? Yet is that statement approximate also, and not final. Omnipresence is a higher fact. Not through subtle subterranean channels need friend and fact be drawn to their counterpart, but, rightly considered, these things proceed from the eternal generation of the soul. Cause and effect are two sides of one fact.

The same law of eternal procession ranges all that we call the virtues, and extinguishes each in the light of a better. The great man will not be prudent in the popular sense; all his prudence will be so much deduction from his grandeur. But it behooves each to see, when he sacrifices prudence, to what god he devotes it; if to ease and pleasure, he had better be prudent still; if to a great trust, he can well spare his mule and panniers who has a winged chariot instead. Geoffrey draws on his boots to go through the woods, that his feet may be safer from the bite of snakes; Aaron never thinks of such a peril. In many years neither is harmed by such an accident. Yet it seems to me that with every precaution you take against such an evil you put yourself into the power of the evil. I suppose that the highest prudence is the lowest prudence. Is this too sudden a rushing from the centre to the verge of our orbit? Think how many times we shall fall back into pitiful calculations before we take up our rest in the great sentiment, or make the verge of to-day the new centre. Besides, your bravest sentiment is familiar to the humblest men. The poor and the low have their way of expressing the last facts of philosophy as well as you. “Blessed be nothing” and “The worse things are, the better they are” are proverbs which express the transcendentalism of common life.

One man’s justice is another’s injustice; one man’s beauty another’s ugliness; one man’s wisdom another’s folly; as one beholds the same objects from a higher point of view. One man thinks justice consists in paying debts, and has no measure in his abhorrence of another who is very remiss in this duty and makes the creditor wait tediously. But that second man has his own way of looking at things; asks himself which debt must I pay first, the debt to the rich, or the debt to the poor? the debt of money, or the debt of thought to mankind, of genius to nature? For you, O broker, there is no other principle but arithmetic. For me,
commerce is of trivial import; love, faith, truth of character, the aspiration of man, these are sacred; nor can I detach one duty, like you, from all other duties, and concentrate my forces mechanically on the payment of moneys. Let me live onward; you shall find that, though slower, the progress of my character will liquidate [273] all these debts without injustice to higher claims. If a man should dedicate himself to the payment of notes, would not this be injustice? Owes he no debt but money? And are all claims on him to be postponed to a landlord’s or a banker’s?

There is no virtue which is final; all are initial. The virtues of society are vices of the saint. The terror of reform is the discovery that we must cast away our virtues, or what we have always esteemed such, into the same pit that has consumed our grosser vices.

Forgive his crimes, forgive his virtues too, Those smaller faults, half converts to the right.

It is the highest power of divine moments that they abolish our contritions also. I accuse myself of sloth and unprofitableness day by day; but when these waves of God flow into me I no longer reckon lost time. I no longer poorly compute my possible achievement by what remains to me of the month or the year; for these moments confer a sort of omnipresence and omnipotence which asks nothing of duration, but sees that the energy of the mind is commensurate with the work to be done, without time.

And thus, O circular philosopher, I hear some reader exclaim, you have arrived at a fine pyrrhonism, at an equivalence and indifferency of all actions, and would fain teach us that if we are true, forsooth, our crimes may be lively stones out of which we shall construct the temple of the true God.

I am not careful to justify myself. I own I am gladdened[714] by seeing the predominance of the saccharine principle throughout vegetable nature, and not less by beholding in morals that unrestrained inundation of the principle of good into every chink and hole that selfishness has left open, yea into selfishness and sin itself; so that no evil is pure, nor hell itself without its extreme satisfactions. But lest I should mislead any when I have my own head and obey my whims, let me remind the reader that I am only an experimenter. Do not set the least value on what I do, or the least discredit on what I do not, as if I pretended to settle anything as true or false. I unsettle all things. No facts are to me sacred; none are profane; I simply experiment, an endless seeker with no Past at my back.

Yet this incessant movement and progression which all things partake could never become sensible to us but by contrast to some principle of fixture or stability in the soul. Whilst the eternal generation of circles proceeds, the eternal generator abides. That central life is somewhat superior to creation, superior to knowledge and thought, and contains all its circles. For ever it labors to create a life and thought as large and excellent as itself; but in vain; for that which is made instructs how to make a better.

Thus there is no sleep, no pause, no preservation, but all things renew, germinate and spring. Why should we import rags and relics into the new hour? [275] Nature abhors the old, and old age seems the only disease: all others run into this one. We call it by many names,—fever, intemperance, insanity, stupidity and crime: they are all forms of old age: they are rest, conservatism, appropriation, inertia; not newness, not the way onward. We grizzle every day. I see no need of it. Whilst we converse with what is above us, we do not grow old, but grow young. Infancy, youth, receptive, aspiring, with religious eye looking upward, counts itself nothing and abandons itself to the instruction flowing from all sides. But the man and woman of seventy assume to know all; throw up their hope; renounce aspiration; accept the actual for the necessary and talk down to the young. Let them then become organs of the Holy Ghost; let them be lovers; let them behold truth; and their eyes are uplifted, their wrinkles smoothed, they are perfumed again with hope and power. This old age ought not to creep on a human mind. In nature every moment is new; the past is always swallowed and forgotten; the coming only is sacred. Nothing is secure but life, transition, the energizing spirit. No love can be bound by oath or covenant to secure it against a higher love. No truth so sublime but it may be trivial to-morrow in the light of new thoughts. People wish to be settled: only as far as they are unsettled is there any hope for them.

Life is a series of surprises. We do not guess to-day the mood, the pleasure, the power of to-morrow,[276] when we are building up our being. Of lower states,—of acts of routine and sense, we can tell somewhat, but the masterpieces of God, the total
growths and universal movements of the soul, he hideth; they are incalculable. I can know that truth is divine and helpful; but
how it shall help me I can have no guess, for so to be is the sole inlet of so to know. The new position of the advancing man has
all the powers of the old, yet has them all new. It carries in its bosom all the energies of the past, yet is itself an exhalation of the
morning. I cast away in this new moment all my once hoarded knowledge, as vacant and vain. Now for the first time seem I to
know any thing rightly. The simplest words,—we do not know what they mean except when we love and aspire.

The difference between talents and character is adroitness to keep the old and trodden round, and power and courage to
make a new road to new and better goals. Character makes an overpowering present, a cheerful, determined hour, which
fortifies all the company by making them see that much is possible and excellent that was not thought of. Character dulls the
impression of particular events. When we see the conqueror we do not think much of any one battle or success. We see that we
had exaggerated the difficulty. It was easy to him. The great man is not convulsive or tormentable. He is so much that events
pass over him without much impression. People say sometimes, “See what I have [277] overcome; see how cheerful I am; see
how completely I have triumphed over these black events.” Not if they still remind me of the black event,—they have not yet
conquered. Is it conquest to be a gay and decorated sepulchre, or a half-crazed widow, hysterically laughing? True conquest is
the causing the black event to fade and disappear as an early cloud of insignificant result in a history so large and advancing.

The one thing which we seek with insatiable desire is to forget ourselves, to be surprised out of our propriety, to lose our
sempiternal memory and to do something without knowing how or why; in short to draw a new circle. Nothing great was ever
achieved without enthusiasm. The way of life is wonderful. It is by abandonment. The great moments of history are the facilities
of performance through the strength of ideas, as the works of genius and religion. “A man,” said Oliver Cromwell “never rises
so high as when he knows not whither he is going.” Dreams and drunkenness, the use of opium and alcohol are the semblance
and counterfeit of this oracular genius, and hence their dangerous attraction for men. For the like reason they ask the aid of wild
passions, as in the gaming and war, ape in some manner these flames and generosities of the heart.

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Where I Lived, and What I Lived For

At a certain season of our life we are accustomed to consider every spot as the possible site of a house. I have thus surveyed the country on every side within a dozen miles of where I live. In imagination I have bought all the farms in succession, for all were to be bought, and I knew their price. I walked over each farmer's premises, tasted his wild apples, discoursed on husbandry with him, took his farm at his price, at any price, mortgaging it to him in my mind; even put a higher price on it,—took everything but a deed of it,—took his word for his deed, for I dearly love to talk,—cultivated it, and him too to some extent, I trust, and withdrew when I had enjoyed it long enough, leaving him to carry it on. This experience entitled me to be regarded as a sort of real-estate broker by my friends. Wherever I sat, there I might live, and the landscape radiated from me accordingly. What is a house but a sedes, a seat?—better if a country seat. I discovered many a site for a house not likely to be soon improved, which some might have thought too far from the village, but to my eyes the village was too far from it. Well, there I might live, I said; and there I did live, for an hour, a summer and a winter life; saw how I could let the years run off, buffet the winter through, and see the spring come in. The future inhabitants of this region, wherever they may place their houses, may be sure that they have been anticipated. An afternoon sufficed to lay out the land into orchard, woodlot, and pasture, and to decide what fine oaks or pines should be left to stand before the door, and whence each blasted tree could be seen to the best advantage; and then I let it lie, fallow perchance, for a man is rich in proportion to the number of things which he can afford to let alone.

My imagination carried me so far that I even had the refusal of several farms,—the refusal was all I wanted,—but I never got my fingers burned by actual possession. The nearest that I came to actual possession was when I bought the Hollowell place, and had begun to sort my seeds, and collected materials with which to make a wheelbarrow to carry it on or off with; but before the owner gave me a deed of it, his wife—every man has such a wife—changed her mind and wished to keep it, and he offered me ten dollars to release him. Now, to speak the truth, I had but ten cents in the world, and it surpassed my arithmetic to tell, if I was that man who had ten cents, or who had a farm, or ten dollars, or all together. However, I let him keep the ten dollars and the farm too, for I had carried it far enough; or rather, to be generous, I sold him the farm for just what I gave for it, and, as he was not a rich man, made him a present of ten dollars, and still had my ten cents, and seeds, and materials for a wheelbarrow left. I found thus that I had been a rich man without any damage to my poverty. But I retained the landscape, and I have since annually carried off what it yielded without a wheelbarrow. With respect to landscapes,—

"I am monarch of all I survey,
My right there is none to dispute."

I have frequently seen a poet withdraw, having enjoyed the most valuable part of a farm, while the crusty farmer supposed that he had got a few wild apples only. Why, the owner does not know it for many years when a poet has put his farm in rhyme, the most admirable kind of invisible fence, has fairly impounded it, milked it, skimmed it, and got all the cream, and left the farmer only the skimmed milk.

The real attractions of the Hollowell farm, to me, were; its complete retirement, being, about two miles from the village, half a mile from the nearest neighbor, and separated from the highway by a broad field; its bounding on the river, which the owner said protected it by its fogs from frosts in the spring, though that was nothing to me; the gray color and ruinous state of the house and barn, and the dilapidated fences, which put such an interval between me and the last occupant; the hollow and lichen-covered apple trees, gnawed by rabbits, showing what kind of neighbors I should have; but above all, the recollection I had of it from my earliest voyages up the river, when the house was concealed behind a dense grove of red maples, through which I heard the house-dog bark. I was in haste to buy it, before the proprietor finished getting out some rocks, cutting down the hollow apple trees, and grubbing up some young birches which had sprung up in the pasture, or, in short, had made any more of his improvements. To enjoy these advantages I was ready to carry it on; like Atlas, to take the world on my shoulders,—I
never heard what compensation he received for that,—and do all those things which had no other motive or excuse but that I might pay for it and be unmolested in my possession of it; for I knew all the while that it would yield the most abundant crop of the kind I wanted if I could only afford to let it alone. But it turned out as I have said.

All that I could say, then, with respect to farming on a large scale, (I have always cultivated a garden,) was, that I had had my seeds ready. Many think that seeds improve with age. I have no doubt that time discriminates between the good and the bad; and when at last I shall plant, I shall be less likely to be disappointed. But I would say to my fellows, once for all, As long as possible live free and uncommitted. It makes but little difference whether you are committed to a farm or the county jail.

Old Cato, whose "De Re Rusticâ" is my “Cultivator,” says, and the only translation I have seen makes sheer nonsense of the passage, "When you think of getting a farm, turn it thus in your mind, not to buy greedily; nor spare your pains to look at it, and do not think it enough to go round it once. The oftener you go there the more it will please you, if it is good." I think I shall not buy greedily, but go round and round it as long as I live, and be buried in it first, that it may please me the more at last.

The present was my next experiment of this kind, which I purpose to describe more at length; for convenience, putting the experience of two years into one. As I have said, I do not propose to write an ode to dejection, but to brag as lustily as chanticleer in the morning, standing on his roost, if only to wake my neighbors up.

When first I took up my abode in the woods, that is, began to spend my nights as well as days there, which, by accident, was on Independence Day, or the Fourth of July, 1845, my house was not finished for winter, but was merely a defence against the rain, without plastering or chimney, the walls being of rough, weather-stained boards, with wide chinks, which made it cool at night. The upright white hewn studs and freshly planed door and window casings gave it a clean and airy look, especially in the morning, when its timbers were saturated with dew, so that I fancied that by noon some sweet gum would exude from them. To my imagination it retained throughout the day more or less of this auroral character, reminding me of a certain house on a mountain which I had visited the year before. This was an airy and unplastered cabin, fit to entertain a travelling god, and where a goddess might trail her garments. The winds which passed over my dwelling were such as sweep over the ridges of mountains, bearing the broken strains, or celestial parts only, of terrestrial music. The morning wind forever blows, the poem of creation is uninterrupted; but few are the ears that hear it. Olympus is but the outside of the earth every where.

The only house I had been the owner of before, if I except a boat, was a tent, which I used occasionally when making excursions in the summer, and this is still rolled up in my garret; but the boat, after passing from hand to hand, has gone down the stream of time. With this more substantial shelter about me, I had made some progress toward settling in the world. This frame, so slightly clad, was a sort of crystallization around me, and reacted on the builder. It was suggestive somewhat as a picture in outlines. I did not need to go outdoors to take the air, for the atmosphere within had lost none of its freshness. It was not so much within doors as behind a door where I sat, even in the rainiest weather. The Harivansa says, “An abode without birds is like a meat without seasoning.” Such was not my abode, for I found myself suddenly neighbor to the birds; not by having imprisoned one, but having caged myself near them. I was not only nearer to some of those which commonly frequent the garden and the orchard, but to those wilder and more thrilling songsters of the forest which never, or rarely, serenade a villager,—the wood-thrush, the veery, the scarlet tanager, the field-sparrow, the whippoorwill, and many others.

I was seated by the shore of a small pond, about a mile and a half south of the village of Concord and somewhat higher than it, in the midst of an extensive wood between that town and Lincoln, and about two miles south of that our only field known to fame, Concord Battle Ground; but I was so low in the woods that the opposite shore, half a mile off, like the rest, covered with wood, was my most distant horizon. For the first week, whenever I looked out on the pond it impressed me like a tarn high up on the side of a mountain, its bottom far above the surface of other lakes, and, as the sun arose, I saw it throwing off its nightly clothing of mist, and here and there, by degrees, its soft ripples or its smooth reflecting surface was revealed, while the mists, like ghosts, were stealthily withdrawing in every direction into the woods, as at the breaking up of some nocturnal conventicle. The very dew seemed to hang upon the trees later into the day than usual, as on the sides of mountains.
This small lake was of most value as a neighbor in the intervals of a gentle rain storm in August, when, both air and water being perfectly still, but the sky overcast, mid-afternoon had all the serenity of evening, and the wood-thrush sang around, and was heard from shore to shore. A lake like this is never smoother than at such a time; and the clear portion of the air above it being shallow and darkened by clouds, the water, full of light and reflections, becomes a lower heaven itself so much the more important. From a hill top near by, where the wood had been recently cut off, there was a pleasing vista southward across the pond, through a wide indentation in the hills which form the shore there, where their opposite sides sloping toward each other suggested a stream flowing out in that direction through a wooded valley, but stream there was none. That way I looked between and over the near green hills to some distant and higher ones in the horizon, tinged with blue. Indeed, by standing on tiptoe I could catch a glimpse of some of the peaks of the still bluer and more distant mountain ranges in the north-west, those true-blue coins from heaven's own mint, and also of some portion of the village. But in other directions, even from this point, I could not see over or beyond the woods which surrounded me. It is well to have some water in your neighborhood, to give buoyancy to and float the earth. One value even of the smallest well is, that when you look into it you see that earth is not continent but insular. This is as important as that it keeps butter cool. When I looked across the pond from this peak toward the Sudbury meadows, which in time of flood I distinguished elevated perhaps by a mirage in their seething valley, like a coin in a basin, all the earth beyond the pond appeared like a thin crust insulated and floated even by this small sheet of interverting water, and I was reminded that this on which I dwelt was but dry land.

Though the view from my door was still more contracted, I did not feel crowded or confined in the least. There was pasture enough for my imagination. The low shrub-oak plateau to which the opposite shore arose, stretched away toward the prairies of the West and the steppes of Tartary, affording ample room for all the roving families of men. "There are none happy in the world but beings who enjoy freely a vast horizon,"—said Damodara, when his herds required new and larger pastures.

Both place and time were changed, and I dwelt nearer to those parts of the universe and to those eras in history which had most attracted me. Where I lived was as far off as many a region viewed nightly by astronomers. We are wont to imagine rare and delectable places in some remote and more celestial corner of the system, behind the constellation of Cassiopeia's Chair, far from noise and disturbance. I discovered that my house actually had its site in such a withdrawn, but forever new and unprofaned, part of the universe. If it were worth the while to settle in those parts near to the Hyades, to Aldebaran or Altair, then I was really there, or at an equal remoteness from the life which I had left behind, dwindled and twinkling with as fine a ray to my nearest neighbor, and to be seen only in moonless nights by him. Such was that part of creation where I had squatted;—

"There was a shepherd that did live,
And held his thoughts as high
As were the mounts whereon his flocks
Did hourly feed him by."

What should we think of the shepherd's life if his flocks always wandered to higher pastures than his thoughts?

Every morning was a cheerful invitation to make my life of equal simplicity, and I may say innocence, with Nature herself. I have been as sincere a worshipper of Aurora as the Greeks. I got up early and bathed in the pond; that was a religious exercise, and one of the best things which I did. They say that characters were engraven on the bathing tub of king Tching-thang to this effect: "Renew thyself completely each day; do it again, and again, and forever again." I can understand that. Morning brings back the heroic ages. I was as much affected by the faint hum of a mosquito making its invisible and unimaginable tour through my apartment at earliest dawn, when I was sitting with door and windows open, as I could be by any trumpet that ever sang of fame. It was Homer's requiem; itself an Iliad and Odyssey in the air, singing its own wrath and wanderings. There was something cosmical about it; a standing advertisement, till forbidden, of the everlasting vigor and fertility of the world. The morning, which is the most memorable season of the day, is the awakening hour. Then there is least somnolence in us; and for an hour, at least, some part of us awakes which slumbers all the rest of the day and night. Little is to be expected of that day, if it can be called a day, to which we are not awakened by our Genius, but by the mechanical nudgings of some servitor, are not awakened by our own newly-acquired force and aspirations from within, accompanied by the undulations of celestial music, instead of factory
bells, and a fragrance filling the air—to a higher life than we fell asleep from; and thus the darkness bear its fruit, and prove itself to be good, no less than the light. That man who does not believe that each day contains an earlier, more sacred, and auroral hour than he has yet profaned, has despaired of life, and is pursuing a descending and darkening way. After a partial cessation of his sensuous life, the soul of man, or its organs rather, are reinvigorated each day, and his Genius tries again what noble life it can make. All memorable events, I should say, transpire in morning time and in a morning atmosphere. The Vedas say, “All intelligences awake with the morning.” Poetry and art, and the fairest and most memorable of the actions of men, date from such an hour. All poets and heroes, like Memnon, are the children of Aurora, and emit their music at sunrise. To him whose elastic and vigorous thought keeps pace with the sun, the day is a perpetual morning. It matters not what the clocks say or the attitudes and labors of men. Morning is when I am awake and there is a dawn in me. Moral reform is the effort to throw off sleep. Why is it that men give so poor an account of their day if they have not been slumbering? They are not such poor calculators. If they had not been overcome with drowsiness, they would have performed something. The millions are awake enough for physical labor; but only one in a million is awake enough for effective intellectual exertion, only one in a hundred millions to a poetic or divine life. To be awake is to be alive. I have never yet met a man who was quite awake. How could I have looked him in the face?

We must learn to reawaken and keep ourselves awake, not by mechanical aids, but by an infinite expectation of the dawn, which does not forsake us in our soundest sleep. I know of no more encouraging fact than the unquestionable ability of man to elevate his life by a conscious endeavor. It is something to be able to paint a particular picture, or to carve a statue, and so to make a few objects beautiful; but it is far more glorious to carve and paint the very atmosphere and medium through which we look, which morally we can do. To affect the quality of the day, that is the highest of arts. Every man is tasked to make his life, even in its details, worthy of the contemplation of his most elevated and critical hour. If we refused, or rather used up, such paltry information as we get, the oracles would distinctly inform us how this might be done.

I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. I did not wish to live what was not life, living is so dear; nor did I wish to practise resignation, unless it was quite necessary. I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life, to live so sturdily and Spartan-like as to put to rout all that was not life, to cut a broad swath and shave close, to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms, and, if it proved to be mean, why then to get the whole and genuine meanness of it, and publish its meanness to the world; or if it were sublime, to know it by experience, and be able to give a true account of it in my next excursion. For most men, it appears to me, are in a strange uncertainty about it, whether it is of the devil or of God, and have somewhat hastily concluded that it is the chief end of man here to “glorify God and enjoy him forever.”

Still we live meanly, like ants; though the fable tells us that we were long ago changed into men; like pygmies we fight with cranes; it is error upon error, and clout upon clout, and our best virtue has for its occasion a superfluous and evitable wretchedness. Our life is fretted away by detail. An honest man has hardly need to count more than his ten fingers, or in extreme cases he may add his ten toes, and lump the rest. Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity! I say, let your affairs be as two or three, and not a hundred or a thousand; instead of a million count half a dozen, and keep your accounts on your thumb nail. In extreme cases he may add his ten toes, and lump the rest. Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity! I say, let your affairs be as two or three, and not a hundred or a thousand; instead of a million count half a dozen, and keep your accounts on your thumb nail. In extreme cases he may add his ten toes, and lump the rest. Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity! I say, let your affairs be as two or three, and not a hundred or a thousand; instead of a million count half a dozen, and keep your accounts on your thumb nail.
business, who will want railroads? We do not ride on the railroad; it rides upon us. Did you ever think what those sleepers are that underlie the railroad? Each one is a man, an Irish-man, or a Yankee man. The rails are laid on them, and they are covered with sand, and the cars run smoothly over them. They are sound sleepers, I assure you. And every few years a new lot is laid down and run over; so that, if some have the pleasure of riding on a rail, others have the misfortune to be ridden upon. And when they run over a man that is walking in his sleep, a supernumerary sleeper in the wrong position, and wake him up, they suddenly stop the cars, and make a hue and cry about it, as if this were an exception. I am glad to know that it takes a gang of men for every five miles to keep the sleepers down and level in their beds as it is, for this is a sign that they may sometime get up again.

Why should we live with such hurry and waste of life? We are determined to be starved before we are hungry. Men say that a stitch in time saves nine, and so they take a thousand stitches to-day to save nine to-morrow. As for work, we haven't any of any consequence. We have the Saint Vitus’ dance, and cannot possibly keep our heads still. If I should only give a few pulls at the parish bell-roping, as for a fire, that is, without setting the bell, there is hardly a man on his farm in the outskirts of Concord, notwithstanding that press of engagements which was his excuse so many times this morning, nor a boy, nor a woman, I might almost say, but would forsake all and follow that sound, not mainly to save property from the flames, but, if we will confess the truth, much more to see it burn, since burn it must, and we, be it known, did not set it on fire,—or to see it put out, and have a hand in it, if that is done as handsomely; yes, even if it were the parish church itself. Hardly a man takes a half hour’s nap after dinner, but when he wakes he holds up his head and asks, “What's the news?” as if the rest of mankind had stood his sentinels. Some give directions to be waked every half hour, doubtless for no other purpose; and then, to pay for it, they tell what they have dreamed. After a night’s sleep the news is as indispensable as the breakfast. “Pray tell me any thing new that has happened to a man anywhere on this globe,”—and he reads it over his coffee and rolls, that a man has had his eyes gouged out this morning on the Wachito River; never dreaming the while that he lives in the dark unfathomed mammoth cave of this world, and has but the rudiment of an eye himself.

For my part, I could easily do without the post-office. I think that there are very few important communications made through it. To speak critically, I never received more than one or two letters in my life—I wrote this some years ago—that were worth the postage. The penny-post is, commonly, an institution through which you seriously offer a man that penny for his thoughts which is so often safely offered in jest. And I am sure that I never read any memorable news in a newspaper. If we read of one man robbed, or murdered, or killed by accident, or one house burned, or one vessel wrecked, or one steamboat blown up, or one cow run over on the Western Railroad, or one mad dog killed, or one lot of grasshoppers in the winter,—we never need read of another. One is enough. If you are acquainted with the principle, what do you care for a myriad instances and applications? To a philosopher all news, as it is called, is gossip, and they who edit and read it are old women over their tea. Yet not a few are greedy after this gossip. There was such a rush, as I hear, the other day at one of the offices to learn the foreign news by the last arrival, that several large squares of plate glass belonging to the establishment were broken by the pressure,—news which I seriously think a ready wit might write a twelve-month, or twelve years, beforehand with sufficient accuracy. As for Spain, for instance, if you know how to throw in Don Carlos and the Infanta, and Don Pedro and Seville and Granada, from time to time in the right proportions,—they may have changed the names a little since I saw the papers,—and serve up a bull-fight when other entertainments fail, it will be true to the letter, and give us as good an idea of the exact state or ruin of things in Spain as the most succinct and lucid reports under this head in the newspapers: and as for England, almost the last significant scrap of news from that quarter was the revolution of 1649; and if you have learned the history of her crops for an average year, you never need attend to that thing again, unless your speculations are of a merely pecuniary character. If one may judge who rarely looks into the newspapers, nothing new does ever happen in foreign parts, a French revolution not excepted.

What news! how much more important to know what that is which was never old! “Kieou-he-yu (great dignitary of the state of Wei) sent a man to Khoung-tseu to know his news. Khoung-tseu caused the messenger to be seated near him, and questioned him in these terms: What is your master doing? The messenger answered with respect: My master desires to diminish the number of his faults, but he cannot come to the end of them. The messenger being gone, the philosopher remarked: What a worthy messenger! What a worthy messenger!” The preacher, instead of vexing the ears of drowsy farmers on their day of rest...
at the end of the week,—for Sunday is the fit conclusion of an ill-spent week, and not the fresh and brave beginning of a new one,—with this one other draggle-tail of a sermon, should shout with thundering voice, "Pause! Avast! Why so seeming fast, but deadly slow?"

Shams and delusions are esteemed for soundest truths, while reality is fabulous. If men would steadily observe realities only, and not allow themselves to be deluded, life, to compare it with such things as we know, would be like a fairy tale and the Arabian Nights’ Entertainments. If we respected only what is inevitable and has a right to be, music and poetry would resound along the streets. When we are unhurried and wise, we perceive that only great and worthy things have any permanent and absolute existence,—that petty fears and petty pleasures are but the shadow of the reality. This is always exhilarating and sublime. By closing the eyes and slumbering, and consenting to be deceived by shows, men establish and confirm their daily life of routine and habit everywhere, which still is built on purely illusory foundations. Children, who play life, discern its true law and relations more clearly than men, who fail to live it worthily, but who think that they are wiser by experience, that is, by failure. I have read in a Hindoo book, that "there was a king's son, who, being expelled in infancy from his native city, was brought up by a forester, and, growing up to maturity in that state, imagined himself to belong to the barbarous race with which he lived. One of his father's ministers having discovered him, revealed to him what he was, and the misconception of his character was removed, and he knew himself to be a prince. So soul," continues the Hindoo philosopher, "from the circumstances in which it is placed, mistakes its own character, until the truth is revealed to it by some holy teacher, and then it knows itself to be Brahme." I perceive that we inhabitants of New England live this mean life that we do because our vision does not penetrate the surface of things. We think that that is which appears to be. If a man should walk through this town and see only the reality, where, think you, would the "Mill-dam" go to? If he should give us an account of the realities he beheld there, we should not recognize the place in his description. Look at a meeting-house, or a court-house, or a jail, or a shop, or a dwelling-house, and say what that thing really is before a true gaze, and they would all go to pieces in your account of them. Men esteem truth remote, in the outskirts of the system, behind the farthest star, before Adam and after the last man. In eternity there is indeed something true and sublime. But all these times and places and occasions are now and here. God himself culminates in the present moment, and will never be more divine in the lapse of all the ages. And we are enabled to apprehend at all what is sublime and noble only by the perpetual instilling and drenching of the reality that surrounds us. The universe constantly and obediently answers to our conceptions; whether we travel fast or slow, the track is laid for us. Let us spend our lives in conceiving then. The poet or the artist never yet had so fair and noble a design but some of his posterity at least could accomplish it.

Let us spend one day as deliberately as Nature, and not be thrown off the track by every nutshell and mosquito's wing that falls on the rails. Let us rise early and fast, or break fast, gently and without perturbation; let company come and let company go, let the bells ring and the children cry,—determined to make a day of it. Why should we knock under and go with the stream? Let us not be upset and overwhelmed in that terrible rapid and whirlpool called a dinner, situated in the meridian shallows. Weather this danger and you are safe, for the rest of the way is down hill. With unrelaxed nerves, with morning vigor, sail by it, looking another way, tied to the mast like Ulysses. If the engine whistles, let it whistle till it is hoarse for its pains. If the bell rings, why should we allow ourselves to be deluded, life, to compare it with such things as we know, and call reality, and say, This is, and no mistake; and then begin, having a point d'appui, below freshet and frost and fire, a place where you might found a wall or a state, or set a lamp-post safely, or perhaps a gauge, not a Nilometer, but a Reaometer, that future ages might know how deep a freshet of shams and appearances had gathered from time to time. If you stand right fronting and face to face to a fact, you will see the sun glimmer on both its surfaces, as if it were a cimeter, and feel its sweet edge dividing you through the heart and marrow, and so you will happily conclude your mortal career. Be it life or death, we crave only reality. If we are really dying, let us hear the rattle in our throats and feel cold in the extremities; if we are alive, let us go about our business.

Time is but the stream I go a-fishing in. I drink at it; but while I drink I see the sandy bottom and detect how shallow it is. Its thin current slides away, but eternity remains. I would drink deeper; fish in the sky, whose bottom is pebbly with stars. I cannot count one. I know not the first letter of the alphabet. I have always been regretting that I was not as wise as the day I was born.
The intellect is a cleaver; it discerns and rifts its way into the secret of things. I do not wish to be any more busy with my hands than is necessary. My head is hands and feet. I feel all my best faculties concentrated in it. My instinct tells me that my head is an organ for burrowing, as some creatures use their snout and fore-paws, and with it I would mine and burrow my way through these hills. I think that the richest vein is somewhere hereabouts; so by the divining-rod and thin rising vapors I judge; and here I will begin to mine.

**Reading**

With a little more deliberation in the choice of their pursuits, all men would perhaps become essentially students and observers, for certainly their nature and destiny are interesting to all alike. In accumulating property for ourselves or our posterity, in founding a family or a state, or acquiring fame even, we are mortal; but in dealing with truth we are immortal, and need fear no change nor accident. The oldest Egyptian or Hindoo philosopher raised a corner of the veil from the statue of the divinity; and still the trembling robe remains raised, and I gaze upon as fresh a glory as he did, since it was I in him that was then so bold, and it is he in me that now reviews the vision. No dust has settled on that robe; no time has elapsed since that divinity was revealed. That time which we really improve, or which is improvable, is neither past, present, nor future.

My residence was more favorable, not only to thought, but to serious reading, than a university; and though I was beyond the range of the ordinary circulating library, I had more than ever come within the influence of those books which circulate round the world, whose sentences were first written on bark, and are now merely copied from time to time on to linen paper. Says the poet Mir Camar Uddîn Mast, “Being seated to run through the region of the spiritual world; I have had this advantage in books. To be intoxicated by a single glass of wine; I have experienced this pleasure when I have drunk the liquor of the esoteric doctrines.” I kept Homer’s Iliad on my table through the summer, though I looked at his page only now and then. Incessant labor with my hands, at first, for I had my house to finish and my beans to hoe at the same time, made more study impossible. Yet I sustained myself by the prospect of such reading in future. I read one or two shallow books of travel in the intervals of my work, till that employment made me ashamed of myself, and I asked where it was then that I lived.

The student may read Homer or Æschylus in the Greek without danger of dissipation or luxuriousness, for it implies that he in some measure emulate their heroes, and consecrate morning hours to their pages. The heroic books, even if printed in the character of our mother tongue, will always be in a language dead to degenerate times; and we must laboriously seek the meaning of each word and line, conjecturing a larger sense than common use permits out of what wisdom and valor and generosity we have. The modern cheap and fertile press, with all its translations, has done little to bring us nearer to the heroic writers of antiquity. They seem as solitary, and the letter in which they are printed as rare and curious, as ever. It is worth the expense of youthful days and costly hours, if you learn only some words of an ancient language, which are raised out of the trivialness of the street, to be perpetual suggestions and provocations. It is not in vain that the farmer remembers and repeats the few Latin words which he has heard. Men sometimes speak as if the study of the classics would at length make way for more modern and practical studies; but the adventurous student will always study classics, in whatever language they may be written and however ancient they may be. For what are the classics but the noblest recorded thoughts of man? They are the only oracles which are not decayed, and there are such answers to the most modern inquiry in them as Delphi and Dodona never gave. We might as well omit to study Nature because she is old. To read well, that is, to read true books in a true spirit, is a noble exercise, and one that will task the reader more than any exercise which the customs of the day esteem. It requires a training such as the athletes underwent, the steady intention almost of the whole life to this object. Books must be read as deliberately and reservedly as they were written. It is not enough even to be able to speak the language of that nation by which they are written, for there is a memorable interval between the spoken and the written language, the language heard and the language read. The one is commonly transitory, a sound, a tongue, a dialect merely, almost brutish, and we learn it unconsciously, like the brutes, of our mothers. The other is the maturity and experience of that; if that is our mother tongue, this is our father tongue, a reserved and select expression, too significant to be heard by the ear, which we must be born again in order to speak. The crowds of men who merely spoke the Greek and Latin tongues in the middle ages were not entitled by the accident of birth to read the works of genius written in those languages; for these were not written in that Greek or Latin which they knew, but in the select language of literature. They had not learned the nobler dialects of Greece and Rome, but the very materials on which
they were written were waste paper to them, and they prized instead a cheap contemporary literature. But when the several
nations of Europe had acquired distinct though rude written languages of their own, sufficient for the purposes of their rising
literatures, then first learning revived, and scholars were enabled to discern from that remoteness the treasures of antiquity.
What the Roman and Grecian multitude could not hear, after the lapse of ages a few scholars read, and a few scholars only are
still reading it.

However much we may admire the orator's occasional bursts of eloquence, the noblest written words are commonly as far
behind or above the fleeting spoken language as the firmament with its stars is behind the clouds. There are the stars, and
they who can may read them. The astronomers forever comment on and observe them. They are not exhalations like our daily
colloquies and vaporous breath. What is called eloquence in the forum is commonly found to be rhetoric in the study. The orator
yields to the inspiration of a transient occasion, and speaks to the mob before him, to those who can hear him; but the writer,
whose more equable life is his occasion, and who would be distracted by the event and the crowd which inspire the orator,
speaks to the intellect and health of mankind, to all in any age who can understand him.

No wonder that Alexander carried the Iliad with him on his expeditions in a precious casket. A written word is the choicest of
relics. It is something at once more intimate with us and more universal than any other work of art. It is the work of art nearest
to life itself. It may be translated into every language, and not only be read but actually breathed from all human lips;—not be
represented on canvas or in marble only, but be carved out of the breath of life itself. The symbol of an ancient man's thought
becomes a modern man's speech. Two thousand summers have imparted to the monuments of Grecian literature, as to her
marbles, only a maturer golden and autumnal tint, for they have carried their own serene and celestial atmosphere into all lands
to protect them against the corrosion of time. Books are the treasured wealth of the world and the fit inheritance of generations
and nations. Books, the oldest and the best, stand naturally and rightfully on the shelves of every cottage. They have no cause
of their own to plead, but while they enlighten and sustain the reader his common sense will not refuse them. Their authors are
a natural and irresistible aristocracy in every society, and, more than kings or emperors, exert an influence on mankind. When
the illiterate and perhaps scornful trader has earned by enterprise and industry his coveted leisure and independence, and is
admitted to the circles of wealth and fashion, he turns inevitably at last to those still higher but yet inaccessible circles of intellect
and genius, and is sensible only of the imperfection of his culture and the vanity and insufficiency of all his riches, and further
proves his good sense by the pains which he takes to secure for his children that intellectual culture whose want he so keenly
feels; and thus it is that he becomes the founder of a family.

Those who have not learned to read the ancient classics in the language in which they were written must have a very imperfect
knowledge of the history of the human race; for it is remarkable that no transcript of them has ever been made into any modern
tongue, unless our civilization itself may be regarded as such a transcript. Homer has never yet been printed in English, nor
Æschylus, nor Virgil even—works as refined, as solidly done, and as beautiful almost as the morning itself; for later writers, say
what we will of their genius, have rarely, if ever, equalled the elaborate beauty and finish and the lifelong and heroic literary
labors of the ancients. They only talk of forgetting them who never knew them. It will be soon enough to forget them when we
have the learning and the genius which will enable us to attend to and appreciate them. That age will be rich indeed when those
relics which we call Classics, and the still older and more than classic but even less known Scriptures of the nations, shall have
still further accumulated, when the Vaticans shall be filled with Vedas and Zendavestas and Bibles, with Homers and Dantes and
Shakespeares, and all the centuries to come shall have successively deposited their trophies in the forum of the world. By such
a pile we may hope to scale heaven at last.

The works of the great poets have never yet been read by mankind, for only great poets can read them. They have only been
read as the multitude read the stars, at most astrologically, not astronomically. Most men have learned to read to serve a paltry
convenience, as they have learned to cipher in order to keep accounts and not be cheated in trade; but of reading as a noble
intellectual exercise they know little or nothing; yet this only is reading, in a high sense, not that which lulls us as a luxury and
suffers the nobler faculties to sleep the while, but what we have to stand on tip-toe to read and devote our most alert and
wakeful hours to.
I think that having learned our letters we should read the best that is in literature, and not be forever repeating our a b abs, and words of one syllable, in the fourth or fifth classes, sitting on the lowest and foremost form all our lives. Most men are satisfied if they read or hear read, and perchance have been convicted by the wisdom of one good book, the Bible, and for the rest of their lives vegetate and dissipate their faculties in what is called easy reading. There is a work in several volumes in our Circulating Library entitled Little Reading, which I thought referred to a town of that name which I had not been to. There are those who, like cormorants and ostriches, can digest all sorts of this, even after the fullest dinner of meats and vegetables, for they suffer nothing to be wasted. If others are the machines to provide this provender, they are the machines to read it. They read the nine thousandth tale about Zebulon and Sephronia, and how they loved as none had ever loved before, and neither did the course of their true love run smooth,—at any rate, how it did run and stumble, and get up again and go on! how some poor unfortunate got up on to a steeple, who had better never have gone up as far as the belfry; and then, having needlessly got him up there, the happy novelist rings the bell for all the world to come together and hear, O dear! how he did get down again! For my part, I think that they had better metamorphose all such aspiring heroes of universal noveldom into man weathercocks, as they used to put heroes among the constellations, and let them swing round there till they are rusty, and not come down at all to bother honest men with their pranks. The next time the novelist rings the bell I will not stir though the meeting-house burn down. “The Skip of the Tip-Toe-Hop, a Romance of the Middle Ages, by the celebrated author of ‘Tittle-Tol-Tan,’ to appear in monthly parts; a great rush; don’t all come together.” All this they read with saucer eyes, and erect and primitive curiosity, and with unwearied gizzard, whose corrugations even yet need no sharpening, just as some little four-year-old bencher his two-cent gilt-covered edition of Cinderella,—without any improvement, that I can see, in the pronunciation, or accent, or emphasis, or any more skill in extracting or inserting the moral. The result is dulness of sight, a stagnation of the vital circulations, and a general deliquium and sloughing off of all the intellectual faculties. This sort of gingerbread is baked daily and more sedulously than pure wheat or rye-and-Indian in almost every oven, and finds a surer market.

The best books are not read even by those who are called good readers. What does our Concord culture amount to? There is in this town, with a very few exceptions, no taste for the best or for very good books even in English literature, whose words all can read and spell. Even the college-bred and so called liberally educated men here and elsewhere have really little or no acquaintance with the English classics; and as for the recorded wisdom of mankind, the ancient classics and Bibles, which are accessible to all who will know of them, there are the feeblest efforts any where made to become acquainted with them. I know a woodchopper, of middle age, who takes a French paper, not for news as he says, for he is above that, but to “keep himself in practice,” he being a Canadian by birth; and when I ask him what he considers the best thing he can do in this world, he says, beside this, to keep up and add to his English. This is about as much as the college bred generally do or aspire to do, and they take an English paper for the purpose. One who has just come from reading perhaps one of the best English books will find how many with whom he can converse about it? Or suppose he comes from reading a Greek or Latin classic in the original, whose praises are familiar even to the so called illiterate; he will find nobody at all to speak to, but must keep silence about it. Indeed, there is hardly the professor in our colleges, who, if he has mastered the difficulties of the language, has proportionally mastered the difficulties of the wit and poetry of a Greek poet, and has any sympathy to impart to the alert and heroic reader; and as for the sacred Scriptures, or Bibles of mankind, who in this town can tell me even their titles? Most men do not know that any nation but the Hebrews have had a scripture. A man, any man, will go considerably out of his way to pick up a silver dollar; but here are golden words, which the wisest men of antiquity have uttered, and whose worth the wise of every succeeding age have assured us of;—and yet we learn to read only as far as Easy Reading, the primers and class-books, and when we leave school, the “Little Reading,” and story books, which are for boys and beginners; and our reading, our conversation and thinking, are all on a very low level, worthy only of pygmies and manikins.

I aspire to be acquainted with wiser men than this our Concord soil has produced, whose names are hardly known here. Or shall I hear the name of Plato and never read his book? As if Plato were my townsman and I never saw him,—my next neighbor and I never heard him speak or attended to the wisdom of his words. But how actually is it? His Dialogues, which contain what was immortal in him, lie on the next shelf, and yet I never read them. We are underbred and low-lived and illiterate; and in this respect I confess I do not make any very broad distinction between the illiterateness of my townsman who cannot read at all,
and the illiterateness of him who has learned to read only what is for children and feeble intellects. We should be as good as
the worthies of antiquity, but partly by first knowing how good they were. We are a race of tit-men, and soar but little higher in
our intellectual flights than the columns of the daily paper.

It is not all books that are as dull as their readers. There are probably words addressed to our condition exactly, which, if we
could really hear and understand, would be more salutary than the morning or the spring to our lives, and possibly put a new
aspect on the face of things for us. How many a man has dated a new era in his life from the reading of a book. The book
exists for us perchance which will explain our miracles and reveal new ones. The at present unutterable things we may find
somewhere uttered. These same questions that disturb and puzzle and confound us have in their turn occurred to all the wise
men; not one has been omitted; and each has answered them, according to his ability, by his words and his life. Moreover, with
wisdom we shall learn liberality. The solitary hired man on a farm in the outskirts of Concord, who has had his second birth and
peculiar religious experience, and is driven as he believes into the silent gravity and exclusiveness by his faith, may think it is
not true; but Zoroaster, thousands of years ago, travelled the same road and had the same experience; but he, being wise, knew
it to be universal, and treated his neighbors accordingly, and is even said to have invented and established worship among
men. Let him humbly commune with Zoroaster then, and through the liberalizing influence of all the worthies, with Jesus Christ
himself, and let “our church” go by the board.

We boast that we belong to the nineteenth century and are making the most rapid strides of any nation. But consider how little
this village does for its own culture. I do not wish to flatter my townsmen, nor to be flattered by them, for that will not advance
either of us. We need to be provoked.—goaded like oxen, as we are, into a trot. We have a comparatively decent system of
common schools, schools for infants only; but excepting the half-starved Lyceum in the winter, and latterly the puny beginning of
a library suggested by the state, no school for ourselves. We spend more on almost any article of bodily aliment or ailment than
on our mental aliment. It is time that we had uncommon schools, that we did not leave off our education when we begin to be
men and women. It is time that villages were universities, and their elder inhabitants the fellows of universitites, with leisure—if
they are indeed so well off—to pursue liberal studies the rest of their lives. Shall the world be confined to one Paris or one
Oxford forever? Cannot students be boarded here and get a liberal education under the skies of Concord? Can we not hire
some Abelard to lecture to us? Alas! what with foddering the cattle and tending the store, we are kept from school too long, and
our education is sadly neglected. In this country, the village should in some respects take the place of the nobleman of Europe.
It should be the patron of the fine arts. It is rich enough. It wants only the magnanimity and refinement. It can spend money
enough on such things as farmers and traders value, but it is thought Utopian to propose spending money for things which more
intelligent men know to be of far more worth. This town has spent seventeen thousand dollars on a town-house, thank fortune
or politics, but probably it will not spend so much on living wit, the true meat to put into that shell, in a hundred years. The one
hundred and twenty-five dollars annually subscribed for a Lyceum in the winter is better spent than any other equal sum raised
in the town. If we live in the nineteenth century, why should we not enjoy the advantages which the nineteenth century offers?
Why should our life be in any respect provincial? If we will read newspapers, why not skip the gossip of Boston and take the
best newspaper in the world at once?—not be sucking the pap of “neutral family” papers, or browsing “Olive-Branches” here
in New England. Let the reports of all the learned societies come to us, and we will see if they know any thing. Why should we
leave it to Harper & Brothers and Redding & Co. to select our reading? As the nobleman of cultivated taste surrounds himself
with whatever conduces to his culture,—genius—learning—wit—books—paintings—statuary—music—philosophical instruments,
and the like; so let the village do,—not stop short at a pedagogue, a parson, a sexton, a parish library, and three selectmen,
because our pilgrim forefathers got through a cold winter once on a bleak rock with these. To act collectively is according to
the spirit of our institutions; and I am confident that, as our circumstances are more flourishing, our means are greater than the
nobleman’s. New England can hire all the wise men in the world to come and teach her, and board them round the while, and
not be provincial at all. That is the uncommon school we want. Instead of noblemen, let us have noble villages of men. If it is
necessary, omit one bridge over the river, go round a little there, and throw one arch at least over the darker gulf of ignorance
which surrounds us.
I did not read books the first summer; I hoed beans. Nay, I often did better than this. There were times when I could not afford to sacrifice the bloom of the present moment to any work, whether of the head or hands. I love a broad margin to my life.

Sometimes, in a summer morning, having taken my accustomed bath, I sat in my sunny doorway from sunrise till noon, rapt in a revery, amidst the pines and hickories and sumachs, in undisturbed solitude and stillness, while the birds sing around or flitted noiseless through the house, until by the sun falling in at my west window, or the noise of some traveller's wagon on the distant highway, I was reminded of the lapse of time. I grew in those seasons like corn in the night, and they were far better than any work of the hands would have been. They were not time subtracted from my life, but so much over and above my usual allowance. I realized what the Orientals mean by contemplation and the forsaking of works. For the most part, I minded not how the hours went. The day advanced as if to light some work of mine; it was morning, and lo, now it is evening, and nothing memorable is accomplished. Instead of singing like the birds, I silently smiled at my incessant good fortune. As the sparrow had its trill, sitting on the hickory before my door, so had I my chuckle or suppressed warble which he might hear out of my nest.

My days were not days of the week, bearing the stamp of any heathen deity, nor were they minced into hours and fretted by the ticking of a clock; for I lived like the Puri Indians, of whom it is said that "for yesterday, to-day, and to-morrow they have only one word, and they express the variety of meaning by pointing backward for yesterday, forward for to-morrow, and overhead for the passing day." This was sheer idleness to my fellow-townsmen, no doubt; but if the birds and flowers had tried me by their standard, I should not have been found wanting. A man must find his occasions in himself, it is true. The natural day is very calm, and will hardly reprove his indolence.

I had this advantage, at least, in my mode of life, over those who were obliged to look abroad for amusement, to society and the theatre, that my life itself was become my amusement and never ceased to be novel. It was a drama of many scenes and without an end. If we were always indeed getting our living, and regulating our lives according to the last and best mode we had learned, we should never be troubled with ennui. Follow your genius closely enough, and it will not fail to show you a fresh prospect every hour. Housework was a pleasant pastime. When my floor was dirty, I rose early, and, setting all my furniture out of doors on the grass, bed and bedstead making but one budget, dashed water on the floor, and sprinkled white sand from the pond on it, and then with a broom scrubbed it clean and white; and by the time the villagers had broken their fast the morning sun had dried my house sufficiently to allow me to move in again, and my meditations were almost uninterupted. It was pleasant to see the sun shine on these things, and hear the free wind blow on them; so much more interesting most familiar objects look out of doors than in the house. A bird sits on the next bough, life-everlasting grows under the table, and blackberry vines run round its legs; pine cones, chestnut burs, and strawberry leaves are strewn about. It looked as if this was the way these forms came to be transferred to our furniture, to tables, chairs, and bedsteads,—because they once stood in their midst.

My house was on the side of a hill, immediately on the edge of the larger wood, in the midst of a young forest of pitch pines and hickories, and half a dozen rods from the pond, to which a narrow footpath led down the hill. In my front yard grew the strawberry, blackberry, and life-everlasting, johnswort and goldenrod, shrub-oaks and sand-cherry, blueberry and groundnut. Near the end of May, the sand-cherry (Cerasus pumila,) adorned the sides of the path with its delicate flowers arranged in
umbels cylindrically about its short stems, which last, in the fall, weighed down with good sized and handsome cherries, fell over in wreaths like rays on every side. I tasted them out of compliment to Nature, though they were scarcely palatable. The sumach (*Rhus glabra*) grew luxuriantly about the house, pushing up through the embankment which I had made, and growing five or six feet the first season. Its broad pinnate tropical leaf was pleasant though strange to look on. The large buds, suddenly pushing out late in the spring from dry sticks which had seemed to be dead, developed themselves as by magic into graceful green and tender boughs, an inch in diameter; and sometimes, as I sat at my window, so heedlessly did they grow and tax their weak joints, I heard a fresh and tender bough suddenly fall like a fan to the ground, when there was not a breath of air stirring, broken off by its own weight. In August, the large masses of berries, which, when in flower, had attracted many wild bees, gradually assumed their bright velvety crimson hue, and by their weight again bent down and broke the tender limbs.

As I sit at my window this summer afternoon, hawks are circling about my clearing; the tantivy of wild pigeons, flying by twos and threes athwart my view, or perching restless on the white-pine boughs behind my house, gives a voice to the air; a fishhawk dimples the glassy surface of the pond and brings up a fish; a mink steals out of the marsh before my door and seizes a frog by the shore; the sedge is bending under the weight of the reed-birds flitting hither and thither; and for the last half hour I have heard the rattle of railroad cars, now dying away and then reviving like the beat of a partridge, conveying travellers from Boston to the country. For I did not live so out of the world as that boy who, as I hear, was put out to a farmer in the east part of the town, but ere long ran away and came home again, quite down at the heel and homesick. He had never seen such a dull and out-of-the-way place; the folks were all gone off; why, you couldn’t even hear the whistle! I doubt if there is such a place in Massachusetts now:—

"In truth, our village has become a butt  
For one of those fleet railroad shafts, and o’er  
Our peaceful plain its soothing sound is—Concord."

The Fitchburg Railroad touches the pond about a hundred rods south of where I dwell. I usually go to the village along its causeway, and am, as it were, related to society by this link. The men on the freight trains, who go over the whole length of the road, bow to me as to an old acquaintance, they pass me so often, and apparently they take me for an employee; and so I am. I too would fain be a track-repairer somewhere in the orbit of the earth.

The whistle of the locomotive penetrates my woods summer and winter, sounding like the scream of a hawk sailing over some farmer’s yard, informing me that many restless city merchants are arriving within the circle of the town, or adventurous country traders from the other side. As they come under one horizon, they shout their warning to get off the track to the other, heard sometimes through the circles of two towns. Here come your groceries, country; your rations, countrymen! Nor is there any man so independent on his farm that he can say them nay. And here’s your pay for them! screams the countryman’s whistle; timber like long battering rams going twenty miles an hour against the city’s walls, and chairs enough to seat all the weary and heavy laden that dwell within them. With such huge and lumbering civility the country hands a chair to the city. All the Indian huckleberry hills are stripped, all the cranberry meadows are raked into the city. Up comes the cotton, down goes the woven cloth; up comes the silk, down goes the woollen; up come the books, but down goes the wit that writes them.

When I meet the engine with its train of cars moving off with planetary motion,—or, rather, like a comet, for the beholder knows not if with that velocity and with that direction it will ever revisit this system, since its orbit does not look like a returning curve,—with its steam cloud like a banner streaming behind in golden and silver wreaths, like many a downy cloud which I have seen, high in the heavens, unfolding its masses to the light,—as if this travelling demigod, this cloud-compeller, would ere long take the sunset sky for the livery of his train; when I hear the iron horse make the hills echo with his snort like thunder, shaking the earth with his feet, and breathing fire and smoke from his nostrils, (what kind of winged horse or fiery dragon they will put into the new Mythology I don’t know), it seems as if the earth had got a race now worthy to inhabit it. If all were as it seems, and men made the elements their servants for noble ends! If the cloud that hangs over the engine were the perspiration of heroic deeds, or as beneficent as that which floats over the farmer’s fields, then the elements and Nature herself would cheerfully accompany men on their errands and be their escort.
I watch the passage of the morning cars with the same feeling that I do the rising of the sun, which is hardly more regular. Their train of clouds stretching far behind and rising higher and higher, going to heaven while the cars are going to Boston, conceals the sun for a minute and casts my distant field into the shade, a celestial train beside which the petty train of cars which hugs the earth is but the barb of the spear. The stabler of the iron horse was up early this winter morning by the light of the stars amid the mountains, to fodder and harness his steed. Fire, too, was awakened thus early to put the vital heat in him and get him off. If the enterprise were as innocent as it is early! If the snow lies deep, they strap on his snow-shoes, and with the giant plow, plow a furrow from the mountains to the seashore, in which the cars, like a following drill-barrow, sprinkle all the restless men and floating merchandise in the country for seed. All day the fire-steed flies over the country, stopping only that his master may rest, and I am awakened by his tramp and defiant snort at midnight, when in some remote glen in the woods he fronts the elements incased in ice and snow; and he will reach his stall only with the morning star, to start once more on his travels without rest or slumber. Or perchance, at evening, I hear him in his stable blowing off the superfluous energy of the day, that he may calm his nerves and cool his liver and brain for a few hours of iron slumber. If the enterprise were as heroic and commanding as it is protracted and unwearied!

Far through unfrequented woods on the confines of towns, where once only the hunter penetrated by day, in the darkest night dart these bright saloons without the knowledge of their inhabitants; this moment stopping at some brilliant station-house in town or city, where a social crowd is gathered, the next in the Dismal Swamp, scaring the owl and fox. The startings and arrivals of the cars are now the epochs in the village day. They go and come with such regularity and precision, and their whistle can be heard so far, that the farmers set their clocks by them, and thus one well conducted institution regulates a whole country. Have not men improved somewhat in punctuality since the railroad was invented? Do they not talk and think faster in the depot than they did in the stage-office? There is something electrifying in the atmosphere of the former place. I have been astonished at the miracles it has wrought; that some of my neighbors, who, I should have prophesied, once for all, would never get to Boston by so prompt a conveyance, are on hand when the bell rings. To do things “railroad fashion” is now the by-word; and it is worth the while to be warned so often and so sincerely by any power to get off its track. There is no stopping to read the riot act, no firing over the heads of the mob, in this case. We have constructed a fate, an Atropos, that never turns aside. (Let that be the name of your engine.) Men are advertised that at a certain hour and minute these bolts will be shot toward particular points of the compass; yet it interferes with no man’s business, and the children go to school on the other track. We live the steadier for it. We are all educated thus to be sons of Tell. The air is full of invisible bolts. Every path but your own is the path of fate. Keep on your own track, then.

What recommends commerce to me is its enterprise and bravery. It does not clasp its hands and pray to Jupiter. I see these men every day go about their business with more or less courage and content, doing more even than they suspect, and perchance better employed than they could have consciously devised. I am less affected by their heroism who stood up for half an hour in the front line at Buena Vista, than by the steady and cheerful valor of the men who inhabit the snow-plough for their winter quarters; who have not merely the three-o’clock in the morning courage, which Bonaparte thought was the rarest, but whose courage does not go to rest so early, who go to sleep only when the storm sleeps or the sinews of their iron steed are frozen. On this morning of the Great Snow, perchance, which is still raging and chilling men’s blood, I hear the muffled tone of their engine bell from out the fog bank of their chilled breath, which announces that the cars are coming, without long delay, notwithstanding the veto of a New England north-east snow storm, and I behold the ploughmen covered with snow and rime, their heads peering, above the mould-board which is turning down other than daisies and the nests of field-mice, like boulders of the Sierra Nevada, that occupy an outside place in the universe.

Commerce is unexpectedly confident and serene, alert, adventurous, and unwearied. It is very natural in its methods withal, far more so than many fantastic enterprises and sentimental experiments, and hence its singular success. I am refreshed and expanded when the freight train rattles past me, and I smell the stores which go dispensing their odors all the way from Long Wharf to Lake Champlain, reminding me of foreign parts, of coral reefs, and Indian oceans, and tropical climes, and the extent of the globe. I feel more like a citizen of the world at the sight of the palm-leaf which will cover so many flaxen New England heads the next summer, the Manilla hemp and cocoa-nut husks, the old junk, gunny bags, scrap iron, and rusty nails. This car-load of torn sails is more legible and interesting now than if they should be wrought into paper and printed books. Who can write
so graphically the history of the storms they have weathered as these rents have done? They are proof-sheets which need no correction. Here goes lumber from the Maine woods, which did not go out to sea in the last freshet, risen four dollars on the thousand because of what did go out or was split up; pine, spruce, cedar,—first, second, third, and fourth qualities, so lately all of one quality, to wave over the bear, and moose, and caribou. Next rolls Thomaston lime, a prime lot, which will get far among the hills before it gets slacked. These rags in bales, of all hues and qualities, the lowest condition to which cotton and linen descend, the final result of dress,—of patterns which are now no longer cried up, unless it be in Milwaukie, as those splendid articles, English, French, or American prints, ginghams, muslins, &c., gathered from all quarters both of fashion and poverty, going to become paper of one color or a few shades only, on which forsooth will be written tales of real life, high and low, and founded on fact! This closed car smells of salt fish, the strong New England and commercial scent, reminding me of the Grand Banks and the fisheries. Who has not seen a salt fish, thoroughly cured for this world, so that nothing can spoil it, and putting the perseverance of the saints to the blush? with which you may sweep or pave the streets, and split your kindlings, and the teamster shelter himself and his lading against sun wind and rain behind it,—and the trader, as a Concord trader once did, hang it up by his door for a sign when he commences business, until at last his oldest customer cannot tell surely whether it be animal, vegetable, or mineral, and yet it shall be as pure as a snowflake, and if it be put into a pot and boiled, will come out an excellent dun fish for a Saturday’s dinner. Next Spanish hides, with the tails still preserving their twist and the angle of elevation they had when the oxen that wore them were careering over the pampas of the Spanish main,—a type of all obstinacy, and evincing how almost hopeless and incurable are all constitutional vices. I confess, that practically speaking, when I have learned a man’s real disposition, I have no hopes of changing it for the better or worse in this state of existence. As the Orientals say, “A cur’s tail may be warmed, and pressed, and bound round with ligatures, and after a twelve years’ labor bestowed upon it, still it will retain its natural form.” The only effectual cure for such inveteracies as these tails exhibit is to make glue of them, which I believe is what is usually done with them, and then they will stay put and stick. Here is a hogshead of molasses or of brandy directed to John Smith, Cuttingsville, Vermont, some trader among the Green Mountains, who imports for the farmers near his clearing, and now perchance stands over his bulk-head and thinks of the last arrivals on the coast, how they may affect the price for him, telling his customers this moment, as he has told them twenty times before this morning, that he expects some by the next train of prime quality. It is advertised in the Cuttingsville Times.

While these things go up other things come down. Warned by the whizzing sound, I look up from my book and see some tall pine, hewn on far northern hills, which has winged its way over the Green Mountains and the Connecticut, shot like an arrow through the township within ten minutes, and scarce another eye beholds it; going

“to be the mast
Of some great ammiral.”

And hark! here comes the cattle-train bearing the cattle of a thousand hills, sheepcots, stables, and cow-yards in the air, drovers with their sticks, and shepherd boys in the midst of their flocks, all but the mountain pastures, whirled along like leaves blown from the mountains by the September gales. The air is filled with the bleating of calves and sheep, and the hustling of oxen, as if a pastoral valley were going by. When the old bell-wether at the head rattles his bell, the mountains do indeed skip like rams and the little hills like lambs. A car-load of drovers, too, in the midst, on a level with their droves now, their vocation gone, but still clinging to their useless sticks as their badge of office. But their dogs, where are they? It is a stampede to them; they are quite thrown out; they have lost the scent. Methinks I hear them barking behind the Peterboro’ Hills, or panting up the western slope of the Green Mountains. They will not be in at the death. Their vocation, too, is gone. Their fidelity and sagacity are below par now. They will slink back to their kennels in disgrace, or perchance run wild and strike a league with the wolf and the fox. So is your pastoral life whirled past and away. But the bell rings, and I must get off the track and let the cars go by;—

What’s the railroad to me?
I never go to see
Where it ends.
It fills a few hollows,
And makes banks for the swallows,  
It sets the sand a-blowing,  
And the blackberries a-growing,  

but I cross it like a cart-path in the woods. I will not have my eyes put out and my ears spoiled by its smoke and steam and hissing.

Now that the cars are gone by and all the restless world with them, and the fishes in the pond no longer feel their rumbling, I am more alone than ever. For the rest of the long afternoon, perhaps, my meditations are interrupted only by the faint rattle of a carriage or team along the distant highway.

Sometimes, on Sundays, I heard the bells, the Lincoln, Acton, Bedford, or Concord bell, when the wind was favorable, a faint, sweet, and, as it were, natural melody, worth importing into the wilderness. At a sufficient distance over the woods this sound acquires a certain vibratory hum, as if the pine needles in the horizon were the strings of a harp which it swept. All sound heard at the greatest possible distance produces one and the same effect, a vibration of the universal lyre, just as the intervening atmosphere makes a distant ridge of earth interesting to our eyes by the azure tint it imparts to it. There came to me in this case a melody which the air had strained, and which had conversed with every leaf and needle of the wood, that portion of the sound which the elements had taken up and modulated and echoed from vale to vale. The echo is, to some extent, an original sound, and therein is the magic and charm of it. It is not merely a repetition of what was worth repeating in the bell, but partly the voice of the wood; the same trivial words and notes sung by a wood-nymph.

At evening, the distant lowing of some cow in the horizon beyond the woods sounded sweet and melodious, and at first I would mistake it for the voices of certain minstrels by whom I was sometimes serenaded, who might be straying over hill and dale; but soon I was not unpleasantly disappointed when it was prolonged into the cheap and natural music of the cow. I do not mean to be satirical, but to express my appreciation of those youths' singing, when I state that I perceived clearly that it was akin to the music of the cow, and they were at length one articulation of Nature.

Regularly at half past seven, in one part of the summer, after the evening train had gone by, the whippoorwills chanted their vespres for half an hour, sitting on a stump by my door, or upon the ridge pole of the house. They would begin to sing almost with as much precision as a clock, within five minutes of a particular time, referred to the setting of the sun, every evening. I had a rare opportunity to become acquainted with their habits. Sometimes I heard four or five at once in different parts of the wood, by accident one a bar behind another, and so near me that I distinguished not only the cluck after each note, but often that singular buzzing sound like a fly in a spider's web, only proportionally louder. Sometimes one would circle round and round me in the woods a few feet distant as if tethered by a string, when probably I was near its eggs. They sang at intervals throughout the night, and were again as musical as ever just before and about dawn.

When other birds are still the screech owls take up the strain, like mourning women their ancient u-lu-lu. Their dismal scream is truly Ben Jonsonian. Wise midnight hags! It is no honest and blunt tu-whit tu-who of the poets, but, without jesting, a most solemn graveyard ditty, the mutual consolasations of suicide lovers remembering the pangs and the delights of supernal love in the infernal groves. Yet I love to hear their wailing, their doleful responses, trilled along the wood-side; reminding me sometimes of music and singing birds; as if it were the dark and tearful side of music, the regrets and sighs that would fain be sung. They are the spirits, the low spirits and melancholy forebodings, of fallen souls that once in human shape night-walked the earth and did the deeds of darkness, now expiating their sins with their wailing hymns or threnodies in the scenery of their transgressions. They give me a new sense of the variety and capacity of that nature which is our common dwelling.

Oh-o-o-o that I never had been bor-r-r-r-n!

I was also serenaded by a hooting owl. Near at hand you could fancy it the most melancholy sound in Nature, as if she meant by this to stereotype and make permanent in her choir the dying moans of a human being,—some poor weak relic of mortality.
who has left hope behind, and howls like an animal, yet with human sobs, on entering the dark valley, made more awful by a
certain gurgling melodiousness,—I find myself beginning with the letters gl when I try to imitate it,—expressive of a mind which
has reached the gelatinous mildewy stage in the mortification of all healthy and courageous thought. It reminded me of ghouls
and idiots and insane howlings. But now one answers from far woods in a strain made really melodious by distance,—Hoo hoo
hoo, hoorer hoo; and indeed for the most part it suggested only pleasing associations, whether heard by day or night, summer
or winter.

I rejoice that there are owls. Let them do the idiotic and maniacal hooting for men. It is a sound admirably suited to swamps
and twilight woods which no day illustrates, suggesting a vast and undeveloped nature which men have not recognized. They
represent the stark twilight and unsatisfied thoughts which all have. All day the sun has shone on the surface of some savage
swamp, where the single spruce stands hung with usnea lichens, and small hawks circulate above, and the chickadee lisps amid
the evergreens, and the partridge and rabbit skulk beneath; but now a more dismal and fitting day dawns, and a different race
of creatures awakes to express the meaning of Nature there.

Late in the evening I heard the distant rumbling of wagons over bridges,—a sound heard farther than almost any other at
night,—the baying of dogs, and sometimes again the lowing of some disconsolate cow in a distant barn-yard. In the mean while
all the shore rang with the trump of bullfrogs, the sturdy spirits of ancient wine-bibbers and wassailers, still unrepentant, trying
to sing a catch in their Stygian lake,—if the Walden nymphs will pardon the comparison, for though there are almost no weeds,
there are frogs there,—who would fain keep up the hilarious rules of their old festal tables, though their voices have waxed
hoarse and solemnly grave, mocking at mirth, and the wine has lost its flavor, and become only liquor to distend their paunches,
and sweet intoxication never comes to drown the memory of the past, but mere saturation and waterloggedness and distention.
The most aldermanic, with his chin upon a heart-leaf, which serves for a napkin to his drooling chaps, under this northern shore
quaffs a deep draught of the once scorned water, and passes round the cup with the ejaculation tr-r-r-oonk, tr-r-r-oonk, tr-r-r-oonk!
and straightway comes over the water from some distant cove the same password repeated, where the next in seniority
and girth has gushed down to his mark; and when this observance has made the circuit of the shores, then ejaculates the master
of ceremonies, with satisfaction, tr-r-r-oonk! and each in his turn repeats the same down to the least distended, leakiest, and
flabbiest paunched, that there be no mistake; and then the bowl goes round again and again, until the sun disperses the morning
mist, and only the patriarch is not under the pond, but vainly bellowing troonk from time to time, and pausing for a reply.

I am not sure that I ever heard the sound of cock-crowing from my clearing, and I thought that it might be worth the while to keep
a cockerel for his music merely, as a singing bird. The note of this once wild Indian pheasant is certainly the most remarkable
of any bird’s, and if they could be naturalized without being domesticated, it would soon become the most famous sound in our
woods, surpassing the clanger of the goose and the hooting of the owl; and then imagine the cackling of the hens to fill the
pauses when their lords’ clarions rested! No wonder that man added this bird to his tame stock,—to say nothing of the eggs and
drumsticks. To walk in a winter morning in a wood where these birds abounded, their native woods, and hear the wild cockerels
crow on the trees, clear and shrill for miles over the resounding earth, drowning the feebler notes of other birds,—think of it! It
would put nations on the alert. Who would not be early to rise, and rise earlier and earlier every successive day of his life, till he
became unspeakably healthy, wealthy, and wise? This foreign bird’s note is celebrated by the poets of all countries along with
the notes of their native songsters. All climates agree with brave Chanticleer. He is more indigenous even than the natives. His
health is ever good, his lungs are sound, his spirits never flag. Even the sailor on the Atlantic and Pacific is awakened by his
voice; but its shrill sound never roused me from my slumbers. I kept neither dog, cat, cow, pig, nor hens, so that you would have
said there was a deficiency of domestic sounds; neither the churn, nor the spinning wheel, nor even the singing of the kettle,
nor the hissing of the urn, nor children crying, to comfort one. An old-fashioned man would have lost his senses or died of ennui
before this. Not even rats in the wall, for they were starved out, or rather were never baited in,—only squirrels on the roof and
under the floor, a whippoorwill on the ridge pole, a blue-jay screaming beneath the window, a hare or woodchuck under the
house, a screech-owl or a cat-owl behind it, a flock of wild geese or a laughing loon on the pond, and a fox to bark in the night.
Not even a lark or an oriole, those mild plantation birds, ever visited my clearing. No cockerels to crow nor hens to cackle in the
yard. No yard! but unfenced Nature reaching up to your very sills. A young forest growing up under your meadows, and wild
sumachs and blackberry vines breaking through into your cellar; sturdy pitch pines rubbing and creaking against the shingles
for want of room, their roots reaching quite under the house. Instead of a scuttle or a blind blown off in the gale,—a pine tree
snapped off or torn up by the roots behind your house for fuel. Instead of no path to the front-yard gate in the Great Snow,—no
gate,—no front-yard,—and no path to the civilized world!

Solitude

This is a delicious evening, when the whole body is one sense, and imbibes delight through every pore. I go and come with a
strange liberty in Nature, a part of herself. As I walk along the stony shore of the pond in my shirt sleeves, though it is cool as
well as cloudy and windy, and I see nothing special to attract me, all the elements are unusually congenial to me. The bullfrogs
trump to usher in the night, and the note of the whippoorwill is borne on the rippling wind from over the water. Sympathy with
the fluttering alder and poplar leaves almost takes away my breath; yet, like the lake, my serenity is rippled but not ruffled. These
small waves raised by the evening wind are as remote from storm as the smooth reflecting surface. Though it is now dark, the
wind still blows and roars in the wood, the waves still dash, and some creatures lull the rest with their notes. The repose is never
complete. The wildest animals do not repose, but seek their prey now; the fox, and skunk, and rabbit, now roam the fields and
woods without fear. They are Nature’s watchmen,—links which connect the days of animated life.

When I return to my house I find that visitors have been there and left their cards, either a bunch of flowers, or a wreath of
evergreen, or a name in pencil on a yellow walnut leaf or a chip. They who come rarely to the woods take some little piece of
the forest into their hands to play with by the way, which they leave, either intentionally or accidentally. One has peeled a willow
wand, woven it into a ring, and dropped it on my table. I could always tell if visitors had called in my absence, either by the
bended twigs or grass, or the print of their shoes, and generally of what sex or age or quality they were by some slight trace left,
as a flower dropped, or a bunch of grass plucked and thrown away, even as far off as the railroad, half a mile distant, or by the
lingering odor of a cigar or pipe. Nay, I was frequently notified of the passage of a traveller along the highway sixty rods off by
the scent of his pipe.

There is commonly sufficient space about us. Our horizon is never quite at our elbows. The thick wood is not just at our door, nor
the pond, but somewhat is always clearing, familiar and worn by us, appropriated and fenced in some way, and reclaimed from
Nature. For what reason have I this vast range and circuit, some square miles of unfrequented forest, for my privacy, abandoned
to me by men? My nearest neighbor is a mile distant, and no house is visible from any place but the hill-tops within half a mile
of my own. I have my horizon bounded by woods all to myself; a distant view of the railroad where it touches the pond on the
one hand, and of the fence which skirts the woodland road on the other. But for the most part it is as solitary where I live as on
the prairies. It is as much Asia or Africa as New England. I have, as it were, my own sun and moon and stars, and a little world
all to myself. At night there was never a traveller passed my house, or knocked at my door, more than if I were the first or last
man; unless it were in the spring, when at long intervals some came from the village to fish for pouts,—they plainly fished much
more in the Walden Pond of their own natures, and baited their hooks with darkness,—but they soon retreated, usually with
light baskets, and left “the world to darkness and to me,” and the black kernel of the night was never profaned by any human
neighborhood. I believe that men are generally still a little afraid of the dark, though the witches are all hung, and Christianity
and candles have been introduced.

Yet I experienced sometimes that the most sweet and tender, the most innocent and encouraging society may be found in any
natural object, even for the poor misanthrope and most melancholy man. There can be no very black melancholy to him who
lives in the midst of Nature and has his senses still. There was never yet such a storm but it was Æolian music to a healthy and
innocent ear. Nothing can rightly compel a simple and brave man to a vulgar sadness. While I enjoy the friendship of the seasons
I trust that nothing can make life a burden to me. The gentle rain which waters my beans and keeps me in the house to-day is
not drear and melancholy, but good for me too. Though it prevents my hoeing them, it is of far more worth than my hoeing. If
it should continue so long as to cause the seeds to rot in the ground and destroy the potatoes in the low lands, it would still
be good for the grass on the uplands, and, being good for the grass, it would be good for me. Sometimes, when I compare
myself with other men, it seems as if I were more favored by the gods than they, beyond any deserts that I am conscious of;
as if I had a warrant and surety at their hands which my fellows have not, and were especially guided and guarded. I do not
flatter myself, but if it be possible they flatter me. I have never felt lonesome, or in the least oppressed by a sense of solitude, but once, and that was a few weeks after I came to the woods, when, for an hour, I doubted if the near neighborhood of man was not essential to a serene and healthy life. To be alone was something unpleasant. But I was at the same time conscious of a slight insanity in my mood, and seemed to foresee my recovery. In the midst of a gentle rain while these thoughts prevailed, I was suddenly sensible of such sweet and beneficent society in Nature, in the very pattering of the drops, and in every sound and sight around my house, an infinite and unaccountable friendliness all at once like an atmosphere sustaining me, as made the fancied advantages of human neighborhood insignificant, and I have never thought of them since. Every little pine needle expanded and swelled with sympathy and befriended me. I was so distinctly made aware of the presence of something kindred to me, even in scenes which we are accustomed to call wild and dreary, and also that the nearest of blood to me and humanest was not a person nor a villager, that I thought no place could ever be strange to me again.—

“Mourning untimely consumes the sad; Few are their days in the land of the living, Beautiful daughter of Toscar.”

Some of my pleasantest hours were during the long rain storms in the spring or fall, which confined me to the house for the afternoon as well as the forenoon, soothed by their ceaseless roar and pelting; when an early twilight ushered in a long evening in which many thoughts had time to take root and unfold themselves. In those driving north-east rains which tried the village houses so, when the maids stood ready with mop and pail in front entries to keep the deluge out, I sat behind my door in my little house, which was all entry, and thoroughly enjoyed its protection. In one heavy thunder shower the lightning struck a large pitch-pine across the pond, making a very conspicuous and perfectly regular spiral groove from top to bottom, an inch or more deep, and four or five inches wide, as you would groove a walking-stick. I passed it again the other day, and was struck with awe on looking up and beholding that mark, now more distinct than ever, where a terrific and resistless bolt came down out of the harmless sky eight years ago. Men frequently say to me, “I should think you would feel lonesome down there, and want to be nearer to folks, rainy and snowy days and nights especially.” I am tempted to reply to such,—This whole earth which we inhabit is but a point in space. How far apart, think you, dwell the two most distant inhabitants of yonder star, the breadth of whose disk cannot be appreciated by our instruments? Why should I feel lonely? is not our planet in the Milky Way? This which you put seems to me not to be the most important question. What sort of space is that which separates a man from his fellows and makes him solitary? I have found that no exertion of the legs can bring two minds much nearer to one another. What do we want most to dwell near to? Not to many men surely, the depot, the post-office, the bar-room, the meeting-house, the school-house, the grocery, Beacon Hill, or the Five Points, where men most congregate, but to the perennial source of our life, whence in all our experience we have found that to issue, as the willow stands near the water and sends out its roots in that direction. This will vary with different natures, but this is the place where a wise man will dig his cellar…. I one evening overtook one of my townsmen, who has accumulated what is called “a handsome property,”—though I never got a fair view of it,—on the Walden road, driving a pair of cattle to market, who inquired of me how I could bring my mind to give up so many of the comforts of life. I answered that I was very sure I liked it passably well; I was not joking. And so I went home to my bed, and left him to pick his way through the darkness and the mud to Brighton,—or Bright-town,—which place he would reach some time in the morning.

Any prospect of awakening or coming to life to a dead man makes indifferent all times and places. The place where that may occur is always the same, and indescribably pleasant to all our senses. For the most part we allow only outlying and transient circumstances to make our occasions. They are, in fact, the cause of our distraction. Nearest to all things is that power which fashions their being. Next to us the grandest laws are continually being executed. Next to us is not the workman whom we have hired, with whom we love so well to talk, but the workman whose work we are.

“How vast and profound is the influence of the subtile powers of Heaven and of Earth!”

“We seek to perceive them, and we do not see them; we seek to hear them, and we do not hear them; identified with the substance of things, they cannot be separated from them.”
“They cause that in all the universe men purify and sanctify their hearts, and clothe themselves in their holiday garments to offer sacrifices and oblations to their ancestors. It is an ocean of subtile intelligences. They are every where, above us, on our left, on our right; they environ us on all sides.”

We are the subjects of an experiment which is not a little interesting to me. Can we not do without the society of our gossips a little while under these circumstances,—have our own thoughts to cheer us? Confucius says truly, “Virtue does not remain as an abandoned orphan; it must of necessity have neighbors.”

With thinking we may be beside ourselves in a sane sense. By a conscious effort of the mind we can stand aloof from actions and their consequences; and all things, good and bad, go by us like a torrent. We are not wholly involved in Nature. I may be either the drift-wood in the stream, or Indra in the sky looking down on it. I may be affected by a theatrical exhibition; on the other hand, I may not be affected by an actual event which appears to concern me much more. I only know myself as a human entity; the scene, so to speak, of thoughts and affections; and am sensible of a certain doubleness by which I can stand as remote from myself as from another. However intense my experience, I am conscious of the presence and criticism of a part of me, which, as it were, is not a part of me, but spectator, sharing no experience, but taking note of it; and that is no more I than it is you. When the play, it may be the tragedy, of life is over, the spectator goes his way. It was a kind of fiction, a work of the imagination only, so far as he was concerned. This doubleness may easily make us poor neighbors and friends sometimes.

I find it wholesome to be alone the greater part of the time. To be in company, even with the best, is soon wearisome and dissipating. I love to be alone. I never found the companion that was so companionable as solitude. We are for the most part more lonely when we go abroad among men than when we stay in our chambers. A man thinking or working is always alone, let him be where he will. Solitude is not measured by the miles of space that intervene between a man and his fellows. The really diligent student in one of the crowded hives of Cambridge College is as solitary as a dervish in the desert. The farmer can work alone in the field or the woods all day, hoeing or chopping, and not feel lonesome, because he is employed; but when he comes home at night he cannot sit down in a room alone, at the mercy of his thoughts, but must be where he can “see the folks,” and recreate, and as he thinks remunerate himself for his day’s solitude; and hence he wonders how the student can sit alone in the house all night and most of the day without ennui and “the blues;” but he does not realize that the student, though in the house, is still at work in his field, and chopping in his woods, as the farmer in his, and in turn seeks the same recreation and society that the latter does, though it may be a more condensed form of it.

Society is commonly too cheap. We meet at very short intervals, not having had time to acquire any new value for each other. We meet at meals three times a day, and give each other a new taste of that old musty cheese that we are. We have had to agree on a certain set of rules, called etiquette and politeness, to make this frequent meeting tolerable and that we need not come to open war. We meet at the post-office, and at the sociable, and about the fireside every night; we live thick and are in each other’s way, and stumble over one another, and I think that we thus lose some respect for one another. Certainly less frequency would suffice for all important and hearty communications. Consider the girls in a factory,—never alone, hardly in their dreams. It would be better if there were but one inhabitant to a square mile, as where I live. The value of a man is not in his skin, that we should touch him.

I have heard of a man lost in the woods and dying of famine and exhaustion at the foot of a tree, whose loneliness was relieved by the grotesque visions with which, owing to bodily weakness, his diseased imagination surrounded him, and which he believed to be real. So also, owing to bodily and mental health and strength, we may be continually cheered by a like but more normal and natural society, and come to know that we are never alone.

I have a great deal of company in my house; especially in the morning, when nobody calls. Let me suggest a few comparisons, that some one may convey an idea of my situation. I am no more lonely than the loon in the pond that laughs so loud, or than Walden Pond itself. What company has that lonely lake, I pray? And yet it has not the blue devils, but the blue angels in it, in the azure tint of its waters. The sun is alone, except in thick weather, when there sometimes appear to be two, but one is a mock sun. God is alone,—but the devil, he is far from being alone; he sees a great deal of company; he is legion. I am no more lonely
than a single mullein or dandelion in a pasture, or a bean leaf, or sorrel, or a horse-fly, or a bumble-bee. I am no more lonely than
the Mill Brook, or a weathercock, or the north star, or the south wind, or an April shower, or a January thaw, or the first spider in
a new house.

I have occasional visits in the long winter evenings, when the snow falls fast and the wind howls in the wood, from an old settler
and original proprietor, who is reported to have dug Walden Pond, and stoned it, and fringed it with pine woods; who tells me
stories of old time and of new eternity; and between us we manage to pass a cheerful evening with social mirth and pleasant
views of things, even without apples or cider,—a most wise and humorous friend, whom I love much, who keeps himself more
secret than ever did Goffe or Whalley; and though he is thought to be dead, none can show where he is buried. An elderly dame,
too, dwells in my neighborhood, invisible to most persons, in whose odoruous herb garden I love to stroll sometimes, gathering
tsimples and listening to her fables; for she has a genius of unequalled fertility, and her memory runs back farther than mythology,
and she can tell me the original of every fable, and on what fact every one is founded, for the incidents occurred when she was
young. A ruddy and lusty old dame, who delights in all weathers and seasons, and is likely to outlive all her children yet.

The indescribable innocence and beneficence of Nature,—of sun and wind and rain, of summer and winter,—such health, such
cheer, they afford forever! and such sympathy have they ever with our race, that all Nature would be affected, and the sun's
brightness fade, and the winds would sigh humanely, and the clouds rain tears, and the woods shed their leaves and put on
mourning in midsummer, if any man should ever for a just cause grieve. Shall I not have intelligence with the earth? Am I not
partly leaves and vegetable mould myself?

What is the pill which will keep us well, serene, contented? Not my or thy great-grandfather's, but our great-grandmother
Nature's universal, vegetable, botanic medicines, by which she has kept herself young always, outlived so many old Parrs in her
day, and fed her health with their decaying fatness. For my panacea, instead of one of those quack vials of a mixture dipped
from Acheron and the Dead Sea, which come out of those long shallow black-schooner looking wagons which we sometimes
see made to carry bottles, let me have a draught of undiluted morning air. Morning air! If men will not drink of this at the fountain-
head of the day, why, then, we must even bottle up some and sell it in the shops, for the benefit of those who have lost their
subscription ticket to morning time in this world. But remember, it will not keep quite till noon-day even in the coolest cellar,
but drive out the stopples long ere that and follow westward the steps of Aurora. I am no worshipper of Hygeia, who was the
daughter of that old herb-doctor Æsculapius, and who is represented on monuments holding a serpent in one hand, and in the
other a cup out of which the serpent sometimes drinks; but rather of Hebe, cupbearer to Jupiter, who was the daughter of Juno
and wild lettuce, and who had the power of restoring gods and men to the vigor of youth. She was probably the only thoroughly
sound-conditioned, healthy, and robust young lady that ever walked the globe, and wherever she came it was spring.

**Visitors**

I think that I love society as much as most, and am ready enough to fasten myself like a bloodsucker for the time to any full-
blooded man that comes in my way. I am naturally no hermit, but might possibly sit out the sturdiest frequenter of the bar-room,
if my business called me thither.

I had three chairs in my house; one for solitude, two for friendship, three for society. When visitors came in larger and
unexpected numbers there was but the third chair for them all, but they generally economized the room by standing up. It is
surprising how many great men and women a small house will contain. I have had twenty-five or thirty souls, with their bodies,
at once under my roof, and yet we often parted without being aware that we had come very near to one another. Many of our
houses, both public and private, with their almost innumerable apartments, their huge halls and their cellars for the storage of
wines and other munitions of peace, appear to me extravagantly large for their inhabitants. They are so vast and magnificent that
the latter seem to be only vermin which infest them. I am surprised when the herald blows his summons before some Tremont
or Astor or Middlesex House, to see come creeping out over the piazza for all inhabitants a ridiculous mouse, which soon again
slinks into some hole in the pavement.
One inconvenience I sometimes experienced in so small a house, the difficulty of getting to a sufficient distance from my guest when we began to utter the big thoughts in big words. You want room for your thoughts to get into sailing trim and run a course or two before they make their port. The bullet of your thought must have overcome its lateral and ricochet motion and fallen into its last and steady course before it reaches the ear of the hearer, else it may plough out again through the side of his head. Also, our sentences wanted room to unfold and form their columns in the interval. Individuals, like nations, must have suitable broad and natural boundaries, even a considerable neutral ground, between them. I have found it a singular luxury to talk across the pond to a companion on the opposite side. In my house we were so near that we could not begin to hear,—we could not speak low enough to be heard; as when you throw two stones into calm water so near that they break each other's undulations. If we are merely loquacious and loud talkers, then we can afford to stand very near together, cheek by jowl, and feel each other's breath; but if we speak reservedly and thoughtfully, we want to be farther apart, that all animal heat and moisture may have a chance to evaporate. If we would enjoy the most intimate society with that in each of us which is without, or above, being spoken to, we must not only be silent, but commonly so far apart bodily that we cannot possibly hear each other's voice in any case. Referred to this standard, speech is for the convenience of those who are hard of hearing; but there are many fine things which we cannot say if we have to shout. As the conversation began to assume a loftier and grander tone, we gradually shoved our chairs farther apart till they touched the wall in opposite corners, and then commonly there was not room enough.

My "best" room, however, my withdrawing room, always ready for company, on whose carpet the sun rarely fell, was the pine wood behind my house. Thither in summer days, when distinguished guests came, I took them, and a priceless domestic swept the floor and dusted the furniture and kept the things in order.

If one guest came he sometimes partook of my frugal meal, and it was no interruption to conversation to be stirring a hasty-pudding, or watching the rising and maturing of a loaf of bread in the ashes, in the mean while. But if twenty came and sat in my house there was nothing said about dinner, though there might be bread enough for two, more than if eating were a forsaken habit; but we naturally practised abstinence; and this was never felt to be an offence against hospitality, but the most proper and considerate course. The waste and decay of physical life, which so often needs repair, seemed miraculously retarded in such a case, and the vital vigor stood its ground. I could entertain thus a thousand as well as twenty; and if any ever went away disappointed or hungry from my house when they found me at home, they may depend upon it that I sympathized with them at least. So easy is it, though many housekeepers doubt it, to establish new and better customs in the place of the old. You need not rest your reputation on the dinners you give. For my own part, I was never so effectually deterred from frequenting a man's house, by any kind of Cerberus whatever, as by the parade one made about dining me, which I took to be a very polite and roundabout hint never to trouble him so again. I think I shall never revisit those scenes. I should be proud to have for the motto of my cabin those lines of Spenser which one of my visitors inscribed on a yellow walnut leaf for a card:—

"Arrived there, the little house they fill,
Ne looke for entertainment where none was;
Rest is their feast, and all things at their will:
The noblest mind the best contentment has."

When Winslow, afterward governor of the Plymouth Colony, went with a companion on a visit of ceremony to Massasoit on foot through the woods, and arrived tired and hungry at his lodge, they were well received by the king, but nothing was said about eating that day. When the night arrived, to quote their own words,—"He laid us on the bed with himself and his wife, they at the one end and we at the other, it being only planks laid a foot from the ground, and a thin mat upon them. Two more of his chief men, for want of room, pressed by and upon us; so that we were worse weary of our lodging than of our journey." At one o'clock the next day Massasoit "brought two fishes that he had shot," about thrice as big as a bream; "these being boiled, there were at least forty looked for a share in them. The most ate of them. This meal only we had in two nights and a day; and had not one of us bought a partridge, we had taken our journey fasting." Fearing that they would be light-headed for want of food and also sleep, owing to "the savages' barbarous singing, (for they used to sing themselves asleep)," and that they might get home while they had strength to travel, they departed. As for lodging, it is true they were but poorly entertained, though what they found an inconvenience was no doubt intended for an honor; but as far as eating was concerned, I do not see how the Indians could
have done better. They had nothing to eat themselves, and they were wiser than to think that apologies could supply the place of food to their guests; so they drew their belts tighter and said nothing about it. Another time when Winslow visited them, it being a season of plenty with them, there was no deficiency in this respect.

As for men, they will hardly fail one any where. I had more visitors while I lived in the woods than at any other period in my life; I mean that I had some. I met several there under more favorable circumstances than I could any where else. But fewer came to see me on trivial business. In this respect, my company was winnowed by my mere distance from town. I had withdrawn so far within the great ocean of solitude, into which the rivers of society empty, that for the most part, so far as my needs were concerned, only the finest sediment was deposited around me. Beside, there were wafted to me evidences of unexplored and uncultivated continents on the other side.

Who should come to my lodge this morning but a true Homeric or Paphlagonian man,—he had so suitable and poetic a name that I am sorry I cannot print it here,—a Canadian, a woodchopper and post-maker, who can hole fifty posts in a day, who made his last supper on a woodchuck which his dog caught. He, too, has heard of Homer, and, “if it were not for books,” would “not know what to do rainy days,” though perhaps he has not read one wholly through for many rainy seasons. Some priest who could pronounce the Greek itself taught him to read his verse in the testament in his native parish far away; and now I must translate to him, while he holds the book, Achilles’ reproof to Patroclus for his sad countenance.—“Why are you in tears, Patroclus, like a young girl?”—

“Or have you alone heard some news from Phthia?
They say that Menœtius lives yet, son of Actor,
And Peleus lives, son of Æacus, among the Myrmidons,
 Either of whom having died, we should greatly grieve.”

He says, “That’s good.” He has a great bundle of white-oak bark under his arm for a sick man, gathered this Sunday morning. “I suppose there’s no harm in going after such a thing to-day,” says he. To him Homer was a great writer, though what his writing was about he did not know. A more simple and natural man it would be hard to find. Vice and disease, which cast such a sombre moral hue over the world, seemed to have hardly any existence for him. He was about twenty-eight years old, and had left Canada and his father’s house a dozen years before to work in the States, and earn money to buy a farm with at last, perhaps in his native country. He was cast in the coarsest mould; a stout but sluggish body, yet gracefully carried, with a thick sunburnt neck, dark bushy hair, and dull sleepy blue eyes, which were occasionally lit up with expression. He wore a flat gray cloth cap, a dingy wool-colored greatcoat, and cowhide boots. He was a great consumer of meat, usually carrying his dinner to his work a couple of miles past my house,—for he chopped all summer,—in a tin pail; cold meats, often cold woodchucks, and coffee in a stone bottle which dangled by a string from his belt; and sometimes he offered me a drink. He came along early, crossing my bean-field, though without anxiety or haste to get to his work, such as Yankees exhibit. He wasn’t a-going to hurt himself. He didn’t care if he only earned his board. Frequently he would leave his dinner in the bushes, when his dog had caught a woodchuck by the way, and go back a mile and a half to dress it and leave it in the cellar of the house where he boarded, after deliberating first for half an hour whether he could not sink it in the pond safely till nightfall,—loving to dwell long upon these themes. He would say, as he went by in the morning, “How thick the pigeons are! If working every day were not my trade, I could get all the meat I should want by hunting,—pigeons, woodchucks, rabbits, partridges,—by gosh! I could get all I should want for a week in one day.”

He was a skilful chopper, and indulged in some flourishes and ornaments in his art. He cut his trees level and close to the ground, that the sprouts which came up afterward might be more vigorous and a sled might slide over the stumps; and instead of leaving a whole tree to support his cored wood, he would pare it away to a slender stake or splinter which you could break off with your hand at last.

He interested me because he was so quiet and solitary and so happy withal; a well of good humor and contentment which overflowed at his eyes. His mirth was without alloy. Sometimes I saw him at his work in the woods, felling trees, and he would greet me with a laugh of inexpressible satisfaction, and a salutation in Canadian French, though he spoke English as well. When
I approached him he would suspend his work, and with half-suppressed mirth lie along the trunk of a pine which he had felled, and, peeling off the inner bark, roll it up into a ball and chew it while he laughed and talked. Such an exuberance of animal spirits had he that he sometimes tumbled down and rolled on the ground with laughter at any thing which made him think and tickled him. Looking round upon the trees he would exclaim,—"By George! I can enjoy myself well enough here chopping; I want no better sport." Sometimes, when at leisure, he amused himself all day in the woods with a pocket pistol, firing salutes to himself at regular intervals as he walked. In the winter he had a fire by which at noon he warmed his coffee in a kettle; and as he sat on a log to eat his dinner the chickadees would sometimes come round and alight on his arm and peck at the potato in his fingers; and he said that he "liked to have the little fellers about him."

In him the animal man chiefly was developed. In physical endurance and contentment he was cousin to the pine and the rock. I asked him once if he was not sometimes tired at night, after working all day; and he answered, with a sincere and serious look, "Gorrappit, I never was tired in my life." But the intellectual and what is called spiritual man in him were slumbering as in an infant. He had been instructed only in that innocent and ineffectual way in which the Catholic priests teach the aborigines, by which the pupil is never educated to the degree of consciousness, but only to the degree of trust and reverence, and a child is not made a man, but kept a child. When Nature made him, she gave him a strong body and contentment for his portion, and propped him on every side with reverence and reliance, that he might live out his threescore years and ten a child. He was so genuine and unsophisticated that no introduction would serve to introduce him, more than if you introduced a woodchuck to your neighbor. He had got to find him out as you did. He would not play any part. Men paid him wages for work, and so helped to feed and clothe him; but he never exchanged opinions with them. He was so simply and naturally humble—if he can be called humble who never aspires—that humility was no distinct quality in him, nor could he conceive of it. Wiser men were demigods to him. If you told him that such a one was coming, he did as if he thought that any thing so grand would expect nothing of himself, but take all the responsibility on itself, and let him be forgotten still. He never heard the sound of praise. He particularly reverenced the writer and the preacher. Their performances were miracles. When I told him that I wrote considerably, he thought for a long time that it was merely the handwriting which I meant, for he could write a remarkably good hand himself. I sometimes found the name of his native parish handsomely written in the snow by the highway, with the proper French accent, and knew that he had passed. I asked him if he ever wished to write his thoughts. He said that he had read and written letters for those who could not, but he never tried to write thoughts,—no, he could not, he could not tell what to put first, it would kill him, and then there was spelling to be attended to at the same time!

I heard that a distinguished wise man and reformer asked him if he did not want the world to be changed; but he answered with a chuckle of surprise in his Canadian accent, not knowing that the question had ever been entertained before, "No, I like it well enough." It would have suggested many things to a philosopher to have dealings with him. To a stranger he appeared to know nothing of things in general; yet I sometimes saw in him a man whom I had not seen before, and I did not know whether he was as wise as Shakespeare or as simply ignorant as a child, whether to suspect him of a fine poetic consciousness or of stupidity. A townsman told me that when he met him sauntering through the village in his small close-fitting cap, and whistling to himself, as wise as Shakespeare or as simply ignorant as a child, whether to suspect him of a fine poetic consciousness or of stupidity.

His only books were an almanac and an arithmetic, in which last he was considerably expert. The former was a sort of cyclopædia to him, which he supposed to contain an abstract of human knowledge, as indeed it does to a considerable extent. I loved to sound him on the various reforms of the day, and he never failed to look at them in the most simple and practical light. He had never heard of such things before. Could he do without factories? I asked. He had worn the home-made Vermont gray, he said, and that was good. Could he dispense with tea and coffee? Did this country afford any beverage beside water? He had soaked hemlock leaves in water and drank it, and thought that was better than water in warm weather. When I asked him if he could do without money, he showed the convenience of money in such a way as to suggest and coincide with the most philosophical accounts of the origin of this institution, and the very derivation of the word pecunia. If an ox were his property, and he wished to get needles and thread at the store, he thought it would be inconvenient and impossible soon to go on mortgaging some portion of the creature each time to that amount. He could defend many institutions better than any philosopher, because, in describing them as they concerned him, he gave the true reason for their prevalence, and speculation had not suggested to him any other. At another time, hearing Plato's definition of a man,—a biped without feathers,—and that one exhibited a cock
plucked and called it Plato’s man, he thought it an important difference that the knees bent the wrong way. He would sometimes exclaim, “How I love to talk! By George, I could talk all day!” I asked him once, when I had not seen him for many months, if he had got a new idea this summer. “Good Lord,” said he, “a man that has to work as I do, if he does not forget the ideas he has had, he will do well. May be the man you hoe with is inclined to race; then, by gorry, your mind must be there; you think of weeds.” He would sometimes ask me first on such occasions, if he had made any improvement. One winter day I asked him if he was always satisfied with himself, wishing to suggest a substitute within him for the priest without, and some higher motive for living. “Satisfied!” said he; “some men are satisfied with one thing, and some with another. One man, perhaps, if he has got enough, will be satisfied to sit all day with his back to the fire and his belly to the table, by George!” Yet I never, by any manoeuvring, could get him to take the spiritual view of things; the highest that he appeared to conceive of was a simple expediency, such as you might expect an animal to appreciate; and this, practically, is true of most men. If I suggested any improvement in his mode of life, he merely answered, without expressing any regret, that it was too late. Yet he thoroughly believed in honesty and the like virtues.

There was a certain positive originality, however slight, to be detected in him, and I occasionally observed that he was thinking for himself and expressing his own opinion, a phenomenon so rare that I would any day walk ten miles to observe it, and it amounted to the re-origination of many of the institutions of society. Though he hesitated, and perhaps failed to express himself distinctly, he always had a presentable thought behind. Yet his thinking was so primitive and immersed in his animal life, that, though more promising than a merely learned man’s, it rarely ripened to anything which can be reported. He suggested that there might be men of genius in the lowest grades of life, however permanently humble and illiterate, who take their own view always, or do not pretend to see at all; who are as bottomless even as Walden Pond was thought to be, though they may be dark and muddy.

Many a traveller came out of his way to see me and the inside of my house, and, as an excuse for calling, asked for a glass of water. I told them that I drank at the pond, and pointed thither, offering to lend them a dipper. Far off as I lived, I was not exempted from the annual visitation which occurs, methinks, about the first of April, when everybody is on the move; and I had my share of good luck, though there were some curious specimens among my visitors. Half-witted men from the almshouse and elsewhere came to see me; but I endeavored to make them exercise all the wit they had, and make their confessions to me; in such cases making wit the theme of our conversation; and so was compensated. Indeed, I found some of them to be wiser than the so-called overseers of the poor and selectmen of the town, and thought it was time that the tables were turned. With respect to wit, I learned that there was not much difference between the half and the whole. One day, in particular, an inoffensive, simple-minded pauper, whom with others I had often seen used as fencing stuff, standing or sitting on a bushel in the fields to keep cattle and himself from straying, visited me, and expressed a wish to live as I did. He told me, with the utmost simplicity and truth, quite superior, or rather inferior, to anything that is called humility, that he was “deficient in intellect.” These were his words. The Lord had made him so, yet he supposed the Lord cared as much for him as for another. “I have always been so,” said he, “from my childhood; I never had much mind; I was not like other children; I am weak in the head. It was the Lord’s will, I suppose.” And there he was to prove the truth of his words. He was a metaphysical puzzle to me. I have rarely met a fellow-man on such promising ground,—it was so simple and sincere and so true all that he said. And, true enough, in proportion as he appeared to humble himself was he exalted. I did not know at first but it was the result of a wise policy. It seemed that from such a basis of truth and frankness as the poor weak-headed pauper had laid, our intercourse might go forward to something better than the intercourse of sages.

I had some guests from those not reckoned commonly among the town’s poor, but who should be; who are among the world’s poor, at any rate; guests who appeal, not to your hospitality, but to your hospitality; who earnestly wish to be helped, and preface their appeal with the information that they are resolved, for one thing, never to help themselves. I require of a visitor that he be not actually starving, though he may have the very best appetite in the world, however he got it. Objects of charity are not guests. Men who did not know when their visit had terminated, though I went about my business again, answering them from greater and greater remoteness. Men of almost every degree of wit called on me in the migrating season. Some who had more wits than they knew what to do with; runaway slaves with plantation manners, who listened from time to time, like the fox in the fable, as if they heard the hounds a-baying on their track, and looked at me beseeching, as much as to say,—
“O Christian, will you send me back?”

One real runaway slave, among the rest, whom I helped to forward toward the northstar. Men of one idea, like a hen with one chicken, and that a duckling; men of a thousand ideas, and unkempt heads, like those hens which are made to take charge of a hundred chickens, all in pursuit of one bug, a score of them lost in every morning’s dew,—and become frizzled and mangy in consequence; men of ideas instead of legs, a sort of intellectual centipede that made you crawl all over. One man proposed a book in which visitors should write their names, as at the White Mountains; but, alas! I have too good a memory to make that necessary.

I could not but notice some of the peculiarities of my visitors. Girls and boys and young women generally seemed glad to be in the woods. They looked in the pond and at the flowers, and improved their time. Men of business, even farmers, thought only of solitude and employment, and of the great distance at which I dwelt from something or other; and though they said that they loved a ramble in the woods occasionally, it was obvious that they did not. Restless committed men, whose time was all taken up in getting a living or keeping it; ministers who spoke of God as if they enjoyed a monopoly of the subject, who could not bear all kinds of opinions; doctors, lawyers, uneasy housekeepers who pried into my cupboard and bed when I was out,—how came Mrs. —— to know that my sheets were not as clean as hers?—young men who had ceased to be young, and had concluded that it was safest to follow the beaten track of the professions,—all these generally said that it was not possible to do so much good in my position. Ay! there was the rub. The old and infirm and the timid, of whatever age or sex, thought most of sickness, and sudden accident and death; to them life seemed full of danger,—what danger is there if you don’t think of any?—and they thought that a prudent man would carefully select the safest position, where Dr. B. might be on hand at a moment’s warning. To them the village was literally a com-munity, a league for mutual defence, and you would suppose that they would not go a-huckleberrying without a medicine chest. The amount of it is, if a man is alive, there is always danger that he may die, though the danger must be allowed to be less in proportion as he is dead-and-alive to begin with. A man sits as many risks as he runs. Finally, there were the self-styled reformers, the greatest bores of all, who thought that I was forever singing,—

This is the house that I built;
This is the man that lives in the house that I built;

but they did not know that the third line was,—

These are the folks that worry the man
That lives in the house that I built.

I did not fear the hen-harriers, for I kept no chickens; but I feared the men-harriers rather.

I had more cheering visitors than the last. Children come a-berrying, railroad men taking a Sunday morning walk in clean shirts, fishermen and hunters, poets and philosophers; in short, all honest pilgrims, who came out to the woods for freedom’s sake, and really left the village behind, I was ready to greet with,—“Welcome, Englishmen! welcome, Englishmen!” for I had had communication with that race.
The New Food

I see from the current columns of the daily press that “Professor Plumb, of the University of Chicago, has just invented a highly concentrated form of food. All the essential nutritive elements are put together in the form of pellets, each of which contains from one to two hundred times as much nourishment as an ounce of an ordinary article of diet. These pellets, diluted with water, will form all that is necessary to support life. The professor looks forward confidently to revolutionizing the present food system.”

Now this kind of thing may be all very well in its way, but it is going to have its drawbacks as well. In the bright future anticipated by Professor Plumb, we can easily imagine such incidents as the following:

The smiling family were gathered round the hospitable board. The table was plenteously laid with a soup-plate in front of each beaming child, a bucket of hot water before the radiant mother, and at the head of the board the Christmas dinner of the happy home, warmly covered by a thimble and resting on a poker chip. The expectant whispers of the little ones were hushed as the father, rising from his chair, lifted the thimble and disclosed a small pill of concentrated nourishment on the chip before him. Christmas turkey, cranberry sauce, plum pudding, mince pie—it was all there, all jammed into that little pill and only waiting to expand. Then the father with deep reverence, and a devout eye alternating between the pill and heaven, lifted his voice in a benediction.

At this moment there was an agonized cry from the mother.

“Oh, Henry, quick! Baby has snatched the pill!” It was too true. Dear little Gustavus Adolphus, the golden-haired baby boy, had grabbed the whole Christmas dinner off the poker chip and bolted it. Three hundred and fifty pounds of concentrated nourishment passed down the oesophagus of the unthinking child.

“Clap him on the back!” cried the distracted mother. “Give him water!”

The idea was fatal. The water striking the pill caused it to expand. There was a dull rumbling sound and then, with an awful bang, Gustavus Adolphus exploded into fragments!

And when they gathered the little corpse together, the baby lips were parted in a lingering smile that could only be worn by a child who had eaten thirteen Christmas dinners.

A New Pathology

It has long been vaguely understood that the condition of a man’s clothes has a certain effect upon the health of both body and mind. The well-known proverb, “Clothes make the man” has its origin in a general recognition of the powerful influence of the habiliments in their reaction upon the wearer. The same truth may be observed in the facts of everyday life. On the one hand we remark the bold carriage and mental vigour of a man attired in a new suit of clothes; on the other hand we note the melancholy features of him who is conscious of a posterior patch, or the haunted face of one suffering from internal loss of buttons. But while common observation thus gives us a certain familiarity with a few leading facts regarding the ailments and influence of clothes, no attempt has as yet been made to reduce our knowledge to a systematic form. At the same time the writer feels that a valuable addition might be made to the science of medicine in this direction. The numerous diseases which are caused by this fatal influence should receive a scientific analysis, and their treatment be included among the principles of the healing art. The diseases of the clothes may roughly be divided into medical cases and surgical cases, while these again fall into classes according to the particular garment through which the sufferer is attacked.
MEDICAL CASES

Probably no article of apparel is so liable to a diseased condition as the trousers. It may be well, therefore, to treat first those maladies to which they are subject.

I. Contractio Pantalunae, or Shortening of the Legs of the Trousers, an extremely painful malady most frequently found in the growing youth. The first symptom is the appearance of a yawning space (lacuna) above the boots, accompanied by an acute sense of humiliation and a morbid anticipation of mockery. The application of treacle to the boots, although commonly recommended, may rightly be condemned as too drastic a remedy. The use of boots reaching to the knee, to be removed only at night, will afford immediate relief. In connection with Contractio is often found—

II. Inflatio Genu, or Bagging of the Knees of the Trousers, a disease whose symptoms are similar to those above. The patient shows an aversion to the standing posture, and, in acute cases, if the patient be compelled to stand, the head is bent and the eye fixed with painful rigidity upon the projecting blade formed at the knee of the trousers.

In both of the above diseases anything that can be done to free the mind of the patient from a morbid sense of his infirmity will do much to improve the general tone of the system.

III. Oases, or Patches, are liable to break out anywhere on the trousers, and range in degree of gravity from those of a trifling nature to those of a fatal character. The most distressing cases are those where the patch assumes a different colour from that of the trousers (dissimilitas coloris). In this instance the mind of the patient is found to be in a sadly aberrated condition. A speedy improvement may, however, be effected by cheerful society, books, flowers, and, above all, by a complete change.

IV. The overcoat is attacked by no serious disorders, except—

Phosphorescentia, or Glistening, a malady which indeed may often be observed to affect the whole system. It is caused by decay of tissue from old age and is generally aggravated by repeated brushing. A peculiar feature of the complaint is the lack of veracity on the part of the patient in reference to the cause of his uneasiness. Another invariable symptom is his aversion to outdoor exercise; under various pretexts, which it is the duty of his medical adviser firmly to combat, he will avoid even a gentle walk in the streets.

V. Of the waistcoat science recognizes but one disease—

Porriggia, an affliction caused by repeated spilling of porridge. It is generally harmless, chiefly owing to the mental indifference of the patient. It can be successfully treated by repeated fomentations of benzine.

VI. Mortificatio Tili, or Greenness of the Hat, is a disease often found in connection with Phosphorescentia (mentioned above), and characterized by the same aversion to outdoor life.

VII. Sterilitas, or Loss of Fur, is another disease of the hat, especially prevalent in winter. It is not accurately known whether this is caused by a falling out of the fur or by a cessation of growth. In all diseases of the hat the mind of the patient is greatly depressed and his countenance stamped with the deepest gloom. He is particularly sensitive in regard to questions as to the previous history of the hat.

Want of space precludes the mention of minor diseases, such as—

VIII. Odditus Soccorum, or oddness of the socks, a thing in itself trifling, but of an alarming nature if met in combination with Contractio Pantalunae. Cases are found where the patient, possibly on the public platform or at a social gathering, is seized with a consciousness of the malady so suddenly as to render medical assistance futile.

SURGICAL CASES

It is impossible to mention more than a few of the most typical cases of diseases of this sort.
I. Explosio, or Loss of Buttons, is the commonest malady demanding surgical treatment. It consists of a succession of minor fractures, possibly internal, which at first excite no alarm. A vague sense of uneasiness is presently felt, which often leads the patient to seek relief in the string habit—a habit which, if unduly indulged in, may assume the proportions of a ruling passion. The use of sealing-wax, while admirable as a temporary remedy for Explosio, should never be allowed to gain a permanent hold upon the system. There is no doubt that a persistent indulgence in the string habit, or the constant use of sealing-wax, will result in—

II. Fractura Suspendorum, or Snapping of the Braces, which amounts to a general collapse of the system. The patient is usually seized with a severe attack of explosio, followed by a sudden sinking feeling and sense of loss. A sound constitution may rally from the shock, but a system undermined by the string habit invariably succumbs.

III. Sectura Pantalunae, or Ripping of the Trousers, is generally caused by sitting upon warm beeswax or leaning against a hook. In the case of the very young it is not unfrequently accompanied by a distressing suppuration of the shirt. This, however, is not remarked in adults. The malady is rather mental than bodily, the mind of the patient being racked by a keen sense of indignity and a feeling of unworthiness. The only treatment is immediate isolation, with a careful stitching of the affected part.

In conclusion, it may be stated that at the first symptom of disease the patient should not hesitate to put himself in the hands of a professional tailor. In so brief a compass as the present article the discussion has of necessity been rather suggestive than exhaustive. Much yet remains to be done, and the subject opens wide to the inquiring eye. The writer will, however, feel amply satisfied if this brief outline may help to direct the attention of medical men to what is yet an unexplored field.

The Poet Answered

Dear sir:

In answer to your repeated questions and requests which have appeared for some years past in the columns of the rural press, I beg to submit the following solutions of your chief difficulties:—

Topic I.—You frequently ask, where are the friends of your childhood, and urge that they shall be brought back to you. As far as I am able to learn, those of your friends who are not in jail are still right there in your native village. You point out that they were wont to share your gambols. If so, you are certainly entitled to have theirs now.

Topic II.—You have taken occasion to say:

"Give me not silk, nor rich attire,
Nor gold, nor jewels rare."

But, my dear fellow, this is preposterous. Why, these are the very things I had bought for you. If you won’t take any of these, I shall have to give you factory cotton and cordwood.

Topic III.—You also ask, “How fares my love across the sea?” Intermediate, I presume. She would hardly travel steerage.

Topic IV.—”Why was I born? Why should I breathe?” Here I quite agree with you. I don’t think you ought to breathe.

Topic V.—You demand that I shall show you the man whose soul is dead and then mark him. I am awfully sorry; the man was around here all day yesterday, and if I had only known I could easily have marked him so that we could pick him out again.

Topic VI.—I notice that you frequently say, “Oh, for the sky of your native land.” Oh, for it, by all means, if you wish. But remember that you already owe for a great deal.
Topic VII.—On more than one occasion you wish to be informed, “What boots it, that you idly dream?” Nothing boots it at present—a fact, sir, which ought to afford you the highest gratification.

The Force of Statistics

They were sitting on a seat of the car, immediately in front of me. I was consequently able to hear all that they were saying. They were evidently strangers who had dropped into a conversation. They both had the air of men who considered themselves profoundly interesting as minds. It was plain that each laboured under the impression that he was a ripe thinker.

One had just been reading a book which lay in his lap.

"I've been reading some very interesting statistics," he was saying to the other thinker.

"Ah, statistics" said the other; “wonderful things, sir, statistics; very fond of them myself.”

“I find, for instance,” the first man went on, “that a drop of water is filled with little...with little...I forget just what you call them...little—er—things, every cubic inch containing—er—containing...let me see...”

"Say a million," said the other thinker, encouragingly.

“Yes, a million, or possibly a billion...but at any rate, ever so many of them.”

"Is it possible?” said the other. “But really, you know there are wonderful things in the world. Now, coal...take coal...”

“Very, good,” said his friend, “let us take coal,” settling back in his seat with the air of an intellect about to feed itself.

“Do you know that every ton of coal burnt in an engine will drag a train of cars as long as...I forget the exact length, but say a train of cars of such and such a length, and weighing, say so much...from...from...hum! for the moment the exact distance escapes me...drag it from...”

“From here to the moon,” suggested the other.

“Ah, very likely; yes, from here to the moon. Wonderful, isn’t it?”

“But the most stupendous calculation of all, sir, is in regard to the distance from the earth to the sun. Positively, sir, a cannon-ball—er—fired at the sun...”

“Fired at the sun,” nodded the other, approvingly, as if he had often seen it done.

“And travelling at the rate of...of...”

“Of three cents a mile," hinted the listener.

“No, no, you misunderstand me,—but travelling at a fearful rate, simply fearful, sir, would take a hundred million—no, a hundred billion—in short would take a scandalously long time in getting there—”

At this point I could stand no more. I interrupted—“Provided it were fired from Philadelphia,” I said, and passed into the smoking-car.
Men Who have Shaved Me

A barber is by nature and inclination a sport. He can tell you at what exact hour the ball game of the day is to begin, can foretell its issue without losing a stroke of the razor, and can explain the points of inferiority of all the players, as compared with better men that he has personally seen elsewhere, with the nicety of a professional. He can do all this, and then stuff the customer's mouth with a soap-brush, and leave him while he goes to the other end of the shop to make a side bet with one of the other barbers on the outcome of the Autumn Handicap. In the barber-shops they knew the result of the Jeffries-Johnson prize-fight long before it happened. It is on information of this kind that they make their living. The performance of shaving is only incidental to it. Their real vocation in life is imparting information. To the barber the outside world is made up of customers, who are to be thrown into chairs, strapped, manacled, gagged with soap, and then given such necessary information on the athletic events of the moment as will carry them through the business hours of the day without open disgrace.

As soon as the barber has properly filled up the customer with information of this sort, he rapidly removes his whiskers as a sign that the man is now fit to talk to, and lets him out of the chair.

The public has grown to understand the situation. Every reasonable business man is willing to sit and wait half an hour for a shave which he could give himself in three minutes, because he knows that if he goes down town without understanding exactly why Chicago lost two games straight he will appear an ignoramus.

At times, of course, the barber prefers to test his customer with a question or two. He gets him pinned in the chair, with his head well back, covers the customer's face with soap, and then planting his knee on his chest and holding his hand firmly across the customer’s mouth, to prevent all utterance and to force him to swallow the soap, he asks: “Well, what did you think of the Detroit-St. Louis game yesterday?” This is not really meant for a question at all. It is only equivalent to saying: “Now, you poor fool, I'll bet you don't know anything about the great events of your country at all.” There is a gurgle in the customer's throat as if he were trying to answer, and his eyes are seen to move sideways, but the barber merely thrusts the soap-brush into each eye, and if any motion still persists, he breathes gin and peppermint over the face, till all sign of life is extinct. Then he talks the game over in detail with the barber at the next chair, each leaning across an inanimate thing extended under steaming towels that was once a man.

To know all these things barbers have to be highly educated. It is true that some of the greatest barbers that have ever lived have begun as uneducated, illiterate men, and by sheer energy and indomitable industry have forced their way to the front. But these are exceptions. To succeed nowadays it is practically necessary to be a college graduate. As the courses at Harvard and Yale have been found too superficial, there are now established regular Barbers' Colleges, where a bright young man can learn as much in three weeks as he would be likely to know after three years at Harvard. The courses at these colleges cover such things as: (1) Physiology, including Hair and its Destruction, The Origin and Growth of Whiskers, Soap in its Relation to Eyesight; (2) Chemistry, including lectures on Florida Water; and How to Make it out of Sardine Oil; (3) Practical Anatomy, including The Scalp and How to Lift it, The Ears and How to Remove them, and, as the Major Course for advanced students, The Veins of the Face and how to open and close them at will by the use of alum.

The education of the customer is, as I have said, the chief part of the barber's vocation. But it must be remembered that the incidental function of removing his whiskers in order to mark him as a well-informed man is also of importance, and demands long practice and great natural aptitude. In the barbers' shops of modern cities shaving has been brought to a high degree of perfection. A good barber is not content to remove the whiskers of his client directly and immediately. He prefers to cook him first. He does this by immersing the head in hot water and covering the victim's face with steaming towels until he has him boiled to a nice pink. From time to time the barber removes the towels and looks at the face to see if it is yet boiled pink enough for his satisfaction. If it is not, he replaces the towels again and jams them down firmly with his hand until the cooking is finished. The final result, however, amply justifies this trouble, and the well-boiled customer only needs the addition of a few vegetables on the side to present an extremely appetizing appearance.

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During the process of the shave, it is customary for the barber to apply the particular kind of mental torture known as the third degree. This is done by terrorizing the patient as to the very evident and proximate loss of all his hair and whiskers, which the barber is enabled by his experience to foretell. “Your hair,” he says, very sadly and sympathetically, “is all falling out. Better let me give you a shampoo?” “No.” “Let me singe your hair to close up the follicles?” “No.” “Let me plug up the ends of your hair with sealing-wax, it’s the only thing that will save it for you?” “No.” “Let me rub an egg on your scalp?” “No.” “Let me squirt a lemon on your eyebrows?” “No.”

The barber sees that he is dealing with a man of determination, and he warms to his task. He bends low and whispers into the prostrate ear: “You’ve got a good many grey hairs coming in; better let me give you an application of Hairocene, only cost you half a dollar?” “No.” “Your face,” he whispers again, with a soft, caressing voice, “is all covered with wrinkles; better let me rub some of this Rejuvenator into the face.”

This process is continued until one of two things happens. Either the customer is obdurate, and staggers to his feet at last and gropes his way out of the shop with the knowledge that he is a wrinkled, prematurely senile man, whose wicked life is stamped upon his face, and whose unstopped hair-ends and failing follicles menace him with the certainty of complete baldness within twenty-four hours—or else, as in nearly all instances, he succumbs. In the latter case, immediately on his saying “yes” there is a shout of exultation from the barber, a roar of steaming water, and within a moment two barbers have grabbed him by the feet and thrown him under the tap, and, in spite of his struggles, are giving him the Hydro-magnetic treatment. When he emerges from their hands, he steps out of the shop looking as if he had been varnished.

But even the application of the Hydro-magnetic and the Rejuvenator do not by any means exhaust the resources of the up-to-date barber. He prefers to perform on the customer a whole variety of subsidiary services not directly connected with shaving, but carried on during the process of the shave.

In a good, up-to-date shop, while one man is shaving the customer, others black his boots; brush his clothes, darn his socks, point his nails, enamel his teeth, polish his eyes, and alter the shape of any of his joints which they think unsightly. During this operation they often stand seven or eight deep round a customer, fighting for a chance to get at him.

All of these remarks apply to barber-shops in the city, and not to country places. In the country there is only one barber and one customer at a time. The thing assumes the aspect of a straight-out, rough-and-tumble, catch-as-catch-can fight, with a few spectators sitting round the shop to see fair play. In the city they can shave a man without removing any of his clothes. But in the country, where the customer insists on getting the full value for his money, they remove the collar and necktie, the coat and the waistcoat, and, for a really good shave and hair-cut, the customer is stripped to the waist. The barber can then take a rush at him from the other side of the room, and drive the clippers up the full length of the spine, so as to come at the heavier hair on the back of the head with the impact of a lawn-mower driven into long grass.
Some Imagist Poets

Excerpt from Some Imagist Poets

PREFACE

In March, 1914, a volume appeared entitled “Des Imagistes.” It was a collection of the work of various young poets, presented together as a school. This school has been widely discussed by those interested in new movements in the arts, and has already become a household word. Differences of taste and judgment, however, have arisen among the contributors to that book; growing tendencies are forcing them along different paths. Those of us whose work appears in this volume have therefore decided to publish our collection under a new title, and we have been joined by two or three poets who did not contribute to the first volume, our wider scope making this possible.

In this new book we have followed a slightly different arrangement to that of the former Anthology. Instead of an arbitrary selection by an editor, each poet has been permitted to represent himself by the work he considers his best, the only stipulation being that it should not yet have appeared in book form. A sort of informal committee—consisting of more than half the authors here represented—have arranged the book and decided what should be printed and what omitted, but, as a general rule, the poets have been allowed absolute freedom in this direction, limitations of space only being imposed upon them. Also, to avoid any appearance of precedence, they have been put in alphabetical order.

As it has been suggested that much of the misunderstanding of the former volume was due to the fact that we did not explain ourselves in a preface, we have thought it wise to tell the public what our aims are, and why we are banded together between one set of covers.

The poets in this volume do not represent a clique. Several of them are personally unknown to the others, but they are united by certain common principles, arrived at independently. These principles are not new; they have fallen into desuetude. They are the essentials of all great poetry, indeed of all great literature, and they are simply these:—

1. To use the language of common speech, but to employ always the exact word, not the nearly-exact, nor the merely decorative word.
2. To create new rhythms—as the expression of new moods—and not to copy old rhythms, which merely echo old moods. We do not insist upon “free-verse” as the only method of writing poetry. We fight for it as for a principle of liberty. We believe that the individuality of a poet may often be better expressed in free-verse than in conventional forms. In poetry, a new cadence means a new idea.
3. To allow absolute freedom in the choice of subject. It is not good art to write badly about aeroplanes and automobiles; nor is it necessarily bad art to write well about the past. We believe passionately in the artistic value of modern life, but we wish to point out that there is nothing so uninspiring nor so old-fashioned as an aeroplane of the year 1911.
4. To present an image (hence the name: “Imagist”). We are not a school of painters, but we believe that poetry should render particulars exactly and not deal in vague generalities, however magnificent and sonorous. It is for this reason that we oppose the cosmic poet, who seems to us to shirk the real difficulties of his art.
5. To produce poetry that is hard and clear, never blurred nor indefinite.
6. Finally, most of us believe that concentration is of the very essence of poetry.

The subject of free-verse is too complicated to be discussed here. We may say briefly, that we attach the term to all that increasing amount of writing whose cadence is more marked, more definite, and closer knit than that of prose, but which is not so violently nor so obviously accented as the so-called “regular verse.” We refer those interested in the question to the Greek Melic poets, and to the many excellent French studies on the subject by such distinguished and well-equipped authors as Remy de Gourmont, Gustave Kahn, Georges Duhamel, Charles Vildrac, Henri Ghéon, Robert de Souza, André Spire, etc.
We wish it to be clearly understood that we do not represent an exclusive artistic sect; we publish our work together because of mutual artistic sympathy, and we propose to bring out our coöperative volume each year for a short term of years, until we have made a place for ourselves and our principles such as we desire.

Thanks are due to the editors of *Poetry*, *The Smart Set*, *Poetry and Drama*, and *The Egoist* for their courteous permission to reprint certain of these poems which have been copyrighted to them.

RICHARD ALDINGTON

CHILDHOOD

I

The bitterness, the misery, the wretchedness of childhood
Put me out of love with God.
I can't believe in God's goodness;
I can believe
In many avenging gods.
Most of all I believe
In gods of bitter dullness,
Cruel local gods
Who seared my childhood.

II

I've seen people put
A chrysalis in a match-box,
"To see," they told me, "what sort of moth would come."
But when it broke its shell
It slipped and stumbled and fell about its prison
And tried to climb to the light
For space to dry its wings:
That's how I was.
Somebody found my chrysalis
And shut it in a match-box.
My shrivelled wings were beaten,
Shed their colours in dusty scales
Before the box was opened
For the moth to fly. And then it was too late,
Because the beauty a child has,
And the beautiful things it learns before its birth,
Were shed, like moth-scales, from me.

III

I hate that town;
I hate the town I lived in when I was little;
I hate to think of it.
There were always clouds, smoke, rain
In that dingy little valley.
It rained; it always rained.
I think I never saw the sun until I was nine—
And then it was too late;
everything's too late after the first seven years.
That long street we lived in
Was duller than a drain
And nearly as dingy.
There were the big College
And the pseudo-Gothic town-hall.
There were the sordid provincial shops—
The grocer's, and the shops for women,
The shop where I bought transfers,
And the piano and gramophone shop
Where I used to stand
Staring at the huge shiny pianos and at the pictures
Of a white dog looking into a gramaphone. How dull and greasy and grey and sordid it was!
On wet days—it was always wet—
I used to kneel on a chair
And look at it from the window. The dirty yellow trams
Dragged noisily along
With a clatter of wheels and bells
And a humming of wires overhead.
They threw up the filthy rain-water from the hollow lines
And then the water ran back.
Full of brownish foam bubbles.
[Pg 6]
There was nothing else to see—
It was all so dull—
Except a few grey legs under shiny black umbrellas
Running along the grey shiny pavements;
Sometimes there was a waggon
Whose horses made a strange loud hollow sound
With their hoofs
Through the silent rain. And there was a grey museum
Full of dead birds and dead insects and dead animals
And a few relics of the Romans—dead also.
There was the sea-front,
A long asphalt walk with a bleak road beside it,
Three piers, a row of houses,
And a salt dirty smell from the little harbour. I was like a moth—-
Like one of those grey Emperor moths
Which flutter through the vines at Capri.
And that damned little town was my match-box,
Against whose sides I beat and beat
Until my wings were torn and faded, and dingy
As that damned little town.

IV

At school it was just dull as that dull High Street.
They taught me pothooks—
I wanted to be alone, although I was so little,
Alone, away from the rain, the dingyness, the dullness,
Away somewhere else—The town was dull;
The front was dull;
The High Street and the other street were dull—
And there was a public park, I remember,
And that was damned dull too,
With its beds of geraniums no one was allowed to pick,
And its clipped lawns you weren’t allowed to walk on,
And the gold-fish pond you mustn’t paddle in,
And the gate made out of a whale’s jaw-bones,
And the swings, which were for “Board-School children,”
And its gravel paths. And on Sundays they rang the bells,
From Baptist and Evangelical and Catholic churches.
They had the Salvation Army.
I was taken to a High Church;
The parson’s name was Mowbray,
"Which is a good name but he thinks too much of it—"
That's what I heard people say.
[Pg 8]
I took a little black book
To that cold, grey, damp, smelling church,
And I had to sit on a hard bench,
Wriggled off it to kneel down when they sang psalms,
And wriggled off it to kneel down when they prayed—
And then there was nothing to do
Except to play trains with the hymn-books. There was nothing to see,
Nothing to do,
Nothing to play with,
Except that in an empty room upstairs
There was a large tin box
Containing reproductions of the Magna Charta,
Of the Declaration of Independence
And of a letter from Raleigh after the Armada.
There were also several packets of stamps,
Yellow and blue Guatemala parrots,
Blue stags and red baboons and birds from Sarawak,
Indians and Men-of-war
From the United States,
And the green and red portraits
Of King Francobollo
Of Italy.

I don't believe in God.
I do believe in avenging gods
Who plague us for sins we never sinned
But who avenge us. That's why I'll never have a child,
Never shut up a chrysalis in a match-box
For the moth to spoil and crush its bright colours,
Beating its wings against the dingy prison-wall.

THE POPLAR

Why do you always stand there shivering
Between the white stream and the road? The people pass through the dust
On bicycles, in carts, in motor-cars;
The waggoners go by at dawn;
The lovers walk on the grass path at night. Stir from your roots, walk, poplar!
You are more beautiful than they are. I know that the white wind loves you,
Is always kissing you and turning up
The white lining of your green petticoat.
The sky darts through you like blue rain,
And the grey rain drips on your flanks
And loves you.
And I have seen the moon
Slip his silver penny into your pocket
As you straightened your hair;
And the white mist curling and hesitating
Like a bashful lover about your knees.

I know you, poplar;
I have watched you since I was ten.
But if you had a little real love,
A little strength,
You would leave your nonchalant idle lovers
And go walking down the white road
Behind the waggoners. There are beautiful beeches down beyond the hill.
Will you always stand there shivering?

ROUND-POND

Water ruffled and speckled by galloping wind
Which puffs and spurts it into tiny pashing breakers
Dashed with lemon-yellow afternoon sunlight.
The shining of the sun upon the water
Is like a scattering of gold crocus-petals
In a long wavering irregular flight. The water is cold to the eye
As the wind to the cheek. In the budding chestnuts
Whose sticky buds glimmer and are half-burst open
The starlings make their clitter-clatter;
And the blackbirds in the grass
Are getting as fat as the pigeons. Too-hoo, this is brave;
Even the cold wind is seeking a new mistress.

DAISY

"Plus quam se atque suos amavit omnes,
Nunc..."
Catullus.

You were my playmate by the sea.
We swam together.
Your girl's body had no breasts. We found prawns among the rocks;
We liked to feel the sun and to do nothing;
In the evening we played games with the others. It made me glad to be by you. Sometimes I kissed you,
And you were always glad to kiss me;
But I was afraid—I was only fourteen. And I had quite forgotten you,
You and your name. To-day I pass through the streets.

[Page 14] She who touches my arm and talks with me
Is—who knows?—Helen of Sparta,
Dryope, Laodamia....

And there are you
A whore in Oxford Street.

EPIGRAMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a girl</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You were that clear Sicilian fluting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That pains our thought even now.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You were the notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of cold fantastic grief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some few found beautiful.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>new love</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>She has new leaves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After her dead flowers,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Like the little almond-tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which the frost hurt.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>october</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The beech-leaves are silver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For lack of the tree’s blood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At your kiss my lips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Become like the autumn beech-leaves.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

THE FAUN SEES SNOW FOR THE FIRST TIME

Zeus,
Brazen-thunder-hurler,
Cloud-whirler, son-of-Kronos,
Send vengeance on these Oreads
Who strew
White frozen flecks of mist and cloud
Over the brown trees and the tufted grass
Of the meadows, where the stream
Runs black through shining banks
Of bluish white.Zeus,
Are the halls of heaven broken up
That you flake down upon me
Feather-strips of marble? Dis and Styx!
When I stamp my hoof
The frozen-cloud-specks jam into the cleft
So that I reel upon two slippery points....Fool, to stand here cursing
When I might be running!

LEMURES

In Nineveh
And beyond Nineveh
In the dusk
They were afraid. In Thebes of Egypt
In the dusk
They chanted of them to the dead. In my Lesbos and Achaia
Where the God dwelt
We knew them. Now men say “They are not”:
But in the dusk
Ere the white sun comes—
A gay child that bears a white candle—
I am afraid of their rustling,
Of their terrible silence,
The menace of their secrecy.

1. D.

THE POOL

Are you alive?
I touch you.
You quiver like a sea-fish.
I cover you with my net.
What are you—banded one?

THE GARDEN

I

You are clear,
O rose, cut in rock,
hard as the descent of hail.
I could scrape the colour
from the petal,
like spilt dye from a rock.
If I could break you
I could break a tree.
If I could stir
I could break a tree.
I could break you.

II

O wind,
rend open the heat,
cut apart the heat,
rend it sideways.
Fruit can not drop
through this thick air:
fruit can not fall into heat
that presses up and blunts
the points of pears
and rounds the grapes.
Cut the heat,
plough through it,
turning it on either side
of your path.

SEA LILY

Reed,
slash and torn,
but doubly rich—
such great heads as yours
drift upon temple-steps,
but you are shattered
in the wind.
Myrtle-bark
is flecked from you,
scales are dashed
from your stem,
sand cuts your petal,
furrows it with hard edge,
like flint
on a bright stone.
Yet though the whole wind
slash at your bark,
you are lifted up,
aye—though it hiss
to cover you with froth.
SEA IRIS

I
Weed, moss-weed, root tangled in sand, sea-iris, brittle flower, one petal like a shell is broken, and you print a shadow like a thin twig. Fortunate one, scented and stinging, rigid myrrh-bud, camphor-flower, sweet and salt—you are wind in our nostrils.

II
Do the murex-fishers drench you as they pass? Do your roots drag up colour from the sand? Have they slipped gold under you; rivets of gold?
Band of iris-flowers above the waves, You are painted blue, painted like a fresh prow stained among the salt weeds.

SEA ROSE

Rose, harsh rose, marred and with stint of petals, meagre flower, thin, sparse of leaf: more precious than a wet rose, single on a stem—you are caught in the drift. Stunted, with small leaf, you are flung on the sands, you are lifted in the crisp sand that drives in the wind. Can the spice-rose drip such acrid fragrance hardened in a leaf?

OREAD

Whirl up, sea—Whirl your pointed pines, Splash your great pines On our rocks, Hurl your green over us, Cover us with your pools of fir.

ORION DEAD

[Artemis speaks]
The cornel-trees uplift from the furrows, the roots at their bases strike lower through the barley-sprays. So arise and face me. I am poisoned with the rage of song. I once pierced the flesh of the wild-deer,
now am I afraid to touch
the blue and the gold-veined hyacinths?
I will tear the full flowers
and the little heads
of the grape-hyacinths.
I will strip the life from the bulb
until the ivory layers
lie like narcissus petals
on the black earth.
Arise,
lest I bend an ash-tree
into a taut bow,
and slay—and tear
all the roots from the earth.

[Page 30]
The cornel-wood blazes
and strikes through the barley-sprays,
but I have lost heart for this.
I break a staff.
I break the tough branch.
I know no light in the woods.
I have lost pace with the winds.
Martin Luther King, Jr. Three Ways of Meeting Oppression

Three Ways of Meeting Oppression

by Martin Luther King, Jr., PhD

Oppressed people deal with their oppression in three characteristic ways. One way is acquiescence: the oppressed resign themselves to their doom. They tacitly adjust themselves to oppression, and thereby become conditioned to it. In every movement toward freedom some of the oppressed prefer to remain oppressed. Almost 2800 years ago Moses set out to lead the children of Israel from the slavery of Egypt to the freedom of the Promised Land. He soon discovered that slaves do not always welcome their deliverers. They become accustomed to being slaves. They would rather bear those ills they have, as Shakespeare pointed out, than flee to others that they know not of. They prefer the “fleshpots of Egypt” to the ordeals of emancipation.1 There is such a thing as the freedom of exhaustion. Some people are so worn down by the yoke of oppression that they give up. A few years ago in the slum areas of Atlanta, a Negro guitarist used to sing almost daily: “Ben down so long that down don’t bother me.” This is the type of negative freedom and resignation that often engulfs the life of the oppressed.

But this is not the way out. To accept passively an unjust system is to cooperate with that system; thereby the oppressed become as evil as the oppressor. Non-cooperation with evil is as much a moral obligation as is cooperation with good. The oppressed must never allow the conscience of the oppressor to slumber. Religion reminds every man that he is his brother’s keeper. To accept injustice or segregation passively is to say to the oppressor that his actions are morally right. It is a way of allowing his conscience to fall asleep. At this moment the oppressed fails to be his brother’s keeper. So acquiescence—while often the easier way—is not the moral way. It is the way of the coward. The Negro cannot win the respect of his oppressor by acquiescing; he merely increases the oppressor’s arrogance and contempt. Acquiescence is interpreted as proof of the Negro’s inferiority. The Negro cannot win the respect of the white people of the South or the peoples of the world if he is willing to sell the future of his children for his personal and immediate comfort and safety.

A second way that oppressed people sometimes deal with oppression is to resort to physical violence and corroding hatred. Violence often brings about momentary results. Nations have frequently won their independence in battle. But in spite of temporary victories, violence never brings permanent peace. It solves no social problem; it merely creates new and more complicated ones.4 Violence as a way of achieving racial justice is both impractical and immoral. It is impractical because it is a descending spiral ending in destruction for all. The old law of an eye for an eye leaves everybody blind. It is immoral because it seeks to humiliate the opponent rather than win his understanding; it seeks to annihilate rather than to convert. Violence is immoral because it thrives on hatred rather than love. It destroys community and makes brotherhood impossible. It leaves society in monologue rather than dialogue. Violence ends by defeating itself. It creates bitterness in the survivors and brutality in the destroyers. A voice echoes through time saying to every potential Peter, “Put up your sword.” History is cluttered with the wreckage of nations that failed to follow his command.

If the American Negro and other victims of oppression succumb to the temptation of using violence in the struggle for freedom, future generations will be the recipients of a desolate night of bitterness, and our chief legacy to them will be an endless reign of meaningless chaos. Violence is not the way.6

The third way open to oppressed people in their quest for freedom is the way of nonviolent resistance. Like the synthesis in Hegelian philosophy, the principle of nonviolent resistance seeks to reconcile the truths of two opposites—acquiescence and violence—while avoiding the extremes and immoralities of both. The nonviolent resister agrees with the person who acquiesces that one should not be physically aggressive toward his opponent; but he balances the equation by agreeing with the person...
of violence that evil must be resisted. He avoids the nonresistance of the former and the violent resistance of the latter. With nonviolent resistance, no individual or group need submit to any wrong, nor need anyone resort to violence in order to right a wrong.7

It seems to me that this is the method that must guide the actions of the Negro in the present crisis in race relations. Through nonviolent resistance the Negro will be able to rise to the noble height of opposing the unjust system while loving the perpetrators of the system. The Negro must work passionately and unrelentingly for full stature as a citizen, but he must not use inferior methods to gain it. He must never come to terms with falsehood, malice, hate, or destruction.8

Nonviolent resistance makes it possible for the Negro to remain in the South and struggle for his rights. The Negro’s problem will not be solved by running away. He cannot listen to the glib suggestion of those who would urge him to migrate en masse to other sections of the country. By grasping his great opportunity in the South he can make a lasting contribution to the moral strength of the nation and set a sublime example of courage for generations yet unborn.9

By nonviolent resistance, the Negro can also enlist all men of good will in his struggle for equality. The problem is not a purely racial one, with Negroes set against whites. In the end, it is not a struggle between people at all, but a tension between justice and injustice. Nonviolent resistance is not aimed against oppressors but against oppression. Under its banner consciences, not racial groups, are enlisted.10

If the Negro is to achieve the goal of integration, he must organize himself into a militant and nonviolent mass movement. All three elements are indispensable. The movement for equality and justice can only be a success if it has both an amass and militant character; the barriers to be overcome require both. Nonviolence is an imperative in order to bring about ultimate community.11

A mass movement of militant quality that is not at the same time committed to nonviolence tends to generate conflict, which in turn breeds anarchy. The support of the participants and the sympathy of the uncommitted are both inhibited by the threat that bloodshed will engulf the community. This reaction in turn encourages the opposition to threaten and resort to force. When, however, the mass movement repudiates violence while moving resolutely toward its goal, its opponents are revealed as the instigators and practitioners of violence if it occurs. Then public support is magnetically attracted to the advocates of nonviolence, while those who employ violence are literally disarmed by overwhelming sentiment against their stand.

Only through a nonviolent approach can the fears of the white community be mitigated. A guilt-ridden white minority lives in fear that if the Negro should ever attain power, he would act without restraint or pity to revenge the injustices and brutality of the years. It is something like a parent who continually mistreats a son. One day that parent raises his hand to strike the son, only to discover that the son is now as tall as he is. The parent is suddenly afraid—fearful that the son will use his new physical power to repay his parent for all the blows of the past.

The Negro, once a helpless child, has now grown up politically, culturally, and economically. Many white men fear retaliation. The job of the Negro is to show them that they have nothing to fear, that the Negro understands and forgives and is ready to forget the past. He must convince the white man that all he seeks is justice, for both himself and the white man. A mass movement exercising nonviolence is an object lesson in power under discipline, a demonstration to the white community that if such a movement attained a degree of strength, it would use its power creatively and not vengefully.14

Nonviolence can touch men where the law cannot reach them. When the law regulates behavior it plays an indirect part in molding public sentiment. The enforcement of the law is itself a form of peaceful persuasion. But the law needs help. The courts can order desegregation of the public schools. But what can be done to mitigate the fears, to disperse the hatred, violence, and irrationality gathered around school integration, to take the initiative out of the hands of racial demagogues, to release respect for the law? In the end, for laws to be obeyed, men must believe they are right.15

Here nonviolence comes in as the ultimate form of persuasion. It is the method which seeks to implement the just law by appealing to the conscience of the great decent majority who through blindness, fear, pride, or irrationality have allowed their consciences to sleep. 16
The nonviolent resisters can summarize their message in the following simple terms: We will take direct action against injustice without waiting for other agencies to act. We will not obey unjust laws or submit to unjust practices. We will do this peacefully, openly, cheerfully because our aim is to persuade. We adopt the means of nonviolence because our end is a community at peace with itself. We will try to persuade with our words, but if our words fail, we will try to persuade with our acts. We will always be willing to talk and seek fair compromise, but we are ready to suffer when necessary and even risk our lives to become witnesses to the truth as we see it.

The way of nonviolence means a willingness to suffer and sacrifice. It may mean going to jail. If such is the case the resister must be willing to fill the jailhouses of the South. It may even mean physical death. But if physical death is the price that a man must pay to free his children and his white brethren from a permanent death of the spirit, then nothing could be more redemptive.

from *Stride Toward Freedom*, 1958
Three Steven Pinker Essays

These three pieces—two by Pinker and the other about his ideas—are important in establishing the ways language is a living, changing human institution.

“The Moral Instinct” is available at: https://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/13/magazine/13Psychology-t.html

“7 Writing Style Lessons We Learned From Linguist Steven Pinker” is available at: https://www.wbur.org/radioboston/2014/09/30/pinker-harvard-writing

--If any of these works’ links doesn’t operate properly, you can do an author or title search to find it.

Thursday, Sep. 06, 2007 Words Don’t Mean What They Mean” By Steven Pinker

In the Movie Tootsie, The character played by Dustin Hoffman is disguised as a woman and is speaking to a beautiful young actress played by Jessica Lange. During a session of late-night girl talk, Lange’s character says, “You know what I wish? That a guy could be honest enough to walk up to me and say, ‘I could lay a big line on you, but the simple truth is I find you very interesting, and I’d really like to make love to you.’ Wouldn’t that be a relief?” Later in the movie, a twist of fate throws them together at a cocktail party, this time with Hoffman’s character dressed as a man. The actress doesn’t recognize him, and he tries out the speech on her. Before he can even finish, she throws a glass of wine in his face and storms away. When people talk, they lay lines on each other, do a lot of role playing, sidestep, shilly-shally and engage in all manner of vagueness and innuendo. We do this and expect others to do it, yet at the same time we profess to long for the plain truth, for people to say what they mean, simple as that. Such hypocrisy is a human universal. Sexual come-ons are a classic example. “Would you like to come up and see my etchings?” has been recognized as a double entendre for so long that by 1939, James Thurber could draw a cartoon of a hapless man in an apartment lobby saying to his date, “You wait here, and I’ll bring the etchings down.” The veiled threat also has a stereotype: the Mafia wiseguy offering protection with the soft sell, “Nice store you got there. Would be a real shame if something happened to it.” Traffic cops sometimes face not-so-innocent questions like, “Gee, Officer, is there some way I could pay the fine right here?” And anyone who has sat through a fund-raising dinner is familiar with euphemistic schnorring like, “We’re counting on you to show leadership.” Why don’t people just say what they mean? The reason is that conversational partners are not modems downloading information into each other’s brains. People are very, very touchy about their relationships. Whenever you speak to someone, you are presuming the two of you have a certain degree of familiarity—which your words might alter. So every sentence has to do two things at once: convey a message and continue to negotiate that relationship. The clearest example is ordinary politeness. When you are at a dinner party and want the salt, you don’t blurt out, “Gimme the salt.” Rather, you use what linguists call a whimperative, as in “Do you think you could pass the salt?” or “If you could pass the salt, that would be awesome.”

Taken literally, these sentences are inane. The second is an overstatement, and the answer to the first is obvious. Fortunately, the hearer assumes that the speaker is rational and listens between the lines. Yes, your point is to request the salt, but you’re doing it in such a way that first takes care to establish what linguists call “felicity conditions,” or the prerequisites to making a sensible request. The underlying rationale is that the hearer not be given a command but simply be asked or advised about one of the necessary conditions for passing the salt. Your goal is to have your need satisfied without treating the listener as a flunky who can be bossed around at will. Warm acquaintances go out of their way not to look as if they are presuming a dominant-subordinate relationship but rather one of equals. It works the other way too. When people are in a subordinate relationship (like a driver with police), they can’t sound as if they are presuming anything more than that, so any bribe must be veiled. Fund raisers, simulating an atmosphere of warm friendship with their donors, also can’t break the spell with a bald businesslike proposition. It is in the arena of sexual relationships, however, that the linguistic dance can be its most elaborate. In an episode of Seinfeld, George is asked by his date if he would like to come up for coffee. He declines, explaining that caffeine
keeps him up at night. Later he slaps his forehead: “‘Coffee’ doesn’t mean coffee! ‘Coffee’ means sex!” The moment is funny, but it’s also a reminder of just how carefully romantic partners must always tread. Make too blatant a request, as in Tootsie, and the hearer is offended; too subtle, as in Seinfeld, and it can go over the hearer’s head. In the political arena, miscalibrated speech can lead to more serious consequences than wine in the face or a slap on the forehead. In 1980, Wanda Brandstetter, a lobbyist for the National Organization for Women (NOW), tried to get an Illinois state representative to vote for the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) by handing him a business card on which she had written, “Mr. Swanstrom, the offer for help in your election, plus $1,000 for your campaign for the pro-ERA vote.” A prosecutor called the note a “contract for bribery,” and the jury agreed.

So how do lobbyists in Gucci Gulch bribe legislators today? They do it with innuendo. If Brandstetter had said, “As you know, Mr. Swanstrom, NOW has a history of contributing to political campaigns. And it has contributed more to candidates with a voting record that is compatible with our goals. These days one of our goals is the ratification of the ERA,” she would have avoided a fine, probation and community service. Indirect speech has a long history in diplomacy too. In the wake of the Six-Day War in 1967, the U.N. Security Council passed its famous Resolution 242, which called for the “withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict.” The wording is ambiguous. Does it mean “some of the territories” or “all of the territories”? In some ways it was best not to ask, since the phrasing was palatable to Israel and its allies only under the former interpretation and to concerned Arab states and their allies only under the latter. Unfortunately, for 40 years partisans have been debating the semantics of Resolution 242, and the Israeli-Arab conflict remains unresolved, to put it mildly. That’s not to say such calculated ambiguity never works for diplomats. After all, the language of an agreement has to be acceptable not just to leaders but to their citizens.

Reasonable leaders might thus come to an understanding between themselves, while each exploits the ambiguities of the deal to sell it to their country’s more bellicose factions. What’s more, diplomats can gamble that times will change and circumstances will bring the two sides together, at which point they can resolve the vagueness amicably. When all else fails, as it often does, nations can sort out their problems without any words at all—and often without fighting either. In these cases, they may fall back on communicating through what’s known as authority ranking, also known as power, status, autonomy and dominance. The logic of authority ranking is “Don’t mess with me.” Its biological roots are in the dominance hierarchies that are widespread in the animal kingdom. One animal claims the right to a contested resource based on size, strength, seniority or allies, and the other animal cedes it when the outcome of the battle can be predicted and both sides have a stake in not getting bloodied in a fight whose winner is a forgone conclusion. Such sword-rattling gestures as a larger military power’s conducting “naval exercises” in the waters off the coast of a weaker foe are based on just this kind of pre-emptive reminder of strength. People often speak of indirect speech as a means of saving face. What we’re referring to is not just a matter of hurt feelings but a social currency with real value. The expressive power of words helps us guard this prized asset, but only as long as we’re careful. Words let us say the things we want to say and also things we would be better off not having said. They let us know the things we need to know, and also things we wish we didn’t. Language is a window into human nature, but it is also a fistula, an open wound through which we’re exposed to an infectious world. It’s not surprising that we sheathe our words in politeness and innuendo and other forms of doublespeak. From *The Stuff of Thought* by Steven Pinker

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- Three Steven Pinker Essays. **Authored by:** Steven Pinker. **Provided by:** Radio Boston. **Located at:** https://www.wbur.org/radioboston/2014/09/30/pinker-harvard-writing. **Project:** Arguing Through Writing. **License:** All Rights Reserved
ARGUMENT PROJECTS
Audiences Know the Topic Well. . . . Alter Their Actions

Just a reminder: Research papers will need to show your side (obviously) as well as the opposition and refutations of the specific points from the other side. Refutations are counterargument sections where we respectfully and clearly prove the extent to which the other side is misguided. These are not reports we’re writing. . .

Readers know the topic well, so you won’t be able to get away with a lot of informing or basic overviews.

Similarly, yes/no “answers” probably reflect a lack of imagination or sufficient research.

It’s better to reflect the fact that the ongoing debates that preceded your argument will continue after you write it. Locate those areas of genuine, ongoing disagreement. While the tone of the essay doesn’t need to be combative (like the “winner take all” binary debates that make for good courtroom dramas), they should focus on the ways that the argument tends to be organized.

Where you can make the essay yours is in giving different emphasis to the reasons and refutations.
Avoid Oversimplifying in Essays

A key tendency when arguing definitions is to oversimplify inherently complex issues. Some of the claims so far seem scattered in that there are several reasons but they aren’t being shown to fit the claim. The body paragraphs aren’t being transitioned among or connected to the claim. Let’s try and tighten up the coherence so that the flow is allowed while also letting readers know how each reason helps prove the claim.

All this can be done without resorting to the use of you or I. Remember that informed readers’ ideas are being challenged to a greater or lesser extent by the claims, so those must be provable.

Some people are finding success in showing the conditions under which something works. That can seem fairly obvious as a move, though, so make sure that if you do this you are following up by locating arguable areas. For instance, if I were trying to modify an author’s idea of the evolution of morals and tried showing that Stalin’s killing of millions of his people was immoral (easy enough), I might do well to connect that to other atrocities. The fact that Stalin did this to his own countrymen might be something to talk about. The problem with equating evil like Stalin with Hitler’s actions could be covered and its difficulties discussed. My point is that the details can be occasions for you to comment, to point out the ways definitions prove useful.

My fear is that, for too many years, most writers have gotten just to point out ideas as stand-ins for actually analyzing their aspects. There’s a definition for this: passive writing! So let us comment carefully and as thoroughly as we can to earn points and alter readers’ ideas.
The Qualities of a Good Research Question

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Research = the physical process of gathering information + the mental process of deriving the answer to your question from the information you gathered.

Research writing = the process of sharing the answer to your research question along with the evidence on which your answer is based, the sources you used, and your own reasoning and explanation.
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Developing a good research question is the foundation of a successful research project, so it is worth spending time and effort understanding what makes a good question.

1. **A research question is a question that CAN be answered in an objective way, at least partially and at least for now.**
   - Questions that are purely values-based (such as “Should assisted suicide be legal?”) cannot be answered objectively because the answer varies depending on one’s values. Be wary of questions that include “should” or “ought” because those words often (although not always) indicate a values-based question. However, note that most values-based questions can be turned into research questions by judicious reframing. For instance, you could reframe “Should assisted suicide be legal?” as “What are the ethical implications of legalizing assisted suicide?” Using a “what are” frame turns a values-based question into a legitimate research question by moving it out of the world of debate and into the world of investigation.

2. **A good research question is one that can be answered using information that already exists or that can be collected.**
   - The question, “Does carbon-based life exist outside of Earth’s solar system?” is a perfectly good research question in the sense that it is not values-based and therefore could be answered in an objective way, IF it were possible to collect data about the presence of life outside of Earth’s solar system. That is not yet possible with current technology; therefore, this is not (yet) a research question because it’s not (now) possible to obtain the data that would be needed to answer it.

3. **A good research question is a question that hasn’t already been answered, or hasn’t been answered completely, or hasn’t been answered for your specific context.**
   - If the answer to the question is readily available in a good encyclopedia, textbook, or reference book, then it is a homework question, not a research question. It was probably a research question in the past, but if the answer is so thoroughly known that you can easily look it up and find it, then it is no longer an open question. However, it is important to remember that as new information becomes available, homework questions can sometimes be reopened as research questions. Equally important, a question may have been answered for one population or circumstance, but not for all populations or all circumstances.
Assessment: Research Question Task

First, review the 3 resources noted below.

1. This infographic about fantasy cover art illustrates one way of reporting data. From the accompanying notes, you will get a good idea of the research method used, and you should be able to infer (that is, make an informed guess based on relevant evidence) the research question.
   - The Chart of Fantasy Art, 2009

2. This research uses the same pool of sources (cover art from fantasy titles published by Orbit in 2008 and 2009) but collects different data (details of the visual representations of heroines) to answer a different research question. Again, you should be able to infer the question from the answer as represented in the infographic.

3. Meta-Analysis and Review of the Literature A meta-analysis is a form of research in which the researcher examines all of a certain type of artifact, in this case all the scientific articles on climate change published between November 2012 and December 2013 in peer-reviewed journals. The purpose of meta-analysis is to identify trends in the available data that would not be visible from any one article alone. A meta-analysis is similar to another type of research that begins by examining all the artifacts in a certain category: the review of the literature (aka literature review).

Then, complete this writing task.

Pick ONE of the above examples of research (“Fantasy Book Covers,” “Heroines,” or “Scientific Consensus on Anthropogenic Global Warming: A Pie Chart”).

For the one you choose, state what you feel the research question was of the author in a single sentence. Then briefly explain what the research method used was. You may need to infer (that is, use evidence and logical reasoning to draw a conclusion about) the research method.
Choosing A Manageable Research Topic

This is a link to a YouTube video called “Choosing a Manageable Research Topic” by PfauLibrary. The end contains a few “test yourself” questions. Consider WHY the answers are the way they are as you watch.

- http://youtu.be/BDuqfJQhFeM

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This discussion is going to be in small groups, with 3–4 other people, in order to facilitate more direct interaction.

After finishing this unit’s readings, as well as looking through the research essay prompt we’ll use to guide us the rest of the quarter, what are your initial thoughts about possible topic ideas? Come up with at least 5 potential ideas. At least one of those should be something “light-hearted”—something you would normally never consider as a possible topic, but still think it’d be fun to play with for a while. Don’t tell us which one the light-hearted topic is, though!

For each of the 5 ideas (or more!), tell us the following:

- 1-2 sentences about what it is and why it interests you
- 1-2 questions you have about the topic that you don’t already know the answers to. These can be small questions or large ones—whatever you would like to find out.

Your post should be about 100-150 words. It doesn’t have to be grammatically perfect, but should use standard English (no text-speak, please) and normal capitalization rules.

Respond to EVERYONE else in your group who has made a post before you. (That means that the first person to post doesn’t have to reply to anyone. The earlier you post, the less work you have to do!)

Of the list of 5 your classmate has suggested, which do you like best as a paper topic? Why? What do you think the potential value of researching this idea further would be? Do you have any initial suggestions for research sources, or ways of narrowing down this idea further? Basically—we’re helping one another brainstorm.

Replies should be at least 50 words long each. They should contain serious, thoughtful replies that directly correspond to what your classmate has written.
Diotima's Ladder Video: Check Out the Forms

Whether they term it idealism outright, the editors write a lot about the Forms (capitalized, big-deal abstractions they thought were primary to the imperfect versions we can observe with the senses). This basic Western, Platonic approach informs many of our topics. For instance, it’s a Platonic move to have lawyers and judges inferring what the Founders might have thought of assault weapons or privacy. The Form (their thinking then) is being used to decide court cases on issues impacting us.

From a really neat series, *The History of Ideas*, here’s *The Simpsons*’ Harry Shearer narrating about Diotima’s Ladder:

- [https://youtu.be/xT6wjqssVK4?list=PLLiykcLlICgOofIXMu1gfUSiVdxBOtkJT](https://youtu.be/xT6wjqssVK4?list=PLLiykcLlICgOofIXMu1gfUSiVdxBOtkJT)

The one on “The Golden Ratio” is also neat! Beats some of the reading on these ideas, I can attest!
WHAT IS RESEARCH?
Research Essay Project Overview

In the remainder of the course ahead, you will select a topic of personal interest to you, define a controversy within that topic, and examine that controversy at length. The final result will be a 2500-3000 word (approx. 10-12 page) persuasive research paper that argues convincingly for one side of that controversy.

You will utilize at least 7 sources that will help you portray your argument. These sources must be incorporated correctly, used appropriately, and cited thoroughly using MLA standards. Sources should represent both the side that agrees with you and those that disagree with your own thesis. Your final draft will need to incorporate at least one chart, table, or graph, as well as at least one pictorial component (photo, drawing, etc).

You will be given more detailed assignments for each portion of the project as we move through the quarter. You’re welcome to peek ahead at upcoming modules to get a sense of what the steps leading up to the final will be. The idea is that we do small chunks here and there, so that the last steps feel more like assembly than writing a huge paper all in one or two days.

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What Is Research?

At its most basic level, research is anything you have to do to find out something you didn’t already know. That definition might seem simple and obvious, but it contains some key assumptions that might not be as obvious. Understanding these assumptions is going to be essential to your success in this course (and in your life after college), so I’m going to spell them out here.

First, research is about acquiring new information or new knowledge, which means that it always begins from a gap in your knowledge—that is, something you don’t know. More importantly, research is always goal-directed: that is, it always begins from a specific question you need to answer (a specific gap in your body of information that you need to fill) in order to accomplish some particular goal. If you are a very focused, driven person, this will seem obvious to you because you are probably already quite aware of yourself as someone who goes after the information you need in order to accomplish your goals. If you tend to be more laid-back and open to whatever experiences life brings you, you may not be as conscious of yourself as a goal-directed finder of information, but I hope to help you recognize the ways in which research is already embedded in your life.

Research (definition 1) = Anything you have to do to find out something you didn’t already know.

Research Question = Your one-sentence statement of the thing-you-don’t-know that motivates your research.

Sometimes the answer to your question or the information needed to fill your knowledge gap already exists in exactly the form you need. For example,

1. Does Columbus, Ohio, have a commercial airport?

The answer to this turns out to be yes, and the time to find the answer is about ten seconds. A Google search of “airports in Ohio” produces as its first hit a Wikipedia entry titled “List of airports in Ohio.” A quick glance at the this document shows that Columbus does indeed have a commercial airport, and that it is one of the three largest airports in Ohio.

2. Do any airlines offer direct flights from Kansas City to Columbus?

The answer to this appears to be no, and the time to find the answer is about two minutes. Using Travelocity.com and searching for flights from MCI (Kansas City International Airport) to CMH (Port Columbus International Airport) gets the message “We’ve searched more than 400 airlines we sell and couldn’t find any flights from Kansas City (MCI) … to Columbus (CMH).” Doing the same search on Expedia.com and Orbitz.com yields the same answer. There appear to be no direct flights from Kansas City to Columbus, Ohio.

Often, however, the questions we need to have answered are more complicated than this, which means that answer comes with some assembly required.

3. What’s the best way to get from Kansas City to Columbus, Ohio?
To answer this question requires a two-stage process of gathering information about travel options and then evaluating the results based on parameters not stated in the question. We already know that it is possible to fly to Columbus, although no direct flights are available. A quick look at a map shows that it is also a relatively straightforward drive of about 650 miles. That’s the information gathering stage. Now we have to evaluate the results based on things like cost, time and effort required, practicality given the purpose of the trip, and the personal preferences of the traveler. For a business traveler for whom shortest possible travel time is more important than lowest cost, the final decision may be very different than for a college student with a large dog.

Although all three questions require information gathering, for the purposes of this course we are going to call questions like #1 and #2 “homework questions” (because you can find the answer just by going to a single reference source and looking it up) and save the designation “research question” for questions like #3 for which developing a fully functional answer requires both gathering relevant information and then assembling it in a meaningful way.

So for the purposes of this course, research (definition 2) is the process of finding the information needed to answer your research question and then deriving or building the answer from the information you found.

Research (definition 2) = The physical process of gathering information + the mental process of deriving the answer to your research question from the information you gathered.

Homework question = A question for which a definite answer exists and can easily be found by consulting the appropriate reference source.

Research question = A question that can be answered through a process of collecting relevant information and then building the answer from the relevant information.
How to Read Like a Writer

by Mike Bunn

In 1997, I was a recent college graduate living in London for six months and working at the Palace Theatre owned by Andrew Lloyd Webber. The Palace was a beautiful red brick, four-story theatre in the heart of London’s famous West End, and eight times a week it housed a three-hour performance of the musical Les Miserables. Because of antiquated fire-safety laws, every theatre in the city was required to have a certain number of staff members inside watching the performance in case of an emergency.

My job (in addition to wearing a red tuxedo jacket) was to sit inside the dark theater with the patrons and make sure nothing went wrong. It didn’t seem to matter to my supervisor that I had no training in security and no idea where we kept the fire extinguishers. I was pretty sure that if there was any trouble I’d be running down the back stairs, leaving the patrons to fend for themselves. I had no intention of dying in a bright red tuxedo.

There was a Red Coat stationed on each of the theater’s four floors, and we all passed the time by sitting quietly in the back, reading books with tiny flashlights. It’s not easy trying to read in the dim light of a theatre—flashlight or no flashlight—and it’s even tougher with shrieks and shouts and gunshots coming from the stage. I had to focus intently on each and every word, often rereading a single sentence several times. Sometimes I got distracted and had to re-read entire paragraphs. As I struggled to read in this environment, I began to realize that the way I was reading—one word at a time—was exactly the same way that the author had written the text. I realized writing is a word-by-word, sentence-by-sentence process. The intense concentration required to read in the theater helped me recognize some of the interesting ways that authors string words into phrases into paragraphs into entire books.

I came to realize that all writing consists of a series of choices.

I was an English major in college, but I don’t think I ever thought much about reading. I read all the time. I read for my classes and on the computer and sometimes for fun, but I never really thought about the important connections between reading and writing, and how reading in a particular way could also make me a better writer.

What Does It Mean to Read Like a Writer?

When you Read Like a Writer (RLW) you work to identify some of the choices the author made so that you can better understand how such choices might arise in your own writing. The idea is to carefully examine the things you read, looking at the writerly techniques in the text in order to decide if you might want to adopt similar (or the same) techniques in your writing.

You are reading to learn about writing.

Instead of reading for content or to better understand the ideas in the writing (which you will automatically do to some degree anyway), you are trying to understand how the piece of writing was put together by the author and what you can learn about writing by reading a particular text. As you read in this way, you think about how the choices the author made and the techniques that he/she used are influencing your own responses as a reader. What is it about the way this text is written that makes you feel and respond the way you do?
The goal as you read like a writer is to locate what you believe are the most important writerly choices represented in the text—choices as large as the overall structure or as small as a single word used only once—to consider the effect of those choices on potential readers (including yourself). Then you can go one step further and imagine what different choices the author might have made instead, and what effect those different choices would have on readers.

Say you’re reading an essay in class that begins with a short quote from President Barack Obama about the war in Iraq. As a writer, what do you think of this technique? Do you think it is effective to begin the essay with a quote? What if the essay began with a quote from someone else? What if it was a much longer quote from President Obama, or a quote from the President about something other than the war?

And here is where we get to the most important part: Would you want to try this technique in your own writing?

Would you want to start your own essay with a quote? Do you think it would be effective to begin your essay with a quote from President Obama? What about a quote from someone else? You could make yourself a list. What are the advantages and disadvantages of starting with a quote? What about the advantages and disadvantages of starting with a quote from the President? How would other readers respond to this technique? Would certain readers (say Democrats or liberals) appreciate an essay that started with a quote from President Obama better than other readers (say Republicans or conservatives)? What would be the advantages and disadvantages of starting with a quote from a less divisive person? What about starting with a quote from someone more divisive?

The goal is to carefully consider the choices the author made and the techniques that he or she used, and then decide whether you want to make those same choices or use those same techniques in your own writing. Author and professor Wendy Bishop explains how her reading process changed when she began to read like a writer:

It wasn’t until I claimed the sentence as my area of desire, interest, and expertise—until I wanted to be a writer writing better—that I had to look underneath my initial readings . . . I started asking, how did the writer get me to feel, how did the writer say something so that it remains in my memory when many other things too easily fall out, how did the writer communicate his/her intentions about genre, about irony? (119–20)

Bishop moved from simply reporting her personal reactions to the things she read to attempting to uncover how the author led her (and other readers) to have those reactions. This effort to uncover how authors build texts is what makes Reading Like a Writer so useful for student writers.

How Is RLW Different from “Normal” Reading?

Most of the time we read for information. We read a recipe to learn how to bake lasagna. We read the sports page to see if our school won the game, Facebook to see who has commented on our status update, a history book to learn about the Vietnam War, and the syllabus to see when the next writing assignment is due. Reading Like a Writer asks for something very different.

In 1940, a famous poet and critic named Allen Tate discussed two different ways of reading:

There are many ways to read, but generally speaking there are two ways. They correspond to the two ways in which we may be interested in a piece of architecture. If the building has Corinthian columns, we can trace the origin and development of Corinthian columns; we are interested as historians. But if we are interested as architects, we may or may not know about the history of the Corinthian style; we must, however, know all about the construction of the building, down to the last nail or peg in the beams. We have got to know this if we are going to put up buildings ourselves. (506)
While I don’t know anything about Corinthian columns (and doubt that I will ever want to know anything about Corinthian columns), Allen Tate’s metaphor of reading as if you were an architect is a great way to think about RLW. When you read like a writer, you are trying to figure out how the text you are reading was constructed so that you learn how to “build” one for yourself. Author David Jauss makes a similar comparison when he writes that “reading won’t help you much unless you learn to read like a writer. You must look at a book the way a carpenter looks at a house someone else built, examining the details in order to see how it was made” (64).

Perhaps I should change the name and call this Reading Like an Architect, or Reading Like a Carpenter. In a way those names make perfect sense. You are reading to see how something was constructed so that you can construct something similar yourself.

**Why Learn to Read Like a Writer?**

For most college students RLW is a new way to read, and it can be difficult to learn at first. Making things even more difficult is that your college writing instructor may expect you to read this way for class but never actually teach you how to do it. He or she may not even tell you that you’re supposed to read this way. This is because most writing instructors are so focused on teaching writing that they forget to show students how they want them to read.

That’s what this essay is for.

In addition to the fact that your college writing instructor may expect you to read like a writer, this kind of reading is also one of the very best ways to learn how to write well. Reading like a writer can help you understand how the process of writing is a series of making choices, and in doing so, can help you recognize important decisions you might face and techniques you might want to use when working on your own writing. Reading this way becomes an opportunity to think and learn about writing.

Charles Moran, a professor of English at the University of Massachusetts, urges us to read like writers because:

> When we read like writers we understand and participate in the writing. We see the choices the writer has made, and we see how the writer has coped with the consequences of those choices . . . We “see” what the writer is doing because we read as writers; we see because we have written ourselves and know the territory, know the feel of it, know some of the moves ourselves. (61)

You are already an author, and that means you have a built-in advantage when reading like a writer. All of your previous writing experiences—inside the classroom and out—can contribute to your success with RLW. Because you “have written” things yourself, just as Moran suggests, you are better able to “see” the choices that the author is making in the texts that you read. This in turn helps you to think about whether you want to make some of those same choices in your own writing, and what the consequences might be for your readers if you do.

**What Are Some Questions to Ask Before You Start Reading?**

As I sat down to work on this essay, I contacted a few of my former students to ask what advice they would give to college students regarding how to read effectively in the writing classroom and also to get their thoughts on RLW. Throughout the rest of the essay I’d like to share some of their insights and suggestions; after all, who is better qualified to help you learn what you need to know about reading in college writing courses than students who recently took those courses themselves?

One of the things that several students mentioned to do first, before you even start reading, is to consider the context surrounding both the assignment and the text you’re reading. As one former student, Alison, states: “The reading I did in college
asked me to go above and beyond, not only in breadth of subject matter, but in depth, with regards to informed analysis and background information on context." Alison was asked to think about some of the factors that went into the creation of the text, as well as some of the factors influencing her own experience of reading—taken together these constitute the context of reading. Another former student, Jamie, suggests that students "learn about the historical context of the writings" they will read for class. Writing professor Richard Straub puts it this way: “You’re not going to just read a text. You’re going to read a text within a certain context, a set of circumstances . . . It’s one kind of writing or another, designed for one audience and purpose or another” (138).

Among the contextual factors you’ll want to consider before you even start reading are:

- Do you know the author’s purpose for this piece of writing?
- Do you know who the intended audience is for this piece of writing?

It may be that you need to start reading before you can answer these first two questions, but it’s worth trying to answer them before you start. For example, if you know at the outset that the author is trying to reach a very specific group of readers, then his or her writerly techniques may seem more or less effective than if he/she was trying to reach a more general audience. Similarly—returning to our earlier example of beginning an essay with a quote from President Obama about the war in Iraq—if you know that the author’s purpose is to address some of the dangers and drawbacks of warfare, this may be a very effective opening. If the purpose is to encourage Americans to wear sunscreen while at the beach this opening makes no sense at all. One former student, Lola, explained that most of her reading assignments in college writing classes were designed “to provoke analysis and criticisms into the style, structure, and purpose of the writing itself.”

In What Genre Is This Written?

Another important thing to consider before reading is the genre of the text. Genre means a few different things in college English classes, but it’s most often used to indicate the type of writing: a poem, a newspaper article, an essay, a short story, a novel, a legal brief, an instruction manual, etc. Because the conventions for each genre can be very different (who ever heard of a 900-page newspaper article?), techniques that are effective for one genre may not work well in another. Many readers expect poems and pop songs to rhyme, for example, but might react negatively to a legal brief or instruction manual that did so. Another former student, Mike, comments on how important the genre of the text can be for reading:

I think a lot of the way I read, of course, depends on the type of text I’m reading. If I’m reading philosophy, I always look for signaling words (however, therefore, furthermore, despite) indicating the direction of the argument . . . when I read fiction or creative nonfiction, I look for how the author inserts dialogue or character sketches within narration or environmental observation. After reading To the Lighthouse [sic] last semester, I have noticed how much more attentive I’ve become to the types of narration (omniscient, impersonal, psychological, realistic, etc.), and how these different approaches are utilized to achieve an author’s overall effect.

Although Mike specifically mentions what he looked for while reading a published novel, one of the great things about RLW is that it can be used equally well with either published or student-produced writing.

Is This a Published or a Student-Produced Piece of Writing?

As you read both kinds of texts you can locate the choices the author made and imagine the different decisions that he/she might have made. While it might seem a little weird at first to imagine how published texts could be written differently—after all, they were good enough to be published—remember that all writing can be improved. Scholar Nancy Walker believes that it’s important for students to read published work using RLW because “the work ceases to be a mere artifact, a stone tablet, and becomes instead a living utterance with immediacy and texture. It could have been better or worse than it is had the author
made different choices” (36). As Walker suggests, it’s worth thinking about how the published text would be different—maybe even better—if the author had made different choices in the writing because you may be faced with similar choices in your own work.

**Is This the Kind of Writing You Will Be Assigned to Write Yourself?**

Knowing ahead of time what kind of writing assignments you will be asked to complete can really help you to read like a writer. It’s probably impossible (and definitely too time consuming) to identify all of the choices the author made and all techniques an author used, so it’s important to prioritize while reading. Knowing what you’ll be writing yourself can help you prioritize. It may be the case that your instructor has assigned the text you’re reading to serve as model for the kind of writing you’ll be doing later. Jessie, a former student, writes, “In college writing classes, we knew we were reading for a purpose—to influence or inspire our own work. The reading that I have done in college writing courses has always been really specific to a certain type of writing, and it allows me to focus and experiment on that specific style in depth and without distraction.”

If the text you’re reading is a model of a particular style of writing—for example, highly-emotional or humorous—RLW is particularly helpful because you can look at a piece you’re reading and think about whether you want to adopt a similar style in your own writing. You might realize that the author is trying to arouse sympathy in readers and examine what techniques he/she uses to do this; then you can decide whether these techniques might work well in your own writing. You might notice that the author keeps including jokes or funny stories and think about whether you want to include them in your writing—what would the impact be on your potential readers?

**What Are Questions to Ask As You Are Reading?**

It is helpful to continue to ask yourself questions as you read like a writer. As you’re first learning to read in this new way, you may want to have a set of questions written or typed out in front of you that you can refer to while reading. Eventually—after plenty of practice—you will start to ask certain questions and locate certain things in the text almost automatically. Remember, for most students this is a new way of reading, and you’ll have to train yourself to do it well. Also keep in mind that you’re reading to understand how the text was written—how the house was built—more than you’re trying to determine the meaning of the things you read or assess whether the texts are good or bad.

First, return to two of the same questions I suggested that you consider before reading:

- What is the author’s purpose for this piece of writing?
- Who is the intended audience?

Think about these two questions again as you read. It may be that you couldn’t really answer them before, or that your ideas will change while reading. Knowing why the piece was written and who it’s for can help explain why the author might have made certain choices or used particular techniques in the writing, and you can assess those choices and techniques based in part on how effective they are in fulfilling that purpose and/or reaching the intended audience.

Beyond these initial two questions, there is an almost endless list of questions you might ask regarding writing choices and techniques. Here are some of the questions that one former student, Clare, asks herself:

When reading I tend to be asking myself a million questions. If I were writing this, where would I go with the story? If the author goes in a different direction (as they so often do) from what I am thinking, I will ask myself, why did they do this? What are they telling me?
Clare tries to figure out why the author might have made a move in the writing that she hadn’t anticipated, but even more importantly, she asks herself what she would do if she were the author. Reading the text becomes an opportunity for Clare to think about her own role as an author.

Here are some additional examples of the kinds of questions you might ask yourself as you read:

- How effective is the language the author uses? Is it too formal? Too informal? Perfectly appropriate?

Depending on the subject matter and the intended audience, it may make sense to be more or less formal in terms of language. As you begin reading, you can ask yourself whether the word choice and tone/language of the writing seem appropriate.

- What kinds of evidence does the author use to support his/her claims? Does he/she use statistics? Quotes from famous people? Personal anecdotes or personal stories? Does he/she cite books or articles?

- How appropriate or effective is this evidence? Would a different type of evidence, or some combination of evidence, be more effective?

To some extent the kinds of questions you ask should be determined by the genre of writing you are reading. For example, it’s probably worth examining the evidence that the author uses to support his/her claims if you’re reading an opinion column, but less important if you’re reading a short story. An opinion column is often intended to convince readers of something, so the kinds of evidence used are often very important. A short story may be intended to convince readers of something, sometimes, but probably not in the same way. A short story rarely includes claims or evidence in the way that we usually think about them.

- Are there places in the writing that you find confusing? What about the writing in those places makes it unclear or confusing?

It’s pretty normal to get confused in places while reading, especially while reading for class, so it can be helpful to look closely at the writing to try and get a sense of exactly what tripped you up. This way you can learn to avoid those same problems in your own writing.

- How does the author move from one idea to another in the writing? Are the transitions between the ideas effective? How else might he/she have transitioned between ideas instead?

Notice that in these questions I am encouraging you to question whether aspects of the writing are appropriate and effective in addition to deciding whether you liked or disliked them. You want to imagine how other readers might respond to the writing and the techniques you’ve identified. Deciding whether you liked or disliked something is only about you; considering whether a technique is appropriate or effective lets you contemplate what the author might have been trying to do and to decide whether a majority of readers would find the move successful. This is important because it’s the same thing you should be thinking about while you are writing: how will readers respond to this technique I am using, to this sentence, to this word? As you read, ask yourself what the author is doing at each step of the way, and then consider whether the same choice or technique might work in your own writing.

**What Should You Be Writing As You Are Reading?**

The most common suggestion made by former students—mentioned by every single one of them—was to mark up the text, make comments in the margins, and write yourself notes and summaries both during and after reading. Often the notes students took while reading became ideas or material for the students to use in their own papers. It’s important to read with a pen or
highlighter in your hand so that you can mark—right on the text—all those spots where you identify an interesting choice the author has made or a writerly technique you might want to use. One thing that I like to do is to highlight and underline the passage in the text itself, and then try to answer the following three questions on my notepad:

- What is the technique the author is using here?
- Is this technique effective?
- What would be the advantages and disadvantages if I tried this same technique in my writing?

By utilizing this same process of highlighting and note taking, you’ll end up with a useful list of specific techniques to have at your disposal when it comes time to begin your own writing.

What Does RLW Look Like in Action?

Let’s go back to the opening paragraph of this essay and spend some time reading like writers as a way to get more comfortable with the process:

In 1997, I was a recent college graduate living in London for six months and working at the Palace Theatre owned by Andrew Lloyd Webber. The Palace was a beautiful red brick, four-story theatre in the heart of London’s famous West End, and eight times a week it housed a three-hour performance of the musical Les Miserables. Because of antiquated fire-safety laws, every theatre in the city was required to have a certain number of staff members inside watching the performance in case of an emergency.

Let’s begin with those questions I encouraged you to try to answer before you start reading. (I realize we’re cheating a little bit in this case since you’ve already read most of this essay, but this is just practice. When doing this on your own, you should attempt to answer these questions before reading, and then return to them as you read to further develop your answers.)

- Do you know the author’s purpose for this piece of writing? I hope the purpose is clear by now; if it isn’t, I’m doing a pretty lousy job of explaining how and why you might read like a writer.
- Do you know who the intended audience is? Again, I hope that you know this one by now.
- What about the genre? Is this an essay? An article? What would you call it?
- You know that it’s published and not student writing. How does this influence your expectations for what you will read?
- Are you going to be asked to write something like this yourself? Probably not in your college writing class, but you can still use RLW to learn about writerly techniques that you might want to use in whatever you do end up writing.

Now ask yourself questions as you read.

In 1997, I was a recent college graduate living in London for six months and working at the Palace Theatre owned by Andrew Lloyd Webber. The Palace was a beautiful red brick, four-story theatre in the heart of London’s famous West End, and eight times a week it housed a three-hour performance of the musical Les Miserables. Because of antiquated fire-safety laws, every theatre in the city was required to have a certain number of staff members inside watching the performance in case of an emergency.

Since this paragraph is the very first one, it makes sense to think about how it introduces readers to the essay. What technique(s) does the author use to begin the text? This is a personal story about his time working in London. What else do you notice as you read over this passage? Is the passage vague or specific about where he worked? You know that the author worked in a famous part of London in a beautiful theater owned by a well-known composer. Are these details important? How different would this opening be if instead I had written:

In 1997, I was living in London and working at a theatre that showed Les Miserables.
This is certainly shorter, and some of you may prefer this version. It’s quick. To the point. But what (if anything) is lost by eliminating so much of the detail? I chose to include each of the details that the revised sentence omits, so it’s worth considering why. Why did I mention where the theater was located? Why did I explain that I was living in London right after finishing college? Does it matter that it was after college? What effect might I have hoped the inclusion of these details would have on readers? Is this reference to college an attempt to connect with my audience of college students? Am I trying to establish my credibility as an author by announcing that I went to college? Why might I want the readers to know that this was a theater owned by Andrew Lloyd Weber? Do you think I am just trying to mention a famous name that readers will recognize? Will Andrew Lloyd Weber figure prominently in the rest of the essay?

These are all reasonable questions to ask. They are not necessarily the right questions to ask because there are no right questions. They certainly aren’t the only questions you could ask, either. The goal is to train yourself to formulate questions as you read based on whatever you notice in the text. Your own reactions to what you’re reading will help determine the kinds of questions to ask.

Now take a broader perspective. I begin this essay—an essay about reading—by talking about my job in a theater in London. Why? Doesn’t this seem like an odd way to begin an essay about reading? If you read on a little further (feel free to scan back up at the top of this essay) you learn in the third full paragraph what the connection is between working in the theater and reading like a writer, but why include this information at all? What does this story add to the essay? Is it worth the space it takes up?

Think about what effect presenting this personal information might have on readers. Does it make it feel like a real person, some “ordinary guy,” is talking to you? Does it draw you into the essay and make you want to keep reading?

What about the language I use? Is it formal or more informal? This is a time when you can really narrow your focus and look at particular words:

*Because of antiquated fire-safety laws, every theatre in the city was required to have a certain number of staff members inside watching the performance in case of an emergency.*

What is the effect of using the word “antiquated” to describe the fire-safety laws? It certainly projects a negative impression; if the laws are described as antiquated it means I view them as old-fashioned or obsolete. This is a fairly uncommon word, so it stands out, drawing attention to my choice in using it. The word also sounds quite formal. Am I formal in the rest of this sentence?

I use the word “performance” when I just as easily could have written “show.” For that matter, I could have written “old” instead of “antiquated.” You can proceed like this throughout the sentence, thinking about alternative choices I could have made and what the effect would be. Instead of “staff members” I could have written “employees” or just “workers.” Notice the difference if the sentence had been written:

*Because of old fire-safety laws, every theatre in the city was required to have a certain number of workers inside watching the show in case of an emergency.*

Which version is more likely to appeal to readers? You can try to answer this question by thinking about the advantages and disadvantages of using formal language. When would you want to use formal language in your writing and when would it make more sense to be more conversational?

As you can see from discussing just this one paragraph, you could ask questions about the text forever. Luckily, you don’t have to. As you continue reading like a writer, you’ll learn to notice techniques that seem new and pay less attention to the ones you’ve thought about before. The more you practice the quicker the process becomes until you’re reading like a writer almost automatically.

I want to end this essay by sharing one more set of comments by my former student, Lola, this time about what it means to her to read like a writer:
Reading as a writer would compel me to question what might have brought the author to make these decisions, and then decide what worked and what didn’t. What could have made that chapter better or easier to understand? How can I make sure I include some of the good attributes of this writing style into my own? How can I take aspects that I feel the writer failed at and make sure not to make the same mistakes in my writing?

Questioning why the author made certain decisions. Considering what techniques could have made the text better. Deciding how to include the best attributes of what you read in your own writing. This is what Reading Like a Writer is all about.

Are you ready to start reading?

Discussion

1. How is “Reading Like a Writer” similar to and/or different from the way(s) you read for other classes?
2. What kinds of choices do you make as a writer that readers might identify in your written work?
3. Is there anything you notice in this essay that you might like to try in your own writing? What is that technique or strategy? When do you plan to try using it?
4. What are some of the different ways that you can learn about the context of a text before you begin reading it?

Works Cited


Discussion: What Research Have You Done Lately?

In your life outside of school, think about some investigation you’ve done to satisfy your own curiosity. (Keep in mind the difference between “homework questions” and “research questions” as noted in What Is Research?)

- What was your research question?
- What kind of information did you have to gather in order to answer it?
- What sources did you use to gather the information?
- Were you successful in answering the question?
- And, if you’re willing to share, what was your answer?

Post 1: For your first post, answer the first 4 bullet points (and the last, if you’re willing).

Your post should be at least 150-200 words. It doesn’t have to be grammatically perfect, but should use standard English (no text-speak, please) and normal capitalization rules.

Posts 2 and 3: Respond to at least two of your classmates’ posts.

Responses are weighed as heavily as your initial posting, and should be roughly as long (150-200 words) when combined. Responses should indicate you’ve read your classmates’ posts carefully. Include specific details from the post you’re responding to in your reply.

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Research and Other Types of Source-based Writing

CAUTION: The fact that we don’t have quite enough different words to express all possible variations of information-gathering tasks has created an area of potential confusion for students writing research papers for English classes. The following paragraph is designed to clear that up, so please read it carefully.

Some high school and first-year college writing courses use the term “research paper” or “research writing” to apply to any situation in which students use information from an outside source in writing a paper. The logic behind this is that if the writer has to go find information from a source, that action of going and finding information is similar to research, so it is convenient to call that kind of writing task a “research paper.” However, it is only true research if it starts from a QUESTION to which the writer genuinely doesn’t know the answer and if the writer then develops or builds the answer to the question through gathering and processing information.

To help keep that difference in mind, this module will use “research” to refer to the goal-directed process of gathering information and building the answer to a research question, and “source-based writing” to refer to the many other types of information gathering and source-based writing one might do.

One important indicator of the difference between research and other source-based writing tasks is when in the process you develop the thesis (main point) of your paper. In a research project, you begin with a question, gather the data from which you will derive or build the answer to the question, build the answer, and then state your answer in a single sentence. This one-sentence statement of your answer to your research question then becomes your thesis statement and serves as the main point of your paper. In the research writing process, therefore, stating your thesis happens at the pivot point between research and writing (so roughly half or two thirds of the way through the project, depending on the amount of time spent gathering and processing information).

Any assignment for which you begin by developing your thesis and then go out and gather information to support it is indeed be a source-based writing assignment, but it is not technically research because it begins from the answer instead of the question.

Being aware of this distinction is essential to your successful completion of both research projects and other source-based writing tasks. The work processes that lead to efficiency and success with research projects are very different from the work processes you may have used successfully for other types of source-based papers. Both offer valuable learning experiences, but it is important to understand which type of assignment you are being asked to do so that you can adjust your expectations accordingly.

Think of the most recent writing project you have done that required sources. Based on this definition, was it a research project or a source-based writing project?

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What Is Research Writing?

Research = the physical process of **gathering information** + the mental process of **deriving the answer to your question** from the information you gathered.

Research writing = the process of **sharing the answer** to your research question along with the **evidence** on which your answer is based, the **sources** you used, and your own **reasoning** and **explanation**.

The essential components or building blocks of research writing are the same no matter what kind of question you are answering or what kind of reader you are assuming as you share your answer.

**The Essential Building Blocks of Research Writing**

1. **Do real research**
   1. Begin from a question to which you don’t know the answer and that can’t be answered just by going to the appropriate reference source. That is, begin from a research question, not a homework question.
   2. Decide what kind of information or data will be needed in order to build the answer to the question.
   3. Gather information and/or collect data.
   4. Work with the information/data to derive or construct your answer.

   This is the *research process*, and it happens before you begin to write your paper. No research, no research writing, so don’t shortchange this part of the process.

2. **Create a one-sentence answer to your research question.**
   1. This will be the thesis statement/main point/controlling idea of your research paper.

3. **Share your answer to research questions in a way that make it believable, understandable, and usable for your readers.** To do this:
   1. Include plentiful and well-chosen examples from the data/information you gathered
   2. Indicate the validity of your data by accurately reporting your research method (field or lab research)
   3. Indicate the quality of your information by accurately citing your sources (source-based research)
   4. Provide the reasoning and explanation that will let your readers completely understand how the evidence adds up to your answer.
Reading to Write Effectively

Reading to Write Effectively: Why you need a reading strategy before writing anything

Given all of the reading and writing that we are expected to accomplish as college/university students, it’s important to be as efficient as possible when committing our time to these responsibilities. Three of the most important suggestions for approaching reading and, therefore, writing, efficiently are as follows:

read with a pen in hand; don’t expect yourself to remember key concepts/ideas

• most of us can’t remember everything that we’ve read and then call it to memory when we’re writing. Therefore, reading with a pen in hand prepares you to circle/underline key concepts/ideas in the text you’re reading. This creates a way of “tracing” key concepts/ideas throughout the text so that when it’s time to recall what you’ve read and use it to guide your writing, it will be much easier to condense the entire text into a unique, organized, written response. If you don’t want to write in the text that you’re reading, open a blank Word document for keeping track of key concepts/ideas (and page numbers).

write while reading because it’s an informal way of “conversing with” the author of the text (i.e. learning about how your writing can contribute something useful to “the conversation” of your resources)

• in addition to circling/underlining key concepts/ideas throughout your reading process, it may also be helpful to keep a list of questions, connections with other texts/assignments/disciplines, etc. because this list can easily translate into “official” writing. For instance, even if your teacher isn’t requiring a written assignment in response to the reading assignment, if you keep a working document with questions, connections, etc. regarding the reading assignment, you will likely be much better prepared to discuss the reading, not to mention that your notations can easily serve in the short-term as a Twitter/Facebook post (which is helpful for providing others’ responses to your ideas) or in the long-term as an idea for a final paper. For most of us, it’s much easier to have somewhere to start when, eventually, we need to complete a writing assignment based on the reading assignments of the course.

develop research questions/research key words while reading; most of the time, it’s fairly easy to identify research key words/ create unique research questions while reading actively

• the notations you keep in the texts you’re reading can help to prevent the frustration of figuring out “what to write about” when it comes time to interpret the reading assignments into unique written work. They give you something to start with – either in the sense that you can extend the ideas you have already written down, or challenge them by researching what’s missing … either way, you have something to work with, which helps to alleviate some of the anxiety of staring at a blank page.

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EVALUATING SOURCES
The Seven Steps of the Research Process

The following seven steps outline a simple and effective strategy for finding information for a research paper and documenting the sources you find. Depending on your topic and your familiarity with the library, you may need to rearrange or recycle these steps. Adapt this outline to your needs. We are ready to help you at every step in your research.

**STEP 1: IDENTIFY AND DEVELOP YOUR TOPIC**

**SUMMARY:** State your topic as a question. For example, if you are interested in finding out about use of alcoholic beverages by college students, you might pose the question, “What effect does use of alcoholic beverages have on the health of college students?” Identify the main concepts or keywords in your question.

More details on how to identify and develop your topic: [http://olinuris.library.cornell.edu/ref/research/topic.html](http://olinuris.library.cornell.edu/ref/research/topic.html)

**STEP 2: FIND BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

**SUMMARY:** Look up your keywords in the indexes to subject encyclopedias. Read articles in these encyclopedias to set the context for your research. Note any relevant items in the bibliographies at the end of the encyclopedia articles. Additional background information may be found in your lecture notes, textbooks, and reserve readings.

More suggestions on how to find background information: [http://olinuris.library.cornell.edu/ref/research/background.html](http://olinuris.library.cornell.edu/ref/research/background.html)

**STEP 3: USE CATALOGS TO FIND BOOKS AND MEDIA**

**SUMMARY:** Use guided keyword searching to find materials by topic or subject. Print or write down the citation (author, title, etc.) and the location information (call number and library). Note the circulation status. When you pull the book from the shelf, scan the bibliography for additional sources. Watch for book-length bibliographies and annual reviews on your subject; they list citations to hundreds of books and articles in one subject area. Check the standard subject subheading “—BIBLIOGRAPHIES,” or titles beginning with Annual Review of... in the Cornell Library Classic Catalog.

More detailed instructions for using catalogs to find books: [http://olinuris.library.cornell.edu/ref/research/books.html](http://olinuris.library.cornell.edu/ref/research/books.html)

Finding media (audio and video) titles: [http://olinuris.library.cornell.edu/ref/research/mediafind.html](http://olinuris.library.cornell.edu/ref/research/mediafind.html)


**STEP 4: USE INDEXES TO FIND PERIODICAL ARTICLES**

**SUMMARY:** Use periodical indexes and abstracts to find citations to articles. The indexes and abstracts may be in print or computer-based formats or both. Choose the indexes and format best suited to your particular topic; ask at the reference desk if you need help figuring out which index and format will be best. You can find periodical articles by the article author, title, or keyword by using the periodical indexes in the Library home page. If the full text is not linked in the index you are using, write down the citation from the index and search for the title of the periodical in the Cornell Library Classic Catalog. The catalog lists the print, microform, and electronic versions of periodicals at Cornell.

How to find and use periodical indexes at Cornell: [http://olinuris.library.cornell.edu/ref/research/periodical.html](http://olinuris.library.cornell.edu/ref/research/periodical.html)

**STEP 5: FIND INTERNET RESOURCES**

**SUMMARY:** Use search engines. Check to see if your class has a bibliography or research guide created by librarians.
Finding Information on the Internet: A thorough tutorial from UC Berkeley: http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/FindInfo.html

**STEP 6: EVALUATE WHAT YOU FIND**

**SUMMARY:** See How to Critically Analyze Information Sources and Distinguishing Scholarly from Non-Scholarly Periodicals: A Checklist of Criteria for suggestions on evaluating the authority and quality of the books and articles you located.

- https://youtu.be/uDGJ2CYfY9A
- https://youtu.be/QAiJL5B5esM

If you have found too many or too few sources, you may need to narrow or broaden your topic. Check with a reference librarian or your instructor. When you’re ready to write, here is an annotated list of books to help you organize, format, and write your paper.

**STEP 7: CITE WHAT YOU FIND USING A STANDARD FORMAT**

Give credit where credit is due; cite your sources.

Citing or documenting the sources used in your research serves two purposes, it gives proper credit to the authors of the materials used, and it allows those who are reading your work to duplicate your research and locate the sources that you have listed as references.

Knowingly representing the work of others as your own is plagiarism. (See Cornell's Code of Academic Integrity). Use one of the styles listed below or another style approved by your instructor. Handouts summarizing the APA and MLA styles are available at Uris and Olin Reference.

**Available online:**

RefWorks (http://encompass.library.cornell.edu/cgi-bin/checkIP.cgi?access=gateway_standard%26url=http://www.refworks.com/refworks) is a web-based program that allows you to easily collect, manage, and organize bibliographic references by interfacing with databases. RefWorks also interfaces directly with Word, making it easy to import references and incorporate them into your writing, properly formatted according to the style of your choice.

See our guide to citation tools and styles: http://www.library.cornell.edu/services/citing.html

Format the citations in your bibliography using examples from the following Library help pages: Modern Language Association (MLA) examples and American Psychological Association (APA) examples.

- Style guides in print (book) format:
  - *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. 7th ed. New York: MLA, 2009. This handbook is based on the MLA Style Manual and is intended as an aid for college students writing research papers. Included here is information on selecting a topic, researching the topic, note taking, the writing of footnotes and bibliographies, as well as sample pages of a research paper. Useful for the beginning researcher.

If you are writing an annotated bibliography, see How to Prepare an Annotated Bibliography: http://olinuris.library.cornell.edu/ref/research/skill28.htm
RESEARCH TIPS:

• WORK FROM THE GENERAL TO THE SPECIFIC. Find background information first, then use more specific and recent sources.
• RECORD WHAT YOU FIND AND WHERE YOU FOUND IT. Record the complete citation for each source you find; you may need it again later.
• TRANSLATE YOUR TOPIC INTO THE SUBJECT LANGUAGE OF THE INDEXES AND CATALOGS YOU USE. Check your topic words against a thesaurus or subject heading list.

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• The Seven Steps. Provided by: Research & Learning Services Olin Library Cornell University Library Ithaca, NY, USA. Located at: http://guides.library.cornell.edu/sevensteps. License: CC BY-NC-SA: Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike. License Terms: Lumen Learning has received permission from Olin & Uris Libraries to reproduce this and adapt it for our own use
Understanding Bias

Bias

Bias means presenting facts and arguments in a way that consciously favours one side or other in an argument. Is bias bad or wrong?

No! Everyone who argues strongly for something is biased. So it’s not enough, when you are doing a language analysis, to merely spot some bias and say…”This writer is biased” or “This speaker is biased.”

Let’s begin by reading a biased text.

Hypocrites gather to feed off Daniel’s tragic death

The death of two-year-old Daniel Valerio at the hands of his step-father brought outrage from the media.

Daniel suffered repeated beatings before the final attack by Paul Alton, who was sentenced in Melbourne in February to 22 years jail.

Rupert Murdoch’s Herald-Sun launched a campaign which included a public meeting of hundreds of readers. Time magazine put Daniel on its front cover. The Herald-Sun summed up their message:

The community has a duty to protect our children from abuse – if necessary by laws that some people regard as possibly harsh or unnecessary.

But laws – like making it compulsory for doctors and others to report suspected abuse – cannot stop the violence.

Last year, 30 children were murdered across Australia. Babies under one are more likely to be killed than any other social group.

Daniel’s murder was not a horrific exception but the product of a society that sends some of its members over the edge into despairing violence.

The origin of these tragedies lies in the enormous pressures on families, especially working class families.

The media and politicians wring their hands over a million unemployed. But they ignore the impact that having no job, or a stressful poorly paid job, can have.

Child abuse can happen in wealthy families. But generally it is linked to poverty.

A survey in 1980 of “maltreating families” showed that 56.5 per cent were living in poverty and debt. A further 20 per cent expressed extreme anxiety about finances.

A study in Queensland found that all the children who died from abuse came from working class families.

Police records show that school holidays – especially Xmas – are peak times for family violence. ”The sad fact is that when families are together for longer than usual, there tends to be more violence”, said one Victorian police officer.

Most people get by. Family life may get tense, but not violent.

But a minority cannot cope and lash out at the nearest vulnerable person to hand – an elderly person, a woman, or a child.

Compulsory reporting of child abuse puts the blame on the individual parents rather than the system that drives them to this kind of despair.

Neither is it a solution. Daniel was seen by 21 professionals before he was killed. Nonetheless, the Victorian Liberal government has agreed to bring it in.
Their hypocrisy is breathtaking.

This is the same government that is sacking 250 fire-fighters, a move that will lead to more deaths.

A real challenge to the basis of domestic violence means a challenge to poverty.

Yet which side were the media on when Labor cut the under-18 dole, or when Jeff Kennett[1] added $30 a week to the cost of sending a child to kindergarten?

To really minimise family violence, we need a fight for every job and against every cutback.

– by David Glanz, The Socialist, April 1993

There are good and bad aspects of bias.

1. It is good to be open about one’s bias. For example, the article about Daniel Valerio’s tragic death is written for The Socialist newspaper. Clearly socialists will have a bias against arguments that blame only the individual for a crime when it could be argued that many other factors in society contributed to the crime and need to be changed. Focusing on the individual, from the socialist’s point of view, gets “the system” off the hook when crimes happen. The socialist’s main reason for writing is to criticise the capitalist system. So David Glanz is not pretending not to be biased, because he has published his article in a partisan[2] newspaper.

   ◦ Here are some ways to be open about your bias, but still be naughty.
   
   ▪ (a) Deliberately avoid mentioning any of the opposing arguments.
   ▪ (b) Deliberately avoid mentioning relevant facts or information that would undermine your own case.
   ▪ (c) Get into hyperbole.
   ▪ (d) Make too much use of emotive language.
   ▪ (e) Misuse or distort statistics.
   ▪ (f) Use negative adjectives when talking about people you disagree with, but use positive adjectives when talking about people you agree with.
   
   Can you find examples of any of these “naughty” ways to be biased in Glaz’s article?

2. You mustn’t assume that because a person writes with a particular bias he/she is not being sincere, or that he/she has not really thought the issue through. The person is not just stating what he/she thinks, he/she is trying to persuade you about something.

Bias can result from the way you have organised your experiences in your own mind. You have lumped some experiences into the ‘good’ box and some experiences into the ‘bad’ box. Just about everybody does this[3]. The way you have assembled and valued experiences in your mind is called your Weltanschauung (Velt-arn-shao-oong). If through your own experience, plus good thinking about those experiences, you have a better understanding of something, your bias is indeed a good thing.

For example, if you have been a traffic policeman, and have seen lots of disasters due to speed and alcohol, it is not ‘wrong’ for you to biased against fast cars and drinking at parties and pubs. Your bias is due to your better understanding of the issue, but you still have to argue logically.

Really naughty bias

4. If you pretend to be objective, to not take sides, but actually use techniques that tend to support one side of an argument, in that case you are being naughty. There are subtle ways to do this.
(a) If the support for one side of the argument is mainly at the top of the article, and the reasons to support the opposite side of the issue are mainly at the bottom end of the article; that might be subtle bias – especially if it was written by a journalist. Journalists are taught that many readers only read the first few paragraphs of an article before moving on to reading another article, so whatever is in the first few paragraphs will be what sticks in the reader’s mind.

(b) Quotes from real people are stronger emotionally than just statements by the writer. This is especially true if the person being quoted is an ‘authority’ on the subject, or a ‘celebrity’. So if one side of the issue is being supported by lots of quotes, and the other side isn’t, that is a subtle form of bias.

(c) If when one person is quoted as saying X, but the very next sentence makes that quote sound silly or irrational, that is a subtle form of bias too.

Common sense tells us that if someone is making money out of something, he/she will be biased in favour of it.

For example, a person who makes money out of building nuclear reactors in Europe or China could be expected to support a change in policy in Australia towards developing nuclear energy.

A manufacturer of cigarettes is unlikely to be in favour of health warnings on cigarette packets or bans on smoking in pubs.

Nonetheless, logically speaking, we cannot just assume a person who is making money out of something will always take sides with whomever or whatever will make him/her more money.

We have to listen to the arguments as they come up. Assuming someone is biased is not logically okay. You have to show that someone is biased and use evidence to support your assertion that he/she is biased.

[1] Jeff Kennett was the leader of the Liberal party in Victoria at that time.

[2] When you are a partisan you have taken sides in an argument, or a battle, or a war.

[3] Learning critical thinking (which is what you are learning in Year 11 and 12 English) is aimed at getting you to do more, and better, thinking than that.
Anatomy of a Journal Article

Academic papers are essentially reports that scholars write to their peers—present and future—about what they’ve done in their research, what they’ve found, and why they think it’s important. Thus, in a lot of fields they often have a structure reminiscent of the lab reports you’ve written for science classes:

1. **Abstract**: A one-paragraph summary of the article: its purpose, methods, findings, and significance.

2. **Introduction**: An overview of the key question or problem that the paper addresses, why it is important, and the key conclusion(s) (i.e., thesis or theses) of the paper.

3. **Literature review**: A synthesis of all the relevant prior research (the so-called “academic literature” on the subject) that explains why the paper makes an original and important contribution to the body of knowledge.

4. **Data and methods**: An explanation of what data or information the author(s) used and what they did with it.

5. **Results**: A full explanation of the key findings of the study.

6. **Conclusion/discussion**: Puts the key findings or insights from the paper into their broader context; explains why they matter.

Not all papers are so “sciencey.” For example, a historical or literary analysis doesn’t necessarily have a “data and methods” section; but they do explain and justify the research question, describe how the authors’ own points relate to those made in other relevant articles and books, develop the key insights yielded by the analysis, and conclude by explaining their significance. Some academic papers are review articles, in which the “data” are published papers and the “findings” are key insights, enduring lines of debate, and/or remaining unanswered questions.

Scholarly journals use a peer-review process to decide which articles merit publication. First, hopeful authors send their article manuscript to the journal editor, a role filled by some prominent scholar in the field. The editor reads over the manuscript and decides whether it seems worthy of peer-review. If it’s outside the interests of the journal or is clearly inadequate, the editor will reject it outright. If it looks appropriate and sufficiently high quality, the editor will recruit a few other experts in the field to act as anonymous peer reviewers.

The editor will send the manuscript (scrubbed of identifying information) to the reviewers who will read it closely and provide a thorough critique. Is the research question driving the paper timely and important? Does the paper sufficiently and accurately review all of the relevant prior research? Are the information sources believable and the research methods rigorous? Are the stated results fully justified by the findings? Is the significance of the research clear? Is it well written? Overall, does the paper add new, trustworthy, and important knowledge to the field?
Reviewers send their comments to the editor who then decides whether to (1) reject the manuscript, (2) ask the author(s) to revise and resubmit the manuscript, or (3) accept it for publication.

Editors send the reviewers’ comments (again, with no identifying information) to authors along with their decisions.

A manuscript that has been revised and resubmitted usually goes out for peer-review again; editors often try to get reviews from one or two first-round reviewers as well as a new reviewer. The whole process, from start to finish, can easily take a year, and it is often another year before the paper appears in print.

Understanding the academic publication process and the structure of scholarly articles tells you a lot about how to find, read and use these sources:

1. **Find them quickly.** Instead of paging through mountains of dubious web content, go right to the relevant scholarly article databases in order to quickly find the highest quality sources.

2. **Use the abstracts.** Abstracts tell you immediately whether or not the article you’re holding is relevant or useful to the paper you’re assigned to write. You shouldn’t ever have the experience of reading the whole paper just to discover it’s not useful.

3. **Read strategically.** Knowing the anatomy of a scholarly article tells you what you should be reading for in each section. For example, you don’t necessarily need to understand every nuance of the literature review. You can just focus on why the authors claim that their own study is distinct from the ones that came before.

4. **Don’t sweat the technical stuff.** Not every social scientist understands the intricacies of log-linear modeling of quantitative survey data; however, the reviewers definitely do, and they found the analysis to be well constructed. Thus, you can accept the findings as legitimate and just focus on the passages that explain the findings and their significance in plainer language.

5. **Use one article to find others.** If you have one really good article that’s a few years old, you can use article databases to find newer articles that cited it in their own literature reviews. That immediately tells you which ones are on the same topic and offer newer findings. On the other hand, if your first source is very recent, the literature review section will describe the other papers in the same line of research.

You can look them up directly.

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**Anatomy of a Journal Article.** **Authored by:** Amy Guptill, SUNY Brockport. **Provided by:** SUNY. **Located at:** https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/BookDetail.aspx?bookid=247. **Project:** Open Textbook Library, Center for Open Education. **License:** CC BY-NC-SA: Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike
Assessment: Investigating Your Source

For the source you've chosen—and it can be *anything* that relates to your final research essay topic—complete the following questionnaire. *It's important to note that not all of these answers may prove helpful to actually drafting the Evaluation Essay.* Instead, you're brainstorming possible content for that essay, and then picking what seems to be the most important features about your source from this initial exploration.

**Source Evaluation Questionnaire**

**Title of Source:**

**How you found it:**

1. Who wrote/presented this information? (If not an individual, who is responsible for publishing it?) Do a websearch on this individual or group. What do you learn?
2. Where was this source published or made available? What other types of articles, etc., does this publication have on offer?
3. Note one particular fact or bit of data that is included, here. Try to verify this fact by checking other sources. What do you learn?
4. Does the author seem to have any bias? In what way? Why do you suspect this? (Review the Understanding Bias page to help.)
5. Does the source publication have any bias? In what way? Why do you suspect this?
6. What is this source's thesis or prevailing idea?
7. How does this source promote this main idea? In other words, how does it support its argument?
8. What does this source's primary audience seem to be? How do you know?
9. What is its primary rhetorical mode (logic, emotion, ethics)?
10. Does this source support, oppose, or remain neutral on your own paper's thesis?

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Library Research as Problem-Solving

You'll probably engage the subscription article databases at different points in the process. For example, imagine you've been assigned a research paper that can focus on any topic relevant to the course. Imagine further that you don't have a clue about where to start and aren't entirely sure what counts as an appropriate topic in this discipline. A great approach is to find the top journals in the specific field of your course and browse through recent issues to see what people are publishing on. For example, when I assign an open-topic research paper in my Introduction to Sociology course, I suggest that students looking for a topic browse recent issues of *Social Problems* or *American Journal of Sociology* and find an article that looks interesting. They'll have a topic and—booyah!—their first source. An instructor of a class on kinesiology might recommend browsing *Human Movement Science*, the *Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research*, or *Perceptual and Motor Skills*.

When you have a topic and are looking for a set of sources, your biggest challenge is finding the right keywords. You'll never find the right sources without them. You'll obviously start with words and phrases from the assignment prompt, but you can't stop there.

As explained above, lower tier sources (such as Wikipedia) or the top-tier sources you already have are great for identifying alternative keywords, and librarians and other library staff are also well practiced at finding new approaches to try. Librarians can also point you to the best databases for your topic as well.

As you assess your evidence and further develop your thesis through the writing process, you may need to seek additional sources. For example, imagine you're writing a paper about the added risks adolescents face when they have experienced their parents' divorce. As you synthesize the evidence about negative impacts, you begin to wonder if scholars have documented some positive impacts as well. Thus you delve back into the literature to look for more articles, find some more concepts and keywords (such as *resiliency*), assess new evidence, and revise your thinking to account for these broader perspectives. Your instructor may have asked you to turn in a bibliography weeks before the final paper draft.

You can check with your professor, but he or she is probably perfectly fine with you seeking additional sources as your thinking evolves. That's how scholars write.

Finding good sources is a much more creative task than it seems on the face of it. It's an extended problem-solving exercise, an iterative cycle of questions and answers. Go ahead and use Wikipedia to get broadly informed if you want. It won't corrupt your brain. But use it, and all other sources, strategically. You should eventually arrive at a core set of Tier 1 sources that will enable you to make a well informed and thoughtful argument in support of your thesis. It's also a good sign when you find yourself deciding that some of the first sources you found are no longer relevant to your thesis; that likely means that you have revised and specified your thinking and are well on your way to constructing the kind of self-driven in-depth analysis that your professor is looking for.

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- Secondary Sources in Their Natural Habitats Writing in College: From Competence to Excellence Guptill. **Authored by:** Amy Guptill, SUNY Brockport. **Provided by:** SUNY. Located at [https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/BookDetail.aspx?bookId=247](https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/BookDetail.aspx?bookId=247). **Project:** Open Textbook Library, Center for Open Education. **License:** CC BY-NC-SA. Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike
INTEGRATING SOURCES
LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

• Identify the uses of quotes.
• Correctly use quotes in sentences.

Quotation marks (" ") set off a group of words from the rest of the text. Use quotation marks to indicate direct quotations of another person's words or to indicate a title. Quotation marks always appear in pairs.

Direct Quotations

A direct quotation is an exact account of what someone said or wrote. To include a direct quotation in your writing, enclose the words in quotation marks. An indirect quotation is a restatement of what someone said or wrote. An indirect quotation does not use the person's exact words. You do not need to use quotation marks for indirect quotations.

Direct quotation: Carly said, “I’m not ever going back there again.”

Indirect quotation: Carly said that she would never go back there.

Writing at Work

Most word processing software is designed to catch errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation. While this can be a useful tool, it is better to be well acquainted with the rules of punctuation than to leave the thinking to the computer. Properly punctuated writing will convey your meaning clearly. Consider the subtle shifts in meaning in the following sentences:

• The client said he thought our manuscript was garbage.
• The client said, “He thought our manuscript was garbage.”

The first sentence reads as an indirect quote in which the client does not like the manuscript. But did he actually use the word “garbage”? (This would be alarming!) Or has the speaker paraphrased (and exaggerated) the client’s words?

The second sentence reads as a direct quote from the client. But who is “he” in this sentence? Is it a third party?

Word processing software would not catch this because the sentences are not grammatically incorrect. However, the meanings of the sentences are not the same. Understanding punctuation will help you write what you mean, and in this case, could save a lot of confusion around the office!
Punctuating Direct Quotations

Quotation marks show readers another person’s exact words. Often, you will want to identify who is speaking. You can do this at the beginning, middle, or end of the quote. Notice the use of commas and capitalized words.

Beginning: Madison said, “Let’s stop at the farmers market to buy some fresh vegetables for dinner.”

Middle: “Let’s stop at the farmers market,” Madison said, “to buy some fresh vegetables for dinner.”

End: “Let’s stop at the farmers market to buy some fresh vegetables for dinner,” Madison said.

Speaker not identified: “Let’s stop at the farmers market to buy some fresh vegetables for dinner.”

Always capitalize the first letter of a quote even if it is not the beginning of the sentence. When using identifying words in the middle of the quote, the beginning of the second part of the quote does not need to be capitalized.

Use commas between identifying words and quotes. Quotation marks must be placed after commas and periods. Place quotation marks after question marks and exclamation points only if the question or exclamation is part of the quoted text.

Question is part of quoted text: The new employee asked, “When is lunch?”

Question is not part of quoted text: Did you hear her say you were “the next Picasso”?

Exclamation is part of quoted text: My supervisor beamed, “Thanks for all of your hard work!”

Exclamation is not part of quoted text: He said I “single-handedly saved the company thousands of dollars”!

Quotations within Quotations

Use single quotation marks (‘’) to show a quotation within a quotation.
Theresa said, “I wanted to take my dog to the festival, but the man at the gate said, ‘No dogs allowed.’”

“When you say, ‘I can’t help it,’ what exactly does that mean?”

“The instructions say, ‘Tighten the screws one at a time.’”

**Titles**

Use quotation marks around titles of short works of writing, such as essays, songs, poems, short stories, and chapters in books. Usually, titles of longer works, such as books, magazines, albums, newspapers, and novels, are italicized.

> “Annabelle Lee” is one of my favorite romantic poems.

> The *New York Times* has been in publication since 1851.

**Writing at Work**

In many businesses, the difference between exact wording and a paraphrase is extremely important. For legal purposes, or for the purposes of doing a job correctly, it can be important to know exactly what the client, customer, or supervisor said. Sometimes, important details can be lost when instructions are paraphrased. Use quotes to indicate exact words where needed, and let your coworkers know the source of the quotation (client, customer, peer, etc.).

**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

- Use quotation marks to enclose direct quotes and titles of short works.
- Use single quotation marks to enclose a quote within a quote.
- Do not use any quotation marks for indirect quotations.

**EXERCISES**

1. Copy the following sentences onto your own sheet of paper, and correct them by adding quotation marks where necessary. If the sentence does not need any quotation marks, write OK.
Yasmin said, I don’t feel like cooking. Let’s go out to eat.
Where should we go? said Russell.
Yasmin said it didn’t matter to her.
I know, said Russell, let’s go to the Two Roads Juice Bar.
Perfect! said Yasmin.
Did you know that the name of the Juice Bar is a reference to a poem? asked Russell.
I didn’t! exclaimed Yasmin. Which poem?
The Road Not Taken, by Robert Frost Russell explained.
Oh! said Yasmin. Is that the one that starts with the line, Two roads diverged in a yellow wood?
That’s the one said Russell.
Quotations

What this handout is about

Used effectively, quotations can provide important pieces of evidence and lend fresh voices and perspectives to your narrative. Used ineffectively, however, quotations clutter your text and interrupt the flow of your argument. This handout will help you decide when and how to quote like a pro.

When should I quote?

Use quotations at strategically selected moments. You have probably been told by teachers to provide as much evidence as possible in support of your thesis. But packing your paper with quotations will not necessarily strengthen your argument. The majority of your paper should still be your original ideas in your own words (after all, it's your paper). And quotations are only one type of evidence: well-balanced papers may also make use of paraphrases, data, and statistics. The types of evidence you use will depend in part on the conventions of the discipline or audience for which you are writing. For example, papers analyzing literature may rely heavily on direct quotations of the text, while papers in the social sciences may have more paraphrasing, data, and statistics than quotations.

1. Discussing specific arguments or ideas.

Sometimes, in order to have a clear, accurate discussion of the ideas of others, you need to quote those ideas word for word. Suppose you want to challenge the following statement made by John Doe, a well-known historian:

“At the beginning of World War Two, almost all Americans assumed the war would end quickly.”

If it is especially important that you formulate a counterargument to this claim, then you might wish to quote the part of the statement that you find questionable and establish a dialogue between yourself and John Doe:

Historian John Doe has argued that in 1941 “almost all Americans assumed the war would end quickly” (Doe 223). Yet during the first six months of U.S. involvement, the wives and mothers of soldiers often noted in their diaries their fear that the war would drag on for years.

2. Giving added emphasis to a particularly authoritative source on your topic.

There will be times when you want to highlight the words of a particularly important and authoritative source on your topic. For example, suppose you were writing an essay about the differences between the lives of male and female slaves in the U.S. South. One of your most provocative sources is a narrative written by a former slave, Harriet Jacobs. It would then be appropriate to quote some of Jacobs’s words:

Harriet Jacobs, a former slave from North Carolina, published an autobiographical slave narrative in 1861. She exposed the hardships of both male and female slaves but ultimately concluded that “slavery is terrible for men; but it is far more terrible for women.”
In this particular example, Jacobs is providing a crucial first-hand perspective on slavery. Thus, her words deserve more exposure than a paraphrase could provide. Jacobs is quoted in Harriet A. Jacobs, Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, ed. Jean Fagan Yellin (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987).

3. Analyzing how others use language.

This scenario is probably most common in literature and linguistics courses, but you might also find yourself writing about the use of language in history and social science classes. If the use of language is your primary topic, then you will obviously need to quote users of that language.

Examples of topics that might require the frequent use of quotations include:

- Southern colloquial expressions in William Faulkner's *Light in August*
- *Ms.* and the creation of a language of female empowerment
- A comparison of three British poets and their use of rhyme

4. Spicing up your prose.

In order to lend variety to your prose, you may wish to quote a source with particularly vivid language. All quotations, however, must closely relate to your topic and arguments. Do not insert a quotation solely for its literary merits.

One example of a quotation that adds flair:

Calvin Coolidge's tendency to fall asleep became legendary. As H. L. Mencken commented in the American Mercury in 1933, "Nero fiddled, but Coolidge only snored."

How do I set up and follow up a quotation?

Once you’ve carefully selected the quotations that you want to use, your next job is to weave those quotations into your text. The words that precede and follow a quotation are just as important as the quotation itself. You can think of each quote as the filling in a sandwich: it may be tasty on its own, but it’s messy to eat without some bread on either side of it. Your words can serve as the “bread” that helps readers digest each quote easily. Below are four guidelines for setting up and following up quotations.

In illustrating these four steps, we’ll use as our example, Franklin Roosevelt’s famous quotation, “The only thing we have to fear is fear itself.”

1. Provide a context for each quotation.

Do not rely on quotations to tell your story for you. It is your responsibility to provide your reader with a context for the quotation. The context should set the basic scene for when, possibly where, and under what circumstances the quotation was spoken or written. So, in providing a context for our above example, you might write:

When Franklin Roosevelt gave his inaugural speech on March 4, 1933, he addressed a nation weakened and demoralized by economic depression.
2. **Attribute each quotation to its source.**

Tell your reader who is speaking. Here is a good test: try reading your text aloud. Could your reader determine without looking at your paper where your quotations begin? If not, you need to attribute the quote more noticeably.

Avoid getting into the “he/she said” attribution rut! There are many other ways to attribute quotes besides this construction. Here are a few alternative verbs, usually followed by “that”:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>add</th>
<th>remark</th>
<th>exclaim</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>announce</td>
<td>reply</td>
<td>state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>comment</td>
<td>respond</td>
<td>estimate</td>
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<tr>
<td>write</td>
<td>point out</td>
<td>predict</td>
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<tr>
<td>argue</td>
<td>suggest</td>
<td>propose</td>
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<td>declare</td>
<td>criticize</td>
<td>proclaim</td>
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<tr>
<td>note</td>
<td>complain</td>
<td>opine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>observe</td>
<td>think</td>
<td>note</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Different reporting verbs are preferred by different disciplines, so pay special attention to these in your disciplinary reading. If you’re unfamiliar with the meanings of any of these words or others you find in your reading, consult a dictionary before using them.

3. **Explain the significance of the quotation.**

Once you’ve inserted your quotation, along with its context and attribution, don’t stop! Your reader still needs your assessment of why the quotation holds significance for your paper. Using our Roosevelt example, if you were writing a paper on the first one-hundred days of FDR’s administration, you might follow the quotation by linking it to that topic:

With that message of hope and confidence, the new president set the stage for his next one-hundred days in office and helped restore the faith of the American people in their government.

4. **Provide a citation for the quotation.**

All quotations, just like all paraphrases, require a formal citation. For more details about particular citation formats, see the UNC Library’s citation tutorial (http://www2.lib.unc.edu/instruct/citations/). In general, you should remember one rule of thumb: Place the parenthetical reference or footnote/endnote number after—not within—the closed quotation mark.

Roosevelt declared, “The only thing we have to fear is fear itself” (Roosevelt, Public Papers 1).

Roosevelt declared, “The only thing we have to fear is fear itself.”

**How much should I quote?**

As few words as possible. Remember, your paper should primarily contain your own words, so quote only the most pithy and memorable parts of sources. Here are three guidelines for selecting quoted material judiciously.

1. **Excerpt fragments.**

Sometimes, you should quote short fragments, rather than whole sentences. Suppose you interviewed Jane Doe about her reaction to John F. Kennedy's assassination. She commented:  

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“I couldn’t believe it. It was just unreal and so sad. It was just unbelievable. I had never experienced such denial. I don’t know why I felt so strongly. Perhaps it was because JFK was more to me than a president. He represented the hopes of young people everywhere.”

You could quote all of Jane’s comments, but her first three sentences are fairly redundant. You might instead want to quote Jane when she arrives at the ultimate reason for her strong emotions:

Jane Doe grappled with grief and disbelief. She had viewed JFK, not just as a national figurehead, but as someone who “represented the hopes of young people everywhere.”

2. Excerpt those fragments carefully!

Quoting the words of others carries a big responsibility. Misquoting misrepresents the ideas of others. Here’s a classic example of a misquote:

John Adams has often been quoted as having said: “This would be the best of all possible worlds if there were no religion in it.”

John Adams did, in fact, write the above words. But if you see those words in context, the meaning changes entirely. Here’s the rest of the quotation:

Twenty times, in the course of my late reading, have I been on the point of breaking out, ‘this would be the best of all possible worlds, if there were no religion in it!!!!’ But in this exclamation, I should have been as fanatical as Bryant or Cleverly. Without religion, this world would be something not fit to be mentioned in public company—I mean hell.

As you can see from this example, context matters!

This example is from Paul F. Boller, Jr. and John George, They Never Said It: A Book of Fake Quotes, Misquotes, and Misleading Attributions (Oxford University Press, 1989).

3. Use block quotations sparingly.

There may be times when you need to quote long passages. However, you should use block quotations only when you fear that omitting any words will destroy the integrity of the passage. If that passage exceeds four lines (some sources say five), then set it off as a block quotation.

Here are a few general tips for setting off your block quotation—to be sure you are handling block quotes correctly in papers for different academic disciplines, check the index of the citation style guide you are using:

1. Set up a block quotation with your own words followed by a colon.
2. Indent. You normally indent 4-5 spaces for the start of a paragraph. When setting up a block quotation, indent the entire paragraph once from the left-hand margin.
3. Single space or double space within the block quotation, depending on the style guidelines of your discipline (MLA, CSE, APA, Chicago, etc.).
4. Do not use quotation marks at the beginning or end of the block quote—the indentation is what indicates that it’s a quote.
5. Place parenthetical citation according to your style guide (usually after the period following the last sentence of the quote).
6. Follow up a block quotation with your own words.

So, using the above example from John Adams, here’s how you might include a block quotation:

After reading several doctrinally rigid tracts, John Adams recalled the zealous ranting of his former teacher, Joseph Cleverly, and minister, Lemuel Bryant. He expressed his ambivalence toward religion in an 1817 letter to Thomas Jefferson:
Twenty times, in the course of my late reading, have I been on the point of breaking out, ‘this would be the best of all possible worlds, if there were no religion in it!!!!’ But in this exclamation, I should have been as fanatical as Bryant or Cleverly. Without religion, this world would be something not fit to be mentioned in public company—I mean hell.

Adams clearly appreciated religion, even if he often questioned its promotion.

**How do I combine quotation marks with other punctuation marks?**

It can be confusing when you start combining quotation marks with other punctuation marks. You should consult a style manual for complicated situations, but the following two rules apply to most cases:

1) **Keep periods and commas within quotation marks.**

So, for example:

According to Professor Jones, Lincoln "feared the spread of slavery," but many of his aides advised him to “watch and wait.”

In the above example, both the comma and period were enclosed in the quotation marks. The main exception to this rule involves the use of internal citations, which always precede the last period of the sentence. For example:

According to Professor Jones, Lincoln “feared the spread of slavery,” but many of his aides advised him to “watch and wait” (Jones 143).

Note, however, that the period remains inside the quotation marks when your citation style involved superscript footnotes or endnotes. For example:

According to Professor Jones, Lincoln “feared the spread of slavery,” but many of his aides advised him to “watch and wait.”

2) **Place all other punctuation marks (colons, semicolons, exclamation marks, question marks) outside the quotation marks, except when they were part of the original quotation.**

Take a look at the following examples:

The student wrote that the U. S. Civil War “finally ended around 1900”!

The coach yelled, “Run!”

In the first example, the author placed the exclamation point outside the quotation mark because she added it herself to emphasize the absurdity of the student’s comment. The student’s original comment had not included an exclamation mark. In the second example, the exclamation mark remains within the quotation mark because it is indicating the excited tone in which the coach yelled the command. Thus, the exclamation mark is considered to be part of the original quotation.

**How do I indicate quotations within quotations?**

If you are quoting a passage that contains a quotation, then you use single quotation marks for the internal quotation. Quite rarely, you quote a passage that has a quotation within a quotation. In that rare instance, you would use double quotation marks for the second internal quotation.

Here’s an example of a quotation within a quotation:

In “The Emperor’s New Clothes,” Hans Christian Andersen wrote, “‘But the Emperor has nothing on at all!’ cried a little child.”
Remember to consult your style guide to determine how to properly cite a quote within a quote.

**When do I use those three dots ( . . . )?**

Whenever you want to leave out material from within a quotation, you need to use an ellipsis, which is a series of three periods, each of which should be preceded and followed by a space. So, an ellipsis in this sentence would look like . . . this. There are a few rules to follow when using ellipses:

1. **Be sure that you don’t fundamentally change the meaning of the quotation by omitting material.**

   Take a look at the following example: “The Writing Center is located on the UNC campus and serves the entire UNC community.”

   “The Writing Center . . . serves the entire UNC community.”

   The reader’s understanding of the Writing Center’s mission to serve the UNC community is not affected by omitting the information about its location.

2. **Do not use ellipses at the beginning or ending of quotations, unless it’s important for the reader to know that the quotation was truncated.**

   For example, using the above example, you would NOT need an ellipsis in either of these situations:

   “The Writing Center is located on the UNC campus . . .”

   The Writing Center ” . . . serves the entire UNC community.”

3. **Use punctuation marks in combination with ellipses when removing material from the end of sentences or clauses.**

   For example, if you take material from the end of a sentence, keep the period in as usual.

   “The boys ran to school, forgetting their lunches and books. Even though they were out of breath, they made it on time.”

   “The boys ran to school. . . . Even though they were out of breath, they made it on time.”

   Likewise, if you excerpt material at the end of clause that ends in a comma, retain the comma.

   “The red car came to a screeching halt that was heard by nearby pedestrians, but no one was hurt.”

   “The red car came to a screeching halt . . . , but no one was hurt.”

**Is it ever okay to insert my own words or change words in a quotation?**

Sometimes it is necessary for clarity and flow to alter a word or words within a quotation. You should make such changes rarely. In order to alert your reader to the changes you’ve made, you should always bracket the altered words. Here are a few examples of situations when you might need brackets.

1. **Changing verb tense or pronouns in order to be**
consistent with the rest of the sentence.

Suppose you were quoting a woman who, when asked about her experiences immigrating to the United States, commented "nobody understood me." You might write:

Esther Hansen felt that when she came to the United States "nobody understood [her]."

In the above example, you’ve changed “me” to “her” in order to keep the entire passage in third person. However, you could avoid the need for this change by simply rephrasing:

“Nobody understood me,” recalled Danish immigrant Esther Hansen.

2. Including supplemental information that your reader needs in order to understand the quotation.

For example, if you were quoting someone’s nickname, you might want to let your reader know the full name of that person in brackets.

“The principal of the school told Billy [William Smith] that his contract would be terminated.”

Similarly, if a quotation referenced an event with which the reader might be unfamiliar, you could identify that event in brackets.

“We completely revised our political strategies after the strike [of 1934].”

3. Indicating the use of nonstandard grammar or spelling.

In rare situations, you may quote from a text that has nonstandard grammar, spelling, or word choice. In such cases, you may want to insert [sic], which means “thus” or “so” in Latin. Using [sic] alerts your reader to the fact that this nonstandard language is not the result of a typo on your part. Always italicize “sic” and enclose it in brackets. There is no need to put a period at the end. Here’s an example of when you might use [sic]:

Twelve-year-old Betsy Smith wrote in her diary, “Father is afraid that he will be guilty of beach [sic] of contract.”

Here [sic] indicates that the original author wrote “beach of contract,” not breach of contract, which is the accepted terminology.

4. Do not overuse brackets!

For example, it is not necessary to bracket capitalization changes that you make at the beginning of sentences. For example, suppose you were going to use part of this quotation:

“We never looked back, but the memory of our army days remained with us the rest of our lives.”

If you wanted to begin a sentence with an excerpt from the middle of this quotation, there would be no need to bracket your capitalization changes.

“The memory of our army days remained with us the rest of our lives,” commented Joe Brown, a World War II veteran.

Not

“[T]he memory of our army days remained with us the rest of our lives,” commented Joe Brown, a World War II veteran.
Works consulted

We consulted these works while writing the original version of this handout. This is not a comprehensive list of resources on the handout's topic, and we encourage you to do your own research to find the latest publications on this topic. Please do not use this list as a model for the format of your own reference list, as it may not match the citation style you are using. For guidance on formatting citations, please see the UNC Library's citation tutorial.


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Introduction of Borrowed Material

The basic idea is that you need to set up your quotes or paraphrases. Establish the credibility of your source. By reading your paragraph aloud, you will notice how well you have done this. Trust your ear. You will hear whether you have set up the quote at all—or whether you have used the same patterns of introduction over and over.

- Fit in the used material smoothly.
- Parenthetical citations are meant to be brief, so that they won’t distract readers.
- Use brackets [like this] to indicate that you added words to the original quote.
- Avoid taking a quote out of context. The examples in the handbook illustrate awkward and revised source usage.
- Vary the verbs while still maintaining accuracy. Readers will notice such little touches.

Writers who fail to realize their options often end up with papers that are boring collections of quotes from others.

By varying verbs, first words of sentences, and types of sentences (simple, compound, complex), you will tend to write stronger papers. Such flexibility and variety—hallmarks of strong writing—are also necessary ingredients when integrating borrowed material.
A Typical Body Paragraph Pattern

(Remember, though, that this is not a formula. Vary your paragraphs, sentences, details, appeals, etc.)

1. Transition.
2. Topic sentence. This is your own. Avoid starting w/quote
3. Signal phrase: This is the setup for source use (1-3 sentences)
4. Source use (quote then cite, or paraphrase one sentence then cite)
5. Direct interpretation of the quote’s words or the paraphrase’s meaning(s) (1-4 sentences, right?)
6. Analyze, interpret, challenge, elaborate on, evaluate the cited material.
   1. If you have space you might reproduce 3-5 all over again with another bit of cited material.
7. Craft a paragraph closing/transition/restated topic sentence/link to thesi

Make sure you nearly always end the paragraph on your own.
Using Sources Blending Source Material with Your Own Work

When working with sources, many students worry they are simply regurgitating ideas that others formulated. That is why it is important for you to develop your own assertions, organize your findings so that your own ideas are still the thrust of the paper, and take care not to rely too much on any one source, or your paper's content might be controlled too heavily by that source.

In practical terms, some ways to develop and back up your assertions include:

**Blend sources with your assertions.** Organize your sources before and as you write so that they blend, even within paragraphs. Your paper—both globally and at the paragraph level—should reveal relationships among your sources, and should also reveal the relationships between your own ideas and those of your sources.

**Write an original introduction and conclusion.** As much as is practical, make the paper's introduction and conclusion your own ideas or your own synthesis of the ideas inherent in your research. Use sources minimally in your introduction and conclusion.

**Open and close paragraphs with originality.** In general, use the openings and closing of your paragraphs to reveal your work—“enclose” your sources among your assertions. At a minimum, create your own topic sentences and wrap-up sentences for paragraphs.

**Use transparent rhetorical strategies.** When appropriate, outwardly practice such rhetorical strategies as analysis, synthesis, comparison, contrast, summary, description, definition, hierarchical structure, evaluation, hypothesis, generalization, classification, and even narration. Prove to your reader that you are thinking as you write.

Also, you must clarify where your own ideas end and the cited information begins. Part of your job is to help your reader draw the line between these two things, often by the way you create context for the cited information. A phrase such as "A 1979 study revealed that . . ." is an obvious announcement of citation to come. Another recommended technique is the insertion of the author's name into the text to announce the beginning of your cited information. You may worry that you are not allowed to give the actual names of sources you have studied in the paper's text, but just the opposite is true. In fact, the more respectable a source you cite, the more impressed your reader is likely to be with your material while reading. If you note that the source is the NASA Science website or an article by Stephen Jay Gould or a recent edition of *The Wall Street Journal* right in your text, you offer your readers immediate context without their having to guess or flip to the references page to look up the source.

What follows is an excerpt from a political science paper that clearly and admirably draws the line between writer and cited information:

The above political upheaval illuminates the reasons behind the growing Iranian hatred of foreign interference; as a result of this hatred, three enduring geopolitical patterns have evolved in Iran, as noted by John Limbert. First . . .

Note how the writer begins by redefining her previous paragraph's topic (political upheaval), then connects this to Iran's hatred of foreign interference, then suggests a causal relationship and ties her ideas into John Limbert's analysis—thereby announcing that a synthesis of Limbert's work is coming. This writer's work also becomes more credible and meaningful because, right in the text, she announces the name of a person who is a recognized authority in the field. Even in this short excerpt, it is obvious that this writer is using proper citation and backing up her own assertions with confidence and style.

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The Paragraph Body: Supporting Your Ideas

Whether the drafting of a paragraph begins with a main idea or whether that idea surfaces in the revision process, once you have that main idea, you’ll want to make sure that the idea has enough support. The job of the paragraph body is to develop and support the topic. Here’s one way that you might think about it:

- Topic sentence: what is the main claim of your paragraph; what is the most important idea that you want your readers to take away from this paragraph?
- Support in the form of evidence: how can you prove that your claim or idea is true (or important, or noteworthy, or relevant)?
- Support in the form of analysis or evaluation: what discussion can you provide that helps your readers see the connection between the evidence and your claim?
- Transition: how can you help your readers move from the idea you’re currently discussing to the next idea presented? (For more specific discussion about transitions, see the following section on “Developing Relationships between Ideas”).
- For more on methods of development that can help you to develop and organize your ideas within paragraphs, see “Patterns of Organization and Methods of Development” later in this section of this text.

Types of support might include
- Reasons.
- Facts.
- Statistics.
- Quotations.
- Examples.

Now that we have a good idea what it means to develop support for the main ideas of your paragraphs, let’s talk about how to make sure that those supporting details are solid and convincing.

Good vs. Weak Support

What questions will your readers have? What will they need to know? What makes for good supporting details?

Why might readers consider some evidence to be weak?

If you’re already developing paragraphs, it’s likely that you already have a plan for your essay, at least at the most basic level. You know what your topic is, you might have a working thesis, and you probably have at least a couple of supporting ideas in mind that will further develop and support your thesis.

So imagine you’re developing a paragraph on one of these supporting ideas and you need to make sure that the support that you develop for this idea is solid. Considering some of the points about understanding and appealing to your audience (from the Audience and Purpose and the Prewriting sections of this text) can also be helpful in determining what your readers will consider good support and what they’ll consider to be weak. Here are some tips on what to strive for and what to avoid when it comes to supporting details.

Good support
- Is relevant and focused (sticks to the point).
- Is well developed.
- Provides sufficient detail.
- Is vivid and descriptive.
- Is well organized.
- Is coherent and consistent.
- Highlights key terms and ideas.

**Weak Support**

- Lacks a clear connection to the point that it’s meant to support.
- Lacks development.
- Lacks detail or gives too much detail.
- Is vague and imprecise.
- Lacks organization.
- Seems disjointed (ideas don’t clearly relate to each other).
- Lacks emphasis of key terms and ideas.

**Breaking, Combining, or Beginning New Paragraphs**

Like sentence length, paragraph length varies. There is no single ideal length for “the perfect paragraph.” There are some general guidelines, however. Some writing handbooks or resources suggest that a paragraph should be at least three or four sentences; others suggest that 100 to 200 words is a good target to shoot for. In academic writing, paragraphs tend to be longer, while in less formal or less complex writing, such as in a newspaper, paragraphs tend to be much shorter. Two-thirds to three-fourths of a page is usually a good target length for paragraphs at your current level of college writing. If your readers can’t see a paragraph break on the page, they might wonder if the paragraph is ever going to end or they might lose interest.

The most important thing to keep in mind here is that the amount of space needed to develop one idea will likely be different than the amount of space needed to develop another. So when is a paragraph complete? The answer is, when it’s fully developed. The guidelines above for providing good support should help.

Some signals that it’s time to end a paragraph and start a new one include that
- You’re ready to begin developing a new idea.
- You want to emphasize a point by setting it apart.
- You’re getting ready to continue discussing the same idea but in a different way (e.g. shifting from comparison to contrast).
- You notice that your current paragraph is getting too long (more than three-fourths of a page or so), and you think your writers will need a visual break.
- Some signals that you may want to combine paragraphs include that
  - You notice that some of your paragraphs appear to be short and choppy.
  - You have multiple paragraphs on the same topic.
  - You have undeveloped material that needs to be united under a clear topic.

Finally, paragraph number is a lot like paragraph length. You may have been asked in the past to write a five paragraph essay. There’s nothing inherently wrong with a five-paragraph essay, but just like sentence length and paragraph length, the number of paragraphs in an essay depends upon what’s needed to get the job done. There’s really no way to know that until you start writing. So try not to worry too much about the proper length and number of things. Just start writing and see where the essay and the paragraphs take you. There will be plenty of time to sort out the organization in the revision process. You’re not trying to fit pegs into holes here. You’re letting your ideas unfold. Give yourself—and them—the space to let that happen.

**Developing Relationships Between Ideas**

So you have a main idea, and you have supporting ideas, but how can you be sure that your readers will understand the relationships between them? How are the ideas tied to each other?
One way to emphasize these relationships is through the use of clear transitions between ideas. Like every other part of your essay, transitions have a job to do. They form logical connections between the ideas presented in an essay or paragraph, and they give readers clues that reveal how you want them to think about (process, organize, or use) the topics presented.

**Why are Transitions Important?**

Transitions signal the order of ideas, highlight relationships, unify concepts, and let readers know what's coming next or remind them about what's already been covered. When instructors or peers comment that your writing is choppy, abrupt, or needs to “flow better,” those are some signals that you might need to work on building some better transitions into your writing. If a reader comments that she's not sure how something relates to your thesis or main idea, a transition is probably the right tool for the job.

**When Is the Right Time to Build in Transitions?**

There’s no right answer to this question. Sometimes transitions occur spontaneously, but just as often (or maybe even more often) good transitions are developed in revision. While drafting, we often write what we think, sometimes without much reflection about how the ideas fit together or relate to one another. If your thought process jumps around a lot (and that’s okay), it’s more likely that you will need to pay careful attention to reorganization and to providing solid transitions as you revise.

When you’re working on building transitions into an essay, consider the essay’s overall organization. Consider using reverse outlining and other organizational strategies presented in this text to identify key ideas in your essay and to get a clearer look at how the ideas can be best organized. This can help you determine where transitions are needed.

Let’s take some time to consider the importance of transitions at the sentence level and transitions between paragraphs.

**Sentence-Level Transitions**

Transitions between sentences often use “connecting words” to emphasize relationships between one sentence and another. A friend and coworker suggests the “something old something new” approach, meaning that the idea behind a transition is to introduce something new while connecting it to something old from an earlier point in the essay or paragraph. Here are some examples of ways that writers use connecting words (highlighted with red text and italicized) to show connections between ideas in adjacent sentences:

**To Show Similarity**

When I was growing up, my mother taught me to say “please” and “thank you” as one small way that I could show appreciation and respect for others. In the same way, I have tried to impress the importance of manners on my own children.

Other connecting words that show similarity include also, similarly, and likewise.

**To Show Contrast**

Some scientists take the existence of black holes for granted; however, in 2014, a physicist at the University of North Carolina claimed to have mathematically proven that they do not exist.

Other connecting words that show contrast include in spite of, on the other hand, in contrast, and yet.

**To Exemplify**

The cost of college tuition is higher than ever, so students are becoming increasingly motivated to keep costs as low as possible. For example, a rising number of students are signing up to spend their first two years at a less costly community college before transferring to a more expensive four-year school to finish their degrees.
Other connecting words that show example include for instance, specifically, and to illustrate.

To Show Cause and Effect

Where previously painters had to grind and mix their own dry pigments with linseed oil inside their studios, in the 1840s, new innovations in pigments allowed paints to be premixed in tubes. Consequently, this new technology facilitated the practice of painting outdoors and was a crucial tool for impressionist painters, such as Monet, Cezanne, Renoir, and Cassatt.

Other connecting words that show cause and effect include therefore, so, and thus.

To Show Additional Support

When choosing a good trail bike, experts recommend 120–140 millimeters of suspension travel; that’s the amount that the frame or fork is able to flex or compress. Additionally, they recommend a 67–69 degree head-tube angle, as a steeper head-tube angle allows for faster turning and climbing.

Other connecting words that show additional support include also, besides, equally important, and in addition.

A Word of Caution

Single-word or short-phrase transitions can be helpful to signal a shift in ideas within a paragraph, rather than between paragraphs (see the discussion below about transitions between paragraphs). But it’s also important to understand that these types of transitions shouldn’t be frequent within a paragraph. As with anything else that happens in your writing, they should be used when they feel natural and feel like the right choice. Here are some examples to help you see the difference between transitions that feel like they occur naturally and transitions that seem forced and make the paragraph awkward to read:

Too Many Transitions: The Impressionist painters of the late 19th century are well known for their visible brush strokes, for their ability to convey a realistic sense of light, and for their everyday subjects portrayed in outdoor settings. In spite of this fact, many casual admirers of their work are unaware of the scientific innovations that made it possible for this movement in art to take place. Then, in 1841, an American painter named John Rand invented the collapsible paint tube. To illustrate the importance of this invention, pigments previously had to be ground and mixed in a fairly complex process that made it difficult for artists to travel with them. For example, the mixtures were commonly stored in pieces of pig bladder to keep the paint from drying out. In addition, when working with their palettes, painters had to puncture the bladder, squeeze out some paint, and then mend the bladder again to keep the rest of the paint mixture from drying out. Thus, Rand’s collapsible tube freed the painters from these cumbersome and messy processes, allowing artists to be more mobile and to paint in the open air.

Subtle Transitions that Aid Reader Understanding: The Impressionist painters of the late 19th century are well known for their visible brush strokes, for their ability to convey a realistic sense of light, and for their everyday subjects portrayed in outdoor settings. However, many casual admirers of their work are unaware of the scientific innovations that made it possible for this movement in art to take place. In 1841, an American painter named John Rand invented the collapsible paint tube. Before this invention, pigments had to be ground and mixed in a fairly complex process that made it difficult for artists to travel with them. The mixtures were commonly stored in pieces of pig bladder to keep the paint from drying out. When working with their palettes, painters had to puncture the bladder, squeeze out some paint, and then mend the bladder again to keep the rest of the paint mixture from drying out. Rand’s collapsible tube freed the painters from these cumbersome and messy processes, allowing artists to be more mobile and to paint in the open air.

Transitions between Paragraphs and Sections

It’s important to consider how to emphasize the relationships not just between sentences but also between paragraphs in your essay. Here are a few strategies to help you show your readers how the main ideas of your paragraphs relate to each other and also to your thesis.
Use Signposts

Signposts are words or phrases that indicate where you are in the process of organizing an idea; for example, signposts might indicate that you are introducing a new concept, that you are summarizing an idea, or that you are concluding your thoughts. Some of the most common signposts include words and phrases like first, then, next, finally, in sum, and in conclusion. Be careful not to overuse these types of transitions in your writing. Your readers will quickly find them tiring or too obvious. Instead, think of more creative ways to let your readers know where they are situated within the ideas presented in your essay. You might say, “The first problem with this practice is...”

Or you might say, “The next thing to consider is...” Or you might say, “Some final thoughts about this topic are....”

Use Forward-Looking Sentences at the End of Paragraphs

Sometimes, as you conclude a paragraph, you might want to give your readers a hint about what’s coming next. For example, imagine that you’re writing an essay about the benefits of trees to the environment and you’ve just wrapped up a paragraph about how trees absorb pollutants and provide oxygen. You might conclude with a forward-looking sentence like this: “Trees benefits to local air quality are important, but surely they have more to offer our communities than clean air.” This might conclude a paragraph (or series of paragraphs) and then prepare your readers for additional paragraphs to come that cover the topics of trees’ shade value and ability to slow water evaporation on hot summer days. This transitional strategy can be tricky to employ smoothly. Make sure that the conclusion of your paragraph doesn’t sound like you’re leaving your readers hanging with the introduction of a completely new or unrelated topic.

Use Backward-Looking Sentences at the Beginning of Paragraphs

Rather than concluding a paragraph by looking forward, you might instead begin a paragraph by looking back. Continuing with the example above of an essay about the value of trees, let’s think about how we might begin a new paragraph or section by first taking a moment to look back. Maybe you just concluded a paragraph on the topic of trees’ ability to decrease soil erosion and you’re getting ready to talk about how they provide habitats for urban wildlife. Beginning the opening of a new paragraph or section of the essay with a backward-looking transition might look something like this: “While their benefits to soil and water conservation are great, the value that trees provide to our urban wildlife also cannot be overlooked.”

Evaluate Transitions for Predictability or Conspicuousness

Finally, the most important thing about transitions is that you don’t want them to become repetitive or too obvious. Reading your draft aloud is a great revision strategy for so many reasons, and revising your essay for transitions is no exception to this rule. If you read your essay aloud, you’re likely to hear the areas that sound choppy or abrupt. This can help you make note of areas where transitions need to be added. Repetition is another problem that can be easier to spot if you read your essay aloud. If you notice yourself using the same transitions over and over again, take time to find some alternatives. And if the transitions frequently stand out as you read aloud, you may want to see if you can find some subtler strategies.
Using Sources Creatively
Heather Logan
(printable version here: http://writing2.richmond.edu/writing/wweb/creatsrcprint.html)

When writing papers that require the use of outside source material, it is often tempting to cite only direct quotations from your sources. If, however, this is the only method of citation you choose, your paper will become nothing more than a series of quotations linked together by a few connecting words. Your paper will seem to be a collection of others’ thoughts and will contain little thinking on your part.

To avoid falling into this trap, follow a few simple pointers:

• **Avoid using long quotations merely as space-fillers.** While this is an attractive option when faced with a ten-page paper, the overuse of long quotations gives the reader the impression you cannot think for yourself.

• **Don’t use only direct quotations.** Try using paraphrases in addition to your direct quotations. To the reader, the effective use of paraphrases indicates that you took the time to think about the meaning behind the quote’s words. (For further assistance see our materials on "Using Paraphrases: http://writing2.richmond.edu/writing/wweb/paraphrs.html").

• **When introducing direct quotations, try to use a variety of verbs in your signal phrases.** Don’t always rely on stock verbs such as “states” or “says.” Think for a little while about the purpose of your quotation and then choose a context-appropriate verb.

Also, when using direct quotations try qualifying them in a novel or interesting manner. Depending on the system of documentation you’re using, the signal phrases don’t always have to introduce the quotation.

For example, instead of saying:

“None of them knew the color of the sky” is the opening line of Stephen Crane’s short story, “The Open Boat” (339). This implies the idea that “all sense of certainty” in the lives of these men is gone (Wolford 18).

Try saying:

“None of them knew the color of the sky,” the opening line of Stephen Crane’s, “The Open Boat,” implies that “all sense of certainty” in the lives of these men is gone (Crane 339; Wolford 18).
The combination of these two sentences into one is something different. It shows thought on the writer’s part in how to combine direct quotations in an interesting manner.

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Assessment: Practice Quoting

Responsible academic writing involves a good deal of direct quotation from sources. Let’s practice that now, to make sure that we’ve got the finer points figured out by the time the essay is due.

Find a quote from the original article that you think will serve you well in your Source Evaluation Essay.

- Include an introductory “signal” phrase that cues us in on the context for the quote, and then the quote itself. Follow this quote with a phrase or sentence in your own words that summarizes, interprets, or explains the quote in your own words.

This 3-step process is sometimes referred to as a “quote sandwich” and is useful for every time you’d like to incorporate a quote into an academic essay you’re writing.

If you have any questions at all about using quotations in your writing, please include them in your submission.

This work is just a draft—you may choose to use it or not in the final version of your essay at your discretion.

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When to Quote & When to Paraphrase

“When to Quote and When to Paraphrase” was written by Brianna Jerman

Academic writing requires authors to connect information from outside sources to their own ideas in order to establish credibility and produce an effective argument.

Sometimes, the rules surrounding source integration and plagiarism may seem confusing, so many new writers err on the side of caution by using the simplest form of integration: direct quotation. However, using direct quotes is not always the best way to use a source. Paraphrasing or summarizing a text is sometimes a more effective means of supporting a writer’s argument than directly quoting. Taking into consideration the purpose of their own writing and the purpose of utilizing the outside source, authors should seek to vary the ways in which they work sources into their own writing.

Paraphrasing and quoting are two of the three ways an author can integrate sources. The two methods are closely related, and therefore, can sometimes be confused with one another. Quoting borrows the exact wording used in a source and is indicated by placing quotes around the borrowed material. Paraphrasing, on the other hand, borrows an idea found in a shorter passage but communicates this idea using different words and word order. While it is acceptable to loosely follow a similar structure, paraphrasing requires more than simply changing a few of the original words to synonyms. Both paraphrasing and directly quoting have their merit, but they should be used at different times for different purposes. An author chooses to use one of these strategies depending on why the source is being used and what information the source provides.

When to Paraphrase

Paraphrasing provides an author the opportunity to tailor the passage for the purpose of his or her own essay, which cannot always be done when using a direct quote. Paraphrasing should be used to

- Further explain or simplify a passage that may be difficult to understand. It could be that the topic, such as the process of extracting stem cells, is particularly difficult to follow, or that the author has used language that further complicates the topic. In such situations, paraphrasing allows an author to clarify or simplify a passage so the audience can better understand the idea.
- Establish the credibility of the author. In connection to the above point, paraphrasing a complicated passage can help the author establish trust with his or her audience. If an author directly quotes a difficult passage without analysis or further explanation, it may appear that he or she does not understand the idea. Paraphrasing not only clarifies the idea in the passage but also illustrates that the writer, since he or she can articulate this difficult message to the reader, is knowledgeable about the topic and should be trusted.
- Maintain the flow of the writing. Each author has a unique voice, and using direct quotes can interrupt this voice. Too many quotes can make an essay sound choppy and difficult to follow. Paraphrasing can help communicate an important idea in a passage or source without interrupting the flow of the essay.
- Eliminate less relevant information. Since paraphrasing is written using the author’s own words, he or she can be more selective in what information from a passage should be included or omitted. While an author should not manipulate a passage unnecessarily, paraphrasing allows an author to leave out unrelated details that would have been part of a direct quote.
- Communicate relevant statistics and numerical data. A lot of times, sources offer statistical information about a topic that an author may find necessary to developing his or her own argument. For example, statistics about the percentage of mothers who work more than one job may be useful to explaining how the economy has affected children rearing practices. Directly quoting statistics such as this should be avoided.
When to Quote

Direct quotes should be used sparingly, but when they are used, they can be a powerful rhetorical tool. As a rule, avoid using long quotes when possible, especially those longer than three lines. When quotes are employed, they should be used to

- Provide indisputable evidence of an incredible claim. Directly quoting a source can show the audience exactly what the source says so there is not suspicion of misinterpretation on the author’s part.
- Communicate an idea that is stated in a particularly striking or unique way. A passage should be quoted if the source explains an idea in the best way possible or in a way that cannot be reworded. Additionally, quoting should be used when the original passage is particularly moving or striking.
- Serve as a passage for analysis. If an author is going to analyze the quote or passage, the exact words should be included in the essay either before or following the author’s analysis.
- Provide direct evidence for or proof of an author’s own claim. An author can use a direct quote as evidence for a claim he or she makes. The direct quote should follow the author’s claim and a colon, which indicates that the following passage is evidence of the statement that precedes it.
- Support or clarify information you’ve already reported from a source. Similar to the above principle, an author can use a direct quote as further evidence or to emphasize a claim found in the source. This strategy should be used when an idea from a source is particularly important to an author’s own work.
- Provide a definition of a new or unfamiliar term or phrase. When using a term that is used or coined by the source’s author or that is unfamiliar to most people, use direct quotes to show the exact meaning of the phrase or word according to the original source.
Discussion: Practice Paraphrasing

Academic writing also involves heavy use of paraphrasing sources. Paraphrasing is actually much more common than quoting, particularly in APA-style writing.

Paraphrasing has several advantages:

• it lets you keep a consistent tone and voice throughout the essay
• it demonstrates your mastery of the concepts coming from outside sources
• it lets you be flexible in wording and vocabulary to best meet the needs of your readers

Paraphrasing seems simple on the surface: it’s just putting another author’s ideas into your own original words. In practice, though, this is one of the most challenging aspects of writing academic work.

To help us all feel more comfortable and confident with our paraphrasing skills, let’s practice it here.

In your post, copy and paste the original wording (a direct quote) from the source you’re using for the Source Evaluation Essay. Be sure to include the title of the source and a link to it, if possible, and put the quote inside of quotation marks.

Beneath this quote, draft a paraphrase that states the idea of the quotation in unique language. The paraphrase should include a “signal” phrase, so that we have some context for where it’s coming from. Guidance about how to draft a paraphrase can be found in earlier module contents.

Your post should be about 100-200 words. It doesn’t have to be grammatically perfect, but should use standard English (no text-speak, please) and normal capitalization rules.

You will also need to return to this Discussion to reply to at least two of your classmates’ posts. Content could include, but is not limited to, any of the following: Commenting on the style or quality of your classmate’s paraphrase. Be sure to point out if the paraphrase contains too much borrowed language from the original article that your classmate may not have noticed.

Responses are weighed as heavily as your initial posting, and should be roughly as long (100-200 words) when combined. Responses should indicate you’ve read your classmate’s post carefully. Include specific details from the post you’re responding to in your reply.
Signal Phrases

For us to Appreciate Your Thinking, Use These!

If readers cannot tell where a source begins or ends—forget about whether or not it’s credible—then the paper will feature serious problems. At all points, make it clear where you begin or end. Some of the drafts rely on summaries where it’s not clear where the writer’s source use starts.

Other papers—and this is common—start with setup, show a summary (after which there’s no citation) and then have the writer’s interpretation and then more source material. The problem here would be that the best part is the writer’s interpretation and it’s hidden between two citations... only there’s just one citation where there should be two. So readers get distracted both by the lack of clarity and the missing citation.

Check for this in one’s writing. Thanks!

The following link from the Shepard Academy overviews signal phrases and offers some useful models:
http://shepardacademyjuniorblockspring.weebly.com/integrating-research-into-your-essay.html

Lastly, remember that using no signal phrases is also a choice which signals something to readers: that you either didn’t know the source context/credibility or could not be bothered to let the audience know!
Assessment: Signalling/Paraphrasing/Quoting

Directions:

1. Find any 4 pieces of information that you have found from your research. This information should come from at least four different sources that you have found to be credible and useful to your research. Once you have identified these sources, do the following:

2. Copy one paragraph from the source that includes information that you might want to use in your research paper. Type the section out EXACTLY as it is written in the original. (1 point)

3. Take one piece of specific information from the original information and write a direct quote using those exact words. The direct quote needs to contain a signal phrases and use MLA in-text citations. (2 points)

4. Take the same information that you've just quoted and write it again, paraphrasing it into your own words. Remember to use MLA in-text citations. (2 points)

Example (Using MLA In-text citation rules):

Original

About half of the rise in sea level is due to thermal expansion. In addition oceans are rising because ice is melting. So far, most of that water has come from mountain glaciers and ice caps. If the Greenland ice sheet were to melt completely, it would release enough water to raise the sea level by 7 meters. West Antarctica’s melting would raise sea level by over 5 meters and East Antarctica by 50 meters. If the Earth were to lose just 8% of its ice, the consequences would be horrific. New York, London, Shanghai, and other low-lying cities would be submerged.

Direct Quote

According to Lonnie G. Thompson and Gioietta Kuo in the article, “Climate Change” “If the Earth were to lose just 8% of its ice, the consequences would be horrific. New York, London, Shanghai, and other low-lying cities would be submerged.”

Paraphrase

According to Lonnie G. Thompson and Gioetta Kuo in the article, “Climate Change” even if the earth lost only 8% of its frozen waters, many cities below sea level would be engulfed under water.

You will repeat this process 4 times, for a total of 4 sets of quotes & paraphrases.

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310 | Arguing Through Writing
Integration Tips in Preparation for Peer Editing or Editing

The following comments can be applied either to one’s paper or others’ work. Each challenge appears enough that it is worth noting generally.

We shouldn’t be seeing many quotes at the starts or ends of paragraphs for the obvious reason that they would not get integrated.

You’re not complimenting a reader’s intelligence if you define, say, drug use or what a computer game is. That would be filler.

Sometimes, students pad papers by overusing long quotes. Avoid this. Those quotes are rarely that well-worded. Mostly, they are used for filler. Summarize so you can set up interpretations and commentary instead.

Consider that the default source use option isn’t quoting, but paraphrase. With that in mind, we should see drafts which contain paraphrases.

**Topic Sentences Related to the Thesis? Where are These Legendary Creatures?**

Early in semesters, students get caught deferring—passively letting sources take over—far too much. I cannot tell what your topic sentences are, much less the causes—even much less the ways that those causes relate to the claim you are making. Partly, this is because the thesis statements were too broad and didn’t argue much. A valid thesis must be an arguable opinion about which others may disagree. It’s not a fact. If the claim you’re working with is one on which a book could be based, it’s too broad!

Consider recognizing the boring, obvious causes outright in your introduction, but then pivoting to make some claim about lesser-known causes that must be known if the topic is to be understood properly. You provide those lesser-known causes while acknowledging the ones most other people immediately think about. Again, show that you know how to get beyond the obvious. (Read a few papers and see if anyone’s causes taught you anything or were surprising in how they were combined with the other causes.) The claims must change so that you show how the causes work together—which are relatively more or less important.

Oh, and add transitions . . . . there ought to be a logic that you provide to readers as to how the causes are ordered. Causes being time-based, that should be easy, but you can focus on importance as well. Not all causes are equally important, so not all causes get equal attention.

**Setup is Something Critical Readers Expect**

Provide a signal phrase. It’s a must. Readers need to know that you know why a source is valid. Don’t just name drop. If you say that Robinson says _____ about video games, who are good readers to care about Robinson yet? The yet is the key. It’s for you to establish. Use a signal phrase that does this.

- Save author’s name for the in-text citation if there’s no page to put in there, as there wouldn’t be a page with a HTML database article or a website. There would be a page for a book or PDF article.
- Establish the credentials and context in a signal phrase. **Example:** In his acclaimed 1991 book on Africa’s migration crisis, Harvard researcher Tudo Bom notes
That example has time, status, context, and name all folded in. See how much better this is than “cold quoting”—starting a sentence with a quote. If you compound the problem by not following up with any interpretation, readers are checked out and your impressive quote has utterly backfired. This is what we expect at the college level.

**Interpretation: Comment to Varying Extents and Adopt Tones**

Readers are less interested in a quote than in what the writer does with it.

Do more writing around the quote (signal phrase, interpretation) than the quote is long. If you can start there, you might have an integrated paragraph. There are writing moves that ought to occur after a quote.

Statistics and misleadingly vivid, atypical cases got overused in too many people’s drafts. Instead of marshaling support for your side, they erode credibility.

“In other words,” is a common after-citation move.

Relate the cited material to the topic sentence and/or the thesis claim. Do something afterwards!

In no case should I be seeing over 60% of any paragraph coming from sources. (Summaries, remember, are from “them” and are theirs.)

These are not skill-based issues, folks. They are attentiveness challenges. We are overlooking the basics and filling space. Having errors like the extra spaces in the heading, around the title, between paragraphs, etc., will lead to automatic letter-grade deductions by most instructors. The topics will become more arguable if you break them down.

Why not note that “In discussions of the supposed link between video games and violence, television media have tended to suppose ______ and ______; this paper instead focuses on ______._” Set apart your paper. In my example, too, you’ll see that some people in D1 entirely mistook the purpose and ended up supporting those mistaken media presumptions rather than arguing anything of their own.

Think about what you think here. Read aloud the work you have. You’ll notice gaps in logic, areas needing transitions, and unfounded presumptions needing reworking. You can do it!
Proper Source Use in Paragraphs

**Function of Source Use**

You use sources as a form of backup for what you write. They support your claims. This means that you own your paper. Readers always need to be able to tell what’s yours from what’s theirs.

**Consequences of the String of Pearls Effect**

Using a single source several times in a row and then moving on as if some writing occurred is a common writing problem. How great a percentage of an average body paragraph should come from the source? Answers vary, of course, depending on your purpose and the sophistication of your topic. However, if you consistently let the sources take over more than one-third of your body paragraphs, you will not be a successful arguer, thinker, or writer.

If you consistently string together a bunch of quotes, then readers are left with unused material. If you have two or three quotes in a row, that means you did not interpret them. For some reason, many writers think that the quotation marks are magic, as if the quotes speak—or mean something—for themselves. They don’t. If you think of the quotes as excuses for you to discuss their meaning, you will be much better off.

We call the stringing together of paraphrases or quotes “the string of pearls effect.” What is the effect on readers of such lists?

I usually tell students that readers need lots of prompts and reminders. Say things again, even if you think the quote did a good job of making meaning. Tell readers what something means—just don’t use “I” or “you” as you follow up on the quote. The ends of paragraphs are where things tend to fall apart, I think. Succeed in synthesizing your source, in using it and proving the meaning of source information.

**With cited material, follow up by**

1. linking the paraphrase/quote to the paragraph’s topic sentence,
2. linking the cited information to the thesis
3. restating the relevance, credibility, or context of the source material
4. setting up a transition to the upcoming paragraph(s)
5. using a signal phrase like “in other words, . . .” and launching into a direct interpretation of the cited bit

Use your options. Take an active approach so papers—especially the research essay—actually use the sources actively.

**A Typical Paragraph Pattern**

(Remember, though, that this is not a formula. Vary your paragraphs, sentences, details, appeals, etc.)

Topic sentence. This is your own. Avoid starting w/quote (Why is this so?)
setup for source use (1-3 sentences)
source use (quote then cite, or paraphrase one sentence then cite)
direct interpretation of the quote’s words or the paraphrase’s meaning(s) (1-4 sentences, right?)
paragraph closing/transition/restated topic sentence/link to thesis
End the paragraph on your own with emphasis and power.

In large part, how well you do from here on out depends on how well you learn MLA citing and the standards of writing academic arguments. If we’re stuck with poorly-written paragraphs, the papers will only reach a certain level of quality.
CITING SOURCES
Citing and Referencing Techniques

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

• Apply American Psychological Association (APA) style formatting guidelines for citations.

This section covers the nitty-gritty details of in-text citations. You will learn how to format citations for different types of source materials, whether you are citing brief quotations, paraphrasing ideas, or quoting longer passages. You will also learn techniques you can use to introduce quoted and paraphrased material effectively. Keep this section handy as a reference to consult while writing the body of your paper.

Formatting Cited Material: The Basics

As noted in previous sections of this book, in-text citations usually provide the name of the author(s) and the year the source was published. For direct quotations, the page number must also be included. Use past-tense verbs when introducing a quote—“Smith found…” and not “Smith finds….”

Formatting Brief Quotations

For brief quotations—fewer than forty words—use quotation marks to indicate where the quoted material begins and ends, and cite the name of the author(s), the year of publication, and the page number where the quotation appears in your source. Remember to include commas to separate elements within the parenthetical citation. Also, avoid redundancy. If you name the author(s) in your sentence, do not repeat the name(s) in your parenthetical citation. Review following the examples of different ways to cite direct quotations.

Chang (2008) emphasized that “engaging in weight-bearing exercise consistently is one of the single best things women can do to maintain good health” (p. 49).

Weight Training for Women (Chang, 2008) claimed that “engaging in weight-bearing exercise consistently is one of the single best things women can do to maintain good health” (p. 49).

Including the title of a source is optional.

In Chang’s 2008 text Weight Training for Women, she asserts, “Engaging in weight-bearing exercise is one of the single best things women can do to maintain good health” (p. 49).

The author’s name, the date, and the title may appear in the body of the text. Include the page number in the parenthetical citation. Also, notice the use of the verb asserts to introduce the direct quotation.
“Engaging in weight-bearing exercise,” Chang asserts, “is one of the single best things women can do to maintain good health” (2008, p. 49).

You may begin a sentence with the direct quotation and add the author’s name and a strong verb before continuing the quotation.

### Formatting Paraphrased and Summarized Material

When you paraphrase or summarize ideas from a source, you follow the same guidelines previously provided, except that you are not required to provide the page number where the ideas are located. If you are summing up the main findings of a research article, simply providing the author’s name and publication year may suffice, but if you are paraphrasing a more specific idea, consider including the page number.

Read the following examples.

Chang (2008) pointed out that weight-bearing exercise has many potential benefits for women.

Here, the writer is summarizing a major idea that recurs throughout the source material. No page reference is needed.

Chang (2008) found that weight-bearing exercise could help women maintain or even increase bone density through middle age and beyond, reducing the likelihood that they will develop osteoporosis in later life (p. 86).

Although the writer is not directly quoting the source, this passage paraphrases a specific detail, so the writer chose to include the page number where the information is located.

### TIP

Although APA style guidelines do not require writers to provide page numbers for material that is not directly quoted, your instructor may wish you to do so when possible.

Check with your instructor about his or her preferences.

### Formatting Longer Quotations

When you quote a longer passage from a source—forty words or more—use a different format to set off the quoted material. Instead of using quotation marks, create a block quotation by starting the quotation on a new line and indented five spaces from the margin. Note that in this case, the parenthetical citation comes after the period that ends the sentence. Here is an example:

In recent years, many writers within the fitness industry have emphasized the ways in which women can benefit from weight-bearing exercise, such as weightlifting, karate, dancing, stair climbing, hiking, and jogging. Chang (2008) found that engaging in weight-bearing exercise regularly significantly reduces women’s risk of developing osteoporosis. Additionally, these exercises help women maintain muscle mass and overall strength, and many common forms of weight-bearing exercise, such as brisk walking or stair climbing, also provide noticeable cardiovascular benefits. (p. 93)

If you are quoting a passage that continues into a second paragraph, indent five spaces again in the first line of the second paragraph. Here is an example:

In recent years, many writers within the fitness industry have emphasized the ways in which women can benefit from weight-bearing exercise, such as weightlifting, karate, dancing, stair climbing, hiking, and jogging. Chang
(2008) found that engaging in weight-bearing exercise regularly significantly reduces women's risk of developing osteoporosis. Additionally, these exercises help women maintain muscle mass and overall strength, and many common forms of weight-bearing exercise, such as brisk walking or stair climbing, also provide noticeable cardiovascular benefits.

It is important to note that swimming cannot be considered a weight-bearing exercise, since the water supports and cushions the swimmer. That doesn't mean swimming isn’t great exercise, but it should be considered one part of an integrated fitness program. (p. 93)

**TIP**

Be wary of quoting from sources at length. Remember, your ideas should drive the paper, and quotations should be used to support and enhance your points. Make sure any lengthy quotations that you include serve a clear purpose. Generally, no more than 10–15 percent of a paper should consist of quoted material.

**Introducing Cited Material Effectively**

Including an introductory phrase in your text, such as "Jackson wrote" or “Copeland found,” often helps you integrate source material smoothly. This citation technique also helps convey that you are actively engaged with your source material. Unfortunately, during the process of writing your research paper, it is easy to fall into a rut and use the same few dull verbs repeatedly, such as “Jones said,” “Smith stated,” and so on.

Punch up your writing by using strong verbs that help your reader understand how the source material presents ideas. There is a world of difference between an author who “suggests” and one who “claims,” one who “questions” and one who “criticizes.” You do not need to consult your thesaurus every time you cite a source, but do think about which verbs will accurately represent the ideas and make your writing more engaging. The following chart shows some possibilities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strong Verbs for Introducing Cited Material</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ask</td>
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<td>explain</td>
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<tr>
<td>recommend</td>
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<td>propose</td>
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<td>assess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sum up</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Writing at Work**

It is important to accurately represent a colleague’s ideas or communications in the workplace. When writing professional or academic papers, be mindful of how the words you use to describe someone’s tone or ideas carry certain connotations. Do not say a source *argues* a particular point unless an argument is, in fact, presented. Use lively language, but avoid language that is emotionally charged. Doing so will ensure you have represented your colleague’s words in an authentic and accurate way.
Formatting In-Text Citations for Other Source Types

These sections discuss the correct format for various types of in-text citations. Read them through quickly to get a sense of what is covered, and then refer to them again as needed.

Print Sources

This section covers books, articles, and other print sources with one or more authors.

A Work by One Author

For a print work with one author, follow the guidelines provided in “Formatting a Research Paper.” Always include the author’s name and year of publication. Include a page reference whenever you quote a source directly. (See also the guidelines presented earlier in this chapter about when to include a page reference for paraphrased material.)

Chang (2008) emphasized that “engaging in weight-bearing exercise consistently is one of the single best things women can do to maintain good health” (p. 49).

Chang (2008) pointed out that weight-bearing exercise has many potential benefits for women.

Two or More Works by the Same Author

At times, your research may include multiple works by the same author. If the works were published in different years, a standard in-text citation will serve to distinguish them. If you are citing multiple works by the same author published in the same year, include a lowercase letter immediately after the year. Rank the sources in the order they appear in your references section. The source listed first includes an a after the year, the source listed second includes a b, and so on.

Rodriguez (2009a) criticized the nutrition-supplement industry for making unsubstantiated and sometimes misleading claims about the benefits of taking supplements. Additionally, he warned that consumers frequently do not realize the potential harmful effects of some popular supplements (Rodriguez, 2009b).

TIP

If you have not yet created your references section, you may not be sure which source will appear first. See “Creating a References Section” for guidelines—or assign each source a temporary code and highlight the in-text citations so you remember to double-check them later on.

Works by Authors with the Same Last Name

If you are citing works by different authors with the same last name, include each author’s initials in your citation, whether you mention them in the text or in parentheses. Do so even if the publication years are different.

J. S. Williams (2007) believes nutritional supplements can be a useful part of some diet and fitness regimens. C. D. Williams (2008), however, believes these supplements are overrated.

According to two leading researchers, the rate of childhood obesity exceeds the rate of adult obesity (K. Connelley, 2010; O. Connelley, 2010).
Studies from both A. Wright (2007) and C. A. Wright (2008) confirm the benefits of diet and exercise on weight loss.

**A Work by Two Authors**

When two authors are listed for a given work, include both authors' names each time you cite the work. If you are citing their names in parentheses, use an ampersand (&) between them. (Use the word and, however, if the names appear in your sentence.)

As Garrison and Gould (2010) pointed out, “It is never too late to quit smoking. The health risks associated with this habit begin to decrease soon after a smoker quits” (p. 101).

As doctors continue to point out, “It is never too late to quit smoking. The health risks associated with this habit begin to decrease soon after a smoker quits” (Garrison & Gould, 2010, p. 101).

**A Work by Three to Five Authors**

If the work you are citing has three to five authors, list all the authors’ names the first time you cite the source. In subsequent citations, use the first author’s name followed by the abbreviation et al. (Et al. is short for et alia, the Latin phrase for “and others.”)


One survey, conducted among 350 smokers aged 18 to 30, included a detailed questionnaire about participants’ motivations for smoking (Henderson, Davidian, & Degler, 2010).

Note that these examples follow the same ampersand conventions as sources with two authors. Again, use the ampersand only when listing authors’ names in parentheses.

As Henderson et al. (2010) found, some young people, particularly young women, use smoking as a means of appetite suppression.

Disturbingly, some young women use smoking as a means of appetite suppression (Henderson et al., 2010).

Note how the phrase et al. is punctuated. No period comes after et, but al. gets a period because it is an abbreviation for a longer Latin word. In parenthetical references, include a comma after et al. but not before. Remember this rule by mentally translating the citation to English: “Henderson and others, 2010.”

**A Work by Six or More Authors**

If the work you are citing has six or more authors, list only the first author’s name, followed by et al., in your in-text citations. The other authors’ names will be listed in your references section.

Researchers have found that outreach work with young people has helped reduce tobacco use in some communities (Costello et al., 2007).

**A Work Authored by an Organization**

When citing a work that has no individual author(s) but is published by an organization, use the organization’s name in place of the author’s name. Lengthy organization names with well-known abbreviations can be abbreviated. In your first citation, use the full name, followed by the abbreviation in square brackets. Subsequent citations may use the abbreviation only.

It is possible for a patient to have a small stroke without even realizing it (American Heart Association [AHA], 2010).
Another cause for concern is that even if patients realize that they have had a stroke and need medical attention, they may not know which nearby facilities are best equipped to treat them (AHA, 2010).

**A Work with No Listed Author**

If no author is listed and the source cannot be attributed to an organization, use the title in place of the author’s name. You may use the full title in your sentence or use the first few words—enough to convey the key ideas—in a parenthetical reference. Follow standard conventions for using italics or quotations marks with titles:

- Use italics for titles of books or reports.
- Use quotation marks for titles of articles or chapters.


Regular exercise can benefit patients with diabetes ("Living with Diabetes," 2009).

Rosenhan (1973) had mentally healthy study participants claim to be experiencing hallucinations so they would be admitted to psychiatric hospitals.

**A Work Cited within Another Work**

To cite a source that is referred to within another secondary source, name the first source in your sentence. Then, in parentheses, use the phrase as cited in and the name of the second source author.

Rosenhan’s study “On Being Sane in Insane Places” (as cited in Spitzer, 1975) found that psychiatrists diagnosed schizophrenia in people who claimed to be experiencing hallucinations and sought treatment—even though these patients were, in fact, imposters.

**Two or More Works Cited in One Reference**

At times, you may provide more than one citation in a parenthetical reference, such as when you are discussing related works or studies with similar results. List the citations in the same order they appear in your references section, and separate the citations with a semicolon.

Some researchers have found serious flaws in the way Rosenhan’s study was conducted (Dawes, 2001; Spitzer, 1975).

Both of these researchers authored works that support the point being made in this sentence, so it makes sense to include both in the same citation.

**A Famous Text Published in Multiple Editions**

In some cases, you may need to cite an extremely well-known work that has been repeatedly republished or translated. Many works of literature and sacred texts, as well as some classic nonfiction texts, fall into this category. For these works, the original date of publication may be unavailable. If so, include the year of publication or translation for your edition. Refer to specific parts or chapters if you need to cite a specific section. Discuss with your instructor whether he or she would like you to cite page numbers in this particular instance.

In *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*, Freud explains that the “manifest content” of a dream—what literally takes place—is separate from its “latent content,” or hidden meaning (trans. 1965, lecture XXIX).

Here, the student is citing a classic work of psychology, originally written in German and later translated to English. Since the book is a collection of Freud’s lectures, the student cites the lecture number rather than a page number.
An Introduction, Foreword, Preface, or Afterword

To cite an introduction, foreword, preface, or afterword, cite the author of the material and the year, following the same format used for other print materials.

Electronic Sources

Whenever possible, cite electronic sources as you would print sources, using the author, the date, and where appropriate, a page number. For some types of electronic sources—for instance, many online articles—this information is easily available. Other times, however, you will need to vary the format to reflect the differences in online media.

Online Sources without Page Numbers

If an online source has no page numbers but you want to refer to a specific portion of the source, try to locate other information you can use to direct your reader to the information cited. Some websites number paragraphs within published articles; if so, include the paragraph number in your citation. Precede the paragraph number with the abbreviation for the word paragraph and the number of the paragraph (e.g., para. 4).

As researchers have explained, “Incorporating fresh fruits and vegetables into one’s diet can be a challenge for residents of areas where there are few or no easily accessible supermarkets” (Smith & Jones, 2006, para. 4).

Even if a source does not have numbered paragraphs, it is likely to have headings that organize the content. In your citation, name the section where your cited information appears, followed by a paragraph number.


This student cited the appropriate section heading within the website and then counted to find the specific paragraph where the cited information was located.

If an online source has no listed author and no date, use the source title and the abbreviation n.d. in your parenthetical reference.

It has been suggested that electromagnetic radiation from cellular telephones may pose a risk for developing certain cancers (“Cell Phones and Cancer,” n.d.).

Personal Communication

For personal communications, such as interviews, letters, and e-mails, cite the name of the person involved, clarify that the material is from a personal communication, and provide the specific date the communication took place. Note that while in-text citations correspond to entries in the references section, personal communications are an exception to this rule. They are cited only in the body text of your paper.

J. H. Yardley, M.D., believes that available information on the relationship between cell phone use and cancer is inconclusive (personal communication, May 1, 2009).

Writing at Work

At work, you may sometimes share information resources with your colleagues by photocopying an interesting article or forwarding the URL of a useful website. Your goal in these situations and in formal research citations is the same. The goal is to
provide enough information to help your professional peers locate and follow up on potentially useful information. Provide as much specific information as possible to achieve that goal, and consult with your professor as to what specific style he or she may prefer.

KEY TAKEAWAY

- In APA papers, in-text citations include the name of the author(s) and the year of publication whenever possible.
- Page numbers are always included when citing quotations. It is optional to include page numbers when citing paraphrased material; however, this should be done when citing a specific portion of a work.
- When citing online sources, provide the same information used for print sources if it is available.
- When a source does not provide information that usually appears in a citation, in-text citations should provide readers with alternative information that would help them locate the source material. This may include the title of the source, section headings and paragraph numbers for websites, and so forth.
- When writing a paper, discuss with your professor what particular standards he or she would like you to follow.

EXERCISES

1. Review the places in your paper where you cited, quoted, and paraphrased material from a source with a single author. Edit your citations to ensure that
   - each citation includes the author’s name, the date of publication, and, where appropriate, a page reference;
   - parenthetical citations are correctly formatted;
   - longer quotations use the block-quotation format.

2. Review the citations in your paper once again. This time, look for places where you introduced source material using a signal phrase in your sentence.
   - Highlight the verbs used in your signal phrases, and make note of any that seem to be overused throughout the paper.
   - Identify at least three places where a stronger verb could be used.
   - Make the edits to your draft.

3. Review the places in your paper where you cited material from a source with multiple authors or with an organization as the author. Edit your citations to ensure that each citation follows APA guidelines for the inclusion of the authors’ names, the use of ampersands and et al., the date of publication, and, where appropriate, a page reference.
Academic Integrity Tutorial

The University of Maryland University College maintains a well-known academic integrity tutorial: http://www.umuc.edu/current-students/learning-resources/academic-integrity/tutorial/interactive.html. It has many valuable tips and should refresh your skills in these areas.
MLA Checklist

OWL Excelsior, an online writing lab with many other good pages, has the following checklist for MLA. Access it and use this when you’re writing the essays.

- http://owl.excelsior.edu/citation-and-documentation/mla-style/mla-checklist/
Acknowledgment of Sources is a Rhetorical Act

To an inexperienced writer, citing and documenting sources may seem like busywork. Yet, when you cite your external sources in the text of your paper and when you document them at the end of your piece in a list of works cited or a bibliography, you are performing a rhetorical act. Complete and accurate citing and documenting of all external sources help writers achieve three very important goals:

1. It enhances your credibility as a writer. By carefully and accurately citing your external sources in the text and by documenting them at the end of your paper you show your readers that you are serious about your subject, your research, and the argument which you are making in your paper. You demonstrate that you have studied your subject in sufficient depth, and by reading credible and authoritative sources.

2. It helps you to avoid plagiarism. Plagiarism is trying to pass someone else's ideas or writing as your own. It is a serious offense that can damage the reputation of a writer forever and lead to very serious consequences if committed in an academic or professional setting. Later on in the chapter, we will discuss plagiarism and ways to avoid it in detail.

3. The presence of complete citations of sources in your paper will help you demonstrate to your readers that you are an active participant in the community of readers, writers, researchers, and learners. It shows that you are aware of the conversations that are going on among writers and researchers in your field and that you are willing to enter those conversations by researching and writing about the subjects that interest you. By providing enough information about the sources which you used in your own research and writing, you give other interested readers the opportunity to find out more about your subject and, thus, to enter in a conversation with you.

The Logic and Structure of a Source Citation

Every time writers cite and document their sources, they do it in two places in the paper—in the text itself and at the end of the paper, in a list of works cited or bibliography. A citation is incomplete and, by and large, useless to the readers, if either of the parts is missing. Consider the following example, in which I cite an academic journal article using the Modern Language Association citation system. Please note that I give this example at this point in the chapter only to demonstrate the two parts of a citation. Later on, we will discuss how to cite and document different kinds of sources using different documentation systems, in full detail.

In-text citations

In-text citations are also known as parenthetical citations or parenthetical references because, at the end of the citation, parentheses are used. In her essay "If Winston Weather Would Just Write to Me on E-mail," published in the journal College Composition and Communication, writer and teacher Wendy Bishop shares her thoughts on the nature of writing: "[I see...writing as a mixture of mess and self-discipline, of self-history [and] cultural history." (101).

The Citation in the List of Works Cited


The reason why each citation, regardless of the type of source and the documentation system being used, has two parts is simple. Writers acknowledge and document external sources for several reasons. One of these reasons is to give their readers
enough information and enable them, if necessary, to find the same source which the paper mentions. Therefore, if we look at
the kinds of information provided in the citation (page numbers, titles, authors, publishers, and publication dates), it becomes
clear that this information is sufficient to locate the source in the library, bookstore, or online.

**When to Cite and Document Sources**

The brief answer to this question is “always.” Every time you use someone else’s ideas, arguments, opinions, or data, you need
to carefully acknowledge their author and source. Keep in mind that you are not just borrowing others’ words when you use
sources in your writing. You are borrowing ideas. Therefore, even if you are not directly citing the source, but paraphrase or
summarize it, you still need to cite it both in the text and at the end of the paper in a list of works cited or in a list of references.
The only exception is when you are dealing with what is known as “common knowledge.” Common knowledge consists of facts
that are so widely known that they do not require a source reference. For instance, if you say in your writing that the Earth rotates
around the Sun or that Ronald Reagan was a US President, you do not need to cite the sources of this common knowledge
formally.

**Avoiding Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is a problem that exists not only on college, university, and high school campuses. In recent years, several high profile
cases, some involving famous writers and journalists have surfaced, in which these writers were accused of either presenting
someone else work as their own or fabricating works based on fictitious or unreliable research. With the advent of the Internet,
it has become relatively easy to download complete papers. Various people and organizations, sometimes masquerading as
“writing consultants” promise students that they would write a paper on any subject and of any level of complexity for a hefty
fee. Clearly, the use of such services by student writers is dishonest and dishonorable. If your college or university is like mine, it
probably has adopted strict policies for dealing with plagiarizing writers. Punishments for intentional plagiarism are severe and
may include not only a failing grade for the class but even an expulsion from the university.

In addition to intentional plagiarism, there is also the unintentional kind. Experience shows that beginning writers’ work
sometimes include passages which could be called plagiarized because such writers often do not know how to cite and
document external sources properly or do not understand that importance of following proper citation practices.

Observing the following practices will help you avoid plagiarism:

As you research, keep careful notes of your sources. As you take notes for your research project, keep track of what materials
in those notes comes from external sources and what material is yours. Keep track of all your sources, including interviews and
surveys, photographs and drawings, personal e-mails and conversations. Be sure to record the following information:

- Author
- Title
- Date of publication
- Publisher

Remember that when you use external sources, you are borrowing not the words of another writer, but his or her ideas, theories,
and opinions. Therefore, even if you summarize or paraphrase a source, be sure to give it full credit. Writers used to have to
record this information on separate note cards. However, with the proliferation of online and other electronic tools which allow
us to keep track of our research, the task of recording and reflecting on source-related information has become easier.

**Anti-Plagiarism Activity**

Read the following four paragraphs. They are from a research source, an article in *The New Yorker* magazine. The other three
are from student papers which attempt to use the article as an external source. As you read consider the following questions:
Would you call the student's passage or its parts plagiarized from the original? Why or why not?

If any parts of the student's passages are plagiarized what needs to be changed in order to avoid plagiarism? Keep in mind that you may need to rewrite the whole Paragraph and not just make changes in separate sentences.

Which of the student passages will require more significant rewriting than others and why?

Source Paragraph (from the article “Personality Plus,” by Malcolm Gladwell. New Yorker, Sept 20, 2004). One of the most popular personality tests in the world is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), a psychological assessment system based on Carl Jung’s notion that people make sense of the world through a series or psychological frames. Some people are extraverts, some are introverts. Some process information through logical thought. Some are directed by their feelings. Some make sense of the world through intuitive leaps. Others collect data through their senses.

Student Paragraph 1

The Myers-Briggs Test is a very popular way to assess someone’s personality type. Philosopher Carl Jung believed that people make sense of the world in different ways. Some are extraverts and some and introverts. According to this idea, people process information either by logical reasoning or through intuition or feelings.

Student Paragraph 2

According to writer Malcolm Gladwell, One of the most popular personality tests in the world is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), a psychological assessment system based on Carl Jung’s notion that people make sense of the world through a series or psychological frames. Gladwell states that the test is based on the idea by Carl Jung that people make sense of the world through a series of psychological frames. According to Jung, some people are extroverts and some are introverts. Some process information through logical input, and some through feelings. Some make sense of the world through intuitive leaps. Others collect data through their senses.

Student Paragraph 3

One of the most popular personality tests in the world is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), a psychological assessment system based on Carl Jung’s notion that people make sense of the world through a series or psychological frames (Gladwell 43). The test is based on Jung’s theory that people understand the world differently. This is why we have extroverts and introverts and people who act either based on reasoning or feelings (Gladwell).

Major Citation Systems

In this part of the chapter, I will explain the major citation and documentation systems which you are likely to encounter in your writing for college classes and beyond. The information in this section is not meant to be memorized. Instead, I encourage you to use this material as a reference source, when you are writing a paper and need to cite and document sources correctly, using one of the systems described below, refer to this chapter.

Please note that the following sections include only the basic information about each of the citation styles. There are plenty of excellent sources explaining and illustrating the differences between citation systems. I recommend the cite of the Online Writing Center at Purdue University.

Conclusion

Avoiding plagiarism and acknowledging your external sources completely and accurately are vital parts of the writing process. Your credibility as a writer and the reception that you work will receive from readers may depend on how well you acknowledge your sources. By following the guidelines presented in this chapter and by seeking out more knowledge about the rules of citing...
and documenting from the publications listed in this chapter, you will become a more competent, more professional, and more credible writer. This chapter covers only the basics of source citing and documenting. For more resources this topic and the various styles of documentation, see the Appendix to this book.

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Assessment: MLA & APA Game Response

APA (American Psychological Association) and MLA (Modern Language Association) are two very common types of citation formatting used in higher education. There are others, as well, but we'll be talking specifically about APA and MLA this quarter.

APA is typically used for science courses, including nursing. MLA, on the other hand, is the usual style for humanities and social science courses. You'll probably be asked to use both of them during your time in college, so I want you to be prepared to handle each of them when need be.

First, visit the APA and MLA Citation Game Home Page by the University of Washington’s TRIO Training program.

Then, complete the writing task below.

For this assignment, I'd like you to write a 2-paragraph (3+ sentences per paragraph) commentary on your familiarity with APA and MLA right now.

• In the first paragraph, describe your reaction to the citation work you’ve done so far in your academic life. Which style have you used more often so far? Which style seems more natural to you? Which style is more likely to be the one used in your degree program?
• In the second paragraph, discuss the mechanics of APA and MLA citation as you understand them right now. Did the questions in this game make sense to you? Do you have questions about why things are formatted in citations the way they are? Do you have comments about what information needs to be included in a citation, and why that information is necessary?

Extra Credit Opportunity: While the overall quiz is pretty accurate, it does contain a few minor mistakes in the way it lists authors and dates. You can earn 1 extra credit point for each inaccuracy you find, up to 5 points maximum.

For each extra point, you must tell me

• which page of the quiz the error is on
• what specifically is wrong
• what the correct format should be instead

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Assessment: Five Potential Sources

**Locate 5 potential research sources** for the topic you submitted as your final choice for the Research Essay. At least one of these needs to come from the school’s library (electronic databases are fine).

These are just to get you started. You won’t have to use them in the final draft of the essay if they turn out to be duds.

These should be 5 NEW sources. Don’t include ones you’ve used for previous assignments, even if they relate to your chosen topic.

You don’t have to tell me anything about the contents of these sources. Instead, I want you to **create BOTH Works Cited (MLA) citations and References (APA) citations for each of the 5 sources you’ve found.**

You’re welcome to use the pre-formatted citations available in the library databases, if you find your sources there. Other good helpful tools for building citations are [Son of Citation Machine](http://sonofcitations.com) and [EasyBib](http://easycitation.com).

All of the automated citation generators have their unique, problematic quirks. Be sure to compare what they give you with what the handbooks say your citation should look like, so you can learn to spot the problems with machine-generated citations.

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- Composition II. **Authored by**: Alexis McMillan-Clifton. **Provided by**: Tacoma Community College. **Located at**: [http://www.tacomacc.edu](http://www.tacomacc.edu). **Project**: Kaleidoscope Open Course Initiative. **License**: [CC BY: Attribution](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0)
Paragraph Menu Settings Use No Extra Vertical Spaces

MLA calls for double-spacing with no extra spaces (around titles, heading, between paragraphs). Avoid getting a significant penalty for multiple MLA errors.

Here’s a screen shot of the proper Paragraph menu settings in Word:

![Paragraph Menu Settings](image)

When managing the works cited page, use the Paragraph menu to create the **hanging indent** that indent the second or third lines of a given works cited entry.
Avoid Word Templates for Citations

When citing in the text of your paper or preparing your works cited list, be sure to avoid the “handy” Word templates. They invariably go wrong. Citation engines can help, but again they’re going to lead to errors. For instance, they have cute colored fonts, bold, and bigger text for the title of the page.

We want this to be 100% correct. Any errors degrade our credibility.
Works Cited Entries: What to Include

The Indian River State College Library pages have many useful pages covering MLA style and how to approach it. I like this page on what goes into a works cited entry (http://irsc.libguides.com/mla/whattoinclude) for the way it reminds us that the entries have common elements we should remember.
ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHIES
Annotated Bibliographies

Writers often create annotated bibliographies as a part of a research project, as a means of recording their thoughts and deciding which sources to actually use to support the purpose of their research. Some writers include annotated bibliographies at the end of a research paper as a way of offering their insights about the source’s usability to their readers.

Instructors in college often assign annotated bibliographies as a means of helping students think through their source’s quality and appropriateness to their research question or topic.

Although it may take a while to complete the annotated bibliography, the annotations themselves are relatively brief.

Annotations may include three things:

1. A brief summary of the information in that source.
2. A brief evaluation of the quality of the source’s information.
3. A brief evaluation of whether the source is useful for the purpose of the research.

**NOTE:** Although there is a basic structure to annotated bibliographies that most professors will follow, your professor may require something a little different. Be sure to follow your assignment instructions, as each professor may have expectations that are slightly different.

The Excelsior OWL site also has a sample annotated bibliography in APA style.
Annotated Bibliography Assignment

Overview

Create a working bibliography. Working bibliographies are glorified works cited pages, consisting of a MLA works cited entry and a brief summary of how you will use the source. You must have at least eight sources of the proper type, explanations for how they’ll be used, and brief summaries of every source in your words. Go one by one through the sources, then, and don’t number your alphabetized entries.

You will need to include both a works cited entry and a short summary of the source’s usefulness to get credit here. You may use notes or fragments when summarizing how you’ll use the source.

Questions You May Wish to Pose & Answer

How am I going to use your source?
Where in the paper might I use this source?
Does this source have information on my side, the other side(s), or both?
What major point will information from this source serve? Is the information current? Are the author’s points logical?
What bias does my source have?
What would readers need to know about where/how this information was derived?
Why is the author credible? She is credible because____________.

Anticipating and answering questions like this is an important part of the working bibliography.
Do not use the wording of any abstracts in your summaries of the sources’ usefulness.
Each source gets its own works cited entry and commentary. Do not number the entries.
If you get sources after this, of course those can be added to the paper.
STRUCTURE & OUTLINING
Academic Writing Review

Remember these items as you edit your essay. They can make a big difference. I hope this sort of things helps. It’s incomplete, but it’s a start.

Think of the purpose of your paper, and of how each paragraph helps you fulfill it. As I mentioned elsewhere, the essays in the book aren’t pure models for the academic writing we will be doing. What we write should look more solid, even if it is less flashy. You’ll need to cite details and quickly follow up on their meanings through strong interpretation of the cited material. Topic sentences and transitions are key elements as well.

Thesis/Introduction

- Set up your thesis; it’s best to place it near/at the end of the introduction.
- Two-part introductions or other types of unconventional introductions tend not to work. Why? The writer tends not to do the jobs of the introduction. These include previewing the rest of the essay, setting up the thesis (and showing other sides to the point you’re trying to prove).
- Make sure your introduction promises what you’ll do. (Don’t say “In this essay I’ll…” or “First, I’ll discuss,” though. Just go ahead and start previewing the paper.)
- Avoid using “I” as much as possible.
- “Don’t use don’t.” Avoid contractions—as I haven’t in this posting!
- “Oh, I almost forgot.” Be careful of the formal writing voice you need to use. Don’t sound chatty. I want you to write more formally than you are in your postings.

Thesis Checklist

With the thesis statement, keep the following questions in mind. They might work for most academic writing. Get good at asking follow-up questions of your own so that you can edit your work.

- Is it a statement?
- Is it a complex sentence? (Most good thesis statements provide an overview of what you’ll go into. Therefore, most good thesis statements need to be complex sentences.)
- Does it take into account your 2-3 main reasons? (These are usually your body paragraph topics, right?)
- Does it take different sides into account? You want to appear fair, and the thesis is a great place for you to frame the merits and weak points of contending sides.
- Where will you locate this statement? Usually, though not always, we put the thesis either at the end of the introduction, or near the end. This allows us to set up the thesis carefully. Your introduction should take care to preview what you’ll get into in the body paragraphs, just as the conclusion reviews what you did.

Paragraphing

- Starting/ending paragraphs with quotes is often a warning sign. Why is that?
- When editing, check for strong topic sentences. Are they there? (Go a step further: did your major topics make it into the introduction as preview material, and into the conclusion as review?)
- Citing properly matters. If readers are wondering where a source begins or ends, they are not attending to the content you chose to cite. Their job of appreciating what you brought to the essay is made impossible by citing problems.
- Do interpret between quotes. Avoid stacking two or three quotes. I’m more interested in what you have to write about the quotes than what’s in the quotes.
- Fix the problems with Smart Quotes. (See that mini-lecture in Module 1)
- Are your paragraphs connected directly to the thesis? How? (Is the connection clear enough?)
End paragraphs well. (Consider transitions as well as restatement of topic sentence.)

**Interpretation**

Perhaps the biggest frustration is that many of you include great quotes. They’re promising, they’re useful, they’re... sitting there! Use the words in the quote. Get readers to see their meaning. If you aren’t doing some work at this level, then you aren’t interpreting. Good readers are waiting for you to prove your points through close reading of the text. (Sell us on what the words mean. That takes some time.)

**Conclusion**

- Lack of a conclusion will seriously affect your readers’ reactions to the essay (and thus, your grade).
- I value strong conclusions that restate your points and remind readers about how you proved your claim(s).
- Do not add new information to the conclusion.
- Restate your thesis at a strategic point. Otherwise, readers will not remember your work soon afterwards—or a week from now.
- Be detailed: this is where you remind us of what you did.
- Don’t write two or three sentences and “be done with it.”
Classical Essay Structure

The following videos provide an explanation of the classical model of structuring a persuasive argument. You can access the slides alone, without narration, here: https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1ziU1K7VmGX0BueQ1Z6s6i8fk6PUk7HmCNw8X1V4gl/pub?start=false&loop=false&delayms=3000

- https://youtu.be/3m_EP-BPsBs
Your prewriting activities and readings have helped you gather information for your assignment. The more you sort through the pieces of information you found, the more you will begin to see the connections between them. Patterns and gaps may begin to stand out. But only when you start to organize your ideas will you be able to translate your raw insights into a form that will communicate meaning to your audience.

Organizing Ideas

When you write, you need to organize your ideas in an order that makes sense. The writing you complete in all your courses exposes how analytically and critically your mind works. In some courses, the only direct contact you may have with your instructor is through the assignments you write for the course. You can make a good impression by spending time ordering your ideas.

Order refers to your choice of what to present first, second, third, and so on in your writing. The order you pick closely relates to your purpose for writing that particular assignment. For example, when telling a story, it may be important to first describe the background for the action. Or you may need to first describe a 3-D movie projector or a television studio to help readers visualize the setting and scene. You may want to group your support effectively to convince readers that your point of view on an issue is well reasoned and worthy of belief.

In longer pieces of writing, you may organize different parts in different ways so that your purpose stands out clearly and all parts of the paper work together to consistently develop your main point.

Methods of Organizing Writing

The three common methods of organizing writing are chronological order, spatial order, and order of importance. You will learn more about these in Chapter 8 “Writing Essays: From Start to Finish”; however, you need to keep these methods of organization in mind as you plan how to arrange the information you have gathered in an outline. An outline is a written plan that serves as a skeleton for the paragraphs you write. Later, when you draft paragraphs in the next stage of the writing process, you will add support to create “flesh” and “muscle” for your assignment.
When you write, your goal is not only to complete an assignment but also to write for a specific purpose—perhaps to inform, to explain, to persuade, or for a combination of these purposes. Your purpose for writing should always be in the back of your mind, because it will help you decide which pieces of information belong together and how you will order them. In other words, choose the order that will most effectively fit your purpose and support your main point.

Table 7.1 “Order versus Purpose” shows the connection between order and purpose.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Order</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chronological Order</td>
<td>To explain the history of an event or a topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To tell a story or relate an experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To explain how to do or make something</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To explain the steps in a process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spatial Order</td>
<td>To help readers visualize something as you want them to see it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To create a main impression using the senses (sight, touch, taste, smell, and sound)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Order of Importance</td>
<td>To persuade or convince</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To rank items by their importance, benefit, or significance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Writing a Thesis Statement**

One legitimate question readers always ask about a piece of writing is “What is the big idea?” (You may even ask this question when you are the reader, critically reading an assignment or another document.) Every nonfiction writing task—from the short essay to the ten-page term paper to the lengthy senior thesis—needs a big idea, or a controlling idea, as the spine for the work. The controlling idea is the main idea that you want to present and develop.

For a longer piece of writing, the main idea should be broader than the main idea for a shorter piece of writing. Be sure to frame a main idea that is appropriate for the length of the assignment. Ask yourself, “How many pages will it take for me to explain and explore this main idea in detail?” Be reasonable with your estimate. Then expand or trim it to fit the required length.

The big idea, or controlling idea, you want to present in an essay is expressed in a thesis statement. A thesis statement is often one sentence long, and it states your point of view. The thesis statement is not the topic of the piece of writing but rather what you have to say about that topic and what is important to tell readers.

Table 7.2 “Topics and Thesis Statements” compares topics and thesis statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Thesis Statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Music piracy</td>
<td>The recording industry fears that so-called music piracy will diminish profits and destroy markets, but it cannot be more wrong.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The number of consumer choices available in media gear</td>
<td>Everyone wants the newest and the best digital technology, but the choices are extensive, and the specifications are often confusing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-books and online newspapers increasing their share of the market</td>
<td>E-books and online newspapers will bring an end to print media as we know it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Online education and the new media  
Someday, students and teachers will send avatars to their online classrooms.

The first thesis statement you write will be a preliminary thesis statement, or a working thesis statement. You will need it when you begin to outline your assignment as a way to organize it. As you continue to develop the arrangement, you can limit your working thesis statement if it is too broad or expand it if it proves too narrow for what you want to say.

TIP
You will make several attempts before you devise a working thesis statement that you think is effective. Each draft of the thesis statement will bring you closer to the wording that expresses your meaning exactly.

Writing an Outline

For an essay question on a test or a brief oral presentation in class, all you may need to prepare is a short, informal outline in which you jot down key ideas in the order you will present them. This kind of outline reminds you to stay focused in a stressful situation and to include all the good ideas that help you explain or prove your point.

For a longer assignment, like an essay or a research paper, many college instructors require students to submit a formal outline before writing a major paper as a way to be sure you are on the right track and are working in an organized manner. A formal outline is a detailed guide that shows how all your supporting ideas relate to each other. It helps you distinguish between ideas that are of equal importance and ones that are of lesser importance. You build your paper based on the framework created by the outline.

TIP
Instructors may also require you to submit an outline with your final draft to check the direction of the assignment and the logic of your final draft. If you are required to submit an outline with the final draft of a paper, remember to revise the outline to reflect any changes you made while writing the paper.

There are two types of formal outlines: the topic outline and the sentence outline. You format both types of formal outlines in the same way.

- Place your introduction and thesis statement at the beginning, under roman numeral I.
- Use roman numerals (II, III, IV, V, etc.) to identify main points that develop the thesis statement.
- Use capital letters (A, B, C, D, etc.) to divide your main points into parts.
- Use arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, etc.) if you need to subdivide any As, Bs, or Cs into smaller parts.
- End with the final roman numeral expressing your idea for your conclusion.

Here is what the skeleton of a traditional formal outline looks like. The indentation helps clarify how the ideas are related.

1. Introduction
   Thesis statement
2. Main point 1 → becomes the topic sentence of body paragraph 1
   1. Supporting detail → becomes a support sentence of body paragraph 1
      1. Subpoint
TIP

In an outline, any supporting detail can be developed with subpoints. For simplicity, the model shows them only under the first main point.

TIP

Formal outlines are often quite rigid in their organization. As many instructors will specify, you cannot subdivide one point if it is only one part. For example, for every roman numeral I, there must be a A. For every A, there must be a B. For every arabic numeral 1, there must be a 2. See for yourself on the sample outlines that follow.

Constructing Topic Outlines

A topic outline is the same as a sentence outline except you use words or phrases instead of complete sentences. Words and phrases keep the outline short and easier to comprehend. All the headings, however, must be written in parallel structure. (For more information on parallel structure, see “Refining Your Writing: How Do I Improve My Writing Technique?”.)

Here is the topic outline that Mariah constructed for the essay she is developing. Her purpose is to inform, and her audience is a general audience of her fellow college students. Notice how Mariah begins with her thesis statement. She then arranges her main points and supporting details in outline form using short phrases in parallel grammatical structure.
Checklist

Writing an Effective Topic Outline

This checklist can help you write an effective topic outline for your assignment. It will also help you discover where you may need to do additional reading or prewriting.

- Do I have a controlling idea that guides the development of the entire piece of writing?
- Do I have three or more main points that I want to make in this piece of writing? Does each main point connect to my controlling idea?
- Is my outline in the best order—chronological order, spatial order, or order of importance—for me to present my main points? Will this order help me get my main point across?
- Do I have supporting details that will help me inform, explain, or prove my main points?
- Do I need to add more support? If so, where?
- Do I need to make any adjustments in my working thesis statement before I consider it the final version?
Writing at Work

Word processing programs generally have an automatic numbering feature that can be used to prepare outlines. This feature automatically sets indents and lets you use the tab key to arrange information just as you would in an outline. Although in business this style might be acceptable, in college your instructor might have different requirements. Teach yourself how to customize the levels of outline numbering in your word-processing program to fit your instructor’s preferences.

Constructing Sentence Outlines

A sentence outline is the same as a topic outline except you use complete sentences instead of words or phrases. Complete sentences create clarity and can advance you one step closer to a draft in the writing process.

Here is the sentence outline that Mariah constructed for the essay she is developing.
The information compiled under each roman numeral will become a paragraph in your final paper. In the previous example, the outline follows the standard five-paragraph essay arrangement, but longer essays will require more paragraphs and thus more roman numerals. If you think that a paragraph might become too long or stringy, add an additional paragraph to your outline, renumbering the main points appropriately.

Writing at Work

PowerPoint presentations, used both in schools and in the workplace, are organized in a way very similar to formal outlines. PowerPoint presentations often contain information in the form of talking points that the presenter develops with more details and examples than are contained on the PowerPoint slide.

Key Takeaways

- Writers must put their ideas in order so the assignment makes sense. The most common orders are chronological order, spatial order, and order of importance.
- After gathering and evaluating the information you found for your essay, the next step is to write a working, or preliminary, thesis statement.
- The working thesis statement expresses the main idea that you want to develop in the entire piece of writing. It can be modified as you continue the writing process.
- Effective writers prepare a formal outline to organize their main ideas and supporting details in the order they will be presented.
- A topic outline uses words and phrases to express the ideas.
- A sentence outline uses complete sentences to express the ideas.
- The writer’s thesis statement begins the outline, and the outline ends with suggestions for the concluding paragraph.

Exercises

1. Using the topic you selected in “Apply Prewriting Models,” develop a working thesis statement that states your controlling idea for the piece of writing you are doing. On a sheet of paper, write your working thesis statement.

2. Using the working thesis statement you wrote in #1 and the reading you did in “Apply Prewriting Models,” construct a topic outline for your essay. Be sure to observe correct outline form, including correct indentations and the use of Roman and arabic numerals and capital letters. Please share with a classmate and compare your outline. Point out areas of interest from their outline and what you would like to learn more about.

3. Expand the topic outline you prepared #2 to make it a sentence outline. In this outline, be sure to include multiple supporting points for your main topic even if your topic outline does not contain them. Be sure to observe correct outline form, including correct indentations and the use of Roman and arabic numerals and capital letters.
Introductions

WHAT THIS HANDOUT IS ABOUT

This handout will explain the functions of introductions, offer strategies for writing effective ones, help you check your drafted introductions, and provide you with examples of introductions to be avoided.

THE ROLE OF INTRODUCTIONS

Introductions and conclusions can be the most difficult parts of papers to write. Usually when you sit down to respond to an assignment, you have at least some sense of what you want to say in the body of your paper. You might have chosen a few examples you want to use or have an idea that will help you answer the main question of your assignment: these sections, therefore, are not as hard to write. But these middle parts of the paper can’t just come out of thin air; they need to be introduced and concluded in a way that makes sense to your reader.

Your introduction and conclusion act as bridges that transport your readers from their own lives into the “place” of your analysis. If your readers pick up your paper about education in the autobiography of Frederick Douglass, for example, they need a transition to help them leave behind the world of Chapel Hill, television, e-mail, and the The Daily Tar Heel and to help them temporarily enter the world of nineteenth-century American slavery. By providing an introduction that helps your readers make a transition between their own world and the issues you will be writing about, you give your readers the tools they need to get into your topic and care about what you are saying. Similarly, once you’ve hooked your reader with the introduction and offered evidence to prove your thesis, your conclusion can provide a bridge to help your readers make the transition back to their daily lives. (See our handout on conclusions.)

WHY BOTHER WRITING A GOOD INTRODUCTION?

You never get a second chance to make a first impression. The opening paragraph of your paper will provide your readers with their initial impressions of your argument, your writing style, and the overall quality of your work. A vague, disorganized, error-filled, off-the-wall, or boring introduction will probably create a negative impression. On the other hand, a concise, engaging, and well-written introduction will start your readers off thinking highly of you, your analytical skills, your writing, and your paper. This impression is especially important when the audience you are trying to reach (your instructor) will be grading your work.

Your introduction is an important road map for the rest of your paper. Your introduction conveys a lot of information to your readers. You can let them know what your topic is, why it is important, and how you plan to proceed with your discussion. In most academic disciplines, your introduction should contain a thesis that will assert your main argument. It should also, ideally, give the reader a sense of the kinds of information you will use to make that argument and the general organization of the paragraphs and pages that will follow. After reading your introduction, your readers should not have any major surprises in store when they read the main body of your paper.

Ideally, your introduction will make your readers want to read your paper. The introduction should capture your readers’ interest, making them want to read the rest of your paper. Opening with a compelling story, a fascinating quotation, an interesting question, or a stirring example can get your readers to see why this topic matters and serve as an invitation for them to join you for an interesting intellectual conversation.
STRATEGIES FOR WRITING AN EFFECTIVE INTRODUCTION

Start by thinking about the question (or questions) you are trying to answer. Your entire essay will be a response to this question, and your introduction is the first step toward that end. Your direct answer to the assigned question will be your thesis, and your thesis will be included in your introduction, so it is a good idea to use the question as a jumping off point. Imagine that you are assigned the following question:

*Education has long been considered a major force for American social change, righting the wrongs of our society. Drawing on the Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, discuss the relationship between education and slavery in 19th-century America. Consider the following: How did white control of education reinforce slavery? How did Douglass and other enslaved African Americans view education while they endured slavery? And what role did education play in the acquisition of freedom? Most importantly, consider the degree to which education was or was not a major force for social change with regard to slavery.*

You will probably refer back to your assignment extensively as you prepare your complete essay, and the prompt itself can also give you some clues about how to approach the introduction. Notice that it starts with a broad statement, that education has been considered a major force for social change, and then narrows to focus on specific questions from the book. One strategy might be to use a similar model in your own introduction —start off with a big picture sentence or two about the power of education as a force for change as a way of getting your reader interested and then focus in on the details of your argument about Douglass. Of course, a different approach could also be very successful, but looking at the way the professor set up the question can sometimes give you some ideas for how you might answer it.

Decide how general or broad your opening should be. Keep in mind that even a “big picture” opening needs to be clearly related to your topic; an opening sentence that said “Human beings, more than any other creatures on earth, are capable of learning” would be too broad for our sample assignment about slavery and education. If you have ever used Google Maps or similar programs, that experience can provide a helpful way of thinking about how broad your opening should be. Imagine that you’re researching Chapel Hill. If what you want to find out is whether Chapel Hill is at roughly the same latitude as Rome, it might make sense to hit that little “minus” sign on the online map until it has zoomed all the way out and you can see the whole globe. If you’re trying to figure out how to get from Chapel Hill to Wrightsville Beach, it might make more sense to zoom in to the level where you can see most of North Carolina (but not the rest of the world, or even the rest of the United States). And if you are looking for the intersection of Ridge Road and Manning Drive so that you can find the Writing Center’s main office, you may need to zoom all the way in. The question you are asking determines how “broad” your view should be. In the sample assignment above, the questions are probably at the “state” or “city” level of generality. But the introductory sentence about human beings is mismatched—it’s definitely at the “global” level. When writing, you need to place your ideas in context—but that context doesn’t generally have to be as big as the whole galaxy! (See our handout on understanding assignments for additional information on the hidden clues in assignments.)

Try writing your introduction last. You may think that you have to write your introduction first, but that isn’t necessarily true, and it isn’t always the most effective way to craft a good introduction. You may find that you don’t know what you are going to argue at the beginning of the writing process, and only through the experience of writing your paper do you discover your main argument. It is perfectly fine to start out thinking that you want to argue a particular point, but wind up arguing something slightly or even dramatically different by the time you’ve written most of the paper. The writing process can be an important way to organize your ideas, think through complicated issues, refine your thoughts, and develop a sophisticated argument. However, an introduction written at the beginning of that discovery process will not necessarily reflect what you wind up with at the end. You will need to revise your paper to make sure that the introduction, all of the evidence, and the conclusion reflect the argument you intend. Sometimes it’s easiest to just write up all of your evidence first and then write the introduction last—that way you can be sure that the introduction will match the body of the paper.

Don’t be afraid to write a tentative introduction first and then change it later. Some people find that they need to write some kind of introduction in order to get the writing process started. That’s fine, but if you are one of those people, be sure to return to your initial introduction later and rewrite if necessary.
Open with an attention grabber. Sometimes, especially if the topic of your paper is somewhat dry or technical, opening with something catchy can help. Consider these options:

1. an intriguing example (for example, the mistress who initially teaches Douglass but then ceases her instruction as she learns more about slavery)
2. a provocative quotation (Douglass writes that “education and slavery were incompatible with each other”)
3. a puzzling scenario (Frederick Douglass says of slaves that “[N]othing has been left undone to cripple their intellects, darken their minds, debase their moral nature, obliterate all traces of their relationship to mankind; and yet how wonderfully they have sustained the mighty load of a most frightful bondage, under which they have been groaning for centuries!” Douglass clearly asserts that slave owners went to great lengths to destroy the mental capacities of slaves, yet his own life story proves that these efforts could be unsuccessful.)
4. a vivid and perhaps unexpected anecdote (for example, “Learning about slavery in the American history course at Frederick Douglass High School, students studied the work slaves did, the impact of slavery on their families, and the rules that governed their lives. We didn’t discuss education, however, until one student, Mary, raised her hand and asked, ‘But when did they go to school?’ That modern high school students could not conceive of an American childhood devoid of formal education speaks volumes about the centrality of education to American youth today and also suggests the significance of the deprivation of education in past generations.”)
5. a thought-provoking question (given all of the freedoms that were denied enslaved individuals in the American South, why does Frederick Douglass focus his attentions so squarely on education and literacy?)

Pay special attention to your first sentence. Start off on the right foot with your readers by making sure that the first sentence actually says something useful and that it does so in an interesting and error-free way.

Be straightforward and confident. Avoid statements like “In this paper, I will argue that Frederick Douglass valued education.” While this sentence points toward your main argument, it isn’t especially interesting. It might be more effective to say what you mean in a declarative sentence. It is much more convincing to tell us that “Frederick Douglass valued education” than to tell us that you are going to say that he did. Assert your main argument confidently. After all, you can’t expect your reader to believe it if it doesn’t sound like you believe it!

HOW TO EVALUATE YOUR INTRODUCTION DRAFT

Ask a friend to read it and then tell you what he or she expects the paper will discuss, what kinds of evidence the paper will use, and what the tone of the paper will be. If your friend is able to predict the rest of your paper accurately, you probably have a good introduction.

FIVE KINDS OF LESS EFFECTIVE INTRODUCTIONS

1. The place holder introduction. When you don’t have much to say on a given topic, it is easy to create this kind of introduction. Essentially, this kind of weaker introduction contains several sentences that are vague and don’t really say much. They exist just to take up the “introduction space” in your paper. If you had something more effective to say, you would probably say it, but in the meantime this paragraph is just a place holder.

Example: Slavery was one of the greatest tragedies in American history. There were many different aspects of slavery. Each created different kinds of problems for enslaved people.

2. The restated question introduction. Restating the question can sometimes be an effective strategy, but it can be easy to stop at JUST restating the question instead of offering a more specific, interesting introduction to your paper. The professor or teaching assistant wrote your questions and will be reading ten to seventy essays in response to them—he or she does not need to read a whole paragraph that simply restates the question. Try to do something more interesting.
Example: Indeed, education has long been considered a major force for American social change, righting the wrongs of our society. The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass discusses the relationship between education and slavery in 19th century America, showing how white control of education reinforced slavery and how Douglass and other enslaved African Americans viewed education while they endured. Moreover, the book discusses the role that education played in the acquisition of freedom. Education was a major force for social change with regard to slavery.

3. The Webster’s Dictionary introduction. This introduction begins by giving the dictionary definition of one or more of the words in the assigned question. This introduction strategy is on the right track—if you write one of these, you may be trying to establish the important terms of the discussion, and this move builds a bridge to the reader by offering a common, agreed-upon definition for a key idea. You may also be looking for an authority that will lend credibility to your paper. However, anyone can look a word up in the dictionary and copy down what Webster says—it may be far more interesting for you (and your reader) if you develop your own definition of the term in the specific context of your class and assignment, or if you use a definition from one of the sources you’ve been reading for class. Also recognize that the dictionary is also not a particularly authoritative work—it doesn’t take into account the context of your course and doesn’t offer particularly detailed information. If you feel that you must seek out an authority, try to find one that is very relevant and specific. Perhaps a quotation from a source reading might prove better? Dictionary introductions are also ineffective simply because they are so overused. Many graders will see twenty or more papers that begin in this way, greatly decreasing the dramatic impact that any one of those papers will have.

Example: Webster’s dictionary defines slavery as “the state of being a slave,” as “the practice of owning slaves,” and as “a condition of hard work and subjection.”

4. The “dawn of man” introduction. This kind of introduction generally makes broad, sweeping statements about the relevance of this topic since the beginning of time. It is usually very general (similar to the place holder introduction) and fails to connect to the thesis. You may write this kind of introduction when you don’t have much to say—which is precisely why it is ineffective.

Example: Since the dawn of man, slavery has been a problem in human history.

5. The book report introduction. This introduction is what you had to do for your elementary school book reports. It gives the name and author of the book you are writing about, tells what the book is about, and offers other basic facts about the book. You might resort to this sort of introduction when you are trying to fill space because it’s a familiar, comfortable format. It is ineffective because it offers details that your reader already knows and that are irrelevant to the thesis.

Example: Frederick Douglass wrote his autobiography, Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, in the 1840s. It was published in 1986 by Penguin Books. In it, he tells the story of his life.

WORKS CONSULTED

We consulted these works while writing the original version of this handout. This is not a comprehensive list of resources on the handout’s topic, and we encourage you to do your own research to find the latest publications on this topic. Please do not use this list as a model for the format of your own reference list, as it may not match the citation style you are using. For guidance on formatting citations, please see the UNC Libraries citation tutorial.

All quotations are from Frederick Douglass, Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, edited and with introduction by Houston A. Baker, Jr., New York: Penguin Books, 1986.

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Conclusions

WHAT THIS HANDOUT IS ABOUT

This handout will explain the functions of conclusions, offer strategies for writing effective ones, help you evaluate your drafted conclusions, and suggest conclusion strategies to avoid.

ABOUT CONCLUSIONS

Introductions and conclusions can be the most difficult parts of papers to write. While the body is often easier to write, it needs a frame around it. An introduction and conclusion frame your thoughts and bridge your ideas for the reader.

Just as your introduction acts as a bridge that transports your readers from their own lives into the “place” of your analysis, your conclusion can provide a bridge to help your readers make the transition back to their daily lives. Such a conclusion will help them see why all your analysis and information should matter to them after they put the paper down.

Your conclusion is your chance to have the last word on the subject. The conclusion allows you to have the final say on the issues you have raised in your paper, to synthesize your thoughts, to demonstrate the importance of your ideas, and to propel your reader to a new view of the subject. It is also your opportunity to make a good final impression and to end on a positive note.

Your conclusion can go beyond the confines of the assignment. The conclusion pushes beyond the boundaries of the prompt and allows you to consider broader issues, make new connections, and elaborate on the significance of your findings.

Your conclusion should make your readers glad they read your paper. Your conclusion gives your reader something to take away that will help them see things differently or appreciate your topic in personally relevant ways. It can suggest broader implications that will not only interest your reader, but also enrich your reader’s life in some way. It is your gift to the reader.

STRATEGIES FOR WRITING AN EFFECTIVE CONCLUSION

One or more of the following strategies may help you write an effective conclusion.

- Play the “So What” Game. If you’re stuck and feel like your conclusion isn’t saying anything new or interesting, ask a friend to read it with you. Whenever you make a statement from your conclusion, ask the friend to say, “So what?” or “Why should anybody care?” Then ponder that question and answer it. Here’s how it might go: You: Basically, I’m just saying that education was important to Douglass. Friend: So what?

  You: Well, it was important because it was a key to him feeling like a free and equal citizen.

  Friend: Why should anybody care?

  You: That’s important because plantation owners tried to keep slaves from being educated so that they could maintain control. When Douglass obtained an education, he undermined that control personally.

- Return to the theme or themes in the introduction. This strategy brings the reader full circle. For example, if you begin by describing a scenario, you can end with the same scenario as proof that your essay is helpful in creating a new understanding. You may also refer to the introductory paragraph by using key words or parallel concepts and images that you also used in the introduction.

- Synthesize, don’t summarize: Include a brief summary of the paper’s main points, but don’t simply repeat things that were in your paper. Instead, show your reader how the points you made and the support and examples you used fit together.
Pull it all together.

- Include a provocative insight or quotation from the research or reading you did for your paper.
- Propose a course of action, a solution to an issue, or questions for further study. This can redirect your reader's thought process and help her to apply your info and ideas to her own life or to see the broader implications.
- Point to broader implications. For example, if your paper examines the Greensboro sit-ins or another event in the Civil Rights Movement, you could point out its impact on the Civil Rights Movement as a whole. A paper about the style of writer Virginia Woolf could point to her influence on other writers or on later feminists.

**STRATEGIES TO AVOID**

- Beginning with an unnecessary, overused phrase such as “in conclusion,” “in summary,” or “in closing.” Although these phrases can work in speeches, they come across as wooden and trite in writing.
- Stating the thesis for the very first time in the conclusion.
- Introducing a new idea or subtopic in your conclusion.
- Ending with a rephrased thesis statement without any substantive changes.
- Making sentimental, emotional appeals that are out of character with the rest of an analytical paper.
- Including evidence (quotations, statistics, etc.) that should be in the body of the paper.

**FOUR KINDS OF INEFFECTIVE CONCLUSIONS**

1. The “That's My Story and I’m Sticking to It” Conclusion. This conclusion just restates the thesis and is usually painfully short. It does not push the ideas forward. People write this kind of conclusion when they can't think of anything else to say. Example: In conclusion, Frederick Douglass was, as we have seen, a pioneer in American education, proving that education was a major force for social change with regard to slavery.

2. The “Sherlock Holmes” Conclusion. Sometimes writers will state the thesis for the very first time in the conclusion. You might be tempted to use this strategy if you don't want to give everything away too early in your paper. You may think it would be more dramatic to keep the reader in the dark until the end and then “wow” him with your main idea, as in a Sherlock Holmes mystery. The reader, however, does not expect a mystery, but an analytical discussion of your topic in an academic style, with the main argument (thesis) stated up front. Example: (After a paper that lists numerous incidents from the book but never says what these incidents reveal about Douglass and his views on education): So, as the evidence above demonstrates, Douglass saw education as a way to undermine the slaveholders’ power and also an important step toward freedom.

3. The “America the Beautiful”/”I Am Woman”/”We Shall Overcome” Conclusion. This kind of conclusion usually draws on emotion to make its appeal, but while this emotion and even sentimentality may be very heartfelt, it is usually out of character with the rest of an analytical paper. A more sophisticated commentary, rather than emotional praise, would be a more fitting tribute to the topic. Example: Because of the efforts of fine Americans like Frederick Douglass, countless others have seen the shining beacon of light that is education. His example was a torch that lit the way for others. Frederick Douglass was truly an American hero.

4. The “Grab Bag” Conclusion. This kind of conclusion includes extra information that the writer found or thought of but couldn’t integrate into the main paper. You may find it hard to leave out details that you discovered after hours of research and thought, but adding random facts and bits of evidence at the end of an otherwise-well-organized essay can just create confusion. Example: In addition to being an educational pioneer, Frederick Douglass provides an interesting case study for masculinity in the American South. He also offers historians an interesting glimpse into slave resistance when he confronts Covey, the overseer. His relationships with female relatives reveal the importance of family in the slave community.
WORKS CONSULTED

We consulted these works while writing the original version of this handout. This is not a comprehensive list of resources on the handout’s topic, and we encourage you to do your own research to find the latest publications on this topic. Please do not use this list as a model for the format of your own reference list, as it may not match the citation style you are using. For guidance on formatting citations, please see the UNC Libraries citation tutorial (http://www.lib.unc.edu/instruct/citations/).

All quotations are from:


Strategies for Writing a Conclusion. Literacy Education Online, St. Cloud State University. 18 May 2005 <http://leo.stcloudstate.edu/acadwrite/conclude.html>.


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Discussion: Argument and Counterargument

This will be a small group discussion—you’ll only see posts from a smaller group of people.

Previously you did some great work identifying your target audience for your research project. The whole fun of writing a persuasive paper is to pick an audience who disagrees with you, or at least is undecided about the matter. Then you use charm, wit, and raw intelligence to prove that they’re absolutely silly for thinking what they do, and that they better come over to your side or else the world will end.

In being persuasive and winning the fight, it helps a lot to remember that your target audience has reasons for their position on the issue. Those reasons may not be GOOD ones, of course, but they have some motivation for thinking or feeling the way they do. (I still don’t like eating at Jack in the Box because a friend of mine had a really bad experience there years ago, in another state. Not a very rational reason, I admit, but it does shape my behavior when it comes to fast food.)

In order to be truly persuasive, you have to understand what people’s motivations are, and acknowledge those in your essay. If you don’t, then readers will think one of two things: 1) you don’t know what the other side thinks, and are therefore ignorant, or 2) you know what they think, but you just don’t have any good response for it and are avoiding it.

I’d like you to visit POWA’s “Anticipating Opposition” article and read the content there. Then, return to this discussion and build your own pro/con chart, using your thesis as the “proposition.” It’ll be easier to create a list, rather than a chart, given our constraints in the discussion forum platform.

Then look at one or two of your “con” statements in more detail. How will you acknowledge these arguments in your own essay, and what will you say to your reader to counter them? For instance, if I were trying to talk myself into eating at Jack in the Box again, I’d acknowledge that finding a bug in your food is yes, a traumatic event. But it was an isolated incident, and in no way reflects the standards of the chain overall. I’d go into food safety data and possibly relate the health scores of the local franchises recently. Maybe I’d even embark on a smear campaign and talk about similar events that have occurred at other fast food chains, to show it’s not particular to one brand.

Your post should be at least 150-200 words. It doesn’t have to be grammatically perfect, but should use standard English (no text-speak, please) and normal capitalization rules.

You will also need to return to this Discussion to reply to at least one of your group members’ posts. Content could include, but is not limited to, any of the following: Suggest further elements that could be added either to the Pro or Con side of their chart. Indicate what it would take for you to be convinced, if you were on the con side of the argument.

Responses are weighed as heavily as your initial posting, and should be roughly as long (150-200 words). Responses should indicate you’ve read your classmate’s post carefully. Include specific details from the post you’re responding to in your reply.

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Logical Fallacies

Logical fallacies are errors in reasoning. The Excelsior OWL site has several of the main fallacies (http://owl.excelsior.edu/argument-and-critical-thinking/logical-fallacies/) outlined. If you become familiar with them, you can identify logical fallacies in others’ arguments. You can also avoid using logical fallacies in your own writing. . . or, if you’re very clever, use them to your advantage to convince of something. Beware! If a good reader catches the writer committing a fallacy, they will likely read with an edge, becoming an adversary of the writer. It’s just logical that they would do so.

Wouldn't Mr. Spock would agree?
Logical Fallacies Handlist:

Fallacies are statements that might sound reasonable or superficially true but are actually flawed or dishonest. When readers detect them, these logical fallacies backfire by making the audience think the writer is (a) unintelligent or (b) deceptive. It is important to avoid them in your own arguments, and it is also important to be able to spot them in others’ arguments so a false line of reasoning won’t fool you. Think of this as intellectual kung-fu: the vital art of self-defense in a debate. For extra impact, learn both the Latin terms and the English equivalents. You can click here to download a PDF version of this material: https://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/documents/Logic_Fallacies_List.pdf

In general, one useful way to organize fallacies is by category. We have below fallacies of relevance, component fallacies, fallacies of ambiguity, and fallacies of omission. We will discuss each type in turn. The last point to discuss is Occam’s Razor.

FALLACIES OF RELEVANCE: These fallacies appeal to evidence or examples that are not relevant to the argument at hand.

Appeal to Force (Argumentum Ad Baculum or the “Might-Makes-Right” Fallacy): This argument uses force, the threat of force, or some other unpleasant backlash to make the audience accept a conclusion. It commonly appears as a last resort when evidence or rational arguments fail to convince a reader. If the debate is about whether or not 2+2=4, an opponent’s argument that he will smash your nose in if you don’t agree with his claim doesn’t change the truth of an issue. Logically, this consideration has nothing to do with the points under consideration. The fallacy is not limited to threats of violence, however. The fallacy includes threats of any unpleasant backlash—financial, professional, and so on. Example: “Superintendent, you should cut the school budget by $16,000. I need not remind you that past school boards have fired superintendents who cannot keep down costs.” While intimidation may force the superintendent to conform, it does not convince him that the choice to cut the budget was the most beneficial for the school or community. Lobbyists use this method when they remind legislators that they represent so many thousand votes in the legislators’ constituencies and threaten to throw the politician out of office if he doesn’t vote the way they want. Teachers use this method if they state that students should hold the same political or philosophical position as the teachers or risk failing the class. Note that it is isn’t a logical fallacy, however, to assert that students must fulfill certain requirements in the course or risk failing the class!

Genetic Fallacy: The genetic fallacy is the claim that an idea, product, or person must be untrustworthy because of its racial, geographic, or ethnic origin. “That car can’t possibly
be any good! It was made in Japan!” Or, “Why should I listen to her argument? She comes from California, and we all know those people are flakes.” Or, “Ha! I’m not reading that book. It was published in Tennessee, and we know all Tennessee folk are hillbillies and rednecks!” This type of fallacy is closely related to the fallacy of argumentum ad hominem or personal attack, appearing immediately below.

Personal Attack (Argumentum Ad Hominem, literally, “argument toward the man.” Also called “Poisoning the Well”): Attacking or praising the people who make an argument, rather than discussing the argument itself. This practice is fallacious because the personal character of an individual is logically irrelevant to the truth or falseness of the argument itself. The statement “2+2=4” is true regardless if it is stated by criminals, congressmen, or pastors. There are two subcategories:

(1) Abusive: To argue that proposals, assertions, or arguments must be false or dangerous because they originate with atheists, Christians, Muslims, communists, capitalists, the John Birch Society, Catholics, anti-Catholics, racists, anti-racists, feminists, misogynists (or any other group) is fallacious. This persuasion comes from irrational psychological transference rather than from an appeal to evidence or logic concerning the issue at hand. This is similar to the genetic fallacy, and only an anti-intellectual would argue otherwise.

(2) Circumstantial: To argue that an opponent should accept or reject an argument because of circumstances in his or her life. If one’s adversary is a clergyman, suggesting that he should accept a particular argument because not to do so would be incompatible with the scriptures is such a fallacy.
To argue that, because the reader is a Republican or Democrat, she must vote for a specific measure is likewise a circumstantial fallacy. The opponent’s special circumstances have no control over the truth or untruth of a specific contention. The speaker or writer must find additional evidence beyond that to make a strong case. This is also similar to the *genetic fallacy* in some ways. If you are a college student who wants to learn rational thought, you simply must avoid circumstantial fallacies.

Argumentum ad Populum (Literally “Argument to the People”): Using an appeal to popular assent, often by arousing the feelings and enthusiasm of the multitude rather than building an argument. It is a favorite device with the propagandist, the demagogue, and the advertiser. An example of this type of argument is Shakespeare’s version of Mark Antony’s funeral oration for Julius Caesar. There are three basic approaches:

(1) Bandwagon Approach: “Everybody is doing it.” This argumentum ad populum asserts that, since the majority of people believes an argument or chooses a particular course of action, the argument must be true, or the course of action must be followed, or the decision must be the best choice. For instance, “85% of consumers purchase IBM computers rather than Macintosh; all those people can’t be wrong. IBM must make the best computers.” Popular acceptance of any argument does not prove it to be valid, nor does popular use of any product necessarily prove it is the best one.
After all, 85% of people may once have thought planet earth was flat, but that majority’s belief didn’t mean the earth really was flat when they believed it! Keep this in mind, and remember that everybody should avoid this type of logical fallacy.

(2) Patriotic Approach: “Draping oneself in the flag.” This argument asserts that a certain stance is true or correct because it is somehow patriotic, and that those who disagree are unpatriotic. It overlaps with *pathos* and *argumentum ad hominem* to a certain extent. The best way to spot it is to look for emotionally charged terms like Americanism, rugged individualism, motherhood, patriotism, godless communism, etc. A true American would never use this approach. And a truly free man will exercise his American right to drink beer, since beer belongs in this great country of ours. This approach is unworthy of a good citizen.

(3) Snob Approach: This type of *argumentum ad populum* doesn’t assert “everybody is doing it,” but rather that “all the best people are doing it.” For instance, “Any true intellectual would recognize the necessity for studying logical fallacies.” The implication is that anyone who fails to recognize the truth of the author’s assertion is not an intellectual, and thus the reader had best recognize that necessity.

In all three of these examples, the rhetorician does not supply evidence that an argument is true; he merely makes assertions about people who agree or disagree with
the argument. For Christian students in religious schools like Carson-Newman, we might add a fourth category, “Covering Oneself in the Cross.” This argument asserts that a certain political or denominational stance is true or correct because it is somehow “Christian,” and that anyone who disagrees is behaving in an “un-Christian” or “godless” manner. (It is similar to the patriotic approach except it substitutes a gloss of piety instead of patriotism.) Examples include the various “Christian Voting Guides” that appear near election time, many of them published by non-Church related organizations with hidden financial/political agendas, or the stereotypical crooked used-car salesman who keeps a pair of bibles on his dashboard in order to win the trust of those he would fleece. Keep in mind Moliere’s question in Tartuffe: “Is not a face quite different than a mask?” Is not the appearance of Christianity quite different than actual Christianity? Christians should beware of such manipulation since they are especially vulnerable to it.

Appeal to Tradition (Argumentum Ad Traditionem; aka Argumentum Ad Antiquitatem):
This line of thought asserts that a premise must be true because people have always believed it or done it. For example, “We know the earth is flat because generations have thought that for centuries!” Alternatively, the appeal to tradition might conclude that the premise has always worked in the past and will thus always work in the future: “Jefferson City has kept its urban growth boundary at six miles for the past thirty years. That has been good enough for thirty years, so why should we change it now? If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.” Such an argument is appealing in that it seems to be common sense, but it ignores important questions. Might an alternative policy work even better than the old one? Are there drawbacks to that long-standing policy? Are circumstances changing from the way they were thirty years ago? Has new evidence emerged that might throw that long-standing policy into doubt?

Appeal to Improper Authority (Argumentum Ad Verecundium, literally “argument from that which is improper”): An appeal to an improper authority, such as a famous person or a source that may not be reliable or who might not know anything about the topic. This fallacy attempts to capitalize upon feelings of respect or familiarity with a famous individual. It is not fallacious to refer to an admitted authority if the individual’s expertise is within a strict field of knowledge. On the other hand, to cite Einstein to settle an argument about education or economics is fallacious. To cite Darwin, an authority on biology, on religious matters is fallacious. To cite Cardinal Spellman on legal problems is fallacious. The worst offenders usually involve movie stars and psychic hotlines. A subcategory is the Appeal to Biased Authority. In this sort of appeal, the authority is one who actually is knowledgeable on the matter, but one who may have professional or personal motivations that render his professional judgment suspect: for instance, “To determine whether fraternities are beneficial to this campus, we interviewed all the frat presidents.” Or again, “To find out whether or not sludge-mining really is endangering the Tuskogee salamander’s breeding grounds, we interviewed the owners of the sludge-mines, who declared there is no problem.” Indeed, it is important to get “both viewpoints” on an argument, but basing a substantial part of your argument on a source
that has personal, professional, or financial interests at stake may lead to biased arguments. As Upton Sinclair once stated, “It’s difficult to get a man to understand something when his salary depends upon his not understanding it.” Sinclair is pointing out that even a knowledgeable authority might not be entirely rational on a topic when he has economic incentives that bias his thinking.

Appeal to Emotion (Argumentum Ad Misericordiam, literally, “argument from pity”): An emotional appeal concerning what should be a logical issue during a debate. While *pathos* generally works to reinforce a reader’s sense of duty or outrage at some abuse, if a writer tries to use emotion merely for the sake of getting the reader to accept what should be a logical conclusion, the argument is a fallacy. For example, in the 1880s, prosecutors in a Virginia court presented overwhelming proof that a boy was guilty of murdering his parents with an ax. The defense presented a “not-guilty” plea on the grounds that the boy was now an orphan, with no one to look after his interests if the court was not lenient. This appeal to emotion obviously seems misplaced, and the argument is irrelevant to the question of whether or not he did the crime.

Argument from Adverse Consequences: Asserting that an argument must be false because the implications of it being true would create negative results. For instance, “The medical tests show that Grandma has advanced cancer. However, that can’t be true because then she would die! I refuse to believe it!” The argument is illogical because truth and falsity are not contingent based upon how much we like or dislike the consequences of that truth. Grandma, indeed, might have cancer, in spite of how negative that fact may be or how cruelly it may affect us.

Argument from Personal Incredulity: Asserting that opponent's argument must be false because you personally don’t understand it or can’t follow its technicalities. For instance, one person might assert, “I don’t understand that engineer’s argument about how airplanes can fly. Therefore, I cannot believe that airplanes are able to fly.” Au contraire, that speaker’s own mental limitations do not limit the physical world—so airplanes may very well be able to fly in spite of a person’s inability to understand how they work. One person’s comprehension is not relevant to the truth of a matter.

COMPONENT FALLACIES: Component fallacies are errors in inductive and deductive reasoning or in syllogistic terms that fail to overlap.

Begging the Question (also called Petitio Principii, this term is sometimes used interchangeably with Circular Reasoning): If writers assume as evidence for their argument the very conclusion they are attempting to prove, they engage in the fallacy of begging the question. The most common form of this fallacy is when the first claim is initially loaded with the very conclusion one has yet to prove. For instance, suppose a particular student group states, “Useless courses like English 101 should be dropped
from the college’s curriculum.” The members of the student group then immediately move on in the argument, illustrating that spending money on a useless course is something nobody wants. Yes, we all agree that spending money on useless courses is a bad thing. However, those students never did prove that English 101 was itself a useless course—they merely “begged the question” and moved on to the next “safe” part of the argument, skipping over the part that’s the real controversy, the heart of the matter, the most important component. Begging the question is often hidden in the form of a complex question (see below).

Circular Reasoning is closely related to begging the question. Often the writers using this fallacy word take one idea and phrase it in two statements. The assertions differ sufficiently to obscure the fact that that the same proposition occurs as both a premise and a conclusion. The speaker or author then tries to “prove” his or her assertion by merely repeating it in different words. Richard Whately wrote in Elements of Logic (London 1826): “To allow every man unbounded freedom of speech must always be on the whole, advantageous to the state; for it is highly conducive to the interest of the community that each individual should enjoy a liberty perfectly unlimited of expressing his sentiments.” Obviously the premise is not logically irrelevant to the conclusion, for if the premise is true the conclusion must also be true. It is, however, logically irrelevant in proving the conclusion. In the example, the author is repeating the same point in different words, and then attempting to “prove” the first assertion with the second one. A more complex but equally fallacious type of circular reasoning is to create a circular chain of reasoning like this one: “God exists.” “How do you know that God exists?” “The Bible says so.” “Why should I believe the Bible?” “Because it’s the inspired word of God.” If we draw this out as a chart, it looks like this:

![Circular Reasoning Diagram]

The so-called “final proof” relies on unproven evidence set forth initially as the subject of debate. Basically, the argument goes in an endless circle, with each step of the argument
relying on a previous one, which in turn relies on the first argument yet to be proven.
Surely God deserves a more intelligible argument than the circular reasoning proposed in this example!

Hasty Generalization (Dicto Simpliciter, also called “Jumping to Conclusions,” “Converse Accident”): Mistaken use of inductive reasoning when there are too few samples to prove a point. Example: “Susan failed Biology 101. Herman failed Biology 101. Egbert failed Biology 101. I therefore conclude that most students who take Biology 101 will fail it.” In understanding and characterizing general situations, a logician cannot normally examine every single example. However, the examples used in inductive reasoning should be typical of the problem or situation at hand. Maybe Susan, Herman, and Egbert are exceptionally poor students. Maybe they were sick and missed too many lectures that term to pass. If a logician wants to make the case that most students will fail Biology 101, she should (a) get a very large sample—at least one larger than three—or (b) if that isn’t possible, she will need to go out of his way to prove to the reader that her three samples are somehow representative of the norm. If a logician considers only exceptional or dramatic cases and generalizes a rule that fits these alone, the author commits the fallacy of hasty generalization.

One common type of hasty generalization is the Fallacy of Accident. This error occurs when one applies a general rule to a particular case when accidental circumstances render the general rule inapplicable. For example, in Plato’s Republic, Plato finds an exception to the general rule that one should return what one has borrowed: “Suppose that a friend when in his right mind has deposited arms with me and asks for them when he is not in his right mind. Ought I to give the weapons back to him? No one would say that I ought or that I should be right in doing so. . . .” What is true in general may not be true universally and without qualification. So remember, generalizations are bad. All of them. Every single last one. Except, of course, for those that are not.

Another common example of this fallacy is the misleading statistic. Suppose an individual argues that women must be incompetent drivers, and he points out that last Tuesday at the Department of Motor Vehicles, 50% of the women who took the driving test failed. That would seem to be compelling evidence from the way the statistic is set forth. However, if only two women took the test that day, the results would be far less clear-cut.

Incidentally, the cartoon Dilbert makes much of an incompetent manager who cannot perceive misleading statistics. He does a statistical study of when employees call in sick and cannot come to work during the five-day work week. He becomes furious to learn that 40% of office “sick-days” occur on Mondays (20%) and Fridays (20%)—just in time to create a three-day weekend. Suspecting fraud, he decides to punish his workers. The irony, of course, is that these two days compose 40% of a five day work week, so the numbers are completely average. Similar nonsense emerges when parents or teachers complain that “50% of students perform at or below the national average on standardized tests in mathematics and verbal aptitude.” Of course they do! The very nature of an average implies that!
False Cause: This fallacy establishes a cause/effect relationship that does not exist. There are various Latin names for various analyses of the fallacy. The two most common include these types:

(1) Non Causa Pro Causa (Literally, “Not the cause for a cause”): A general, catch-all category for mistaking a false cause of an event for the real cause.

(2) Post Hoc, Ergo Propter Hoc (Literally: “After this, therefore because of this”): This type of false cause occurs when the writer mistakenly assumes that, because the first event preceded the second event, it must mean the first event caused the later one. Sometimes it does, but sometimes it doesn’t. It is the honest writer’s job to establish clearly that connection rather than merely assert it exists. Example: “A black cat crossed my path at noon. An hour later, my mother had a heart-attack. Because the first event occurred earlier, it must have caused the bad luck later.” This is how superstitions begin.

The most common examples are arguments that viewing a particular movie or show, or listening to a particular type of music “caused” the listener to perform an antisocial act–to snort coke, shoot classmates, or take up a life of crime. These may be potential suspects for the cause, but the mere fact that an individual did these acts and subsequently behaved in a certain way does not yet conclusively rule out other causes. Perhaps the listener had an abusive home-life or school-life, suffered from a chemical imbalance leading to depression and paranoia, or made a bad choice in his companions. Other potential causes must be examined before
asserting that only one event or circumstance alone
earlier in time caused a event or behavior later. For
more information, see correlation and causation.

Irrelevant Conclusion (Ignorantio Elenchi): This fallacy occurs when a rhetorician adapts
an argument purporting to establish a particular conclusion and directs it to prove a
different conclusion. For example, when a particular proposal for housing legislation is
under consideration, a legislator may argue that decent housing for all people is
desirable. Everyone, presumably, will agree. However, the question at hand concerns a
particular measure. The question really isn’t, “Is it good to have decent housing?” The
question really is, “Will this particular measure actually provide it or is there a better
alternative?” This type of fallacy is a common one in student papers when students use a
shared assumption—such as the fact that decent housing is a desirable thing to
have—and then spend the bulk of their essays focused on that fact rather than the real
question at issue. It’s similar to begging the question, above.

One of the most common forms of Ignorantio Elenchi is the “Red Herring.” A red herring
is a deliberate attempt to change the subject or divert the argument from the real
question at issue to some side-point; for instance, “Senator Jones should not be held
accountable for cheating on his income tax. After all, there are other senators who have
done far worse things.” Another example: “I should not pay a fine for reckless driving.
There are many other people on the street who are dangerous criminals and rapists, and
the police should be chasing them, not harassing a decent tax-paying citizen like me.”
Certainly, worse criminals do exist, but that is another issue! The questions at hand are
(1) did the speaker drive recklessly, and (2) should he pay a fine for it?

Another similar example of the red herring is the fallacy known as Tu Quoque (Latin for
“And you too!”), which asserts that the advice or argument must be false simply because
the person presenting the advice doesn’t consistently follow it herself. For instance,
“Susan the yoga instructor claims that a low-fat diet and exercise are good for you—but I
saw her last week pigging out on oreos, so her argument must be a load of hogwash.”
Or, “Reverend Jeremias claims that theft is wrong, but how can theft be wrong if
Jeremias himself admits he stole objects when he was a child?” Or “Thomas Jefferson
made many arguments about equality and liberty for all Americans, but he himself kept
slaves, so we can dismiss any thoughts he had on those topics.”

Straw Man Argument: A subtype of the red herring, this fallacy includes any lame attempt
to “prove” an argument by overstating, exaggerating, or over-simplifying the arguments
of the opposing side. Such an approach is building a straw man argument. The name comes from the idea of a boxer or fighter who meticulously fashions a false opponent out of straw, like a scarecrow, and then easily knocks it over in the ring before his admiring audience. His “victory” is a hollow mockery, of course, because the straw-stuffed opponent is incapable of fighting back. When a writer makes a cartoon-like caricature of the opposing argument, ignoring the real or subtle points of contention, and then proceeds to knock down each “fake” point one-by-one, he has created a straw man argument.

For instance, one speaker might be engaged in a debate concerning welfare. The opponent argues, “Tennessee should increase funding to unemployed single mothers during the first year after childbirth because they need sufficient money to provide medical care for their newborn children.” The second speaker retorts, “My opponent believes that some parasites who don’t work should get a free ride from the tax money of hard-working honest citizens. I’ll show you why he’s wrong . . . ” In this example, the second speaker is engaging in a straw man strategy, distorting the opposition’s statement about medical care for newborn children into an oversimplified form so he can more easily appear to “win.” However, the second speaker is only defeating a dummy-argument rather than honestly engaging in the real nuances of the debate.

Non Sequitur (literally, “It does not follow”): A non sequitur is any argument that does not follow from the previous statements. Usually what happened is that the writer leaped from A to B and then jumped to D, leaving out step C of an argument she thought through in her head, but did not put down on paper. The phrase is applicable in general to any type of logical fallacy, but logicians use the term particularly in reference to syllogistic errors such as the undistributed middle term, non causa pro causa, and ignorantio elenchi. A common example would be an argument along these lines: “Giving up our nuclear arsenal in the 1980’s weakened the United States’ military. Giving up nuclear weaponry also weakened China in the 1990s. For this reason, it is wrong to try to outlaw pistols and rifles in the United States today.” There’s obviously a step or two missing here.

The “Slippery Slope” Fallacy (also called “The Camel’s Nose Fallacy”) is a non sequitur in which the speaker argues that, once the first step is undertaken, a second or third step will inevitably follow, much like the way one step on a slippery incline will cause a person to fall and slide all the way to the bottom. It is also called “the Camel’s Nose Fallacy” because of the image of a sheik who let his camel stick its nose into his tent on a cold night. The idea is that the sheik is afraid to let the camel stick its nose into the tent because once the beast sticks in its nose, it will inevitably stick in its head, and then its neck, and eventually its whole body. However, this sort of thinking does not allow for any possibility of stopping the process. It simply assumes that, once the nose is in, the rest must follow--that the sheik can’t stop the progression once it has begun--and thus the argument is a logical fallacy. For instance, if one were to argue, “If we allow the government to infringe upon our right to privacy on the Internet, it will then feel free to
infringe upon our privacy on the telephone. After that, FBI agents will be reading our mail. Then they will be placing cameras in our houses. We must not let any governmental agency interfere with our Internet communications, or privacy will completely vanish in the United States.” Such thinking is fallacious; no logical proof has been provided yet that infringement in one area will necessarily lead to infringement in another, no more than a person buying a single can of Coca-Cola in a grocery store would indicate the person will inevitably go on to buy every item available in the store, helpless to stop herself. So remember to avoid the slippery slope fallacy; once you use one, you may find yourself using more and more logical fallacies.

Either/Or Fallacy (also called “the Black-and-White Fallacy,” “Excluded Middle,” “False Dilemma,” or “False Dichotomy”): This fallacy occurs when a writer builds an argument upon the assumption that there are only two choices or possible outcomes when actually there are several. Outcomes are seldom so simple. This fallacy most frequently appears in connection to sweeping generalizations: “Either we must ban X or the American way of life will collapse.” “We go to war with Canada, or else Canada will eventually grow in population and overwhelm the United States.” “Either you drink Burpsy Cola, or you will have no friends and no social life.” Either you must avoid either/or fallacies, or everyone will think you are foolish.

Faulty Analogy: Relying only on comparisons to prove a point rather than arguing deductively and inductively. For example, “education is like cake; a small amount tastes sweet, but eat too much and your teeth will rot out. Likewise, more than two years of education is bad for a student.” The analogy is only acceptable to the degree a reader thinks that education is similar to cake. As you can see, faulty analogies are like flimsy wood, and just as no carpenter would build a house out of flimsy wood, no writer should ever construct an argument out of flimsy material.

Undistributed Middle Term: A specific type of error in deductive reasoning in which the minor premise and the major premise of a syllogism might or might not overlap. Consider these two examples: (1) “All reptiles are cold-blooded. All snakes are reptiles. All snakes are cold-blooded.” In the first example, the middle term “snakes” fits in the categories of both “reptile” and “things-that-are-cold-blooded.” (2) “All snails are cold-blooded. All snakes are cold-blooded. All snails are snakes.” In the second example, the middle term of “snakes” does not fit into the categories of both “things-that-are-cold-blooded” and “snails.” Sometimes, equivocation (see below) leads to an undistributed middle term.

Contradictory Premises (also known as a logical paradox): Establishing a premise in such a way that it contradicts another, earlier premise. For instance, “If God can do anything, he can make a stone so heavy that he can’t lift it.” The first premise establishes a deity that has the irresistible capacity to move other objects. The second premise establishes an immovable object impervious to any movement. If the first object capable of moving anything exists, by definition, the immovable object cannot exist, and vice-versa.
Closely related is the fallacy of Special Pleading, in which the writer creates a universal principle, then insists that principle does not for some reason apply to the issue at hand. For instance, “Everything must have a source or creator. Therefore God must exist and he must have created the world. What? Who created God? Well, God is eternal and unchanging—He has no source or creator.” In such an assertion, either God must have His own source or creator, or else the universal principle of everything having a source or creator must be set aside—the person making the argument can’t have it both ways.

FALLACIES OF AMBIGUITY: These errors occur with ambiguous words or phrases, the meanings of which shift and change in the course of discussion. Such more or less subtle changes can render arguments fallacious.

Equivocation: Using a word in a different way than the author used it in the original premise, or changing definitions halfway through a discussion. When we use the same word or phrase in different senses within one line of argument, we commit the fallacy of equivocation. Consider this example: “Plato says the end of a thing is its perfection; I say that death is the end of life; hence, death is the perfection of life.” Here the word end means “goal” in Plato’s usage, but it means “last event” or “termination” in the author’s second usage. Clearly, the speaker is twisting Plato’s meaning of the word to draw a very different conclusion. Compare with amphiboly, below.

Amphiboly (from the Greek word “indeterminate”): This fallacy is similar to equivocation. Here, the ambiguity results from grammatical construction. A statement may be true according to one interpretation of how each word functions in a sentence and false according to another. When a premise works with an interpretation that is true, but the conclusion uses the secondary “false” interpretation, we have the fallacy of amphiboly on our hands. In the command, “Save soap and waste paper,” the amphibolous use of “waste” results in the problem of determining whether “waste” functions as a verb or as an adjective.

Composition: This fallacy is a result of reasoning from the properties of the parts of the whole to the properties of the whole itself—It is an inductive error. Such an argument might hold that, because every individual part of a large tractor is lightweight, the entire machine also must be lightweight. This fallacy is similar to Hasty Generalization (see above), but it focuses on parts of a single whole rather than using too few examples to create a categorical generalization. Also compare it with Division (see below).

Division: This fallacy is the reverse of composition. It is the misapplication of deductive reasoning. One fallacy of division argues falsely that what is true of the whole must be true of individual parts. Such an argument notes that, “Microtech is a company with great influence in the California legislature. Egbert Smith works at Microtech. He must have great influence in the California legislature.” This is not necessarily true. Egbert might
work as a graveyard shift security guard or as the copy-machine repairman at Microtech—positions requiring little interaction with the California legislature. Another fallacy of division attributes the properties of the whole to the individual member of the whole: “Sunsurf is a company that sells environmentally safe products. Susan Jones is a worker at Sunsurf. She must be an environmentally minded individual.” (Perhaps she is motivated by money alone?)

Fallacy of Reification (Also called “Fallacy of Misplaced Concreteness” by Alfred North Whitehead): The fallacy of treating a word or an idea as equivalent to the actual thing represented by that word or idea, or the fallacy of treating an abstraction or process as equivalent to a concrete object or thing. In the first case, we might imagine a reformer trying to eliminate illicit lust by banning all mention of extra-marital affairs or certain sexual acts in publications. The problem is that eliminating the words for these deeds is not the same as eliminating the deeds themselves. In the second case, we might imagine a person or declaring “a war on poverty.” In this case, the fallacy comes from the fact that “war” implies a concrete struggle with another concrete entity which can surrender or be exterminated. “Poverty,” however is an abstraction that cannot surrender or sign peace treaties, cannot be shot or bombed, etc. Reification of the concept merely muddles the issue of what policies to follow and leads to sloppy thinking about the best way to handle a problem. It is closely related to and overlaps with faulty analogy and equivocation.

FALLACIES OF OMISSION: These errors occur because the logician leaves out necessary material in an argument or misdirects others from missing information.

Stacking the Deck: In this fallacy, the speaker “stacks the deck” in her favor by ignoring examples that disprove the point and listing only those examples that support her case. This fallacy is closely related to hasty generalization, but the term usually implies deliberate deception rather than an accidental logical error. Contrast it with the straw man argument.

‘No True Scotsman’ Fallacy: Attempting to stack the deck specifically by defining terms in such a narrow or unrealistic manner as to exclude or omit relevant examples from a sample. For instance, suppose speaker #1 asserts, “The Scottish national character is brave and patriotic. No Scottish soldier has ever fled the field of battle in the face of the enemy.” Speaker #2 objects, “Ah, but what about Lucas MacDurgan? He fled from German troops in World War I.” Speaker #1 retorts, “Well, obviously he doesn’t count as a true Scotsman because he did not live up to Scottish ideals, thus he forfeited his Scottish identity.” By this fallacious reasoning, any individual who would serve as evidence contradicting the first speaker’s assertion is conveniently and automatically dismissed from consideration. We commonly see this fallacy when a company asserts that it cannot be blamed for one of its particularly unsafe or shoddy products because that particular one doesn’t live up to its normally high standards, and thus shouldn’t “count” against its fine reputation. Likewise, defenders of Christianity as a positive historical influence in their zeal might argue the atrocities of the eight Crusades do not “count” in an argument.
because the Crusaders weren’t living up to Christian ideals, and thus aren’t really Christians, etc. So, remember this fallacy. Philosophers and logicians never use it, and anyone who does use it by definition is not really a philosopher or logician.

Argument from the Negative: Arguing from the negative asserts that, since one position is untenable, the opposite stance must be true. This fallacy is often used interchangeably with *Argumentum Ad Ignorantium* (listed below) and the *either/or fallacy* (listed above). For instance, one might mistakenly argue that, since the Newtonian theory of mathematics is not one hundred percent accurate, Einstein’s theory of relativity must be true. Perhaps not. Perhaps the theories of quantum mechanics are more accurate, and Einstein’s theory is flawed. Perhaps they are all wrong. Disproving an opponent’s argument does not necessarily mean your own argument must be true automatically, no more than disproving your opponent’s assertion that 2+2=5 would automatically mean your argument that 2+2=7 must be the correct one. Keeping this mind, students should remember that arguments from the negative are bad, arguments from the positive must automatically be good.

Appeal to a Lack of Evidence (*Argumentum Ad Ignorantium*, literally “Argument from Ignorance”): Appealing to a lack of information to prove a point, or arguing that, since the opposition cannot disprove a claim, the opposite stance must be true. An example of such an argument is the assertion that ghosts must exist because no one has been able to prove that they do not exist. Logicians know this is a logical fallacy because no competing argument has yet revealed itself.

Hypothesis Contrary to Fact (*Argumentum Ad Speculum*): Trying to prove something in the real world by using imaginary examples alone, or asserting that, if hypothetically X had occurred, Y would have been the result. For instance, suppose an individual asserts that if Einstein had been aborted in utero, the world would never have learned about relativity, or that if Monet had been trained as a butcher rather than going to college, the impressionistic movement would have never influenced modern art. Such hypotheses are misleading lines of argument because it is often possible that some other individual would have solved the relativistic equations or introduced an impressionistic art style. The speculation might make an interesting thought-experiment, but it is simply useless when it comes to actually proving anything about the real world. A common example is the idea that one “owes” her success to another individual who taught her. For instance, “You owe me part of your increased salary. If I hadn’t taught you how to recognize logical fallacies, you would be flipping hamburgers at McDonald’s for minimum wages right now instead of taking in hundreds of thousands of dollars as a lawyer.” Perhaps. But perhaps the audience would have learned about logical fallacies elsewhere, so the hypothetical situation described is meaningless.

Complex Question (Also called the “Loaded Question”): Phrasing a question or statement in such a way as to imply another unproven statement is true without evidence or discussion. This fallacy often overlaps with *begging the question* (above), since it also
presupposes a definite answer to a previous, unstated question. For instance, if I were to ask you “Have you stopped taking drugs yet?” my hidden supposition is that you have been taking drugs. Such a question cannot be answered with a simple yes or no answer. It is not a simple question but consists of several questions rolled into one. In this case the unstated question is, “Have you taken drugs in the past?” followed by, “If you have taken drugs in the past, have you stopped taking them now?” In cross-examination, a lawyer might ask a flustered witness, “Where did you hide the evidence?” or “when did you stop beating your wife?” The intelligent procedure when faced with such a question is to analyze its component parts. If one answers or discusses the prior, implicit question first, the explicit question may dissolve.

Complex questions appear in written argument frequently. A student might write, “Why is private development of resources so much more efficient than any public control?” The rhetorical question leads directly into his next argument. However, an observant reader may disagree, recognizing the prior, implicit question remains unaddressed. That question is, of course, whether private development of resources really is more efficient in all cases, a point which the author is skipping entirely and merely assuming to be true without discussion.

To master logic more fully, become familiar with the tool of Occam’s Razor.
How does The Witch Sketch Work Logically?

How does “The Witch Sketch” Work Logically?

Given their deep academic backgrounds, the Pythons (aka Monty Python), a British comedy troupe of the 60s and 70s, featured many logical fallacies in their work. (YouTube “the cheese shop sketch” or “the pet shop sketch” or “the argument clinic sketch” with the Python search modifier to see some of this. One of my favorites is “Confuse a Cat”—and not just because it prefigures our fascination with silly cat videos!)

One of the most famous scenes from Monty Python and the Search for the Holy Grail is the witch sketch. It delineates some logic for figuring out how someone is a witch.

- https://youtu.be/zrzMhU_4m-g

Enjoy! See if you can relate this to our problems of arguing definition.
REVISING & EDITING
Revision Strategies

When you revise and are spending time thinking about how well your content works in your essay, there are some strategies to keep in mind that can help. First and foremost, during the revision process, you should seek outside feedback. It’s especially helpful if you can find someone to review your work who disagrees with your perspective. This can help you better understand the opposing view and can help you see where you may need to strengthen your argument.

If you’re in a writing class, chances are you’ll have some kind of peer review for your argument. It’s important to take advantage of any peer review you receive on your essay. Even if you don’t take all of the advice you receive in a peer review, having advice to consider is going to help you as a writer.

Finally, in addition to the outside feedback, there are some revision strategies that you can engage in on your own. Read your essay carefully and think about the lessons you have learned about logic, fallacies, and audience. For an example of the revision process, check out this first video (http://owl.excelsior.edu/research-and-citations/revising-and-editing-a-research-paper/revising-and-editing-see-it-in-practice/) on revising from the Research & Citations area of the OWL.

A post draft outline can also help you during the revision process. A post draft outline can help you quickly see where you went with your essay and can help you more easily see if you need to make broad changes to content or to organizations.

For more information on creating a post draft outline, you can view the Prezi linked here: http://owl.excelsior.edu/argument-and-critical-thinking/revising-your-argument/revising-your-argument-revision-strategies/. (It will take you to the writing lab’s site where you can then click on the Prezi to run it.) Be sure the volume is turned up on your computer!
Revising and Editing

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

• Identify major areas of concern in the draft essay during revising and editing.
• Use peer reviews and editing checklists to assist revising and editing.
• Revise and edit the first draft of your essay and produce a final draft.

Revising and editing are the two tasks you undertake to significantly improve your essay. Both are very important elements of the writing process. You may think that a completed first draft means little improvement is needed. However, even experienced writers need to improve their drafts and rely on peers during revising and editing. You may know that athletes miss catches, fumble balls, or overshoot goals. Dancers forget steps, turn too slowly, or miss beats. For both athletes and dancers, the more they practice, the stronger their performance will become. Web designers seek better images, a more clever design, or a more appealing background for their web pages. Writing has the same capacity to profit from improvement and revision.

Understanding the Purpose of Revising and Editing

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

• When you revise, you take a second look at your ideas. You might add, cut, move, or change information in order to make your ideas clearer, more accurate, more interesting, or more convincing.
• When you edit, you take a second look at how you expressed your ideas. You add or change words. You fix any problems in grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure. You improve your writing style. You make your essay into a polished, mature piece of writing, the end product of your best efforts.

TIP

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

• Take a break. You are proud of what you wrote, but you might be too close to it to make changes. Set aside your writing for a few hours or even a day until you can look at it objectively.
• Ask someone you trust for feedback and constructive criticism.
• Pretend you are one of your readers. Are you satisfied or dissatisfied? Why?
• Use the resources that your college provides. Find out where your school’s writing lab is located and ask about the assistance they provide online and in person.

Many people hear the words critic, critical, and criticism and pick up only negative vibes that provoke feelings that make them blush, grumble, or shout. However, as a writer and a thinker, you need to learn to be critical of yourself in a positive way and have high expectations for your work. You also need to train your eye and trust your ability to fix what needs fixing. For this, you need to teach yourself where to look.
Creating Unity and Coherence

Following your outline closely offers you a reasonable guarantee that your writing will stay on purpose and not drift away from the controlling idea. However, when writers are rushed, are tired, or cannot find the right words, their writing may become less than they want it to be. Their writing may no longer be clear and concise, and they may be adding information that is not needed to develop the main idea.

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

**TIP**

Reading your writing aloud will often help you find problems with unity and coherence. Listen for the clarity and flow of your ideas. Identify places where you find yourself confused, and write a note to yourself about possible fixes.

Creating Unity

Sometimes writers get caught up in the moment and cannot resist a good digression. Even though you might enjoy such detours when you chat with friends, unplanned digressions usually harm a piece of writing.

Mariah stayed close to her outline when she drafted the three body paragraphs of her essay she tentatively titled “Digital Technology: The Newest and the Best at What Price?” But a recent shopping trip for an HDTV upset her enough that she digressed from the main topic of her third paragraph and included comments about the sales staff at the electronics store she visited. When she revised her essay, she deleted the off-topic sentences that affected the unity of the paragraph.

Read the following paragraph twice, the first time without Mariah’s changes, and the second time with them.
Nothing is more confusing to me than choosing among televisions. It confuses lots of people who want a new high-definition digital television (HDTV) with a large screen to watch sports and DVDs on. You could listen to the guys in the electronics store, but they know little more than you do. They want to sell you what they have in stock, not what best fits your needs. You face decisions you never had to make with the old, bulky picture-tube televisions. Screen resolution means the number of horizontal scan lines the screen can show. This resolution is often 1080p, or full HD, or 720p. The trouble is that if you have a smaller screen, 32 inches or 37 inches diagonal, you won’t be able to tell the difference with the naked eye. The 1080p televisions cost more, though, so those are what the salespeople want you to buy. They get bigger commissions. The other important decision you face as you walk around the sales floor is whether to get a plasma screen or an LCD screen. New here the salespeople may finally give you decent info. Plasma flat-panel television screens can be much larger in diameter than their LCD rivals. Plasma screens show truer blacks and can be viewed at a wider angle than current LCD screens. But be careful and tell the salesperson you have budget constraints. Large flat-panel plasma screens are much more expensive than flat-screen LCD models. Don’t let someone make you buy more television than you need!

**TIP**

When you reread your writing to find revisions to make, look for each type of problem in a separate sweep. Read it straight through once to locate any problems with unity. Read it straight through a second time to find problems with coherence. You may follow this same practice during many stages of the writing process.

**Writing at Work**

Many companies hire copyeditors and proofreaders to help them produce the cleanest possible final drafts of large writing projects. Copyeditors are responsible for suggesting revisions and style changes; proofreaders check documents for any errors in capitalization, spelling, and punctuation that have crept in. Many times, these tasks are done on a freelance basis, with one freelancer working for a variety of clients.
Creating Coherence

Careful writers use transitions to clarify how the ideas in their sentences and paragraphs are related. These words and phrases help the writing flow smoothly. Adding transitions is not the only way to improve coherence, but they are often useful and give a mature feel to your essays. Table 7.3 “Common Transitional Words and Phrases” groups many common transitions according to their purpose.

Table 7.3 Common Transitional Words and Phrases

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<th>Transitions That Show a Conclusion</th>
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<th>Transitions That Continue a Line of Thought</th>
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<td>consequently</td>
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<td>looking further</td>
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<td>besides the fact</td>
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<td>in the same way</td>
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<td>considering..., it is clear that</td>
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<td>additionally</td>
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<td>following this idea further</td>
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<th>Transitions That Change a Line of Thought</th>
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<td>yet</td>
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<td>however</td>
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<td>on the other hand</td>
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<th>Transitions That Show Importance</th>
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<th>Transitions That Introduce the Final Thoughts in a Paragraph or Essay</th>
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<td>in conclusion</td>
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<td>most of all</td>
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<td>last of all</td>
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<th>All-Purpose Transitions to Open Paragraphs or to Connect Ideas Inside Paragraphs</th>
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<td>admittedly</td>
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<td>at this point</td>
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<td>certainly</td>
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<tr>
<td>granted</td>
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<tr>
<td>it is true</td>
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<tr>
<td>generally speaking</td>
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in general | in this situation | no doubt
---|---|---
ox one denies | obviously | of course

to be sure | undoubtedly | unquestionably

**Transitions that Introduce Examples**

for instance | for example

**Transitions That Clarify the Order of Events or Steps**

first, second, third | generally, furthermore, finally | in the first place, also, last

in the first place, furthermore, finally | in the first place, likewise, last

After Maria revised for unity, she next examined her paragraph about televisions to check for coherence. She looked for places where she needed to add a transition or perhaps reword the text to make the flow of ideas clear. In the version that follows, she has already deleted the sentences that were off topic.

---

**TIP**

Many writers make their revisions on a printed copy and then transfer them to the version on-screen. They conventionally use a small arrow called a caret (^) to show where to insert an addition or correction.

---

Finally, Nothing is more confusing to me than choosing among televisions. It confuses lots of people who want a new high-definition digital television (HDTV) or a large screen to watch sports and DVDs on. You face decisions you never had to make with the old, bulky picture-tube televisions. Screen resolution means the number of horizontal scan lines the screen can show. This resolution is often 1080p, or full HD, or 720p. The first big decision is the screen resolution you want.

The screen can show a TV show or a movie. There's good reason for this confusion: You face decisions you never had to make with the old, bulky picture-tube televisions. The trouble is that if you have a smaller screen, 32 inches or 37 inches diagonal, you won't be able to tell the difference with the naked eye. The second important decision you face as you walk around the sales floor is whether to get a plasma screen or an LCD screen. Along with the choice of display type, a further decision buyers face is screen size and features. Plasma flat-panel television screens can be much larger in diameter than their LCD rivals. Plasma screens show truer blacks and can be viewed at a wider angle than current LCD screens. Large flat-panel plasma screens are much more expensive than flat-screen LCD models. Don’t buy more television than you need!
Some writers are very methodical and painstaking when they write a first draft. Other writers unleash a lot of words in order to get out all that they feel they need to say. Do either of these composing styles match your style? Or is your composing style somewhere in between? No matter which description best fits you, the first draft of almost every piece of writing, no matter its author, can be made clearer and more concise.

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

**Identifying Wordiness**

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

- **Sentences that begin with**
  - There is
  - There are
  - Wordy: There are two major experiments that the Biology Department sponsors. **Revised:** The Biology Department sponsors two major experiments.
- **Sentences with unnecessary modifiers.**
  - Wordy: Two extremely famous and well-known consumer advocates spoke eloquently in favor of the proposed important legislation. **Revised:** Two well-known consumer advocates spoke in favor of the proposed legislation.
- **Sentences with deadwood phrases that add little to the meaning.**
  - Be judicious when you use phrases such as in terms of, with a mind to, on the subject of, as to whether or not, more or less, as far as...is concerned, and similar expressions. You can usually find a more straightforward way to state your point. **Wordy:** As a world leader in the field of green technology, the company plans to focus its efforts in the area of geothermal energy. **Revised:** As a world leader in green technology, the company plans to focus on geothermal energy. A report about using geysers as an energy source is in process of preparation. **Revised:** As a world leader in green technology, the company plans to focus on geothermal energy. A report about using geysers as an energy source is in preparation.
- **Sentences in the passive voice or with forms of the verb to be.**
  - Sentences with passive-voice verbs often create confusion, because the subject of the sentence does not perform an action. Sentences are clearer when the subject of the sentence performs the action and is followed by a strong verb. Use strong active-voice verbs in place of forms of to be, which can lead to wordiness. Avoid passive voice when you can. **Wordy:** It might perhaps be said that using a GPS device is something that is a benefit to drivers who have a poor sense of direction. **Revised:** Using a GPS device benefits drivers who have a poor sense of direction.
- **Sentences with constructions that can be shortened.**
  - Wordy: The e-book reader, which is a recent invention, may become as commonplace as the cell phone. My over-sixty uncle bought an e-book reader, and his wife bought an e-book reader, too. **Revised:** The e-book reader, a recent invention, may become as commonplace as the cell phone. My over-sixty uncle and his wife both bought e-book readers.

**Choosing Specific, Appropriate Words**

Most college essays should be written in formal English suitable for an academic situation. Follow these principles to be sure that your word choice is appropriate.

- **Avoid slang.** Find alternatives to bummer, kewl, and rad.
- **Avoid language that is overly casual.** Write about “men and women” rather than “girls and guys” unless you are trying to create a specific effect. A formal tone calls for formal language.
- **Avoid contractions.** Use do not in place of don’t, I am in place of I’m, have not in place of haven’t, and so on. Contractions are considered casual speech.
• **Avoid clichés.** Overused expressions such as *green with envy, face the music, better late than never,* and similar expressions are empty of meaning and may not appeal to your audience.

• **Be careful when you use words that sound alike but have different meanings.** Some examples are *allusion/illusion, complement/compliment, council/counsel, concurrent/consecutive, founder/flounder,* and *historic/historical.* When in doubt, check a dictionary.

• **Choose words with the connotations you want.** Choosing a word for its connotations is as important in formal essay writing as it is in all kinds of writing. Compare the positive connotations of the word *proud* and the negative connotations of *arrogant* and *conceited.*

• **Use specific words rather than overly general words.** Find synonyms for *thing, people, nice, good, bad, interesting,* and other vague words. Or use specific details to make your exact meaning clear.

Now read the revisions Mariah made to make her third paragraph clearer and more concise. She has already incorporated the changes she made to improve unity and coherence.

---

 Completing a Peer Review

After working so closely with a piece of writing, writers often need to step back and ask for a more objective reader. What writers most need is feedback from readers who can respond only to the words on the page. When they are ready, writers show their drafts to someone they respect and who can give an honest response about its strengths and weaknesses.
You, too, can ask a peer to read your draft when it is ready. After evaluating the feedback and assessing what is most helpful, the reader’s feedback will help you when you revise your draft. This process is called peer review.

You can work with a partner in your class and identify specific ways to strengthen each other’s essays. Although you may be uncomfortable sharing your writing at first, remember that each writer is working toward the same goal: a final draft that fits the audience and the purpose. Maintaining a positive attitude when providing feedback will put you and your partner at ease. The box that follows provides a useful framework for the peer review session.

**Questions for Peer Review**

Title of essay: ____________________________________________

Date: ____________________________________________

Writer’s name: ____________________________________________

Peer reviewer’s name: _________________________________________

1. This essay is about____________________________________________.
2. Your main points in this essay are____________________________________________.
3. What I most liked about this essay is____________________________________________.
4. These three points struck me as your strongest:
   1. Point: ____________________________________________Why:
   2. Point: ____________________________________________Why:
   3. Point: ____________________________________________Why:
5. These places in your essay are not clear to me:
   1. Where: ____________________________________________Needs improvement because__________________________________________
   2. Where: ____________________________________________Needs improvement because__________________________________________
   3. Where: ____________________________________________Needs improvement because__________________________________________
6. The one additional change you could make that would improve this essay significantly is
   ____________________________________________

**Writing at Work**

One of the reasons why word-processing programs build in a reviewing feature is that workgroups have become a common feature in many businesses. Writing is often collaborative, and the members of a workgroup and their supervisors often critique group members’ work and offer feedback that will lead to a better final product.

**Using Feedback Objectively**

The purpose of peer feedback is to receive constructive criticism of your essay. Your peer reviewer is your first real audience, and you have the opportunity to learn what confuses and delights a reader so that you can improve your work before sharing the final draft with a wider audience (or your intended audience).
It may not be necessary to incorporate every recommendation your peer reviewer makes. However, if you start to observe a pattern in the responses you receive from peer reviewers, you might want to take that feedback into consideration in future assignments. For example, if you read consistent comments about a need for more research, then you may want to consider including more research in future assignments.

**Using Feedback from Multiple Sources**

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

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

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

Then, using these standards, accept or reject revision feedback.

**Editing Your Draft**

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

The next step after revising the content is editing. When you edit, you examine the surface features of your text. You examine your spelling, grammar, usage, and punctuation. You also make sure you use the proper format when creating your finished assignment.

### TIP

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

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

The last section of this book offers a useful review of grammar, mechanics, and usage. Use it to help you eliminate major errors in your writing and refine your understanding of the conventions of language. Do not hesitate to ask for help, too, from peer tutors in your academic department or in the college’s writing lab. In the meantime, use the checklist to help you edit your writing.
Checklist

Editing Your Writing

Grammar

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

Sentence Structure

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

Punctuation

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

Mechanics and Usage

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

TIP

Be careful about relying too much on spelling checkers and grammar checkers. A spelling checker cannot recognize that you meant to write principle but wrote principal instead. A grammar checker often queries constructions that are perfectly correct. The program does not understand your meaning; it makes its check against a general set of formulas that might not apply in each instance. If you use a grammar checker, accept the suggestions that make sense, but consider why the suggestions came up.
Proofreading requires patience; it is very easy to read past a mistake. Set your paper aside for at least a few hours, if not a day or more, so your mind will rest. Some professional proofreaders read a text backward so they can concentrate on spelling and punctuation. Another helpful technique is to slowly read a paper aloud, paying attention to every word, letter, and punctuation mark.

If you need additional proofreading help, ask a reliable friend, a classmate, or a peer tutor to make a final pass on your paper to look for anything you missed.

**Formatting**

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

To ensure the format is correct and follows any specific instructions, make a final check before you submit an assignment.

**KEY TAKEAWAY**

- Revising and editing are the stages of the writing process in which you improve your work before producing a final draft.
- During revising, you add, cut, move, or change information in order to improve content.
- During editing, you take a second look at the words and sentences you used to express your ideas and fix any problems in grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure.
- Unity in writing means that all the ideas in each paragraph and in the entire essay clearly belong together and are arranged in an order that makes logical sense.
- Coherence in writing means that the writer’s wording clearly indicates how one idea leads to another within a paragraph and between paragraphs.
- Transitional words and phrases effectively make writing more coherent.
- Writing should be clear and concise, with no unnecessary words.
- Effective formal writing uses specific, appropriate words and avoids slang, contractions, clichés, and overly general words.
- Peer reviews, done properly, can give writers objective feedback about their writing. It is the writer's responsibility to evaluate the results of peer reviews and incorporate only useful feedback.
- Remember to budget time for careful editing and proofreading. Use all available resources, including editing checklists, peer editing, and your institution's writing lab, to improve your editing skills.
EXERCISES

1. Answer the following two questions about Mariah’s paragraph in “Creating Unity” above:
   - Do you agree with Mariah’s decision to make the deletions she made? Did she cut too much, too little, or just enough? Explain.
   - Is the explanation of what screen resolution means a digression? Or is it audience friendly and essential to understanding the paragraph? Explain.

   Please share with a classmate and compare your answers.

2. Now start to revise the first draft of the essay you wrote. Reread it to find any statements that affect the unity of your writing. Decide how best to revise.

3. Answer the following questions about Mariah’s revised paragraph in “Creating Coherence.”
   - Do you agree with the transitions and other changes that Mariah made to her paragraph? Which would you keep and which were unnecessary? Explain.
   - What transition words or phrases did Mariah add to her paragraph? Why did she choose each one?
   - What effect does adding additional sentences have on the coherence of the paragraph? Explain. When you read both versions aloud, which version has a more logical flow of ideas? Explain.

4. Now return to the first draft of the essay you wrote and revise it for coherence. Add transition words and phrases where they are needed, and make any other changes that are needed to improve the flow and connection between ideas.

5. Answer the following questions about Mariah’s revised paragraph:
   - Read the unrevised and the revised paragraphs aloud. Explain in your own words how changes in word choice have affected Mariah’s writing.
   - Do you agree with the changes that Mariah made to her paragraph? Which changes would you keep and which were unnecessary? Explain. What other changes would you have made?
   - What effect does removing contractions and the pronoun you have on the tone of the paragraph? How would you characterize the tone now? Why?

6. Now return once more to your essay in progress. Read carefully for problems with word choice. Be sure that your draft is written in formal language and that your word choice is specific and appropriate.

7. Exchange essays with a classmate and complete a peer review of each other’s draft in progress. Remember to give positive feedback and to be courteous and polite in your responses. Focus on providing one positive comment and one question for more information to the author.

8. Work with two partners. Go back to #3 in this lesson and compare your responses about Mariah’s paragraph with your partners’. Recall Mariah’s purpose for writing and her audience. Then, working individually, list where you agree and where you disagree about revision needs.

9. With the help of the checklist, edit and proofread your essay.
Peer Editing

The OWL Excelsior Writing Lab site contains useful information on the writing process. This page on peer editing (http://owl.excelsior.edu/writing-process/revising-and-editing/revising-and-editing-peer-review/) is particularly helpful in reminding us to be positive but specific when engaging with peers’ writing.
General Revision Points to Consider

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

• Discuss the process of revision
• List three general elements of every document that require revision

Just when you think the production of your document is done, the revision process begins. Runners often refer to “the wall,” where the limits of physical exertion are met and exhaustion is imminent. The writing process requires effort, from overcoming writer’s block to the intense concentration composing a document often involves. It is only natural to have a sense of relief when your document is drafted from beginning to end. This relief is false confidence, though. Your document is not complete, and in its current state it could, in fact, do more harm than good. Errors, omissions, and unclear phrases may lurk within your document, waiting to reflect poorly on you when it reaches your audience. Now is not time to let your guard down, prematurely celebrate, or to mentally move on to the next assignment. Think of the revision process as one that hardens and strengthens your document, even though it may require the sacrifice of some hard-earned writing.

General revision requires attention to content, organization, style, and readability. These four main categories should give you a template from which to begin to explore details in depth. A cursory review of these elements in and of itself is insufficient for even the briefest review. Across this chapter we will explore ways to expand your revision efforts to cover the common areas of weakness and error. You may need to take some time away from your document to approach it again with a fresh perspective. Writers often juggle multiple projects that are at different stages of development. This allows the writer to leave one document and return to another without losing valuable production time. Overall, your goal is similar to what it was during your writing preparation and production: a clear mind.

Evaluate Content

Content is only one aspect of your document. Let’s say you were assigned a report on the sales trends for a specific product in a relatively new market. You could produce a one-page chart comparing last year’s results to current figures and call it a day, but would it clearly and concisely deliver content that is useful and correct? Are you supposed to highlight trends? Are you supposed to spotlight factors that contributed to the increase or decrease? Are you supposed to include projections for next year? Our list of questions could continue, but for now let’s focus on content and its relationship to the directions. Have you included the content that corresponds to the given assignment, left any information out that may be necessary to fulfill the expectations, or have you gone beyond the assignment directions? Content will address the central questions of who, what, where, when, why and how within the range and parameters of the assignment.

Evaluate Organization

Organization is another key aspect of any document. Standard formats that include an introduction, body, and conclusion may be part of your document, but did you decide on a direct or indirect approach? Can you tell? A direct approach will announce the main point or purpose at the beginning, while an indirect approach will present an introduction before the main point. Your document may use any of a wide variety of organizing principles, such as chronological, spatial, compare/contrast. Is your organizing principle clear to the reader? Beyond the overall organization, pay special attention to transitions. Readers often
have difficulty following a document if the writer makes the common error of failing to make one point relevant to the next, or to illustrate the relationships between the points. Finally, your conclusion should mirror your introduction and not introduce new material.

**Evaluate Style**

Style is created through content and organization, but also involves word choice and grammatical structures. Is your document written in an informal or formal tone, or does it present a blend, a mix, or an awkward mismatch? Does it provide a coherent and unifying voice with a professional tone? If you are collaborating on the project with other writers or contributors, pay special attention to unifying the document across the different authors’ styles of writing. Even if they were all to write in a professional, formal style, the document may lack a consistent voice. Read it out loud—can you tell who is writing what? If so, that is a clear clue that you need to do more revising in terms of style.

**Evaluate Readability**

Readability refers to the reader’s ability to read and comprehend the document. A variety of tools are available to make an estimate of a document’s reading level, often correlated to a school grade level. If this chapter has a reading level of 11.8, it would be appropriate for most readers in the eleventh grade. But just because you are in grade thirteen, eighteen, or twenty-one doesn’t mean that your audience, in their everyday use of language, reads at a postsecondary level. As a business writer, your goal is to make your writing clear and concise, not complex and challenging.

You can often use the “Tools” menu of your word processing program to determine the approximate reading level of your document. The program will evaluate the number of characters per word, add in the number of words per sentence, and come up with a rating. It may also note the percentage of passive sentences, and other information that will allow you to evaluate readability. Like any computer-generated rating, it should serve you as one point of evaluation, but not the only point. Your concerted effort to choose words you perceive as appropriate for the audience will serve you better than any computer evaluation of your writing.

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**KEY TAKEAWAY**

The four main categories—content, organization, style, and readability—provide a template for general revision.

**EXERCISES**

1. Select a document, such as an article from a Web site, newspaper, magazine, or a piece of writing you have completed for a course. Evaluate the document according to the four main categories described in this section. Could the document benefit from revision in any of these areas? Discuss your findings with your classmates.

2. Interview a coworker or colleague and specifically ask how much time and attention they dedicate to the revision process of their written work. Compare your results with classmates.

3. Find a particularly good example of writing according to the above criteria. Review it and share it with your classmates.

4. Find a particularly bad example of writing according to the above criteria. Review it and share it with your classmates.
Arguing Through Writing
Specific Revision Points to Consider

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE**

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- List six specific elements of every document to check for revision

When revising your document, it can be helpful to focus on specific points. When you consider each point in turn, you will be able to break down the revision process into manageable steps. When you have examined each point, you can be confident that you have avoided many possible areas for errors. Specific revision requires attention to the following:

- Format
- Facts
- Names
- Spelling
- Punctuation
- Grammar

Let’s examine these characteristics one by one.

**Format**

Format is an important part of the revision process. Format involves the design expectations of author and audience. If a letter format normally designates a date at the top, or the sender’s address on the left side of the page before the salutation, the information should be in the correct location. Formatting that is messy or fails to conform to the company style will reflect poorly on you before the reader even starts to read it. By presenting a document that is properly formatted according to the expectations of your organization and your readers, you will start off making a good impression.

**Facts**

Another key part of the revision process is checking your facts. Did you know that news organizations and magazines employ professional fact-checkers? These workers are responsible for examining every article before it gets published and consulting original sources to make sure the information in the article is accurate. This can involve making phone calls to the people who were interviewed for the article—for example, “Mr. Diaz, our report states that you are thirty-nine years old. Our article will be published on the fifteenth. Will that be your correct age on that date?” Fact checking also involves looking facts up in encyclopedias, directories, atlases, and other standard reference works; and, increasingly, in online sources.

While you can’t be expected to have the skills of a professional fact-checker, you do need to reread your writing with a critical eye to the information in it. Inaccurate content can expose you and your organization to liability, and will create far more work than a simple revision of a document. So, when you revise a document, ask yourself the following:

- Does my writing contain any statistics or references that need to be verified?
- Where can I get reliable information to verify it?

It is often useful to do independent verification—that is, look up the fact in a different source from the one where you first got it. For example, perhaps a colleague gave you a list of closing averages for the Dow Jones Industrial on certain dates. You
still have the list, so you can make sure your document agrees with the numbers your colleague provided. But what if your colleague made a mistake? The Web sites of the Wall Street Journal and other major newspapers list closings for “the Dow,” so it is reasonably easy for you to look up the numbers and verify them independently.

**Names**

There is no more embarrassing error in business writing than to misspell someone’s name. To the writer, and to some readers, spelling a name “Michelle” instead of “Michele” may seem like a minor matter, but to Michele herself it will make a big difference. Attribution is one way we often involve a person’s name, and giving credit where credit is due is essential. There are many other reasons for including someone’s name, but regardless of your reasons for choosing to focus on them, you need to make sure the spelling is correct. Incorrect spelling of names is a quick way to undermine your credibility; it can also have a negative impact on your organization’s reputation, and in some cases it may even have legal ramifications.

**Spelling**

Correct spelling is another element essential for your credibility, and errors will be glaringly obvious to many readers. The negative impact on your reputation as a writer, and its perception that you lack attention to detail or do not value your work, will be hard to overcome. In addition to the negative personal consequences, spelling errors can become factual errors and destroy the value of content. This may lead you to click the “spell check” button in your word processing program, but computer spell-checking is not enough. Spell checkers have improved in the years since they were first invented, but they are not infallible. They can and do make mistakes.

Typically, your incorrect word may in fact be a word, and therefore, according to the program, correct. For example, suppose you wrote, “The major will attend the meeting” when you meant to write “The mayor will attend the meeting.” The program would miss this error because “major” is a word, but your meaning would be twisted beyond recognition.

**Punctuation**

Punctuation marks are the traffic signals, signs, and indications that allow us to navigate the written word. They serve to warn us in advance when a transition is coming or the complete thought has come to an end. A period indicates the thought is complete, while a comma signals that additional elements or modifiers are coming. Correct signals will help your reader follow the thoughts through sentences and paragraphs, and enable you to communicate with maximum efficiency while reducing the probability of error (Strunk & White, 1979).

Table 12.1 “Punctuation Marks” lists twelve punctuation marks that are commonly used in English in alphabetical order along with an example of each.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apostrophe</td>
<td>‘ Michele’s report is due tomorrow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colon</td>
<td>: This is what I think: you need to revise your paper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comma</td>
<td>, The report advised us when to sell, what to sell, and where to find buyers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dash</td>
<td>— This is more difficult than it seems—buyers are scarce when credit is tight.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellipsis</td>
<td>… Lincoln spoke of “a new nation...dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclamation Point</td>
<td>! How exciting!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyphen</td>
<td>– The question is a many-faceted one.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parentheses</td>
<td>( ) To answer it (or at least to begin addressing it) we will need more information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbol</td>
<td>Example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period</td>
<td>The answer is no. Period. Full stop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question Mark</td>
<td>Can I talk you into changing your mind?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quotation Marks</td>
<td>The manager told him, &quot;I will make sure Renée is available to help you.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semicolon</td>
<td>Theresa was late to the meeting; her computer had frozen and she was stuck at her desk until a tech rep came to fix it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It may be daunting to realize that the number of possible punctuation errors is as extensive as the number of symbols and constructions available to the author. Software program may catch many punctuation errors, but again it is the committed writer that makes the difference. Here we will provide details on how to avoid mistakes with three of the most commonly used punctuation marks: the comma, the semicolon, and the apostrophe.

## Commas

The comma is probably the most versatile of all punctuation marks. This means you as a writer can use your judgment in many cases as to whether you need a comma or not. It also means that the possible errors involving commas are many. Commas are necessary some of the time, but careless writers often place a comma in a sentence where it is simply not needed.

Commas are used to separate two independent clauses joined by a conjunction like “but,” “and,” and “or.”

**Example**  
The advertising department is effective, but don’t expect miracles in this business climate.

Commas are not used simply to join two independent clauses. This is known as the comma splice error, and the way to correct it is to insert a conjunction after the comma.

**Examples**  
The advertising department is effective, the sales department needs to produce more results.  
The advertising department is effective, but the sales department needs to produce more results.

Commas are used for introductory phrases and to offset clauses that are not essential to the sentence. If the meaning would remain intact without the phrase, it is considered nonessential.

**Examples**  
*After the summary of this year’s sales, the sales department had good reason to celebrate.*  
The sales department, *last year’s winner of the most productive award,* celebrated their stellar sales success this year.  
The sales department celebrated their stellar sales success this year.

Commas are used to offset words that help create unity across a sentence like “however” and “therefore.”

**Examples**  
The sales department discovered, however, that the forecast for next year is challenging.  
*However, the sales department discovered that the forecast for next year is challenging.*

Commas are often used to separate more than one adjective modifying a noun.

**Example**  
The sales department discovered the troublesome, challenging forecast for next year.
Commas are used to separate addresses, dates, and titles; they are also used in dialogue sequences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John is from Ancud, Chile.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katy was born on August 2, 2002.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mackenzie McLean, D. V., is an excellent veterinarian.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa said, “When writing, omit needless words.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Semicolons**

Semicolons have two uses. First, they indicate relationships among groups of items in a series when the individual items are separated by commas. Second, a semicolon can be used to join two independent clauses; this is another way of avoiding the comma splice error mentioned above. Using a semicolon this way is often effective if the meaning of the two independent clauses is linked in some way, such as a cause-effect relationship.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Merchandise on order includes women’s wear such as sweaters, skirts, and blouses; men’s wear such as shirts, jackets, and slacks; and outwear such as coats, parkas, and hats.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The sales campaign was successful; without its contributions our bottom line would have been dismal indeed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Apostrophes**

The apostrophe, like the semicolon, has two uses: it replaces letters omitted in a contraction, and it often indicates the possessive.

Because contractions are associated with an informal style, they may not be appropriate for some professional writing. The business writer will—as always—evaluate the expectations and audience of the given assignment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It’s great news that sales were up. It is also good news that we’ve managed to reduce our advertising costs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When you indicate possession, pay attention to the placement of the apostrophe. Nouns commonly receive “s” when they are made possessive. But plurals that end in “s” receive a hanging apostrophe when they are made possessive, and the word “it” forms the possessive (“its”) with no apostrophe at all.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mackenzie’s sheep are ready to be sheared.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The parents’ meeting is scheduled for Thursday.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are willing to adopt a dog that has already had its shots.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grammar**

Learning to use good, correct standard English grammar is more of a practice than an event, or even a process. Grammar involves the written construction of meaning from words and involves customs that evolve and adapt to usage over time. Because grammar is always evolving, none of us can sit back and rest assured that we “know” how to write with proper grammar. Instead, it is important to write and revise with close attention to grammar, keeping in mind that grammatical errors can undermine your credibility, reflect poorly on your employer, and cause misunderstandings.
Jean Wyrick has provided a list of common errors in grammar to watch out for, which we have adapted here for easy reference (Wyrick, 2008). In each case, the error is in *italics* and the [*correct form* is italicized within square bracket.

**Subject-Verb Agreement**

The subject and verb should agree on the number under consideration. In faulty writing, a singular subject is sometimes mismatched with a plural verb form, or vice versa.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sales have not been consistent and they <em>doesn’t</em> [do not] reflect your hard work and effort.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The president appreciates your hard work and <em>wishes</em> [wishes] to thank you.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Verb Tense**

Verb tense refers to the point in time where action occurs. The most common tenses are past, present, and future. There is nothing wrong with mixing tenses in a sentence if the action is intended to take place at different times. In faulty or careless writing, however, they are often mismatched illogically.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sharon was under pressure to finish the report, so she <em>uses</em> [used] a shortcut to paste in the sales figures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The sales department holds a status meeting every week, and last week’s meeting <em>will be</em> [was] at the Garden Inn.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Split Infinitive**

The infinitive form of verb is one without a reference to time, and in its standard form it includes the auxiliary word “to,” as in “to write is to revise.” It has been customary to keep the “to” next to the verb; to place an adverb between them is known as splitting the infinitive. Some modern writers do this all the time (for example, “to boldly go...”), and since all grammar is essentially a set of customs that govern the written word, you will need to understand what the custom is where you work. If you are working with colleagues trained across the last fifty years, they may find split infinitives annoying. For this reason, it’s often best to avoid splitting an infinitive wherever you can do so without distorting the meaning of the sentence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Marketing Department needs assistance <em>to accurately understand our readers</em> [to understand our readers accurately].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David pondered <em>how best to revise</em> [how best to revise] the sentence.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Double Negative**

A double negative uses two negatives to communicate a single idea, duplicating the negation. In some languages, such as Spanish, when the main action in the sentence is negative, it is correct to express the other elements in the sentence negatively as well. However, in English, this is incorrect. In addition to sounding wrong (you can often hear the error if you read the sentence out loud), a double negative in English causes an error in logic, because two negatives cancel each other out and yield a positive. In fact, the wording of ballot measures is often criticized for confusing voters with double negatives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>John doesn’t need no</em> [any] assistance with his sales presentation. [Or <em>John needs no assistance with his sales presentation.</em>]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Jeri could not find no</em> [any] reason to approve the request. [Or <em>Jeri could find no reason to approve the request.</em>]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Irregular Verbs

Most verbs represent the past with the addition of the suffix “ed,” as in “ask” becomes “asked.” Irregular verbs change a vowel or convert to another word when representing the past tense. Consider the irregular verb “to go”; the past tense is “went,” not “goed.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The need arose to seek additional funding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katy leaped onto the stage to introduce the presentation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Commas in a Series

A comma is used to separate the items in a series, but in some writing styles the comma is omitted between the final two items of the series, where the conjunction joins the last and next-to-last items. The comma in this position is known as the “serial comma.” The serial comma is typically required in academic writing and typically omitted in journalism. Other writers omit the serial comma if the final two items in the series have a closer logical connection than the other items. In business writing, you may use it or omit it according to the prevailing style in your organization or industry. Know your audience and be aware of the rule.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lisa is an amazing wife, mother, teacher, gardener, and editor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa is an amazing wife, mother teacher, gardener and editor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa is an amazing teacher, editor, gardener, wife and mother.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Faulty Comparisons

When comparing two objects by degree, there should be no mention of “est,” as in “biggest” as all you can really say is that one is bigger than the other. If you are comparing three or more objects, then “est” will accurately communicate which is the “biggest” of them all.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between the twins, Mackenzie is the fastest of the two.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Among our three children, Mackenzie is the tallest.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dangling Modifiers

Modifiers describe a subject in a sentence or indicate how or when the subject carried out the action. If the subject is omitted, the modifier intended for the subject is left dangling or hanging out on its own without a clear relationship to the sentence. Who is doing the seeing in the first sentence?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seeing the light at the end of the tunnel, celebrations were in order.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeing the light at the end of the tunnel, we decided that celebrations were in order.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Misplaced Modifiers

Modifiers that are misplaced are not lost, they are simply in the wrong place. Their unfortunate location is often far from the word or words they describe, making it easy for readers to misinterpret the sentence.
Examples

Trying to avoid the deer, the tree hit my car.

My car hit the tree when I tried to avoid a deer in the road.

KEY TAKEAWAY

By revising for format, facts, names, spelling, punctuation, and grammar, you can increase your chances of correcting many common errors in your writing.

EXERCISES

1. Select a news article from a news Web site, newspaper, or magazine. Find as many facts in the article as you can that could require fact-checking. Then check as many of these facts as you can, using sources available to you in the library and on the Internet. Did you find any errors in the article? Discuss your findings with your classmates.

2. Find an example of an assertion without attribution and share it with classmates.

3. Find an example of an error in a published document and share it with classmates.

4. Interview a coworker or colleague and specifically ask them to share a story where an error got past them during the revision process and made it to print or publication. How did they handle it? How much time did it take to correct? What did they learn from the experience? Compare your results with classmates.
"Breaking Up is Hard to Do"

Not a great song. . .

One of the toughest aspects of writing research projects—besides avoiding the completion of things at the last minute—is the breaking up of tasks.

If split apart, each task might take ten to thirty minutes. Sure, we can get into a two-hour writing jag where things work so well we don't have to slow down, but that's incredibly rare, even for published authors. I once wrote a twenty page paper on early Roman writing instruction in one sitting, but I don't even know how I did that.

Anyway, the idea is that we can break up the tasks. Of course, we'll have to do some tasks several times. We might be looking for that great source even as we are editing. Writing is a recursive process. Now, this could mean we swear again and again, but really it means that it curves back upon itself (like those early recurve bows which gain power from the curled shape and the lamination layers). The layering and ordering really doesn't matter. Those linear thinkers tend to get frustrated with writing because it's inherently chaotic.

The idea is to know what works for you. Have several options for when things fall through (as in tests). You should know several prewriting techniques and search tricks for those times when you are stymied. There is a frustration factor to be managed and even used for your advantage.

The papers with which I get annoyed are those where the person never returns to the process. For instance, a writer might get the first five sources that turn up in the first search they conduct. Or, they might be so focused on their own experiences that they do without research. Of course, there is often someone who entirely fails to reread—or even read fully—the essay directions. (You should see the number of literature essays where the sheet says the audience knows the story involved, yet the writer still only retells the plot of the thing!)

Try and work in a time and place that are going to allow you to be successful. (Sure, I'm one to talk. . . three little ones are doing art around me right now. I'm certainly not the still life model. . .)

Don't forget to add in annotating and highlighting of sources for prospective paraphrases, quotes, summaries. The beginnings and endings of sources tend to pack in important information, so go there. Don't forget the middles, though.

I'd like to see what you think about this breaking up of a seemingly overwhelming task into workable bits.
Page One in an Essay Abounds in Pitfalls for Errors

So that we all avoid any issues, here are the most common page one problems in order of appearance:

• Pagination appears in a header and is in the same font as the rest of the essay.
• Titles get centered but have no extra spaces above/below.
• In the heading, don’t have Essay 1 listed. Also avoid having Essay 1 as the title.
• Avoid assuming audiences don’t know what rhetoric or irony are. Only define terms you believe they may not know or whose wording is important to set forward and use.
• Make sure the first body paragraph features a topic sentence (somewhere . . . but usually first) that relates directly to the proving of your claim. Too often, we begin with the first “thing” of interest in the chapter or summarize the chapter in ways that don’t obviously further the thesis’ proving.
• Articles or essays are not novels or stories, so don’t misidentify the title, misspell the author’s (or my) name, or neglect to indicate which topic you’re analyzing.
• Why it matters is called exigency in writing. Convey some sense of why it matters that we understand your thesis.
FINAL DRAFTS
Defining Evil

Oftentimes, when people think of the word evil, it may call to mind frightening images of demonic entities. These entities—beasts composed of scaly skin, glowing red eyes, and enormous wickedly pointed teeth—are thought to take possession of hapless humans, causing them to commit deeds they would otherwise never even contemplate. This is an image well-illustrated by Ante-Nicene theologian Lactanius who, in his *Divine Institutes*, claims that bringers of evil “wander over the earth seeking destruction of men, clinging to individuals and occupying whole houses, where they terrify human souls with dreams and harass their minds with frenzies” (qtd. in White 486). These ideas of evil give it presence; they turn it into a ‘physical something’ that has influence over the thoughts and actions of men. However, if one takes the time to truly contemplate the nature of evil, it becomes clear that evil has a much more logical definition, and thus does not exist as a thing unto itself.

In his book *The Science of Good and Evil*, publisher of *Skeptic* magazine and renowned author Dr. Michael Shermer defines evil as “A descriptive term for a range of environmental events and human behaviors that we describe and interpret as bad, wrong, awful, undesirable, or whatever appropriately descriptive adjective or synonym for evil is chosen” (69). He is expressing that evil is not the hypothetical tiny devil standing on a person’s shoulder, cajoling them to behave immorally, evil is simply the adjective used to describe events or behavior that people think of as “bad.” Having clearly defined evil as a descriptive term, Shermer often uses it in his book to describe immoral behavior. This definition of evil as a description for immoral behavior, rather than an entity that causes harm, is the one that will be expounded upon in this essay.

In defining a person as evil, one is referring to someone who behaves immorally with intent to significantly harm others, without suffering guilt or remorse over the consequences of their actions (White 491). Such a person feels no moral responsibility and has no empathy for their victim. Most often, a person capable of committing an evil act seems perfectly normal under ordinary circumstances. Consider a 2015 case in which a man was prosecuted and charged for murdering his daughter fifteen years prior to his conviction. The man simply had no desire to be a father or pay child support to the mother of his daughter. One afternoon in 2000, after gaining visitation rights, he picked his four-year-old daughter up from school, took her hiking, and tossed the unwary child off a cliff (Shortland). This heinous act of murder was committed free of demonic influence and of his own volition, with no regard for the value of the young girl’s life or for the devastated mother she left behind. The man did not take into consideration the terror that his little daughter must have experienced in her final moments. He had no empathy for her heartbroken mother and stepfather. The man was simply pleased to be free from making child support payments. With his lack of empathy and moral detachment from murdering his own child, the man perfectly illustrates the definition of evil as developed in this essay.

Perhaps the most notorious act of evil in modern history was perpetuated by Adolf Hitler and his lackeys, who followed his orders without so much as raising an eyebrow in question of their morality. If one contemplates humanism, which is the opposite of evil in that all people are acknowledged as worthy and deserving of respect, one can see how Hitler’s deeds were considered evil (White 497). Not only did Adolf Hitler think the Jews were inferior to racially German people, he blamed his...
beloved Germany’s defeat in World War I on a non-existent Jewish conspiracy, instead of bringing himself to admit that Germany was defeated due to its weaknesses (Calder 123). Thus, when he became the leader of Germany he set about systematically destroying German Jews in a mass genocide that still horrifies people to this day.

Per Hitler’s evil orders, Jewish people were dragged from their homes and loaded onto trains without regard as to whether families were being separated. Husbands were parted from wives, children from parents. These unfortunate people were packed into train cars like cattle, with barely enough room to stand, heading for destinations about which they could only fearfully speculate. No empathy was given to the Jews for their hunger, thirst, and fear. No one cared if they were too hot or too cold, or if they had to relieve themselves. They were coldly denied even the most basic of human rights on the hellish train ride that whisked them away to their fates.

As bad as conditions on the train cars were, circumstances only became far worse when they reached their destinations and were unloaded into concentration camps that were surrounded by tall, barbed-wire-topped fences. Although German officers told them that the camps were only temporary holding areas, these death camps were the final stop for millions of innocent Jews. Locked behind fences with no way of escape, they were given scarcely any food or water; many starved to death and the ones who did not became horrifyingly emaciated. Living in deplorable conditions with no clean clothes or opportunity to bathe, the Jews became filthy, their clothing tattered. When finally given an opportunity to ‘shower’ in what seemed to be an unexpected act of grace by the German officers, they were grateful for the opportunity to wash some of the filth from their bodies. The officers led them, with no remorse, into what were not large showers but custom-built gas chambers. While anticipating warm water and a chance to get clean, the unsuspecting Jews, children and adults alike, were mass executed by the application of toxic gas. Their bodies were then carted to buildings that were built specifically as crematoriums, and burned to ash. As the crematoriums became too backlogged to handle the number of bodies being presented for burning, large pits had to be excavated and utilized as a means of disposing of bodies. Countless corpses were tossed into these mass unmarked graves, one atop another, then buried under tons of dirt with no more regard than one gives garbage.

In those final days of their lives, Jewish people were treated with contempt and as less than animals by German officers who would go home at the end of their shifts, sit down to hot meals with their wives and children, and enjoy the trivialities of daily life. Day after day they would impose starvation and suffering, commit mass murder, then be welcomed home by loving families, without a thought for the families they had helped destroy. Adolf Hitler, the mastermind behind the attempted Jewish genocide and responsible for the deaths of millions of innocent people, never even had to get his artsy little hands dirty. In doing what he thought was best for the betterment of his beloved country, Hitler was in fact perpetuating one of the most horrifyingly evil events in history.

In better understanding what evil is, one could contemplate its opposite. As aforementioned, humanism could be considered the opposite of evil. This belief “cherishes the worthiness of all individuals” (White 497). Unlike evil concepts such as the racism and hatred practiced by Hitler and his Nazi regime, those who practice humanism believe all humans were created equal and are worthy of respect and consideration. This anti-evil concept is practiced in the religion of Buddhism, where instead of causing harm to others or persecuting them for having different beliefs, the focus is on being in harmony with all of humanity and improving one’s own inner tranquility (Fenchel 83). Buddhists welcome all people as fellow humans instead of viewing them as strangers or less worthy in some way, even if their beliefs are contradictory to the Buddhist’s. As evil represents immoral behavior that harms others, selfishness, and lack of empathy, humanism represents having empathy for others, being selfless, and striving to behave in a way that does not cause harm to others.

Evil, as defined in this essay, includes immoral thoughts, behaviors, or actions that lead to the intentional significant harm of others. One can perpetrate an evil act directly, as illustrated by the example of the father who threw his four-year-old daughter off a cliff to rid himself of fatherly responsibility. Evil acts can also be masterminded by one person and carried out by many others, as demonstrated by the cruelty of Hitler and his Nazi regime. Both were examples in which pain and suffering were purposely inflicted upon the innocent, done without remorse or even acknowledging that the actions were immoral- and perfectly embody the definition of evil.
Works Cited


Source DOI: 10.1007/s10790-014-9456-7


Shortland, Gail. “Father Threw His 4-year-old Daughter Off a Cliff After Being Ordered to Pay Child Support By the Court; When Cameron Brown Was Ordered To Pay Care For the Child He Didn’t Want, His Actions Were Beyond Evil.” Daily Mirror, Nov. 2015. General OneFile, go. Galegroup.com


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Coherence: What do People Mean When They Say My Writing Doesn't Flow

Coherence: What do People Mean When They Say My Writing Doesn’t Flow

Before You Read

Write 750 to 1,000 words in response to this prompt, keeping in mind that you’re going to be working with this piece of writing extensively in the coming days—not only in this chapter but in other chapters related to style:

As a public university that receives substantial support from the state legislature, the U has an obligation to serve the people of the state of Utah. However, there can be disagreements on what that service means. On one hand, it can mean admitting as many Utah residents as possible in order to increase the state’s population of college-educated citizens. On the other hand, it can mean increasing admission requirements to fulfill the U’s position as the “flagship” university in the state. Where do you come down?

Coherence, or “Flow”—An Overview

Many (student) writers have turned in papers only to have their readers (more often than not, their teachers) hand the papers back with comments that the writing doesn’t “flow.”

Unfortunately, teachers may not always be explicit about what they mean—just that it doesn’t “read” or “sound” right or that the ideas don’t progress from one to another. This chapter is about what “flow” actually means and how to make sure your writing does it.

By “flow,” most readers mean what grammarians and linguists call coherence—the property of a text to hold together at the level of sentences and paragraphs. Of course, cohesion is good in any communication medium, and each medium can present challenges for it. If you’re sending text messages back and forth to a friend and the network sends them out of order, the result can be confusing: you might have written “thank GOD” in response to some piece of news, but your friend might not have gotten your message until after she texted “gotta go.” Oops. If you’re speaking to someone on a train or bus and something outside the window catches your attention, you might say something about it, and the other person might say, “wait—what?”

But in both those cases, you can quickly and easily clear up the confusion. Speech and texting are more or less synchronous media: that is, they involve people communicating at the same time and often in the same (virtual) space. Writing, however—in the traditional sense, anyway—is different, because it’s asynchronous. It also requires an important trade-off. Writing has worked well for a long time as a communication technology because it’s relatively easy to distribute. Someone using writing to communicate doesn’t have to move from place to place: she may simply write something down and send it. However, to use a metaphor from very current communication technologies, writing has low bandwidth compared to other media. If someone is speaking to you, you can infer meaning from words themselves but also from vocal inflections, facial expressions, hand gestures, posture, and even from how close the other person is to you. You can’t do that when you write and read. So, writers and readers can send and receive on the cheap, but they carry a burden of making their words work extraordinarily hard.

This idea has a very clear implication for your own written arguments—an important enough implication that we’d say it pretty loudly if you were standing right in front of us. But, since this is writing, we’ll use boldface: just because an argument you’re
making is clear in your own head, that doesn’t mean it’s automatically clear to people who are reading the written version of your argument. That’s one of the reasons it’s a good idea to circulate the writing you do to others before you turn it in for a grade or circulate it in high-stakes situations.

Fortunately, the to-do list for “flow” is relatively short. Throughout English-language writing, it turns out that there is a small number of strategies for achieving coherence. These strategies help writers follow a key principle for communicating with readers as effectively as possible on the assumption that they’re not looking over their readers’ shoulders pointing out what they really need to know. That principle is called the given-new contract. This contract implies that you as a writer will start your projected readers with something relatively familiar and then lead them to less familiar material. It’s an idea that is simple to state, but it’s powerful, and it works at different levels of a document. At the level of overall document design, consistent visual items on each page (page number location, headings, “white” space, fonts) help create a familiar visual field that works like a container for whatever new information is coming next. As you read earlier in this book, a lot of a writer’s job in an introduction, after all, is orienting readers so that they’re at least familiar with the broad topic before the writer gets specific—with an argument, for example. But the contract helps sentence-level coherence, as well. It’s very helpful to readers if you create a cycle in which you try to put “given” information at the start of sentences and shift “new” information to the ends, and then recycle the “new” information as “given” information in sentences that come up. The principle of end emphasis helps here: readers tend to latch more onto how sentences end than onto how they begin. Skilled writers know this is often the case, so they’ll reserve end-of-sentence slots for new or challenging information, since they know they often have a little more of their readers’ attention at those spots anyway.

The given-new contract and the concept of end emphasis are a little tough to explain in abstract terms, so here’s an example followed by some analysis. We’ve numbered the sentences to help make the analysis clear.

1 This textbook is freely circulable under the terms of a Creative Commons (“CC”) license. 2 CC is a nonprofit organization that helps content creators, such as textbook authors, share their products in more diverse ways than traditional copyright allows. 3 While typical copyright restricts others from using an author’s work unless they have the author’s express consent, CC allows authors to pick and choose which restrictions to apply to their work by using one of several free licenses. 4 For example, this book is available via an “Attribution-NonCommercialShareAlike” agreement: adopters of the textbook may use it free of charge and may even modify it without permission, but they must agree not to try to sell it or share it with others under different licensing terms.

Each sentence in this passage shows our attempt to honor the given-new contract. Here’s how:

1. The first sentence introduces the term “Creative Commons” near its end. We’re assuming that you may not know (much) about CC, so we’re trying to exploit end emphasis to introduce it here very early in the paragraph.
2. This sentence immediately recycles CC and defines the term more fully. The sentence ends with the important (and “new”) idea that CC allows for a wider range of options than copyright.
3. Now, the passage explains in a little more detail the point it just made about copyright restrictions and goes on to clarify the contrast with CC, ending with the “new” information that CC allows authors to choose from several licenses.
4. Not surprisingly, the next sentence shows what the previous sentence introduced by giving an example of a relevant CC license.

In addition to using the principle of end emphasis, writers who honor the given-new contract frequently use several other strategies.

Stock transition words and phrases

Many writers first learn to make their writing flow by using explicit, special-purpose transitional devices. You may hear these devices called “signposts,” because they work much like highway and street signs. When steel boxes weighing 2 tons and more are rolling around at high speeds, it’s important that their operators are repeatedly and clearly told exactly where and when to go with as little ambiguity as possible.
Here’s a list of stock, generic, all-purpose transition words and phrases, organized by their basic functions. Keep in mind that there are differences among these that can make a difference and that determining what those differences is is beyond the scope of this book. It’s a matter of experience.

**To add or show sequence:** again, also, and, and then, besides, equally important, finally, first, further, furthermore, in addition, in the first place, last, moreover, next, second, still, too

**To compare:** also, in the same way, likewise, similarly

**To contrast:** although, and yet, but, but at the same time, despite, even so, even though, for all that, however, in contrast, in spite of, nevertheless, notwithstanding, on the contrary, on the other hand, regardless, still, though, yet

**To give examples or intensify:** after all, an illustration of, even, for example, for instance, indeed, in fact, it is true, of course, specifically, that is, to illustrate, truly

**To indicate place:** above, adjacent to, below, elsewhere, farther on, here, near, nearby, on the other side, opposite to, there, to the east, to the left

**To indicate time:** after a while, afterward, as long as, as soon as, at last, at length, at that time, before, earlier, formerly, immediately, in the meantime, in the past, lately, later, meanwhile, now, presently, shortly, simultaneously, since, so far, soon, subsequently, then, thereafter, until, until now, when

**To repeat, summarize, or conclude:** all in all, altogether, in brief, in conclusion, in other words, in particular, in short, in simpler terms, in summary, on the whole, that is, to put it differently, to summarize

**To show cause and effect:** accordingly, as a result, because, consequently, for this purpose, hence, otherwise, since, then, therefore, thereupon, thus, to this end, with this object in mind

As we just told you, avoiding ambiguity in academic and professional writing is important. But it’s not as important as avoiding it on highways, in factories, or around high-voltage equipment or explosives. In those contexts, lots of signposts with lots of redundancy are vital. In many writing situations, you can expect your readers to pick up other useful clues for coherence, so it’s somewhat less important to use a lot of these “stock” or generic transition words. In fact, if you overuse them (for instance, in an essay in which your first paragraph starts with “first,” your second paragraph starts with “second,” and on and on), it can get annoying.

**Pronouns**

If you’re old enough vaguely to remember the Schoolhouse Rock series, you might remember the episode about pronouns (“he,” “she,” “her,” “him,” “you,” “we,” “they,” “it,” “one,” “this,” “that,” and some others) and how they can stand for nouns, even if the nouns have long names. The idea is that pronouns make speaking and writing more efficient. But you may not have learned that pronouns are at least as powerful as cohesive devices. Since pronouns work by referring back to nouns that have previously been mentioned, they can help writers carry the ideas their nouns represent across sentences and paragraphs.

You may have been told to limit your use of pronouns or even avoid them altogether. This is bad advice, but it’s understandable: pronouns work very well when they clearly refer to their antecedents, but they can create significant comprehension problems, misdirection, and vagueness when they don’t.

**Repetition**

Contrary to a lot of advice novice writers get, repetition is effective. For example, as you’ll learn later in this book (or now if you want to read ahead, of course), many rhetorical strategies that are thousands of years old and that exist in several languages use
repetition. It's a time-honored way to signal importance, create a sense of rhythm, and help audiences remember key ideas. But repetition gets a bad reputation because it can become redundant. (Yes, that sentence used repetition to get its point across. It's no accident that it had a lot of “r”s.)

Repetition can involve individual words, phrases, or grammatical structures. When you repeat similar structural elements but not necessarily the words themselves, you are using parallelism, a special variety of repetition that not only helps coherence but also helps you to communicate that similarly important ideas should be read together. When sentences are written using non-parallel parts, it's certainly possible for readers to understand them, but it creates work for the reader that usually isn't necessary. Compare these sentences:

```
Student writers should learn to start projects early, how to ask for advice from teachers and peers, and when to focus on correcting grammar.

Student writers should learn to start projects early, to ask for advice from teachers and peers, and to figure out when to focus on correcting their grammar.
```

See the difference? The first sentence is comprehensible: the commas, for example, let you know that you’re reading a list. But the extra adverbs (“how” and “when”) get in the way of the sentence’s clarity. And that problem, in turn, means that it's hard to see clearly how each item in the list relates to the others. In the revised sentence, though, it's a lot clearer that each of the three items is something student writers should “learn to” do. That relationship is made clear by the repeating grammatical pattern:

```
Student writers should learn
• to start projects early
• to ask for advice
• to figure out when to focus on grammar
```

Example

Here’s an example of some writing that uses a variety of coherence strategies. We know it well because one of us wrote it. It’s a short essay, written for a broad academic audience in a U publication, about the current state of the English language. To clarify the analysis that follows, we’ve underlined a few of the transition devices.

Teaching (and Learning) Englishes
Jay Jordan
University Writing Program

I teach English-language writing, and I’m a native speaker of the English language. Being a native speaker might seem to be an excellent basic qualification for my job: at the very least, it should necessarily make me the model of English usage. However, it actually makes me very unusual.
According to The British Council, approximately 1.5 billion people around the world use English. Roughly 375 million of them are like me: they have learned English since birth, and most of them live in countries like the US, Canada, Great Britain, Australia, and New Zealand that are traditional English-language centers.

That still leaves over a billion English users. 375 million of those people live in countries that were British colonies until the middle of the last century, such as Ghana, India, Kenya, and Nigeria.

But the largest number of English speakers—50% of the global total—are in countries that were not British colonies and that don’t have much of a history with English. Count China, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, and South Korea among them. So, most English speakers aren’t where we might expect them to be. In addition, they’re not using English in ways we might expect, either, which helps explain why I’m referring to them as “users” and not “writers” or “speakers.” Most people who use English around the world do so in specific circumstances in order to get very specific things done. Many Indians, for instance, might use English in publications and to transact business over the phone, Hindi in a government office, Gujarati at the store, and maybe one of several other languages at home.

What does this mean for my teaching and research? People and information move around globally more so now than ever, and that movement makes diverse uses of English feed back into the US. As students at the U (and the U is not alone) become more culturally and linguistically diverse, I often have as much to learn from them as I have to teach them.

This short example uses each of the coherence strategies described above:

- Overall, the example attempts to honor the given-new contract. It starts on familiar territory—or at least, with an attempt to orient the reader very quickly to the writer’s personal approach. And it also makes a statement about the writer that the reader likely intuitively agrees with: namely, he’s a native speaker of English, which makes him well qualified to be an English teacher. But the first paragraph ends with a surprising claim: being a native English speaker means being unusual. Here, then, the writer starts with what’s comfortable but then uses end emphasis to reinforce the “new” information at the end.

- The writer does use several stock transitions: in fact, one of them —“however”—helps introduce the surprising sentence at the end of the introduction by clearly signposting something different or unexpected. And, as another example, the fourth paragraph starts with “but,” which signposts another transition to information that contradicts what comes before. (You may have been told never to start sentences with conjunctions like “but” or “and.” It turns out that it’s generally fine to do that. Just be aware of your readers’ preferences.)

- Pronouns appear to be the most common cohesion device in the essay. At the start of the third paragraph, for example, “that” stands in for the statistic in the previous paragraph, which would be hard to write out all over again. But “that” also carries forward the sense of the statistic into the next paragraph. And “those people” carries the statistic forward to the next sentence. (Really, “those” is actually an adjective that modifies “people,” but it’s enough like a pronoun that we’re handling it like one here.)

- Repetition is also common in this essay. Words are repeated—or at least, put very close to other words that are very similar in meaning. “English” and “British colonies” clearly help tie together the third and fourth paragraphs. And sentences show parallelism. See, for instance, paragraph four: “So, most English speakers aren’t where we would expect them to be. In addition, they’re not using English in ways we might expect, either.”

To Do

1. Identify at least three other specific cohesion devices used in the example essay. Be prepared to say what kind of device it is and what effect it has on your reading. Also be prepared to suggest what would happen if it weren’t there.

2. Re-read the 750-1,000 words you wrote before you read this chapter, paying particular attention to coherence. Now, revise it to improve its flow.
Given all the time and effort you have put into your research project, you will want to make sure that your final draft represents your best work. This requires taking the time to revise and edit your paper carefully.

You may feel like you need a break from your paper before you revise and edit it. That is understandable—but leave yourself with enough time to complete this important stage of the writing process. In this section, you will learn the following specific strategies that are useful for revising and editing a research paper:

- How to evaluate and improve the overall organization and cohesion
- How to maintain an appropriate style and tone
- How to use checklists to identify and correct any errors in language, citations, and formatting

**Revising Your Paper: Organization and Cohesion**

When writing a research paper, it is easy to become overly focused on editorial details, such as the proper format for bibliographical entries. These details do matter. However, before you begin to address them, it is important to spend time reviewing and revising the content of the paper.

A good research paper is both organized and cohesive. Organization means that your argument flows logically from one point to the next. Cohesion means that the elements of your paper work together smoothly and naturally. In a cohesive research paper, information from research is seamlessly integrated with the writer’s ideas.

**Revise to Improve Organization**

When you revise to improve organization, you look at the flow of ideas throughout the essay as a whole and within individual paragraphs. You check to see that your essay moves logically from the introduction to the body paragraphs to the conclusion, and that each section reinforces your thesis. Use Checklist 12.1 to help you.

**Checklist 12.1**

Revision: Organization

**At the essay level**

- Does my introduction proceed clearly from the opening to the thesis?
- Does each body paragraph have a clear main idea that relates to the thesis?
- Do the main ideas in the body paragraphs flow in a logical order? Is each paragraph connected to the one before it?
- Do I need to add or revise topic sentences or transitions to make the overall flow of ideas clearer?
- Does my conclusion summarize my main ideas and revisit my thesis?
At the paragraph level

- Does the topic sentence clearly state the main idea?
- Do the details in the paragraph relate to the main idea?
- Do I need to recast any sentences or add transitions to improve the flow of sentences?

Jorge reread his draft paragraph by paragraph. As he read, he highlighted the main idea of each paragraph so he could see whether his ideas proceeded in a logical order. For the most part, the flow of ideas was clear. However, he did notice that one paragraph did not have a clear main idea. It interrupted the flow of the writing. During revision, Jorge added a topic sentence that clearly connected the paragraph to the one that had preceded it. He also added transitions to improve the flow of ideas from sentence to sentence.

Read the following paragraphs twice, the first time without Jorge's changes, and the second time with them.

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Picture this: You’re standing in the aisle of your local grocery store when you see a chubby guy nearby staring at several brands of ketchup on display. After deliberating for a moment, he reaches for the bottle with the words “Low-Carb!” displayed prominently on the label. (You can’t help but notice that the low-carb ketchup is higher priced.) Is he making a smart choice that will help him lose weight over the past decade, increasing numbers of Americans have jumped on the low-carbohydrate bandwagon and enjoy better health—or is he just buying into the latest diet fad? Some researchers estimate that approximately 40 million Americans, or about one-fifth of the population, have attempted to restrict their intake of foods high in carbohydrates (Sanders & Katz, 2004; Hirsch, 2004). Proponents of low-carb diets say not only do they help the most effective way to lose weight—but also yield health benefits such as lower blood pressure and improved cholesterol levels. Some doctors claim that low-carbohydrate diets are overrated and caution that their long-term effects are unknown. Although following a low-carbohydrate diet can have many benefits—especially for people who are obese or diabetic—these diets are not necessarily the best option for everyone who wants to lose weight or improve their health.

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Exercise 1

Follow these steps to begin revising your paper’s overall organization.

1. Print out a hard copy of your paper.
2. Read your paper paragraph by paragraph. Highlight your thesis and the topic sentence of each paragraph.
3. Using the thesis and topic sentences as starting points, outline the ideas you presented—just as you would do if you were outlining a chapter in a textbook. Do not look at the outline you created during prewriting. You may write in the margins of your draft or create a formal outline on a separate sheet of paper.
4. Next, reread your paper more slowly, looking for how ideas flow from sentence to sentence. Identify places where adding
a transition or recasting a sentence would make the ideas flow more logically.

5. Review the topics on your outline. Is there a logical flow of ideas? Identify any places where you may need to reorganize ideas.

6. Begin to revise your paper to improve organization. Start with any major issues, such as needing to move an entire paragraph. Then proceed to minor revisions, such as adding a transitional phrase or tweaking a topic sentence so it connects ideas more clearly.

Collaboration

Please share your paper with a classmate. Repeat the six steps and take notes on a separate piece of paper. Share and compare notes.

**TIP**

Writers choose transitions carefully to show the relationships between ideas—for instance, to make a comparison or elaborate on a point with examples. Make sure your transitions suit your purpose and avoid overusing the same ones. For an extensive list of transitions, see Chapter 8 “The Writing Process: How Do I Begin?”, Section 8.4 “Revising and Editing”.

**Revise to Improve Cohesion**

When you revise to improve cohesion, you analyze how the parts of your paper work together. You look for anything that seems awkward or out of place. Revision may involve deleting unnecessary material or rewriting parts of the paper so that the out-of-place material fits in smoothly.

In a research paper, problems with cohesion usually occur when a writer has trouble integrating source material. If facts or quotations have been awkwardly dropped into a paragraph, they distract or confuse the reader instead of working to support the writer’s point. Overusing paraphrased and quoted material has the same effect. Use Checklist 12.2 to review your essay for cohesion.

**Checklist 12.2**

Revision: Cohesion

- Does the opening of the paper clearly connect to the broader topic and thesis? Make sure entertaining quotes or anecdotes serve a purpose.
- Have I included support from research for each main point in the body of my paper?
- Have I included introductory material before any quotations? Quotations should never stand alone in a paragraph.
- Does paraphrased and quoted material clearly serve to develop my own points?
- Do I need to add to or revise parts of the paper to help the reader understand how certain information from a source is relevant?
- Are there any places where I have overused material from sources?
- Does my conclusion make sense based on the rest of the paper? Make sure any new questions or suggestions in the conclusion are clearly linked to earlier material.

As Jorge reread his draft, he looked to see how the different pieces fit together to prove his thesis. He realized that some of his supporting information needed to be integrated more carefully and decided to omit some details entirely. Read the following paragraph, first without Jorge’s revisions and then with them.
One likely reason for these lackluster long-term results is that a low-carbohydrate diet—like any restrictive diet—is difficult to adhere to for any extended period. Most people enjoy foods that are high in carbohydrates, and no one wants to be the person who always turns down that slice of pizza or birthday cake. In commenting on the Gardner study, experts at the Harvard School of Public Health (2010) noted that women in all four diet groups had difficulty following the plan. Because it is hard for dieters to stick to a low-carbohydrate eating plan, the initial success of these diets is short-lived (Heins, 2009). Medical professionals caution that low-carbohydrate diets are difficult for many people to follow consistently and that, to maintain a healthy weight, dieters should try to develop nutrition and exercise habits they can incorporate in their lives in the long term (Mayo Clinic, 2008). "For some people, [low-carbohydrate diets] are great, but for most, any sensible eating and exercise plan would work just as well" (Kwon, 2010).

Jorge decided that his comment about pizza and birthday cake came across as subjective and was not necessary to make his point, so he deleted it. He also realized that the quotation at the end of the paragraph was awkward and ineffective. How would his readers know who Kwon was or why her opinion should be taken seriously? Adding an introductory phrase helped Jorge integrate this quotation smoothly and establish the credibility of his source.

### EXERCISE 2

Follow these steps to begin revising your paper to improve cohesion.

1. Print out a hard copy of your paper, or work with your printout from Note 12.33 “Exercise 1”.
2. Read the body paragraphs of your paper first. Each time you come to a place that cites information from sources, ask yourself what purpose this information serves. Check that it helps support a point and that it is clearly related to the other sentences in the paragraph.
3. Identify unnecessary information from sources that you can delete.
4. Identify places where you need to revise your writing so that readers understand the significance of the details cited from sources.
5. Skim the body paragraphs once more, looking for any paragraphs that seem packed with citations. Review these paragraphs carefully for cohesion.
6. Review your introduction and conclusion. Make sure the information presented works with ideas in the body of the paper.
7. Revise the places you identified in your paper to improve cohesion.
Collaboration
Please exchange papers with a classmate. Complete step four. On a separate piece of paper, note any areas that would benefit from clarification. Return and compare notes.

Writing at Work

Understanding cohesion can also benefit you in the workplace, especially when you have to write and deliver a presentation. Speakers sometimes rely on cute graphics or funny quotations to hold their audience’s attention. If you choose to use these elements, make sure they work well with the substantive content of your presentation. For example, if you are asked to give a financial presentation, and the financial report shows that the company lost money, funny illustrations would not be relevant or appropriate for the presentation.

Using a Consistent Style and Tone

Once you are certain that the content of your paper fulfills your purpose, you can begin revising to improve style and tone. Together, your style and tone create the voice of your paper, or how you come across to readers. Style refers to the way you use language as a writer—the sentence structures you use and the word choices you make. Tone is the attitude toward your subject and audience that you convey through your word choice.

Determining an Appropriate Style and Tone

Although accepted writing styles will vary within different disciplines, the underlying goal is the same—to come across to your readers as a knowledgeable, authoritative guide. Writing about research is like being a tour guide who walks readers through a topic. A stuffy, overly formal tour guide can make readers feel put off or intimidated. Too much informality or humor can make readers wonder whether the tour guide really knows what he or she is talking about. Extreme or emotionally charged language comes across as unbalanced.

To help prevent being overly formal or informal, determine an appropriate style and tone at the beginning of the research process. Consider your topic and audience because these can help dictate style and tone. For example, a paper on new breakthroughs in cancer research should be more formal than a paper on ways to get a good night’s sleep.

A strong research paper comes across as straightforward, appropriately academic, and serious. It is generally best to avoid writing in the first person, as this can make your paper seem overly subjective and opinion based. Use Checklist 12.3 on style to review your paper for other issues that affect style and tone. You can check for consistency at the end of the writing process. Checking for consistency is discussed later in this section.

Checklist 12.3

Style

- My paper avoids excessive wordiness.
- My sentences are varied in length and structure.
- I have avoided using first-person pronouns such as I and we.
- I have used the active voice whenever possible.
- I have defined specialized terms that might be unfamiliar to readers.
- I have used clear, straightforward language whenever possible and avoided unnecessary jargon.
- My paper states my point of view using a balanced tone—neither too indecisive nor too forceful.
Word Choice

Note that word choice is an especially important aspect of style. In addition to checking the points noted on Checklist 12.3, review your paper to make sure your language is precise, conveys no unintended connotations, and is free of biases. Here are some of the points to check for:

- Vague or imprecise terms
- Slang
- Repetition of the same phrases (“Smith states..., Jones states...”) to introduce quoted and paraphrased material (For a full list of strong verbs to use with in-text citations, see Chapter 13 “APA and MLA Documentation and Formatting”)
- Exclusive use of masculine pronouns or awkward use of he or she
- Use of language with negative connotations, such as haughty or ridiculous
- Use of outdated or offensive terms to refer to specific ethnic, racial, or religious groups

TIP

Using plural nouns and pronouns or recasting a sentence can help you keep your language gender neutral while avoiding awkwardness. Consider the following examples.

- **Gender-biased:** When a writer cites a source in the body of his paper, he must list it on his references page.
- **Awkward:** When a writer cites a source in the body of his or her paper, he or she must list it on his or her references page.
- **Improved:** Writers must list any sources cited in the body of a paper on the references page.

Keeping Your Style Consistent

As you revise your paper, make sure your style is consistent throughout. Look for instances where a word, phrase, or sentence just does not seem to fit with the rest of the writing. It is best to reread for style after you have completed the other revisions so that you are not distracted by any larger content issues. Revising strategies you can use include the following:

- **Read your paper aloud.** Sometimes your ears catch inconsistencies that your eyes miss.
- **Share your paper with another reader whom you trust to give you honest feedback.** It is often difficult to evaluate one’s own style objectively—especially in the final phase of a challenging writing project. Another reader may be more likely to notice instances of wordiness, confusing language, or other issues that affect style and tone.
- **Line-edit your paper slowly, sentence by sentence.** You may even wish to use a sheet of paper to cover everything on the page except the paragraph you are editing—that forces you to read slowly and carefully. Mark any areas where you notice problems in style or tone, and then take time to rework those sections.

On reviewing his paper, Jorge found that he had generally used an appropriately academic style and tone. However, he noticed one glaring exception—his first paragraph. He realized there were places where his overly informal writing could come across as unserious or, worse, disparaging. Revising his word choice and omitting a humorous aside helped Jorge maintain a consistent tone. Read his revisions.
Beyond the Hype: Evaluating Low-Carb Diets

I. Introduction

Picture this: You’re standing in the aisle of your local grocery store when you see a chubby guy nearby staring at several brands of ketchup on display. After deliberating for a moment, he reaches for the bottle with the words “Low-Carb!” displayed prominently on the label. (You can’t help but notice that the low-carb ketchup is higher-priced.) Is he making a smart choice that will help him lose weight and enjoy better health—or is he just buying into the latest diet fad?

EXERCISE 3

Using Checklist 12.3, line-edit your paper. You may use either of these techniques:

1. Print out a hard copy of your paper, or work with your printout from Note 12.33 “Exercise 1”. Read it line by line. Check for the issues noted on Checklist 12.3, as well as any other aspects of your writing style you have previously identified as areas for improvement. Mark any areas where you notice problems in style or tone, and then take time to rework those sections.

2. If you prefer to work with an electronic document, use the menu options in your word-processing program to enlarge the text to 150 or 200 percent of the original size. Make sure the type is large enough that you can focus on only one paragraph at a time. Read the paper line by line as described in step 1. Highlight any areas where you notice problems in style or tone, and then take time to rework those sections.

Collaboration

Please exchange papers with a classmate. On a separate piece of paper, note places where the essay does not seem to flow or you have questions about what was written. Return the essay and compare notes.

Editing Your Paper

After revising your paper to address problems in content or style, you will complete one final editorial review. Perhaps you already have caught and corrected minor mistakes during previous revisions. Nevertheless, give your draft a final edit to make sure it is error-free. Your final edit should focus on two broad areas:

1. Errors in grammar, mechanics, usage, and spelling
2. Errors in citing and formatting sources

For in-depth information on these two topics, see Chapter 2 “Writing Basics: What Makes a Good Sentence?” and Chapter 13 “APA and MLA Documentation and Formatting”.

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Correcting Errors

Given how much work you have put into your research paper, you will want to check for any errors that could distract or confuse your readers. Using the spell-checking feature in your word-processing program can be helpful—but this should not replace a full, careful review of your document. Be sure to check for any errors that may have come up frequently for you in the past. Use Checklist 12.4 to help you as you edit:

Checklist 12.4

Grammar, Mechanics, Punctuation, Usage, and Spelling

- My paper is free of grammatical errors, such as errors in subject-verb agreement and sentence fragments. (For additional guidance on grammar, see Chapter 2 “Writing Basics: What Makes a Good Sentence?”
- My paper is free of errors in punctuation and mechanics, such as misplaced commas or incorrectly formatted source titles. (For additional guidance on punctuation and mechanics, see Chapter 3 “Punctuation”.
- My paper is free of common usage errors, such as *alot* and *alright*. (For additional guidance on correct usage, see Chapter 4 “Working with Words: Which Word Is Right?”)
- My paper is free of spelling errors. I have proofread my paper for spelling in addition to using the spell-checking feature in my word-processing program.
- I have checked my paper for any editing errors that I know I tend to make frequently.

Checking Citations and Formatting

When editing a research paper, it is also important to check that you have cited sources properly and formatted your document according to the specified guidelines. There are two reasons for this. First and foremost, citing sources correctly ensures that you have given proper credit to other people for ideas and information that helped you in your work. Second, using correct formatting establishes your paper as one student's contribution to the work developed by and for a larger academic community. Increasingly, American Psychological Association (APA) style guidelines are the standard for many academic fields. Modern Language Association (MLA) is also a standard style in many fields. Use Checklist 12.5 to help you check citations and formatting.

Checklist 12.5

Citations and Formatting

- Within the body of my paper, each fact or idea taken from a source is credited to the correct source.
- Each in-text citation includes the source author’s name (or, where applicable, the organization name or source title) and year of publication. I have used the correct format of in-text and parenthetical citations.
- Each source cited in the body of my paper has a corresponding entry in the references section of my paper.
- My references section includes a heading and double-spaced, alphabetized entries.
- Each entry in my references section is indented on the second line and all subsequent lines.
- Each entry in my references section includes all the necessary information for that source type, in the correct sequence and format.
- My paper includes a title page.
- My paper includes a running head.
- The margins of my paper are set at one inch. Text is double spaced and set in a standard 12-point font.

For detailed guidelines on APA and MLA citation and formatting, see Chapter 13 “APA and MLA Documentation and Formatting”.

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Writing at Work

Following APA or MLA citation and formatting guidelines may require time and effort. However, it is good practice for learning how to follow accepted conventions in any professional field. Many large corporations create a style manual with guidelines for editing and formatting documents produced by that corporation. Employees follow the style manual when creating internal documents and documents for publication.

During the process of revising and editing, Jorge made changes in the content and style of his paper. He also gave the paper a final review to check for overall correctness and, particularly, correct APA or MLA citations and formatting. Read the final draft of his paper.

Beyond the Hype: Evaluating Low-Carb Diets
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BEYOND THE HYPE: EVALUATING LOW-CARB DIETS

Picture this: You’re standing in the aisle of your local grocery store when you see an overweight man nearby staring at several brands of ketchup on display. After deliberating for a moment, he reaches for the bottle with the words “Low-Carb!” displayed prominently on the label. Is he making a smart choice that will help him lose weight and enjoy better health—or is he just buying into the latest diet fad?

Over the past decade, increasing numbers of Americans have jumped on the low-carb bandwagon. As of 2004, researchers estimated that approximately 40 million Americans, or about one-fifth of the population, were attempting to restrict their intake of food high in carbohydrates (Sanders & Katz, 2004). Proponents of low-carb diets say they not only are the most effective way to lose weight but also yield health benefits such as lower blood pressure and improved cholesterol levels. Meanwhile, some doctors claim that low-carb diets are overrated and caution that their long-term effects are unknown. Although following a low-carbohydrate diet can benefit some people, these diets are not necessarily that best option for everyone who wants to lose weight or improve their health.

PURPORTED BENEFITS OF LOW-CARBOHYDRATE DIETS

To make sense of the popular enthusiasm for low-carbohydrate diets, it is important to understand proponents’ claims about how they work. Any eating plan includes a balance of the three macronutrients—proteins, fats, and carbohydrates—each of which is essential for human health. Different foods provide these macronutrients in different proportions; a steak is primarily a source of protein, and a plate of pasta is primarily a source of carbohydrates. No one recommends eliminating any of these three macronutrient groups entirely.

However, experts disagree on what protein: fats: carbohydrate ratio is best for optimum health and for maintaining a healthy weight. Since the 1970s, the USDA has recommended that the greatest proportion of one’s daily calories should come from carbohydrates—breads, pastas, and cereals—with moderate consumption of proteins and minimal consumption of fats. High-carbohydrate foods form the base of the “food pyramid” familiar to nutrition students.

Those who subscribe to the low-carb philosophy, however, argue that this approach is flawed. They argue that excess weight stems from disordered metabolism, which in turn can be traced to overconsumption of foods high in carbohydrates—especially refined carbohydrates like white flour and sugar (Atkins, 2002; Sears, 1995; Agatson, 2003). The body quickly absorbs sugars from these foods, increasing the level of glucose in the blood. This triggers the release of insulin, delivering energy-providing glucose to cells and storing some of the excess as glycogen. Unfortunately, the liver
turns the rest of this excess glucose into fat. Thus, adherents of the low-carb approach often classify foods according to their glycemic index (GI)—a measurement of how quickly a given food raises blood glucose levels when consumed. Foods high in refined carbohydrates—sugar, potatoes, white breads, and pasta, for instance—have a high glycemic index.\(^1\)

Dieters who focus solely on reducing fat intake may fail to realize that consuming refined carbohydrates contributes to weight problems. Atkins (2002) notes that low-fat diets recommended to many who wish to lose weight are, by definition, usually high in carbohydrates, and thus unlikely to succeed.

Even worse, consuming high-carbohydrate foods regularly can, over time, wreak havoc with the body’s systems for regulating blood sugar levels and insulin production. In some individuals, frequent spikes in blood sugar and insulin levels cause the body to become insulin-resistant—less able to use glucose for energy and more likely to convert it to fat (Atkins, 2002). This in turn helps to explain the link between obesity and Type 2 diabetes. In contrast, reducing carbohydrate intake purportedly helps the body use food more efficiently for energy. Additional benefits associated with these diets include reduced risk of cardiovascular disease (Atkins, 2002), lowered blood pressure (Bell, 2006; Atkins, 2002), and reduced risk of developing certain cancers (Atkins, 2002).

Given the experts’ conflicting recommendations, it is no wonder that patients are confused about how to eat for optimum health. Some may assume that even moderate carbohydrate consumption should be avoided (Harvard School of Public Health, 2010). Others may use the low-carb approach to justify consuming large amounts of foods high in saturated fats—eggs, steak, bacon, and so forth. Meanwhile, low-carb diet plans and products have become a multibillion-dollar industry (Hirsch, 2004). Does this approach live up to its adherents’ promises?

### RESEARCH ON LOW-CARBOHYDRATE DIETS AND WEIGHT LOSS

A number of clinical studies have found that low-carbohydrate diet plans are indeed highly effective for weight loss. Gardner et al. (2007) compared outcomes among overweight and obese women who followed one of four popular diet plans: Atkins, The Zone, LEARN, or Ornish. After 12 months, the group that had followed the low-carb Atkins plan had lost significantly more weight than those in the other three groups. McMillan-Price et al. (2006) compared results among overweight and obese young adults who followed one of four plans, all of which were low in fat but had varying proportions of proteins and carbohydrates. They found that, over a 12-week period, the most significantly body-fat loss occurred on plans that were high in protein and/or low in “high glycemic index” foods. More recently, the American Heart Association (2010) reported on an Israeli study that found that subjects who followed a low-carbohydrate, high-protein diet lost more weight than those who followed a low-fat plan or a Mediterranean plan based on vegetables, grains, and minimal consumption of meats and healthy fats.\(^2\) Other researchers have also found that low-carbohydrates diets resulted in increased weight loss (Ebbeling, Leidig, Feldman, Lovesky, & Ludwig, 2007; Bell, 2006; HealthDay, 2010).

Although these results are promising, they may be short-lived. Dieters who succeed in losing weight often struggle to keep the weight off—and unfortunately, low-carb diets are no exception to the rule. HealthDay News (2010) cites a study recently published in the Annals of Internal Medicine that compared obese subjects who followed a low-carbohydrate diet and a low-fat diet. The former group lost more weight steadily—and both groups had difficulty keeping weight off. Similarly, Swiss researchers found that, although low-carb dieters initially lost more weight than those who followed other plans, the differences tended to even out over time (Bell, 2006). This suggests that low-carb diets may be no more effective than other diets for maintaining a healthy weight in the long term.

One likely reason is that a low-carbohydrate diet—like any restrictive diet—is difficult to adhere to for any extended period. In commenting on the Gardner study, experts at the Harvard School of Public Health (2010) noted that women in all four diet groups had difficulty following the plan. Because it is hard for dieters to stick to a low-carbohydrate eating plan, the initial success of these diets is short-lived (Heinz, 2009). Medical professionals caution that low-carbohydrate diets are difficult for many people to follow consistently and that, to maintain a healthy weight, dieters should try to develop nutrition and...
Exercise habits they can incorporate in their lives in the long term (Mayo Clinic, 2008). Registered dietitian Dana Kwon (2010) comments, “For some people, [low-carbohydrate diets] are great, but for most, any sensible eating and exercise plan would work just as well” (Kwon, 2010).

**OTHER LONG-TERM HEALTH OUTCOMES**

Regardless of whether low-carb diets are most effective for weight loss, their potential benefits for weight loss must be weighed against other long-term health outcomes such as hypertension, the risk of heart disease, and cholesterol levels. Research findings in these areas are mixed. For this reason, people considering following a low-carbohydrate diet to lose weight should be advised of the potential risks in doing so.

Research on how low-carbohydrate diets affect cholesterol levels is inconclusive. Some researchers have found that low-carbohydrate diets raise levels of HDL, or “good” cholesterol (Ebbeling et al., 2007; Seppa, 2008). Unfortunately, they may also raise levels of LDL, or “bad” cholesterol, which is associated with heart disease (Ebbeling et al., 2007; Reuters, 2010).

A particular concern is that as dieters on a low-carbohydrate plan increase their intake of meats and dairy products—foods that are high in protein and fat—they are also likely to consume increased amounts of saturated fats, resulting in clogged arteries and again increasing the risk of heart disease. Studies of humans (Bradley et al., 2009) and mice (Foo et al., 2009) have identified possible risks to cardiovascular health associated with low-carb diets. The American Heart Association (2010) and the Harvard School of Public Health (2010) caution that doctors cannot yet assess how following a low-carbohydrate diet affects patients' health over a long-term period.

Some studies (Bell, 2006) have found that following a low-carb diet helped lower patients’ blood pressure. Again, however, excessive consumption of foods high in saturated fats may, over time, lead to the development of clogged arteries and increase risk of hypertension. Choosing lean meats over those high in fat and supplementing the diet with high-fiber, low-glycemic-index carbohydrates, such as leafy green vegetables, is a healthier plan for dieters to follow.

Perhaps most surprisingly, low-carbohydrate diets are not necessarily advantageous for patients with Type 2 diabetes. Bradley et al. (2009) found that patients who followed a low-carb or a low-fat diet had comparable outcomes for both weight loss and insulin resistance. The National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse (2010) advises diabetics to monitor blood sugar levels carefully and to consult with their health care provider to develop a plan for healthy eating. Nevertheless, the nutritional guidelines it provides as a dietary starting point closely follow the USDA food pyramid.

**CONCLUSION**

Low-carb diets have garnered a great deal of positive attention, and it isn’t entirely undeserved. These diets do lead to rapid weight loss, and they often result in greater weight loss over a period of months than other diet plans. Significantly overweight or obese people may find low-carb eating plans the most effective for losing weight and reducing the risks associated with carrying excess body fat. However, because these diets are difficult for some people to adhere to and because their potential long-term health effects are still being debated, they are not necessarily the ideal choice for anyone who wants to lose weight. A moderately overweight person who wants to lose only a few pounds is best advised to choose whatever plan will help him stay active and consume fewer calories consistently—whether or not it involves eating low-carb ketchup.

**REFERENCES**


KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Organization in a research paper means that the argument proceeds logically from the introduction to the body to the conclusion. It flows logically from one point to the next. When revising a research paper, evaluate the organization of the paper as a whole and the organization of individual paragraphs.

- In a cohesive research paper, the elements of the paper work together smoothly and naturally. When revising a research paper, evaluate its cohesion. In particular, check that information from research is smoothly integrated with your ideas.

- An effective research paper uses a style and tone that are appropriately academic and serious. When revising a research paper, check that the style and tone are consistent throughout.

- Editing a research paper involves checking for errors in grammar, mechanics, punctuation, usage, spelling, citations, and formatting.
About the Author

OER books are usually blends of different texts, so I cannot speak to the original Lumen authors’ backgrounds. Here is a little bit of background about myself, though (written in that third person that is always a warning sign for individuals, as Seinfeld episodes show us).

Josh Dickinson is an Associate Professor of English at Jefferson Community College in Watertown, NY. He teaches English and Education courses with a focus upon American Literature, Native American Literature, and non-Western Literature. Josh attended SUNY Jefferson, SUNY Potsdam, Syracuse University, and Colgate University.

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He enjoys participating in the National Novel Writing Month contest, having completed seven novels so far each November. Josh has officiated high school soccer matches for 25 years and supports pro teams Tottenham Hotspur, FC Barcelona, and Borussia Dortmund.

At the Canadian Museum of History, Ottawa: Go Habs, Go!