HOW I WRITE

A GUIDE TO ACADEMIC WRITING

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“If you don't know where you are going, any road will get you there.”
—Lewis Carroll

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Chapter One

Writing with Purpose

“You can approach the act of writing with nervousness, excitement, hopefulness, or even despair . . . . You can come to the act with your fists clenched and your eyes narrowed . . . . You can come to it because you want [someone] to marry you or because you want to change the world. Come to it any way but lightly. Let me say it again: you must not come lightly to the blank page.”

– Stephen King

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Running Toward the Starting Line

“Begin at the beginning,” the King advises the White Rabbit in Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (2000), “and go on till you come to the end: then stop.” (p. 121). While that sounds like good advice, and probably is in most situations, writing tends to work differently. Rarely does a writer manage to craft a story, an essay, or even a letter in a straight line from beginning to end. Though there are identifiable things to conquer along the writing path, we don’t tend to find ourselves moving toward them in any measurable succession—we tend to backtrack, skip over, move backward and forward, and even hyper-focus on some points while ignoring others. More often than not, we write in fits and starts—a little here, a bit there—and many times, the last thing we compose in an essay is the beginning. Sometimes it’s alarming just how closely the writing process actually resembles Wonderland.

Ann E. Berthoff (2009), a leader in the field of Composition Studies, says it best when she makes the claim that “part of learning to write is learning to tolerate ambiguity” (p. 649). In other words, when figuring out this thing called writing, we find that there really isn’t a right or wrong way to approach and carry out a writing task. Sometimes we just have to trust our instincts, feel our way through the process, and hope for the best. The more you write, and the more you understand about writing, however, the better your instincts will get. Our goal throughout this class is to help you to develop those instincts so that your journey through the writing process is more efficient and productive.

Despite the inconsistencies in the writing process, we’ll attempt to make some sense of what steps we can take to make our writing more efficient—we’ll even attempt to place these steps in a usable order. More importantly, we hope to challenge you to think about your own writing process, to reconsider what you already know about writing, to reevaluate it—perhaps for the first time in your life. Throughout the process, we will try to expose you to several different ways to approach the writing process in the hope that one or two of them might work for you. After all, how you write is a personal endeavor; the process is as individual as you are.

**Writing is . . .**

Writing, like your cell phone, your iPod, and the computer on which you are reading this, is a technology. Just like any technology, writing is built on some basic, *agreed upon* principles. It is important to understand that, because writing is a human construction, it is not esoteric, meaning that there are not certain people who are blessed with a natural ability to write and others who will never be able to parse a sentence. Writing must be and, more importantly, can be learned.
Certainly, writing is often the means by which we communicate our ideas to an audience, but writing is not limited to that. Writing is also a tool that can help us to separate ourselves from our ideas so we can examine them outside of our current mode of thinking. When we write, we learn things about ourselves: what type of people we are, what we know about and care about in our world, and what we think and feel about the issue or issues we are examining. The mind is chaotic; writing allows us to make some sense from that chaos. Simply put, writing is therapy; writing is connecting; writing is an important part of what it means to be human.

The Writing Process

Writing is a journey, and, like any journey, it begins with a question. The first travelers likely asked, “What’s over the horizon?” or “Where exactly is this end of the Earth we’ve heard so much about?” The first astronomers probably asked questions like, “What are these lights in the night sky?” The first naturalists might have asked questions like, “What happens if I eat this plant?” or “Do tigers make good pets?” Of course, writing an essay doesn’t always work to change the way we see the Earth, the universe, or life as we know it on such a large scale, but it still works to find an answer to something.

When we write, we need to start with a topic—something we believe needs to be explored or that we would like to know more about. This should be something we’re interested in; the more interested we are, the better we tend to write. Once we have our topic, we need to start to define what it is we’d like to know about that topic. We do this by asking questions: who, what, where, when, why, and how.

What these particular questions entail varies from writing project to writing project, but here are some questions worth considering:

- Who am I writing for?
- What do I hope to learn from this essay?
- Where do I expect my readers to encounter my work?
- When do I need to complete this project?
- Why am I writing this? Why do I care? Why will my readers care?
- How do I approach my subject?
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<th>Steps in the Process</th>
<th>Question(s) to Ask</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Understanding the Assignment</strong> (read grading rubric and criteria sheet several times throughout the writing process. Bring questions to your instructor.)</td>
<td>Who am I writing for? What am I writing? When should it be finished? Why am I writing it? How will it be evaluated?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Choosing a General Topic</strong> (remember, the more you’re interested in the subject, the better you will be able to write it.)</td>
<td>What am I interested in? Will my audience be interested in this topic, too? Will I be able to find enough information?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Gathering Preliminary Information</strong> (Wikipedia is a great place to start—just don’t use it for a final source.)</td>
<td>Where can I find general information on my subject? What key terms can I use to help me have more productive searches?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Free Writing</strong> (setting a time limit—writing in ten-minute increments—is a good plan here.)</td>
<td>What do I already know about my subject and what is it about my subject that really interests me?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Refining the Topic</strong> (you’re not likely to change the world through a composition essay. The smaller the topic, the better.)</td>
<td>What specifically am I going to write about? (i.e. not abortion, but the effects of teen abortion on the American high-school male)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Thesis</strong> (often changes throughout the writing process—use it to guide your research and organization.)</td>
<td>In a single sentence, what exactly is my essay going to be about?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thesis Statement</strong> (usually written very late in the writing process.)</td>
<td>In a sentence or two, what is my organizational plan, what are my key points, and what is my research question?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research</strong> (more than you need is always better than not enough.)</td>
<td>Where am I going to find what information to direct my essay or to prove my thesis?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Drafting</strong> (draft early and often. Have someone read your drafts. Read them aloud—this really helps you to find potential errors in the text.)</td>
<td>Does this draft seem clear enough for my readers? Is there enough information? Are there any surface-level errors (grammar, usage, etc.) that might hinder the effect of my essay?</td>
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In academic writing, we need to understand the assignment with which we are working. Once again, we need to ask who our audience is, what our instructor wants us to accomplish through the writing of this essay, what type of writing is going to be asked of us (see rhetorical modes chart in this chapter), what factors need to be addressed (i.e. page length, organization, style, etc.), when the assignment is due, and how the essay is going to be evaluated. Throughout the next few pages, we’ll begin to break down these types of questions.
Audience

There are a multitude of things that writing can do to affect our lives. It can help us to understand things, to make decisions, and to organize our world. At its core, writing is a means of communication. Because of that, a writer needs an audience (even if that audience is the author him/herself). Effective writers take their audience into close consideration at every stage of the writing process.

For instance: you are writing a letter to your neighbor, Joe, to ask him to join in a community revitalization project you are starting. The first thing you need to consider is who Joe is; after all, no person is simply one thing. Joe is a neighbor, someone’s friend, potentially a father, husband, or uncle. He’s definitely someone’s son and might be a doctor, a soldier, a priest, or a florist. But there’s more to Joe than that. Maybe he is an avid windsurfer, a poet, a world champion ice-sculptor, or he plays a mean guitar. Maybe he reads Russian novels, likes to think of the world as one giant logarithm, puts corn in his pancakes, or dreams in Portuguese.

When we write, we need to consider that different people are made up of a lot of different internalized personalities. This is our audience, but simply understanding who they are isn’t enough. Now we have to consider the things we share with our audience: culture, history, shared knowledge. Perhaps we go to the same college, live in the same country, work at the same place, or are both left-handed, and so on. Sound like a lot of work? It is, but as you progress in your writing, you’ll start to find ways to approach these audiences. The trick is to try to identify which “Joe” you’re going to write to so you know how to appeal to that side of your audience. You should also consider what traits you share with your audience so you can draw a personal connection with him/her/them.

Throughout this class, start by assuming your classmates and your instructor are your audience. Assume we know very little about your topic, but that, if given enough of the right motivation, we are capable of understanding what you’re sharing with us. Through the discussion forums, we will get to know each other. That way, we can begin to see a small, but interesting cross-section of a typical audience and can begin to understand what we can do to draw them into our essays and keep them reading. If we understand our audience, we will have a much easier time convincing people like our neighbor, Joe, to share in our ideas and plans.

It should be noted that in future classes, you will likely encounter varying opinions about how formal or casual your writing should be. That’s the nature of writing classes, of academia, and of life. To some extent, you’ll always have to test the waters before you dive in, but that doesn’t mean you can’t dramatically improve your butterfly stroke with every lesson. For now, let your instructor set the tone.
Types of Writing

After we’ve chosen our general topic and considered our audience, we need to think about the type of writing we’ll be doing. In the academic environment, your instructor will likely inform you of the elements of the essay they assign you. For the most part, that essay will fit into one or more of the rhetorical modes.

Rhetorical modes are categories in which we place individual writings according to their purpose. When we understand how these modes work, we enter writing projects much better prepared to do the writing we intend to do, and because of that, we are more likely to write more efficiently and effectively.

The most common of these rhetorical modes are: narration, description, example, comparison and contrast, process analysis, analysis, classification, cause and effect, definition, and argument/persuasion. The chart on the following page should help you begin to break down the individual elements of each of these modes. Understanding these modes will prepare you, not only for the essays in this class, but throughout your academic and professional careers. We will practice writing in some of the more popular of these modes throughout this class.

Organization

Most writing you’ll do throughout college will include an introduction, a few body paragraphs, and a conclusion. The following paragraphs are meant to introduce you to these conventions.

Introduction

An introduction introduces your topic, the position or direction you are going to take through the essay, and should include a thesis statement (a map of your essay including the points you are about to make in the same order you will make them), and some language to help your readers understand the significance of what you’re about to say. An introduction is important because it orients readers; it prepares them for the mental categorization of what they’re about to absorb. The thesis statement gives readers a basis for considering how the rest of the paper contributes to your main point.

Body

The body of an essay includes the points you need provide to prove your position. Generally, there is one major point per paragraph. Each point needs to be introduced, explored, and related to the other points and the thesis of the paper. Paragraphs within the body of the paper should follow a logical order and transition smoothly from the previous paragraph into the paragraph that follows. Many writers start the writing process in the body paragraphs and then expand to the introduction and conclusion sections. The body of the paper should follow the thesis statement directly, so most writers write the thesis statement toward the end of the writing process.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Method</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>To tell a story or use an analogy to explain something to readers.</td>
<td>Narration</td>
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<tr>
<td>To explain something by appealing to one or more of the senses.</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>To provide proof of something by identifying instances where it occurs.</td>
<td>Example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To explain or evaluate something by showing the similarities and differences between it and another subject.</td>
<td>Comparison and Contrast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To inform readers of how something works or how the series of actions lead to a particular result.</td>
<td>Process Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To draw a conclusion about a subject by deconstructing its parts.</td>
<td>Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To demonstrate order in your subject by showing how it fits into a certain group or groups.</td>
<td>Classification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To explain why something has happened or may happen.</td>
<td>Cause and Effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To explore the boundaries and distinctions of a subject in order to assign it a meaning.</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To convince an audience to do or not to do something or to think about something in a different way.</td>
<td>Argument/Persuasion</td>
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</table>
Conclusion

The conclusion is the last paragraph of your essay and is used to explain what you’d like to have your readers do with the information you’ve presented. In a narrative essay, for instance, your conclusion ends the story and asks the reader to take the events they’ve read about into their own lives. In an argument paper, the conclusion contains a call to action or a statement that summarizes the highlights of the argument and relates the reader back to the thesis.

The Process Revisited

In a nutshell, the writing process works like this:

- Understand the assignment
- Choose a topic
- Gather some basic information
- Write down what you know and/or want to know about the topic
- Make the topic specific
- Write a working thesis (may change as you research and write)
- Research
- Begin drafting (generally beginning with the body paragraphs)
- Write your thesis statement
- Write your introduction and conclusion
- Revise (reading it aloud is a great strategy)
- Have someone read your work
- Revise some more
- Reread the assignment just to make sure you’ve covered everything
- Revise some more
- Submit your essay online to your instructor
General Advice about Academic Writing

- The purpose of writing is to extend, reshape, and/or clarify your topic. You don’t have to have better ideas than others who have written about your topic (though we would hope that you attempt to make them so)—just different ideas. Academic writing should do more than simply relay an idea from one essay to another; the topic should be changed in some real and discernible way.

- Final drafts should be free from errors in spelling, punctuation, and usage and should be well-organized. Nothing hurts the transmission of great ideas quite so much as simple errors in grammar and/or format. Still, understand that grammar is one of the last things you should think about throughout the writing process; get your ideas down and clean them up later. We pair our chapter readings with both an APA Guide and a Grammar and Usage Guide to help you increase your understanding of grammar and format.

- Your essays should show a real effort. This is not to say that you need to suffer through them. Have fun with your essays. Explore the limits of your writing, but demonstrate that you have really engaged yourself with the assignment.

- For every essay, you need to find at least one genuine question about your topic. For example, don’t just write about how helping your neighbor is good or how shoplifting is bad; construct your paper around a question about helping your neighbors or shoplifting.

- Your essay needs to show that you’ve thought about the subject in depth. Start early so you can have time to really play with your ideas and anticipate potential barriers such as writer’s block.

- Don’t panic. It’s okay if your ideas aren’t perfectly formed or if your writing demonstrates that you have struggled through the concept. This lack of unity, however, should reflect that you have put forth an effort to write your paper, not that you were winging it. Your instructors are much more interested in seeing you attempt something new and fall short than in seeing you constantly playing it safe. This class is about growing as a writer, not about demonstrating that you can write (Elbow, 2000, pp. 416-419).
References


Chapter Two

Narrative Writing

“Don’t tell me that the moon is shining; show me a hint of light on broken glass.”

– Anton Chekhov

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Good Writing

What makes a joke funny? What makes us gravitate toward one person and not another? What is the difference between good and not-so-good writing? Interestingly, these seemingly separate phenomena share some compelling similarities. Like comedians, writers want their audience to hang on every word they say. To do this, writers try to have their readers believe that there is a certain amount of pleasure to be had at the end of the text they are reading (much like comedians depend on the audience’s anticipation of an upcoming punch-line). Hopefully, the writer, like the comedian, understands this desire and works hard to fulfill it. Writers also need their writing to attract potential readers if they hope to be heard; they want readers to gravitate toward their work (this is particularly difficult for writers just beginning to share their words).

To accomplish this, writers must write in ways that cause their readers to start reading and continue to read their work. Initially attracting readers has much to do with formatting and titles that call out to the intended audience. For instance, most people would be less compelled to read an article titled, Metaphysical and Dietary Practices of New Guinea Aboriginal Culture, than one called, Eating your Relatives, Friends, and Foes: Spirituality and Cannibalism in the Modern World. However, if the article is intended to be published in a scholarly, sociological magazine, the first title is probably more appropriate and would be more compelling to the type of people who read that magazine.

Of course, having a reader pick up your writing is one thing—indeed, an accomplishment—but keeping your reader interested enough to keep reading your work requires a deeper understanding of the elements that go into good writing.

In an excerpt from his book Telling Writing (2009), Ken Macrorie describes good writing as “clear, vigorous, honest, alive, sensuous, appropriate, unsentimental, rhythmic, without pretension, fresh, metaphorical, evocative in sound, economical, authoritative, surprising, memorable, and light” (p. 311).
We could add that good writing is also thoughtful, in-depth, demonstrative of an awareness of the issue it is examining and its complexities, and experimental. There are, however, two major problems with our list: 1) if we were to try to balance all of these ideals about writing every time we sat down to write, we would likely get nothing done due to the sheer exhaustion from worrying that we would never measure up to those standards; and 2) all of the things on our list rely on opinion.

We had the question about what good writing is; now we have to ask what makes writing seem “clear, vigorous, honest, alive,” and so on. While Macrorie’s elements of good writing are important, happily, like everything else about writing, these elements tend to develop best through practice, and we don’t have the time to worry about all of them in a single course. For now, let’s just reserve a place for them in the back of our minds and try not to worry about them. There are easier, simpler ways to approach the issue.

Our original question in this chapter had to do with the relationship between comedy, attraction, and writing. The simplest answer is this: To be effective, each has to be ninety percent familiar and ten percent odd (ratio not scientifically tested). A good joke, for instance, relates directly to the audience, tells some small truth about the world, and then changes something about that world in a way that is surprising to the audience. Likewise, physically attractive people have symmetrical features that fit into the norm: their eyes are evenly set, their nose is centered, etc. Physically attractive men are typically V shaped (shoulders to waist) and physically attractive women tend to have an hourglass figure. But these attributes are not enough—in fact, because they are what we consider to be the norm in terms of physical attractiveness, they can be quite boring.

For people to be truly attractive (at least according to society’s standards) there has to be some flaw to their beauty, something that disrupts our preconceived notions of what is and what is not attractive—something surprising. Writing works in very much the same way; we start with something our audience can relate to—some small truth about the world—then move toward a new way of thinking about truth, in essence working with the audience’s previously held assumptions and altering them in some way.

The simple rule: good writing starts broadly in order to establish a relationship with the intended audience and then becomes more and more specific, eventually challenging and altering the audience’s ideas about an issue or happenstance. Your number one goal as a writer, above and beyond everything else, is to cause your readers to feel like they are somehow improved through your writing—that their efforts to communicate with your ideas were met, if not exceeded, by you, the author.
Narrative Writing

In narrative writing, we start by inviting our audience into our world; we then show them around a bit and begin to relate to them by sharing with them a unique, significant, and wholly human experience. When we talk about connecting to our readers, one of the most effective ways of doing so is through anecdotes or storytelling. The key to writing in the narrative mode is developing an honest, profitable relationship with our audience. While there are many ways to build this connection, we will spend this chapter isolating and exploring the three major elements that are arguably the most useful: descriptive writing, dialogue, and dramatic action.

In narrative writing, these elements fold around each other to create something meaningful—something we can more easily connect to because it is both compelling and familiar at the same time. Through descriptive writing we are able to create visual images of the world; through dialogue, we are drawn into the same room with the characters of the story—we hear, rather than simply read what they say; and through dramatic action we are able feel the significance of the moment and relate it to our own experiences.

We use each of these elements to demonstrate the significance of our story, and by extension our ideas and even our lives. Much like an attractive person can’t really walk up to you and announce his or her attractiveness, and just like a comedian is less effective if he or she announces that the joke to follow is funny, writers, especially in the narrative form, need to practice the art of showing, not telling.

Anton Chekhov, arguably one of the greatest narrative writers to ever put pen to paper, probably says it best when he writes: “Don’t tell me the moon is shining; show me the glint of light on broken glass” (In Zaran, 2006, p. 14). Throughout the next few pages we will look more deeply into the elements of the narrative form.

Descriptive Writing

Descriptive writing is one of the most powerful ways to lure your audience into your writing. It appeals directly to emotion, humanizes your work, and is easily relatable. When we write descriptively, we discuss the way an object or a situation affects our five senses—sight, taste, touch, smell, and sound. We don’t simply say an old man was having a hard time crossing the street. Instead, we describe the situation:
Notice how the descriptions add to the story. Can you picture the man? What else can you see through these descriptions? Note how the second version doesn’t mention that the man is old. Did you need to read that to know it? Also, note how the task of crossing the street wasn’t explicitly stated. Did you have any trouble knowing what was happening? Think of the ways you visualized this paragraph and go back and read it again.

Notice the things that were not there. Think about how you automatically added them to the story. One of the most interesting things about descriptive writing is that we don’t have to describe everything, just enough to get the audience to participate in the process. Readers already have a wealth of images to draw from their own life experiences; a writer’s job is simply to activate those images in the reader.

Another way we write descriptively is through simile and metaphor. Through these two devices, we can paint our version of the world in more referential ways—ways that ask the reader to take an active role in the communication process. A metaphor is a word or group of words that replaces another; a simile is similar to a metaphor, but the new word is said to be relative to the original word. Here are a few examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Simile</th>
<th>Metaphor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men are like dogs.</td>
<td>Men are dogs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She’s like the wind.</td>
<td>She’s a tornado.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m like a couch, but man! I really bring the room together.</td>
<td>I am a couch—just something to sit on.</td>
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</table>

In the following story, look at the way the author uses description to bring her readers into her world. Note her choices in simile and metaphor that she uses to show the internal world of the characters.
Excerpt from “My Mother’s Work” by Sabrina M. Goss

“Look out at the water,” she says.
I do.
“What do you see?”
“The water,” I tell her.
“No, I’m not asking what’s out there. I’m asking what you see.”
“I see the water, Mom.”
She smiles at me and nods. “Me too. I can’t paint today.”

That makes me look again, to see what she might have seen. I don’t have any idea what I’m looking for, but I know that I hate the ocean and everything it has come to mean over the past few months. I can barely stand to look at it. I hate the white froth that comes up with the jagged-tooth waves, salty salivating entity of blue nothing that keeps my mother here. I hate the way it stains the sand just briefly when the waves come then leave like nothing ever happened, and I hate to think about the things that live in there, as if they choose to.

I start to tell my mother what I see, babbling at first, and she begins to paint. I recognize the canvas ocean after about a minute, but it doesn’t look like what I mean; it’s too smooth. She moves to fix it and paints too much white on the cap of a wave. I tell her to leave it because that’s okay and it looks pretty good. That fuzzy white triangle makes me think of clouds, so I tell her about how I think of the ocean as an upside down thunderstorm, or something horrible, like a wasp on its back unable to fly. She does something on the canvas where the clouds should be, but they are outlines of clouds and not stormy, and any idiot can see that they’re just there to represent the idea of a storm without carrying the storm’s energy. Her brush zips down the canvas in a flash, and lightning like an insect leg appears. The water she alters and scrapes and mends as I talk, and it begins to look alive. (2009, p. 834)

Because the above passage is only an excerpt from a larger story, we’re not getting the whole picture, but what we can draw from this passage that might give us a hint about the rest of the story? Think about key phrases or words that really leap out at you as a reader. How do they make you feel? Can you relate something in your own life to this story, or at least the feelings represented throughout this story? Consider the author’s use of language when she describes the ocean through the eyes of her protagonist (the main character—in this case, the young girl): “. . . jagged-tooth waves, salty salivating entity of blue nothing . . .” (p. 834).

How does this particular description work to explain the way the girl feels about her surroundings? Note what happens in the last part of the sentence: “. . . that keeps my mother here” (p. 834). What has the author given us through these five additional words? Can we understand the relationship between mother and daughter more fully now? Consider some of the author’s other descriptions: “I think of the ocean as an upside-down thunderstorm, or something horrible, like a wasp on its back unable to fly” (p. 834), or “the water she alters and scrapes and mends . . . and it begins to look alive” (p. 834). Note the way the author’s descriptions lend
themselves to that feeling of the ocean as a life form with a consciousness and with an agenda, as if it really were alive.

Dialogue

Dialogue is another powerful technique to attract an audience and keep them reading. Dialogue covers two different areas: what the characters say, and how they say it. Dialogue in narrative writing is meant to bring the reader into direct conversation with the characters, but dialogue is not added to a story without reason. Each piece of dialogue needs to add to the story—to edge it forward, to give insight into how the characters think and feel, and to introduce new ideas and/or situations.

Dialogue is also formatted in a specific way. Each time a speaker changes, a new paragraph emerges. Every so often, you will want to add an attributive tag (she said, he laughed, I remarked, etc.) to help your readers keep track of which character is speaking. Don’t put them in every time or your work will seem choppy. Notice how this worked in the story we’ve been analyzing:

“Look out at the water,” she says.
I do.
“What do you see?”
“The water,” I tell her.
“No, I’m not asking what’s out there. I’m asking what you see.”
“I see the water, Mom.”
She smiles at me and nods. “Me too. I can’t paint today.” (Goss, 2009, p. 834)

Think about what this exchange reveals about the mother and the daughter. Does their relationship seem close or distant? Which of these characters seems more free-spirited and which seems more close-minded? Who seems to hold the power in the relationship? What is happening in the story? Much like the way description can work to show us plot, character, and conflict, dialogue also lets us learn about the characters in the story (in some cases, this may be the only part of the story that really allows us to know them). Dialogue can be a powerful tool to enhance your writing (a playwright, for instance, uses this tool almost exclusively).

We could write something like:

“I was angry when she walked in the door just before my alarm clock went off. She was angry too, but she never told me why.”

Look at how much more we can say through dialogue:
“Do you have any idea what time it is?” I barked at her when she finally came through the door.

“Who cares?” she said flatly.

“I do!” I glared at her. “You’re not the only one who lives here!”

“I’m the only one who lives anywhere,” she said, biting her words at the last syllable and turning her hips as if bracing for impact.

“What do you mean?”

“You know exactly what I mean!”

“No.” I felt like I was bleeding the words through my teeth. “What do you mean?” I seethed.

“Nothing,” she said quietly, defeated, and that was the last thing she said—the last thing ever.

Dramatic Action

Dramatic action does not mean that the story you’re going to be writing has to be an action-packed thrill-ride with explosions and drug smugglers with exotic accents; it is just that something has to happen either to the characters or within them. Aristotle, still the expert in all things dramatic, claimed that every good plotline contains five elements. Here is an incredibly brief summary of Aristotle’s list:

- **Exposition**: a portion of the story, usually at the beginning, that explains the setting and the characters.
- **Conflict**: in any story, something has to be overcome. This *something* is the conflict (in our story, the disconnection between mother and daughter).
- **Complications**: complications are the little things the characters must overcome along the way to facing and beating the conflict (in our story, the hate for the ocean and the painting).
- **Climax**: the climax is generally the height if the action in a story. It is the point where things reach their “boiling point” and start to be resolved.
Falling Action: falling action is the point in the story where the hero/heroine rides off into the sunset. At this stage, things are as resolved as they are going to get. Sometimes this section is hundreds of pages; sometimes it’s a word or two long.

Through dramatic action, we give our readers a measurable distance between the beginning, the middle, and the end of our story (note that these do not always fall in that order). In the first chapter, Writing with Purpose, we mentioned that the act of writing gave mankind something to measure itself by—to judge how far it had come. The same idea applies here. Your readers need to be able to see that there is some sort of progression within the story—these progressions generally happen within the characters as they grow stronger and through the plotline as the events eventually become resolved.

Characteristics of the Narrative Mode

- Descriptive writing – five senses, simile, and metaphor
- Dialogue – words that reveal something about the story or characters
- Dramatic action – a beginning, middle, and end—contains a conflict and a resolution
- Well-developed characters that appear to be real people
- Something to explain the story’s significance

The next step in the process of narrative writing is to write. Spend some time talking to your fellow students and your instructor about possible topics about which you can write your essay. Try to choose something that is significant to you—an event that defined who you are as a person or changed something about your life. Below is a short list of topics that have worked well in the past. These should get you thinking. Feel free to use any of these or find your own:

- A family vacation
- Birth of a child
- Victim or perpetrator of a crime
- Medical operation
- Divorce
- Accident (car, boat, motorcycle, etc.)
- Philanthropic activity
- College experience
- First job
- And, many, many more.

* Be wary of topics that lack conflict and complications. Readers need some kind of tension to become invested in what they are reading. Get started as early as possible so you can enjoy writing this paper. Most of all, have fun with this! We look forward to reading your work.
References


Chapter Three

Making a Plan

“He who does not know the mechanical side of the craft cannot judge it.”
—Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Timothy P. Goss, Tanya C. Klatt, & Alexander V. Ames, Ph.D.
Academic Writing

This week, as we start working on our Narrative essays, we will take the opportunity to also foreshadow the next stage in our composition schedule. Narrative writing is probably the most natural way for most of us to write. And, while learning to structure an essay in the Narrative mode is important, the writing you will be doing in college and in your career will more likely resemble the work we will be doing throughout the remainder of this course.

Throughout this chapter (and the rest of the course), we will be discussing how to write academically. Academic writing differs from expository styles in several areas; specifically, academic writing is about working with the ideas of others and filtering those ideas through our own perceptions. We do not create ideas insomuch as we react to ideas with which we are presented. Academic writing is therefore a collaborative activity. This style of writing is not personal (though you will find it difficult not to bring some of your personality into your writing), meaning that it rarely discusses our personal reactions and instead works to assess the value of ideas as they are applied to the broader, human experience. The purpose of academic writing is to add to the overall body of human knowledge. Although we won’t be expecting you to change the way we all envision the world through the essays you will write in this course, we do want to give you a chance to start working on those skills; you’ll need them soon enough.

Academic writing is, in many ways, formulaic, meaning that it follows very specific patterns. Academic writing should adhere to the formatting of the style it is written in (in this case, APA), following a specific organizational pattern.

This is not to say that some of the academic writing you’ll read won’t break from those rules, but as a great many successful people have been noted to say, “You have to know the rules before you can break them.” Over the next few pages we will take a look at the more common patterns for academic writing.

The Five-Paragraph Model

You have likely seen the five paragraph model before. This is because, though it is basic in nature, it mirrors the argumentative style embraced in Classical Greek society (the basis for Western ideals about gaining and sharing knowledge) and can be found in documents as early as
Cicero’s *Ad Herennium*, the oldest surviving text on rhetoric dating back to around 90 BC. (Cicero, trans., 1954). Because the idea of the five-paragraph essay has been a part of society for so long, the pattern seems logical. Since all writing needs to teach the reader how to read it, a five-paragraph model can simplify the delivery process of an idea and allow the writer to focus more on what he or she is trying to convey.

While some Writing professors feel the five-paragraph model can hinder the development of ideas, we find this model serves as a good way to organize your ideas if you’ve been away from school for a while or you have struggled with writing in the past. We also believe that learning this form will help you remain focused in the essays you will write. The form is as follows:

1. **Introduction**
   - Introduces your subject and the direction you are planning to take your essay. (The thesis and the thesis statement belong in your introduction)

2. **Body**
   - The first body paragraph is the home of your first point. (Generally, the practice is to lead with your strongest point).

3. **Body**
   - This section is home to your second point. Incidentally, these sections are generally a paragraph long (five to seven sentences) and start with an introduction, make a point, and then tie themselves back into the thesis of the essay.

4. **Body**
   - This is your last section before you start wrapping things up so make this one count.

5. **Conclusion**
   - This section summarizes the entire paper briefly, restates the main points of the essay, and ties everything back into the thesis.
The Thesis

The thesis is the stated point of your writing. It tells your reader that throughout this essay you will be explaining a particular aspect of something, taking a stance on a particular side of a debate, or asking a particular something from your readers.

A thesis is drawn from a particular question—something either you want to explore through the essay or something you would like to explain to your audience. In case you hadn’t noticed yet, a thesis should be specific, particular in scope, and definitive.

Finding your Thesis
The following chart shows one way you can move from a subject to a working thesis:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step:</th>
<th>Statement:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Start with a subject.</td>
<td>For example: Healthy eating.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Ask about what you would like to know or say about your subject (remember the who, what, where, when, why, and how questions from chapter one). | • Who should eat healthy?  
  • What is healthy eating?  
  • Why is healthy eating important?  
  • Where can one get healthy food?  
  • When should someone start to change their eating habits?  
  • How should one go about eating more healthy foods?  
| Try drawing connections between the questions you asked. Try to write them in a single statement. | Everyone should eat health foods so that they may have a more active and fulfilling life.  
| Revise this statement to limit your scope. | College students should eat healthy foods.  
| Consider potential problems people might face should they follow your plan. | • They might not know how to eat well.  
  • They might not have access to healthy food.  
| Choose one of your problems and consider ways of solving the issue. | We could educate students on how to develop better eating habits.  
| Refine your solution even further. | Colleges should require that all students take a nutrition class.  
| Ask if you can refine this even further. | Grantham University should require that all students take a nutrition course.  

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Thesis to Thesis Statement: Using syllogism as an organizing principle

Now that we have our thesis, it’s time to think about how we are going to prove our point. We’ll need at least three points (think evidence) that each link to the thesis and work together to prove the thesis to be valid. There are several choices you can make here, and we will visit some of those choices later in the course. For now, we will use a simple syllogism to build our thesis statement.

A syllogism is a basic three-part argument that takes two agreeable premises to promote the validity of a third.

1. Healthy eating is important.
2. College is meant to enhance the lives of students.
3. College should then promote healthy eating.

If this were your topic and your points, your thesis statement might read like this:

“Because eating healthy is important to the quality of an individual’s life, and because the purpose of a college is to improve the lives of its students, Grantham University should require that all students take a nutrition course.”

From here, we would start to build our essay in the order of the point we made in our thesis statement (i.e. body paragraph 1. Healthy eating is important, 2. College is meant to enhance lives, and 3. Grantham University should require a nutrition course).

Think of your thesis statement as a way to forecast the way the remainder of your essay will flow. All good writing has the responsibility to demonstrate how the text should be read. A good thesis statement not only makes it easier for your audience to follow your logic; it can also help keep you focused as you write your essay.
Thesis Through Comparison and Contrast

Sometimes building a thesis through comparison and contrast will better serve your project. We will demonstrate comparing and contrasting more thoroughly in the next chapter. For now, however, think of the process as a way to define two or more ideas and show how they relate and differ from each other. Your thesis in this case would be more like this:

“Despite their differences, in terms of corporate restrictions, conservatives and liberals seem to share some of the same core values.”

Your points might look like this:

1. Conservatives believe that reducing restrictions on the way corporations do business will allow them to create more jobs, thereby causing the economy to grow.

2. Liberals believe that restrictions on corporations designed to protect the consumer will cause them to have more faith in the market, thereby improving economic growth.

3. Essentially, they both want the same thing: To increase the overall quality of American life through economic growth.

Your statement would then look a bit like this:

“In terms of restrictions to corporations, conservatives and liberals seem very different; however, they are not as different as one might think—they both want to raise the standard of living in the United States.”

Note that in comparison contrast, the thesis and thesis statement often mirror each other.

Some other things to know about academic writing

• Academic writing is almost always in third person and, unless the writing is an instruction guide (like much of the reading from this course), academic writing is never written in second person (you, your, yours).

• Academic writing is meant to explain, to convince, or to change something. Though it can be entertaining, that is a secondary element of this type of writing.

• Academic writing is not meant to prove someone or something wrong insomuch as it is meant to find the best way to think about or do something. We do not highlight our personal role in the process (other than by putting our name on the title page).
Introductions, Conclusions, and All that Lies Between

Introduction

The introduction, or opening paragraph, is one of the most important parts of an essay. Introductions work to lure readers into our way of thinking and encourage them to continue reading. You’ve heard the axiom, “You only get one chance at a first impression.” The introduction is that “first impression.”

Though there are many ways to approach your introduction, the most common way (and arguably the most effective) is to envision the paragraph as a funnel—presenting a broad scope to your essay and then narrowing the information to the main point, or thesis statement of your essay.

Many writers treat the introduction of an essay as a kind of “working introduction” that they refine only after the rest of the essay has been written (that’s why we’re visiting it now instead of earlier in the course). Introductions serve as a hook for your readers—they set the tone for the remainder of the essay, establish what the essay is about and the direction you’re taking as its author, and introduce the main point.

Good introductions do the following:

1. Identify the topic.
2. Draw connections to the topic in a larger context.
3. Explain why the topic holds interest.
4. Raise a significant question that will be either answered or examined throughout the rest of the essay.
5. Contain a specific thesis statement that maps out the essay to follow.

You should however, avoid the “magic show”—the part found in some student essays that spells out what the writer plans to do rather than simply showing the readers.

A weak opening:

Through this essay, I am going to argue that Facebook is way superior to MySpace. Facebook has a cooler format, more games, and is more popular.

A stronger opening:

Facebook and MySpace are currently two of the top networking sites on the Internet. While MySpace once held the dominant share of subscribers, Facebook has far surpassed
that number, leaving MySpace nothing short of an Internet graveyard. But how did Facebook do it? What is Facebook offering that MySpace can’t quite compete with?

Conclusion

Conclusions are a chance to revisit everything you’ve said in your essay. Here you need to make the reader feel like you’ve met or even exceeded what you had set out to do. No reader likes to leave an essay without some sense of resolution; the concluding paragraph offers that resolution—that feeling of completeness. If you get to your conclusion and realize that you haven’t answered all of the questions you posed throughout the essay (especially those in your introduction and thesis statement), chances are, you need to go back and add something.

Once you’ve met everything you set out to accomplish, you get to celebrate that accomplishment. Show your readers (don’t tell them) once again how your essay played out. Reassert the main point, remind your readers what they just experienced with you, and let them know what you’d like them to do with the information (call to action).

Remember, writing isn’t linear, (written in straight line from point to point to point), writing is cyclical (circular); a good conclusion almost always ties directly back to the thesis statement, often asks the same questions providing simple, summarized answers, and tries to leave the audience feeling like they are better off for reading the essay.

Conclusions often do three things:

1. They make a plea for change
2. They draw the necessary conclusions from what has been said
3. They summarize the points of the essay

The conclusion should flow naturally out of the body of the paper; it should not have the appearance of an afterthought.

Common Errors in Introductions and Conclusions

1. Don’t use expressions such as, “Now I will explain . . .,” “I will prove . . .,” etc. Remember, good writing shows, not tells.

2. Avoid clichés and colloquialisms.
4. Never apologize or express your unfamiliarity with the subject; your readers will simply stop reading. Instead, get familiar with what you’re writing about.

5. Never assume your readers will automatically follow your thinking. Establish the importance of what you are discussing in your introduction.

6. Never add new information in your conclusion. Instead, show your readers what to do with the information you have given them.

**Body of the Essay**

The body of your essay contains the points you’re making to prove or support your thesis. Since this is often the first part of the essay that writers construct, create a good outline. Think of your topic, find at least three things you’d like to say about it, and then consider the best order in which to present them. Ask yourself, “Does this idea flow well into the next?” “Which of my ideas is the strongest? The weakest?” And, so on…

Consider the following examples:

**Topic: The Major Causes of Teenage Crime**

**Focus:** the Causes

**Points to make:**

I. Poverty  
II. Boredom  
III. Insufficient supervision

**Topic: Preparing for a Job Interview**

**Focus:** Steps

**Points to make:**

I. Research the company  
II. Write a resume  
III. Dress for success

Throughout your introduction, the body of your essay, and the conclusion, work to make your writing appear as a singular line of thought.
Even though we’ve separated the elements here, and you will more than likely write your essays in pieces, the goal is make your essay one cohesive unit of thought—as if it were a conversation.

Once you get a complete draft, try reading it aloud and see if there are any parts you stumble over. If you find them, you may want to rearrange something or re-word a sentence or two.
Resources


Chapter Four

Comparing and Contrasting

“It is good to express a matter in two ways simultaneously so as to give it both a right foot and a left. Truth can stand on one leg, to be sure; but with two it can walk and get about.”

—Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche

Timothy P. Goss, Tanya C. Klatt, & Alexander V. Ames, Ph.D.
Comparison and Contrast

What makes one car better than another? There are a lot of choices out there. Of course, we typically find ourselves emotionally tied to our car decisions, but what if we were to find ourselves needing to make a more logical choice?

The 2011 Toyota Prius, for example, gets an industry leading fifty miles to the gallon and has a four-star safety rating in crash tests—not bad for a car that has a base model costing just a little over $22,000 (Toyota Motor North America, 2011). Of course, for all that sensibility, you’ll likely have to sacrifice a lot in terms of the sheer joy of driving it. If you were to purchase such a vehicle, you will probably not turn many heads as you careen down the highway with your four cylinders humming an eco-friendly tune, but you will surely have the satisfaction that you’re doing your part to make the world a better place for your children.

By contrast, the 2011 Ford Mustang gets an incredible thirty miles to the gallon, has a five-star safety rating in crash tests, and the base model is approximately the same price as the Prius (Ford Motor Company, 2011). A Mustang, of course, is a guaranteed head turner, and with its V6 growling, the joy of driving is standard. Since both of these cars are comparable in initial cost, the purchase price isn’t really a factor in our decision. As far as ownership satisfaction, it depends on what you consider to be important: the environmental footprint you leave on this earth or the adrenalin you feel as you press the accelerator to the floor. If you were to get into an accident, the Mustang would hold up better, but then if you choose the Prius, chances are you’ll drive with the same sensibility that caused you to purchase the car in the first place thereby avoiding potential collisions.

Our comparison and contrast of these two vehicles, therefore, seems to rely on lifetime mileage ratings and the vehicle’s ability to raise one’s status in society. Of course, we could bring in factors such as resale value, lifetime maintenance costs, dealer service, and even socio-political factors like the push to buy American products or the need for America to wean itself from foreign oil. A good comparison and contrast essay begins with limitations; you’ll have to choose three or four points of comparison and contrast.
When we compare and contrast, we weigh the pros and cons of an idea, a product, a policy, a practice, etc. We try to find similarities between the things we are comparing (in the above scenario, two similarly priced vehicles) and we try to illuminate the contrast between the two things. In practice, these two methods are generally fused—there are, in most cases, no two subjects that are completely alike. Comparing and contrasting helps us to isolate and examine those differences. By defining and analyzing particular factors—factors that we believe to be important to us and/or our audience—we amass information that can aid us in making a decision, understanding a problem or situation, and eventually proposing a solution or course of action.

Anytime you find yourself comparing two or more subjects side by side or preferring one thing over another, you are comparing and contrasting. It is a natural process. When writing to compare and contrast, however, we need to make sure that our topics are not too distant. Of course, one probably could make a strong comparison between the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt and the mass production of Gummy Bears, but for now, keep it simple. Topics like comparing McDonalds to Burger King, Conservatives to Liberals, or Army basic training to Navy basic training would be good topics, though you may want to distill these down even more. To be clear, comparing subjects that are drastically different, like snowboarding to waterboarding, for example, may be incredibly interesting, but will likely take more time to adequately explore than a more simplified topic.

Distilling the Process

Once you’ve found your topic, it’s time to start defining what you’d like to compare about your subjects. If you were writing about the difference between getting an on-line or traditional degree, for instance, you might look at factors such as cost, convenience, degree of difficulty, likelihood of getting a job after graduation, and/or quality of the education you’ll receive. If you were comparing and contrasting a book and the movie made from that book, you might want to look at the characters, the plotline, dramatic sequencing, quality of experience, and so on.
Organizing the Comparison and Contrast Essay

You’ve got your subjects, you’ve defined the ways they compare and differ in a few, distinct ways. Now it’s time to start putting your essay together. Even with the limitations we placed on our comparisons and contrasts, this essay can be difficult without a degree of planning. It is best to start with an outline—to put the information in some sort of order. There are two specific ways of going about this: chunking and sequencing.

Chunking

Chunking is a method of placing information into groups. Let’s go back to our car scenario: if you were to organize your essay according to a chunking model, the body of your essay would first contain information about the Toyota Prius, and then information about the Ford Mustang. Next, you would summarize the similarities and differences of the two vehicles. Your outline would look something like this:

1. Toyota Prius
   a. Fifty miles to the gallon
   b. Four-star crash test rating
   c. $22000 price tag
   d. Joy of ownership from being eco-friendly

2. Ford Mustang
   a. Thirty miles to the gallon
   b. Five-star crash test rating
   c. $22000 price tag
   d. Joy of ownership from driving experience

Note how each factor plays out the same way in each of these “chunks.”
Another way of going about outlining our essay is sequencing. Sequencing involves separating out the comparison factors and applying them individually to the subject. Consider the following:

1. Miles per gallon
   a. Prius: Fifty miles per gallon
   b. Mustang: Thirty miles per gallon

2. Crash test rating
   a. Prius: four star rating
   b. Mustang: five star rating

3. Price
   a. Prius: $22000
   b. Mustang: $22000

4. Joy of Ownership
   a. Joy from being eco-friendly
   b. Joy from driving experience

Of course, each of these essays would have an introduction, a thesis/thesis statement, a summary of the comparison/contrast, and a conclusion that leads directly back to the introduction and thesis. Whichever way you choose to organize your essay, make sure your points balance. You can’t really discuss the choice of color the Mustang comes in without explaining the color choices for the Prius, just as you can’t discuss fears about the gas pedal sticking in the Prius without researching and explaining the potential problems one might have owning and driving a Mustang.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chunking</th>
<th>Sequencing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First subject and points</td>
<td>First point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second subject and points</td>
<td>Second point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>Third point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>Summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Words Commonly Used to Show Similarities and Differences

The following is hardly an exhaustive list of the words we generally use in comparison and contrast, but they will get you started in the right direction:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To Show Differences:</th>
<th>To Show Similarities:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>on the other hand</td>
<td>Similarly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in contrast</td>
<td>Likewise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>however</td>
<td>Like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>but, yet</td>
<td>And</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>while</td>
<td>much like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>although</td>
<td>have in common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>even though</td>
<td>And so on . . .</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Comparing and Contrasting Ideas

Throughout this chapter, we have talked about how to compare and contrast products, people, and so on. Comparing and contrasting also works when we look at ideas. Most argument claims fall into one of three categories: arguments of fact, arguments of values, or arguments of policy. Often, the same essay will include all three types of claims, but in order to determine the nature of the overall argument, we need to look to the thesis. Understanding what type of arguments you’re examining can help you to determine how to counter them.

An argument of fact argues that something exists, has existed, or will exist. These arguments are generally supported by facts, statistics, examples, and by expert testimony. An example of a fact-based thesis would be:

The African AIDS epidemic is a direct result of colonialist attitudes and cultural misunderstanding.

An argument of values makes a judgment or expresses approval or disapproval of an action, a belief, or a condition. Value-based arguments work to determine the difference between right and wrong, good or bad, beautiful or ugly, and so on. Taking the same argument and making it an argument of values would result in a thesis like this:

Because they fail to understand the various, often intertwined cultures affected by AIDS, relief organizations are doing a poor job of helping the African people.

An argument of policy claims that certain conditions should or should not exist. Where arguments of fact and arguments of values are often designed to inspire the audience to take action, arguments of policy ask the audience to do something very particular. Consider this:

Correcting the AIDS epidemic in Africa demands that relief organizations alter their practices to function within the cultural climate of the people they are serving rather than asking them to alter their way of life in order to get medical treatment.

Hopefully as you read these examples, you found yourself agreeing or disagreeing with the statements. That’s exactly what you should be doing. That’s exactly what we will be doing for the essays in the last half of the course. When we enter the research and argument portion of this course, we highly suggest you research using the EBSCOhost in Grantham’s online library.
system. Find your topic, research both sides of the arguments, and establish your own position. You might be somewhere in the middle or even take a more extreme position than one or more of your articles. Wherever you end up standing, remember to treat both arguments fairly even if you strongly agree or disagree with one or both of them.

So What?

Because one of the purposes in academic writing is to analyze similarities and differences, you may be tempted in your essays to formulate a thesis that says something like “X and Y have important similarities and differences,” or “X is very similar to or different from Y.”

For example: “The Republican and Democratic platforms for the 1960 American presidential election were very similar.”

This kind of statement is not helpful, and is, quite frankly, boring. You need to ask yourself “So what?” or “Who cares?”

College level writing requires that you say something about what you have learned rather than simply regurgitating the information you encounter. Developing a good thesis for your essays might require you to ask the “So what” question. What do you learn from having discovered similarities and differences? How does it affect your point of view?

The answer to this question can lead to a thesis statement like:

“A comparison of the Republican and Democratic platforms for the 1960 presidential race reveals so many similarities that one must wonder whether Americans actually have options when they go to the polls.”

This is a thesis statement that a reader might find interesting. You can always revise or replace your thesis after your essay is underway.
Some Final Words

Here are a few things to think about when working with comparison and contrast:

1. Know thy purpose – why are you writing (beyond the grade), will your readers see the purpose from the start of your essay?

2. Know thy subjects – are your subjects close enough to warrant a comparison and different enough for you to write an essay on them?

3. Know thy thesis – is your thesis defined enough to cover all of the relevant similarities and differences of your subjects?

4. Know thy organizing method – does the organization method (chunking or sequencing) do justice to your subjects and help your readers to understand the comparison?

5. Know thy balance – are your comparisons balanced? Have you covered the same features of both subjects?

6. Know thy audience – will your readers care? Are you providing a service to your readers, or just filling space on a page?
References


“When I'm getting ready to reason with a man, I spend one-third of my time thinking about myself and what I am going to say—and two-thirds thinking about him and what he is going to say.”

—Abraham Lincoln

Timothy P. Goss, Tanya C. Klatt, & Alexander V. Ames, Ph.D.
Introduction to Argument

When you woke up this morning, chances are that someone or something worked to convince you not to spend the day in bed. When you dressed for the day, you likely used several products that, at one time or another, someone convinced you to purchase. If you drove to school or to work, you were faced with traffic signals, lines painted on the road, and other automobiles, all of which asked you to drive safely—to follow the rules of the road. Arguments are everywhere, asking you to value one thing over another, to do one thing instead of something else, to believe or not to believe, to follow the rules or not to. Arguments are part of our daily lives, and because of that, it is important that we understand how they work.

Jim W. Corder (2004), in his article *Argument as Emergence, Rhetoric as Love*, claims that our very existence is an argument—that each of us has our distinct view of the world and that, when we come into contact with others, our individual notions of reality are brought into question. Sometimes we win the argument and others change to our way of thinking; sometimes we lose and are asked to change something about ourselves. Most of the time these changes are small, and we easily invite these new ideas into our worldview. At other times, the ideas we encounter don’t sit well with us; sometimes we can even react violently to them. What’s important to understand about Corder’s argument is what we are asking people to do when we compose our arguments. We are, essentially, asking them to change something about who they are (pp. 170-89).

Because of this, we have to be aware of what our audience can potentially gain or lose from our argument; likewise, we have to understand what we hope to gain or fear to lose by synthesizing their argument. But what we really need to understand is that argument doesn’t have to be a game with winners and losers; when we challenge our ideas—indeed, our very selves—we become stronger, more capable individuals. That is what the rhetorical dance is all about. In the academic sense, argument is not a heated exchange between two people trying to verbally attack each other; it is a measured art form, designed, not to oppress the ideas of one individual while lifting up the ideas of another, but instead to shape the ideas of both people. Argument is one of the most powerful tools we have to create meaning, to broaden our world, and to deepen our understanding of ourselves.
This chapter is your introduction into argument. Throughout the next few pages, we will look at the structure of basic argumentative writing and to show you how fascinating argument can be. The goal of this chapter is not to help you win the arguments you will face throughout your life, but to appreciate them, to draw from them, and to allow them to help you grow as a student, as a professional, and as a person.

**Warrants, Claims, and Supporting Evidence**

A basic argument contains three parts: the warrant (a premise you and your audience can see as a universal truth), the claim (the main point of the essay, which is often the thesis as well), and supporting evidence (examples of why the claim is accurate). You may recall from chapter two, *Expository Writing*, the idea that good writing begins by establishing a connection to the reader by calling up familiar images and ideas. The same is true in argument; we call this connection the **warrant**.

A warrant, sometimes referred to as an assumption, is generally a point at which the writer assumes no responsibility to prove a particular statement because that statement is a core idea that the writer shares with his or her audience. Of course, the scope of that assumption depends upon the audience to which the writer is directing his or her argument. For example: a Baptist preacher who is arguing that people pay their tithe doesn’t need to spend time asking his audience to believe in God, nor does he need to convince them that the verse in the Bible that says people should give a portion of their money to the church is true. The preacher’s job is to point out that particular verse and provide examples of how following this request will benefit his audience. Similarly, a shoe salesman doesn’t have to convince the customer who wandered into his store that she could use a new pair of shoes. He can assume that because she entered the store, she’s in the market. His job is to show her how shopping at his store, perhaps even buying a certain brand of shoe, will be her best choice.

The claim of the argument is generally the thesis. The claim is the argument itself, what the writer hopes to point out as a candidate for change or conservation. The claim is perhaps the most important part of the argument; however, the claim cannot support itself without evidence and cannot hope to be convincing without the warrant assuming a few things about the audience. A politician may make the claim that we need to start drug testing welfare recipients. If she were to say this in an interview with *High Times*, a magazine that promotes the use of marijuana, her argument would likely be met with extreme opposition. Likewise, were she to simply state her claim, even to a receptive audience, without providing examples of why she is correct in her assertion, her argument would fall flat.

The supporting evidence is the proof that an argument is valid. Without evidence, our arguments are not only going to be ineffective, but they may also be used against us. Imagine how well it
would go over if you were to tell your significant other that you loved him or her, but you couldn’t think of what to say when he or she asked you why. Depending on what you are trying to argue, your evidence may include facts, statistics, expert opinions, examples, and scientific studies. For your supporting evidence to be valuable, it should meet the following criteria:

- **Accuracy**: facts, figures, opinions, and so on are taken from a reliable source and presented undistorted and with clarity.
- **Relevance**: evidence is relevant or shown to be relevant to the argument being made and is as current as possible.
- **Completeness**: the body of evidence included in the essay supports the entire argument, not just a part of the argument.

When we combine the warrant, the claim, and the supporting evidence, our argument begins to take shape. Consider the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parts of an Argument</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Claim:</strong> Getting an education from an online university prepares students to better meet the demands of the global marketplace.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Warrant:</strong> A college-educated workforce is essential to competing in the ever-growing economic landscape.</td>
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| **Evidence:** | 1). Since the way we do business is increasingly being done through electronic avenues, students who gain their education in an electronic context will find it easier to relate the skills developed in college directly toward their careers.  
2). Because online universities are growing at an ever-increasing rate, students who enter the workplace after school will be better able to relate to others who have had similar experiences, thereby establishing solidarity in the company and its clients.  
3). To be successful in an online university, students must be self-motivated. This is an essential skill as more and more companies are looking for employees who can do business from their homes and on the road, rather than in a traditional office environment. |
Reasoning

When we make arguments, we must use logic and reason to guide our readers to meet us at the same conclusion. Aristotle identified the processes of inductive and deductive reasoning. One of the best definitions of each of these two logical processes can be found in Robert M. Pirsig’s book (1999), *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*; in it, he writes:

If the cycle goes over a bump and the engine misfires, and then goes over another bump and the engine misfires, and then goes over another bump and the engine misfires, and then goes over a long smooth stretch of road and there is no misfiring, and then goes over a fourth bump and the engine misfires again, one can logically conclude that the misfiring is caused by the bumps. That is induction: reasoning from particular experiences to general truths.

Deductive inferences do the reverse. They start with general knowledge and predict a specific observation. For example if, from reading the hierarchy of facts about the machine, the mechanic knows the horn of the cycle is powered exclusively by electricity from the battery, then he can logically infer that if the battery is dead, the horn will not work. That is deduction. (p. 99)

When you gather research for a scientific experiment, you are testing a small portion of the population in order to find something out about the entire population; this is inductive reasoning. For example: you are trying to figure out how many people in your town watched *Dancing with the Stars* last week. You could go around and ask everybody in the town, but by the time you had interviewed everyone, people might not remember what they had watched or when they did or did not watch it. Needless to say, the data you receive wouldn’t be very accurate and it would take far too much time to gather that information. Instead, you could ask a group of people who could act as representatives of the various target groups you are looking to study. If forty-three percent of the representative group watched the show, chances are the same percentage of all of the townspeople, with a margin of error, of course, were also watching the show. You could then infer, with some certainty, that more people watched *Dancing with the Stars* than watched the other shows that share the same timeslot.

When we reason deductively, we do the opposite. We take a general statement and apply it to a specific case. You may recall that we introduced syllogism in the chapter last week. A syllogism is an example of how we reason deductively.
Probably the most famous of all syllogisms is this:

All men are mortal.

Socrates is a man.

Therefore, Socrates is mortal.

Interestingly, the syllogism follows the same format we gave for basic arguments: the warrant, the claim, and the evidence. Syllogisms rely on the idea that if the warrant and the evidence are true, then the claim must be true.

All men are mortal. (warrant)

Socrates is a man. (evidence)

Therefore, Socrates is mortal. (claim)

Of course, just because a syllogism seems to work doesn’t mean that it’s correct. If the premises are wrong (warrant and evidence), or if the arguer tries to make a claim that isn’t supported by the evidence, the process falls apart. We need to be careful that our arguments avoid hasty jumps in logic. Consider the following syllogism:

All people must eat to survive.

Lasagna is something people eat.

To survive, people must eat lasagna.

Though there are a few people who would like to agree with this statement, it isn’t very logical (unfortunately, the logical choice isn’t always the tastiest one). Most of these problems in logic are due to the use of logical fallacy.
Fallacies

Fallacies are missteps in your logic that can show vulnerabilities in your argument. While academic argument is not about winning, you want to generate a conversation about the ideas you are presenting, not spend time defending the process by which you came to these ideas. While there are many of these fallacies, the following list contains some of the more common ones you should be careful to avoid. Incidentally, knowing these fallacies can help you in effectively breaking down the arguments of others.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fallacy</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Example</th>
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<tr>
<td>Begging the Question:</td>
<td>Also known as circular reasoning; arguing a claim is true by repeating the claim in different words.</td>
<td>Men are more successful than women because throughout history they have accomplished more.</td>
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<td>Faulty Causality:</td>
<td>Also known as a post hoc fallacy; claiming that because one thing preceded another, the first thing caused the second.</td>
<td>God hates George W. Bush because 911 happened nine months after he took office the first time, and Hurricane Katrina happened 10 months into his second term.</td>
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<td>Either/Or Reasoning:</td>
<td>Presenting one’s claim as the only logical answer to a question by showing a single, unsatisfying alternative.</td>
<td>Either you do well in this class or you will never be able to write.</td>
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<td>Hasty Generalization:</td>
<td>Providing limited or insufficient evidence to support a claim.</td>
<td>I wouldn’t eat at Charlie’s Bar because the kitchen must be dirty. I ate there once a few years ago and got sick the next day.</td>
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<td>False Authority:</td>
<td>Presenting something to be true despite the evidence because an authority figure claims it to be true.</td>
<td>Michael Jordan wears Nikes, so they must be the best shoes on the market.</td>
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<td>Ad Hominem:</td>
<td>Translates as “against the man;” attacking an opponent rather than the claim he or she is proposing.</td>
<td>John’s theories are wrong. He can’t be right. I mean, the guy can’t even match his socks.</td>
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<td>Red Herring:</td>
<td>Misdirecting an argument by raising unrelated points.</td>
<td>I may have been late to work, but I got a great deal on this scarf.</td>
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<td>Slippery Slope:</td>
<td>Claiming that one thing invariably leads to another even though there is no proof to back it up.</td>
<td>If we legalize drugs, everyone in the country will become addicted to heroin and cocaine.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Straw Man:</td>
<td>Arguing against a claim that is not being made and would not be made by an opponent.</td>
<td>I would never allow a foreign government to dictate American policy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non Sequitor:</td>
<td>Translates as “does not follow;” claiming that two unrelated ideas have a cause and effect relationship.</td>
<td>If you like Vincent VanGogh’s paintings, you’ll love the library.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bandwagon:</td>
<td>Claiming something to be true or valuable based on its popularity.</td>
<td>Millions of people agree: Squash Pile is the best movie this summer.</td>
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Some Key Things to Think About

When we write persuasively, a big factor in how our arguments are received is the tone of our voice. Readers are more likely to be persuaded by an argument when they see the author as trustworthy, reasonable, sincere, and as someone who has their best interest in mind. Fair treatment of opposing viewpoints, strong and relevant evidence, and sound reasoning do a lot to persuade and audience, but so does the attitude in which the author conveys the ideas. The following chart demonstrates some things to consider about the way you work to convince your audience:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Tone</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>State opinions and facts in a calm manner:</strong></td>
<td>When your audience sees you as being too excited about your issue, they also see you as being potentially irrational. Likewise, if they see your argument as detached, they probably won’t feel like they should attach themselves to your ideas. Try to develop a moderate tone. Don’t sacrifice your passion; just reign it in.</td>
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<td><strong>Avoid arrogant and sarcastic prose:</strong></td>
<td>Arrogance and sarcasm might help you to convince a close friend of your argument, but the rest of your audience will see you as being rude. Remember, arguments are not about winning; they are about making meaning. You’ll never be able to bring people over to your way of thinking and make that meaning if they don’t like you.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Be aware of your choice of words:</strong></td>
<td>While strong, direct language can convince some people, most people will see it as demanding and obnoxious. For example: the wrong way to write the above description would be, <em>Coercing your audience with strong, direct language will make you look demanding and obnoxious.</em></td>
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Checklist for Persuasive Writing

1. Audience – have you taken into account your audience’s potential viewpoints? Have you reasoned with your opponents rather than attacked them?

2. Thesis – does your argument have a thesis and is it narrow enough to argue in the time and space you have to argue it? Is it clear and reasonable?

3. Evidence – do you support your claim with several well thought out reasons? Do your reasons seem to be relevant?

4. Assumptions – have you made clear, logical connections between your points and your thesis?

5. Logical Fallacies – have you worked to avoid common errors in reasoning?

6. Structure – does your organization lead your readers through your argument step by step, building to your strongest ideas and frequently connecting your points to your thesis?

7. Tone – is your tone reasonable and respectful?
References


Who knows, here where it’s deepest, 
what else the river might hold, or what net
I could toss into the air as if dragging,
not for something lost, but never had,
pulling against the current, as if it were possible,
an entirely different world.

- Judy Jordan, *Fragments in February*

Timothy P. Goss, Tanya C. Klatt,
& Alexander V. Ames, Ph.D.
Collaboration

No one find success alone. Invariably, there is a team of people behind the scenes pushing and pulling, actively working together to make success possible. When we write, we often work directly with the words and ideas of others.

Authorship is not as much the act of generating something new (though this happens quite often in writing), as it is the organizing of pre-existing ideas in ways that create a new way of seeing. We may be the author of the essay we’re writing, but each of our sources play a vital role in the process. The efforts of our team, therefore, cannot go unnoticed.

In this section of the course, we are going to talk about ways that we give credit to our support system; how we show our appreciation for their efforts. This is the etiquette of writing, the pomp and the circumstance, the tradition.

In the Persuasive Writing chapter, we talked about how argument is all about the making of meaning through the challenging of our own ideas and the ideas we encounter through our connections with other people. Much of what we do when we work with textual ideas—ideas that have been recorded in writing, on film, in paint, sculpture, architecture, and so on (we’ll just call them texts) happens in much the same way. We are essentially in conflict with the texts we collide with, but we are also working with them at times to enter into other arguments.

If our personal relationships were anything like our textual relationships, someone would be crying and there might be some broken dishes and hastily-flung cutlery. Texts, however, like living in the fast lane; they like to be thrown into as many situations as they can get into. Texts can fiercely back you up when you need them to and unceremoniously tear you down if you ignore them. It’s an intellectual game, and though battles are won and lost, in the end, the war is won by everyone who played.

While we are often not able to be in direct contact with the authors of the texts we are working with, we do have the opportunity to challenge those ideas while we are in conversation with others—specifically while we are reaching out to our potential readers. This distance, though
seemingly awkward in terms of conversation, allows each of our ideas to breathe, to take on a life of their own. This is where the magic happens.

Paraphrasing, Quotations, and Summary

When we paraphrase, we talk about the ideas the text relayed. Paraphrasing is our way of putting the author’s ideas into our own words, and yes, we still cite our source. It’s only fair, since they did the work.

Summary is a lot like paraphrasing, but instead of just relating what the text says, we also relate what we imagine the text means. As always, we cite our source.

Think of the process of working with texts as a conversation. Consider this example:

“She said she would go with you.”

“She said she’d go? What were her exact words?”

“Well, I asked her and she said, ‘yes, definitely.’”

“Definitely? She actually said that?”

“I told you, man; she’s really into you. It’s sad, really. Seeing as how you are too much of a wimp to ask her yourself.

Notice how this simple conversation uses a quotation (“yes, definitely”), paraphrasing (“She said she would go with you.”), and summary (“she’s really into you.”).

Let’s see how this works with texts. Consider the following short, short story (aka flash fiction) by Earnest Hemingway:

For Sale: Baby shoes—never worn.

(In Mims)
Were we to write about this story, we would have several choices about to do here:

**Paraphrasing**

Let’s talk about paraphrasing first.

When we paraphrase, we simply describe what we have read through our own words. Paraphrasing deals in fact, not speculation.

For example:

Earnest Hemingway’s “Baby Shoes” tells the story about the sale of a pair of baby’s shoes. The haunting side of the tale comes in the last two words: “never worn” (In Mims, 2009). Though this story is only six words long, it remains one of Hemingway’s most popular and celebrated works.

**Summary**

In summary, we would extend our treatment, focusing on the meaning of the story. When we summarize, we transpose our interpretation onto a text. Summary sits on the edge of analysis—the difference is that, while we can talk about meaning and the effects of a text, we must avoid inserting our opinion.

For example:

Earnest Hemingway’s “Baby Shoes” tells an almost cryptic tale about the sale of a pair of baby’s shoes. In the last two words of the story, “never worn,” Hemingway manages to propel his readers into a frenzied dance of speculation as to why these shoes are for sale; what, if anything, happened to the would-be child; and what financial difficulties the parents must be experiencing to be willing to suffer so deeply for the price of a pair of shoes (In Mims).

Though this story is only six words long, it remains one of Hemingway’s most popular and celebrated works, and it isn’t hard to see why. One can’t help but to be drawn into the depths of a world that could have spawned such an advertisement.

On the following page, we will break this process down even further.
The way we treat our sources is important to the scholarship of writing. Our ideas are important to us and we want to get credit for them. Likewise, the authors of those texts we work with that inform our own writing also want credit for all of the time and work they put into writing. Not to do so constitutes plagiarism. To avoid the potential label of a plagiarist, and to treat the work of others as they should be treated, whether in summary, paraphrasing, or in quotations, we need to follow some basic rules. We will highlight those in the following section:
Working with Others: Four Rules to Live By

Rule # 1:

Always introduce the quotation or ideas with which you will be working.

Rule #2:

Attribute those ideas with the author. Qualify the author if this is the first time you are mentioning him or her in the text you are writing—tell your readers why the author is relevant.

Rule #3:

Enter the quotation, paraphrase, or summary of the ideas. Be careful not to misrepresent the meaning. Any time you use more than three words directly from the text, you should place them in quotation marks—these quotations must also be entered word for word.

Rule 4#

Discuss why the ideas you are working with are relevant to your work. How do these ideas argue with or support your thesis?

For example:

Jim W. Corder (2004), one of the most influential voices in rhetorical studies, explores the inefficient nature of language in his article *Aching for a Self*. He writes: “Words and images are incomplete class notes from the world, a way of catching reminders. Of course, they are only traces. They were never anything but traces” (p. 264). But if language, and by extension writing, is so inefficient a medium in the sharing of our thoughts and ideas, why is it that we continue to value writing? Corder doesn't offer an answer; perhaps it is because language is the best tool (and perhaps the only tool) mankind has managed to come up to so far to establish these crucial connections.
Identifying Types of Sources

Websites

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.com</td>
<td>These are commercial websites designed to sell a product or service. Because of that, they are biased toward what they are selling. For the most part, these should be avoided in scholarly work. News sites like <a href="http://www.cnn.com">www.cnn.com</a> and <a href="http://www.bbcworldnews.com">www.bbcworldnews.com</a> are generally credible, but use them to as supporting material, not as a primary source.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.org</td>
<td>These websites are questionable. They are websites that serve as an internet-presence for organizations, but most of these organizations are biased toward their cause. <a href="http://www.peta.org">www.peta.org</a>, for instance, would hardly be credible in terms of statistics if you were writing a paper about animal abuse. If you profile this organization as an important voice in the fight for animal rights, it would be fitting to use their website. Wikipedia (<a href="http://www.wikipedia.org">www.wikipedia.org</a>) is also an .org, and we all know that, because of the nature of that site, the information found there has to be verified through more scholarly sources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.gov</td>
<td>These websites are government-run sites. They are great for statistics and try to be unbiased. <a href="http://foia.fbi.gov">http://foia.fbi.gov</a>. , for instance, is a great site for information regarding famous individuals. Use these any time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.edu</td>
<td>These websites are run by educational entities such as colleges and universities. The information on these sites is usually credible. Use them. A great and relevant example is <a href="http://owl.english.purdue.edu/contact/owlmailtutors">http://owl.english.purdue.edu/contact/owlmailtutors</a> - this site will help you with all things writing related.</td>
</tr>
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Books

These are usually the most scholarly of all research material provided you are steering away from highly-biased authors. Use your own judgment here.

Obviously, you can find books at libraries, but if the library doesn’t have what you want, ask someone. Most libraries can get your book from another library through an interlibrary loan. These services are generally free, but they do take time. Start your research early. You can also check out www.worldcat.org to see if there are any libraries in your area that might already have the book.

Some problems with book research is that books are often hard to get, they contain more information than you really need, and because information in today’s world changes rapidly, books are not always current with the field they are discussing.
**Journal Articles**

Journal articles from the University’s EBSCO database are generally the way to go. They will save you time and effort because they are credible, relatively current, and there is a lot less material to go through. They are also easy to get to and have citing features.

**Citing Sources**

It is important that as you research, you keep track of where you have been. This will save you a lot of frustration when you find yourself needing to get back to a source. Just copy and paste the URL to a word document—that way you can get back to the source when you need to.

Citing your sources is important. The following offers a quick look at how to do it:

**Source:**

*Inventor of cell phone: We knew someday everybody would have one*

*(CNN) --* In 1973, Martin Cooper changed the world, although he didn’t know it yet. Cooper and his team at Motorola, the communications company, created maybe the only thing that runs the lives of business professionals and teenagers alike — the cell phone.

It was the size of a brick and wasn’t commercially sold for another decade. But as Cooper demonstrated on a New York sidewalk, it worked.

The concept of cellular technology had already been created by Motorola’s rival, AT&T. Whose Bell Labs introduced a system allowing calls to be moved from one cell to another while remaining on the same channel. But AT&T was focusing this technology on the carphone.

Cooper wanted people to have freedom to talk on the phone away from their cars. So in reaction, he and Motorola embarked on a project to create a more portable device.

*(Anjarwalla, 2010, p. 1)*

**Our thesis:** “In a free-market system, we cannot allow corporations to require cell-phone contracts to secure customer loyalty.”

**The point we’re making:** That the purpose of the cell phone was to allow the freedom to leave our homes, offices, and cars without sacrificing the need to remain connected to our friends, families, and jobs.

**Our treatment:** According to Tas Anjarwalla (2010), a reporter for CNN, the inventor of the cell phone, Martin Cooper, “wanted people to have the freedom to talk on the phone away from their cars” (p. 1). From the beginning, the purpose of the cell phone was to allow us the freedom to leave our homes, offices, and cars without sacrificing the need to remain connected to our friends, families, and jobs. Contracts, like the ones required by companies like T-Mobile, AT&T, Sprint, and Verizon limit the customer’s right to chose, thereby directly opposing Cooper’s original vision.

*In-text citations should contain (author’s last name, year of publication, and page number) unless that information has already been mentioned in the preceding paragraph.*
References Page

A “References” page is also required. References pages should be arranged in the following way:

Notice how the first line of each entry is flush to the left-hand margin and each additional line is tabbed in (the reverse of how we normally treat a paragraph). Entries are also listed alphabetically. On the following pages, you’ll find an example of an APA paper.
The Formulae of Blackness

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Abstract

This essay compares and contrasts Richard Wright’s novel 1940’s Black Boy with Ralph Ellison’s novel 1952’s Invisible Man. Each of these novels explores issues of racial insistance in America between the Harlem Renaissance and the Civil Rights movement. Because such of these novels dealt with many of the same social problems, it is easy to think that Wright and Ellison would make similar statements. Interestingly, these novels go beyond that shared view of the world and differ quite specific imagery and points which help to emphasize the variance in ways of thinking about what it means to be both American and Black during the Post-Reconstruction period of American history.

The Formula of Blackness

For the past five weeks, a gymnast at our apartment complex has been quiet. The usual sounds of basketballs bouncing against the metallic bleachers and the rhythmic strike of tennis rackets have been replaced by the steady, rhythmic movements of a couple practicing their dismounts. They train at any time of day that I can find out on the runners. Every time I walk across the parking lot, I can hear the laces and paws make a clatter on the dance floor. I might have the experience of the gymnast using a bar to determine the jump and the height of his strike as he guides his moves. For now, I simply watch them through the window and admire their display.

Richard Wright and Ralph Ellison, two of the most important writers in the African American literary tradition dance in much the same way. They move through each other through their words and thoughts in the image throughout their own Black Boy and Invisible Man. Wright looks, having written flat, and Ellison follows in turn and stop. Like an active image, their movements look at first chaotic, but like any reflection, they are opposite as much as they are the same. Still, their interplay is undeniable and will come to be their image with notable skill.

Richard Wright’s autobiographical novel Black Boy (1945) begins with a scene from his childhood. He is four years old, and the first words he learns for all things dangerous are "Beware of men in the window." He later "inadvertently broke the glass bottle when certain—which I had been forbidden to touch—rolled (or bumped) out into the empty street" (pg. 31).

The imagery provides the background for Wright’s life. Outside the window is freedom, the certain which forbid his entry represent the white man—something he’s been "forbidden to touch."—something that he is not only permitted to cross but also expected to cross the line that he will not give the某些人expected to cross.
mindless of danger. He'll die or he'll fall.

In the early parts of Black Boy, Wright makes other tales of his youth—his attempts to please his father by working as a blacksmith, his inability to write his name on a school paper, or because he is black. He tells stories of other children, as he entrusts the child to his care and the stories of how they lived and what they learned in their daily lives. Wright's work was a speech that has been prepared for him at his graduation—of which he could not find a mention in the important works of his literary life.

In this independent manner, Wright sets aside the black, illiterate men of Mississippi through his educational period. He writes of Memphis, where he eventually worked as an employee of the government in both Chicago and New York City. Unlike many of the other African Americans he encountered, he has not been able to transcend the racial barriers that have been long established, but he has been able to make a living on his own.

Like Wright, the annual season of Ralph Ellison’s Invisible Man (1952) has already developed his skill in communicating by the time we meet him (after his high school graduation), and he seems to have an understanding of the human element, even though he is plagued by tentative notions about the world and its economic system. We are to encounter the racial divisions of the novel, and his ability to communicate in a similar way as the catalyst. Wright’s speech at his graduation and Ellison’s novel’s speech set the tone for the beginning of the novel and the centering divide—the opening divide—that splits second division.

It is a point that Ellison and Wright’s work in Black Boy, as well as other works, is a story for the invisible man. Because of this, there are definite similarities in

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References


References


Chapter Seven

Proofreading and Revision

I don’t believe any writing is going to be good if it’s just done in the first draft. . . . If we’re lucky, and the muses are with us, maybe we don’t have to go beyond the third draft. But sometimes it might be twenty drafts before everything is functioning. That’s what we’re trying to achieve, when we do revisions. –Charles Johnson

Timothy P. Goss, Tanya C. Klatt, & Alexander V. Ames, Ph.D.
Writing, Revisited

Writing, if you hadn’t noticed yet, is a pretty poor way of communicating. It demands that we place our thoughts in some kind of two-dimensional, logical order, that we leave more things out than we leave in our writing, and that we are careful to place those ideas in a structure that seems familiar to our audience. But we think laterally, in three dimensional patterns, of several things at once. We skip around in our thinking, and though we have very logical things going on inside our head, those thoughts don’t often translate well to the page.

“If you want to be a writer, you must do two things above all others: Read a lot and write a lot. There’s no way around these two things that I’m aware of, no shortcut.” – Stephen King. (King, 2010, p. 5)

Unfortunately, until someone has figured out how to physically link our minds, writing seems our best alternative. It is therefore incredibly important that we work to be the best writers we can be.

There are three key practices that all good writers share:

1. Good writers read as much as possible. Even with all of the things we can teach you, there really is no substitute for what you will gather by reading. Imagine someone trying to be a good mechanic, but never bothering to look at an engine; or a musician who doesn’t listen to music. It just doesn’t work. If you don’t like to read, there’s a good chance you’re just reading the wrong things. You don’t have to read Shakespeare to be a good writer, but you do need to read something. If you’ve stopped reading for whatever reason, we ask you to give reading another shot; just take the time to choose material that actually interests you.

2. To be a good writer, you must write and write often. Keep a journal, start a blog, text your friends instead of calling them, try your hand at poetry, whatever you can do to keep writing. Don’t expect everything you write to be perfect or even to be read; just write.

3. The third rule, and the focus of this chapter, is to revise often. Revision is one of the most important things a writer can do, yet this is the step that most composition students overlook. In our desperation to be done with the assignment and to move on to other things, we don’t always think about the benefits of revision, but developing good revision skills is the one of the key differences between being a writer and being a good writer.
Re-vision

“When you go over your work, become a Samurai, a great warrior with the courage to cut out anything” – Natalie Goldberg. (Goldberg, 2005, p. 175)

To put revision into perspective, let’s break down the word itself: re-vision. Revising a piece of writing is, in essence, re-seeing it, re-imagining it, changing it in some measurable way. When we write, we wrestle with concepts, we fight with language, we struggle with organization. Writing is a battlefield. Revision can also be a struggle, but instead of creating, we are usually trimming and shaping the work. Think of it this way: it is much easier to shear a sheep than to create one.

Before we go further, we need to talk about the difference between proofreading and revision. They are, after all, very different activities.

Proofreading

Proofreading, also referred to as editing, is simply reading through a draft to find and correct errors in grammar, punctuation, organization, wording, style, and/or flow. Proofreading is a necessary step in the writing process, but is generally best served toward the end of an essay (that’s why we’re only now talking about it). When you begin writing, you shouldn’t be thinking about grammar or organization, or any of those other things we mentioned; you should be thinking about distilling the thoughts from your head onto the page. Though the revision process comes much later, you can think about it early; knowing you will be revising your work later makes it a lot easier to start working.

“Writing is not like painting where you add. It is not what you put on the canvas that the reader sees. Writing is more like a sculpture where you remove; you eliminate in order to make the work visible. Even those pages you remove somehow remain.” – Elie Wiesel. (Wiesel, n.d.).
Once you’ve collected the information you need, have written as much as you feel you have to say on the subject, you enter the first proofreading, or editing stage. Here, you read your essay aloud focusing on every word, to make sure that the essay doesn’t have any – left out (that was on purpose) and that it flows easily from one paragraph to the next, not just through transitions, but through the complete transmission of ideas.

It’s often a very good idea to have someone read your writing; the more people you can get to read your work, the better chance you have to find potential problems.

Once you’ve done everything you can do with your essay in its current form, put it away for a day (this is why you should start writing early) so you can look at it with fresh eyes and begin the revision process. Many times a writer has been fooled into thinking that something they had just penned was perfect, only to come back later to find glaring problems that they couldn’t see before. *In terms of the college environment, any instructor will tell you that students who revise typically receive much higher grades than those who skip this step in the process.*

“*If a teacher told me to revise, I thought that meant my writing was a broken-down car that needed to go to the repair shop. I felt insulted. I didn’t realize the teacher was saying, ‘Make it shine. It’s worth it.’ Now I see revision as a beautiful word of hope. It’s a new vision of something. It means you don’t have to be perfect the first time.’*” - Naomi Shihab Nye (In Kent, 2006, p. 40).

Revision is the single most important step in the writing process; everything else is prep work. As you sit down this week to begin to revise your final essay for this class, keep in mind that your job is to make this essay as perfect as you can make it. This does not mean you have time to put this off; it means you’ll have more time to work with it and get it right.
References


Chapter Eight

Moving Forward

“'Alice began, ‘Would you tell me please, which way I ought to go from here?’

‘That depends a good deal on where you want to get to,’ said the cat.”

—Lewis Carroll

Timothy P. Goss, Tanya C. Klatt,
& Alexander V. Ames, Ph.D.
The Moral of the Story

Best-selling author of the book, *The World is Flat 3.0: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century*, Thomas Friedman (2007), writes that “The first, and most important, ability you can develop . . . is the ability to ‘learn how to learn’” (p. 309). Friedman also claims that, in our new, global world, intellectual curiosity far outweighs intellectual ability (p. 343). Through this class, we hope you are a little closer to developing those skills, “learning to learn” and learning to be intellectually curious. After all, the journey is different for each of us, but it is our duty to ourselves to find that curiosity, to find out how we learn.

The beautiful thing about writing is that it affords us a medium in which to record our passions, out heartbreaks, our triumphs, struggles, fears, and ideals. Throughout our own writing and through the study of the texts of others, we can better determine where we are in our own journey toward meaning.

Through books, articles, blogs, essays, paintings, sculptures, architecture, dance, war, even mathematical equations, we have, as a species, challenged ourselves to find the answers to who we are and what this thing called life has to do with us. This ongoing and ever-evolving conversation started long before our time on this earth and will continue long after we’re gone from this world. We hope that through this course you have found your own way to begin engaging in this dialogue and to help move it forward.

We want to leave you with a few key things you should know about writing:

1. Think about writing as a way to celebrate what you know about a subject. If you learn as much as you can about the topic you are writing about, writing should come much easier to you.

2. Writing is not a gift; it is a skill—one that takes practice and dedication to the craft. If you leave this course and do not continue writing, you will lose much of the effectiveness and creativity you have gained throughout the past few weeks. What we have been discussing throughout this class, we are happy to say, does not really end Tuesday at midnight.

3. You will never write a perfect essay. Do your best, but don’t let the pressure of trying to craft the best paper in the history of the world hinder your writing. This kind of thinking is what made Hemingway, one of the greatest of American writers, put a gun in his mouth and pull the trigger.
One of the most important skills you can learn to get you through college is learning how to find something interesting in everything you encounter. It’s there if you look hard enough. We suggest you start practicing that skill right now. Think about an entire room painted and furnished in beige. Now find something interesting there.

Above all, have fun and do your best. College isn’t a joke, but it can be entertaining. We have enjoyed working with you throughout this class. If we can do anything for you in the future, don’t hesitate to ask.

Since this class is but a step in your educational journey, we thought it would be interesting to send you on your way with some advice from some of the other instructors, deans, and the provost here at Grantham University. We asked them each four questions:

1. What role does writing play in an individual’s education?

2. What is the one thing you would like to see improved regarding your students’ writing and researching practices?

3. What advice would you give to a student still new to the college experience?

4. What is the difference between a good student and a not-so-good student?

Some of their answers appear below. Feel free to read as many or as few as you would like. This is not on a test; it’s simply something we offer to help you through the next stage of your quest. These responses appear in no particular order.
What role does writing play in an individual's education?

“Critical writing and thinking is important in the communication process. Most employers require their employees to write effectively, and students should recognize this early in their academic journey. By practicing these skills daily, students should be better equipped to speak and write with confidence upon graduating.” – Dr. Thomas Spotts

“Writing is extremely important. In addition to being a wonderful tool that aids us in remembering information, writing, good writing, helps us communicate to others our ideas.” – John Meeks

“Education is really two parts: learning and demonstrating. The truth is, as an educator I can't get into students' head to figure out how well they understood the course materials. I have to rely on how well they can demonstrate what they've learned. If learning is about what we know from our education, then writing is about what we do with our education.” – James Dorrough, Criminal Justice

“It is pivotal because the individual has to be able to articulate and write on the topic.” – Tacildayus Andrews

“Writing can make or break an academic career. People who know how to write well know how to get more information from what they are taught and what they read, so they retain and apply that information better. Good writers tend to get more out of classes and instruction.” – Grace Hamel, English Faculty

“In the criminal justice field, report writing is how an officer describes what happened. These reports are used to determine whether a crime has been committed and what crime to charge. These reports end up in the hands of prosecutors and defense attorneys. A report with poor grammar will make the officer look bad.” – Gary Minor, Criminal Justice

“In engineering, a clear communication of the facts is essential to the successful completion of a design and/or a project.” – Raymond Castellani, Engineering

“I believe the skill of writing well is the most important that one can acquire or improve in the college experience. (Yes, it is more important than college level math skills.)” – Dr. Peter McCandless, Mathematics Faculty

“In the workplace, a supervisor has little time or very little tolerance for poor writing skills on the job. Obtaining a bachelor’s degree must have a payoff, and, to receive that payoff, students must put in efforts to achieve their best. As educators, we do not want to send off students into the "world" without providing students the best chance for success. Writing, and writing well, takes time and effort. There is no easy way around this.” – Raymond Verret

“Writing is a critical part of the communication process between a student and his/her respective classmates or instructor. This is particularly true for the online environment where communication is virtually all via written content. Poor writing skills can lead to
misinterpretation of submissions, poor grades, and ultimately a lack respect from the readers. Impressions are formed by the ability of the student to write since there is no face time between the student and the readers.” –Ti Timney

“Written communication and oral communication work together for expression. One helps the other, supports the other, and makes for meaningful descriptions. It is an important foundation to learning.” –Dr. Marilyn Bartels, Provost

“Writing skills play a crucial role in an individual's educational experience, particularly for students enrolled in an online program. Since student/instructor interaction occurs via the virtual classroom, writing in the discussion forum and the submission of weekly assignments are the primary ways for students to relay their thoughts, ideas, and understanding of the concepts and material. Proper grammar along with sentence and paragraph structure and logical flow of thoughts and ideas are essential when developing written responses to discussion questions and papers. How a student writes is just as important as what a student writes. Good writing skills are a reflection of one's competency to communicate, and communication in a virtual environment takes the form of written text.” –Eileen Godinez

“Writing, being able to coherently communicate your thoughts and ideas, is essential in and out of the classroom. In an educational setting, writing provides the opportunity for you to explore the subject matter and demonstrate your mastery as well as your thought processes. As you try to communicate what you think, you reflect upon and organize the information in your mind.” –Jennifer Gibson

“As an employer, I can learn a lot by a student's basic writing skills, and that can mean the difference between getting an interview and not.” Liz Hanson, English Faculty

“Writing is the foundation on which your education is built.” –Bruce Bailey

“Learning to write well and practicing writing well is critical in your education as it prepares you for on-the-job writing where your boss(es) will expect you to communicate well verbally and in writing. This is true for all degree fields.” –Dr. Cynthia Akagi, Dean: School of Allied Health

“In an online forum, writing is how students represent themselves. Writing is the first impression instructors get of students. Writing shows us they understand and can synthesize the material. Writing is really education.” –Matt Diggs, College of Arts and Sciences

“The primary mode of interaction and sharing of ideas in college is written texts. We write to learn information; we write to share ideas, and we learn to write.” –Suzanne Drapeau, English Faculty

“One of the main things that employers want is good communication skills, both oral and written. This is what I found from talking to people in the computer industry and looking at ads in places such as CareerBuilder. You will often need to write proposals for projects you intend to work on or write reports on how the project is going. People who can't express themselves effectively will not be successful. The writing you do while pursuing your education will help you improve your writing skills.” –Brent Tracy, Computer Science
“It is critical to be able to express oneself through the written form. It is often used to judge a student's comprehension of a course's subject matter.” – Bari Courts

“Writing is an integral part of our lives. It is best to learn in school and then be able to apply it to the real world. Supervisors, managers, and clients do not want to receive messages, memos, or reports filled with spelling and grammatical errors.” – Vanessa Paskiatis

“I believe that writing teaches us how to interact and convey what we have learned. It is an integral part of our education because, without it, we would not be able to convey our knowledge or participate within our career fields on the same level as others.” – Cory Aube, English Faculty

“Knowledge is far more useful when you are able to communicate it to others in an effective manner. How much would you get from a lecture if the lecturer spoke in very broken English or in a different language altogether? You will be valued more in the professional world if you can communicate to others in a clear, concise manner.” – Aaron Freestone, Mark Skousen School of Business

“Writing is the most successful way to tie new information to various areas of your brain. By writing about a subject and thinking clearly about what you want to say about various facts, you understand those facts in ways that reading or listening could never match.” – Leslie Skousen

“Writing is perhaps one of the most important ways to express one's views. It allows one to present a viewpoint and then support it with valid arguments. In the college environment, writing assignments are the best way to determine if a student has a good command of the course material and can think critically on the topic at hand.” – Mark Benek, Criminal Justice

“Writing is the cornerstone to any vocation, not just in advancing one's education. In the criminal justice field, the ability to write and communicate is the baseline for professionalism. We have to remember that a judge or justice or the public may be viewing our work 5-10 years down the road. How do you wish to be viewed regarding your writing skills?” – Dr. Currie Myers, Criminal Justice

“In your chosen career, whatever that might be, you will need to write something (a memo, a statement paper, a requisition, etc.). You can either make a great, professional impression with what and how you write, or you can be made to look very bad without the proper writing skills.” – Gary Hope

“It helps build higher level critical thinking skills such as analysis, evaluation, synthesis, and summary, which, in turn, makes for better grades and leadership abilities upon graduation.” – Dr. Janet Smith, Mark Skousen School of Business
What is the one thing you would like to see improved regarding your students' writing and researching practices?

“The one thing in need of improvement is organization. From my experience, students see a topic, research and then write. I think they should begin with organization. Plan out a paper based on the assignment. In this way the students will better know what to look for in their research and, then, be able to present it in an organized manner.” – John Meeks

“I would like to see students place more emphasis on creation over regurgitation. Looking up facts based on other people’s work and repeating them in well-worn sequences constitutes the lowest rung in the taxonomy of knowledge. Students with the highest proficiencies in the course materials will be able to show how one plus one equals three.” – James Dorough, Criminal Justice

“Grammar, citation, formatting and not knowing how to incorporate direct quotes into sentences.” – Tacildayus Andrews

“Students should be willing to use the resources available to them; teachers, links, the library, the SALC - all of these are tools that will help them for individual assignments as well as the long run.” – Grace Hamel, English Faculty

“First, when writing research papers, students need to learn not to speak in the first person or using themselves as justification for a position. That is what the research is for. They also need to learn to create proper reference pages and properly create parenthetical citations. If they learned to use the reference section of MS word, these problems would probably be solved.” – Gray Minor, Criminal Justice

“I think the most common problem I see is in the writing area. The ability to use words in the correct context is problematic. Most students take the time to spell/grammar check their work, but these tools do not catch words that are improperly used in a sentence structure.” – Ti Timney, Computer Science

“Diligence is the most needed improvement in writing and research practices today - use of multiple sources including scholarly and primary sources, attention to detail, and proofreading, from spelling and grammar to fact-checking and analysis of bias.” – Jennifer Gibson

“All writing should be clear, concise, and to point. Never assume I’ll understand what you intend to say. Tell me what I need to know.” – Bruce Bailey

“To improve students' writing: Proofread! Proofread! Proofread! Learn to proofread your own papers and correct errors. For final papers/projects always have someone (family member, friend co-worker who is good at English) proofread your work before you submit it.
To improve your research practices: use GU’s free, online, EBSCO library; look up journal articles and read the entire article, not the abstract only.” –Dr. Cynthia Akagi, Dean: School of Allied Health

“The number one thing I would like to see improve is students’ ability to write coherently. You know what you mean, so it's clear in your head. The words you write may not be so clear. After you write something, let it sit a while and then go back and read it and see if it makes sense. If it does, then submit it. If it doesn't, rewrite it so that it does make sense and then submit it.” –Brent Tracy, Computer Science

“Writing - Overall students need to outline their paper before beginning. They often get off focus and don't properly answer the presented question or problem. Grammatically they need to understand that Word is not the "authority" on grammatical issues.

Research - Understanding that Wikipedia and similar sources are not acceptable.” –Bari Courts

“I would like to see the removal of text language such as “u” and “ur” and the use of proper capitalization.” –Vanessa Paskaitis

“Don't rely on Wikipedia. The textbooks were chosen for a reason; use them. You won't remember what was in a cut-and-paste job from the internet. But you will remember what you read in the textbook as you search for an answer to the assignment question.” –Aaron Freestone, Mark Skousen School of Business

“Analysis. It is one thing to say what happens; it is another to explain WHY it happens. The 'why' should be at the forefront of your mind whenever writing a paragraph, whether your subject is business management or history.” –Lesley Skousen

“I would like to see students learn how to outline a paper. I've seen too many papers where the students don't develop their papers with a strong opening paragraph. We generally don't have a thesis statement but I encourage my students to reiterate the assignment in the first paragraph so that the reader knows what to expect while reading the paper. The supporting paragraphs are generally fine but I've noticed many students do not wrap up their papers with strong conclusions.” –Mark Benek, Criminal Justice

“I would like to see students fully understand the problem/question before starting to write.” –Dr. Janet Smith, Mark Skousen School of Business

“I would like to see proper grammar and spelling.” –Gary Hope

“One area that I would like for students to be mindful of is the clarity in their writing. For instance, I find myself struggling to figure out what information being presented by the student applies to what question that I've asked. A suggestion here is to include part of the question within your response to ensure that your teacher knows what you're addressing. For example, say I asked the question, "What is the resource that students can use to improve upon their writing?" The response should start with part of the question's wording: "One resource that students can use to improve upon their writing would be..." –Melanie Beck, College of Arts and Sciences
“In the Criminal Justice field, we follow APA guidelines. Students should be very familiar with this type of writing ahead of time and understand the importance of writing an abstract and proper referencing. I also recommend our students do research on writing flow.” – Dr. Currie Myers, Criminal Justice

What advice would you give to a student still new to the college experience?

“Organize your work around a five day week. Make sure you give yourself enough time to do your assignments well.” – John Meeks

“Use the resources available to you, like your professors, the Writing Center, EBSCO host, etc. No student looking for the best return on the investments of their time and money will neglect to milk these resources for all their worth.” – James Dorough, Criminal Justice

“Read your paper out loud. Give it to someone else to read and ask them if they get what the individual is trying to say.” – Tacildayus Andrews

“Don't be intimidated, don't be afraid to be honest, and ask lots of questions to both your classmates and your instructors!” – Grace Hamel, English Faculty

“Learn how to use MS Word and the reference section. Also, learn to use the university’s free electronic library.” – Gary Minor, Criminal Justice

“If we can't communicate, we will not succeed. You can't wield steel with a rubber hammer; it takes work to graduate. Remember a degree is not a sprint; it is a marathon.” – Raymond Castellani

“Time management! Start your assignments early in the week. Communicate issues concerning assignments with the instructor early and often. Do not wait until Tuesday afternoon to ask for help or clarification on an assignment. Take advantage of tutoring when offered by the instructors.” – Ti Timney, Computer Science

“In almost every profession, you are going to need to be able to write well to be taken seriously with regard to your own intellect. Improve it in every way you can and know that it can help you get a better job in almost all cases if you are a good communicator.” – Dr. Marilyn Bartels, Provost

“Advice to those new to the college experience: be actively engaged in your education, allow yourself the time to pursue and discuss the topics you are interested in, ask questions, be organized and make note of important dates and times.” – Jennifer Gibson

“Students should read and then re-read each assignment to ensure they are accurately addressing the topics/questions at hand.” – Bruce Bailey
“Make a daily study schedule and stick to it! You enrolled; now make the commitment to doing your best in the course by completing all assignments and discussion forums on time, weekly. If you run into challenges, inform your instructor immediately. If you are not a strong writer, use the GU Writing Center -- use it through your entire degree program if you need it. You will be a better student and better future employee for it!” –Dr. Cynthia Akagi, Dean: School of Allied Health

“Know APA format. Develop your library skills. Understand the difference between paraphrasing and plagiarism.” –Matt Diggs, College of Arts and Sciences

“You can do it. If you can read what I'm writing, you have all the intelligence you need to learn anything.” –Brent Tracy, Computer Science

“Plan your time and review the grading rubrics. Spend your time where you will get the most reward.” –Bari Courts

“Take things one at a time and do not make assignments more difficult than necessary. Break each assignment/discussion down into single steps and before you know it, you will have a finished paper! Also, participate in the discussions!” –Vanessas Paskaitis

“Use your resources. There are countless resources available to students both through Grantham and through their instructors.” –Cory Aube, English Faculty

“Don't take shortcuts. Put in the time necessary to actually learn the material, and it will reward you down the road. Ask questions! Sometimes a student will submit an assignment and say something like, "I wasn't sure what you wanted, so I did it this way." Don't be afraid to ask questions. It will enhance the quality of your work.” –Aaron Freestone, Mark Skousen School of Business

“Do not skip assignments or reading. Jump into the work and think of ways that every class might help you with your goals -- even in unexpected ways, like using math in a management position.” –Lesley Skousen

“Ask questions...talk to fellow students and faculty.” –Dr. Janet Smith, Mark Skousen School of Business

“I would advise them to use some sort of outline and make sure that they hit on all of the questions posed in a particular assignment. If they stick to the topic and answer the questions, then they'll be poised to do well. We as instructors can work with students on the APA formatting, but we can't do much when a student neglects to fully complete an assignment.” –Mark Benek, Criminal Justice

“Have fun. Papers are not for the profession or for our college. It is really for you the student. Think of the paper and information you may want to use again someday and the work will be done by you ahead of the need.” –Dr. Currie Myers, Criminal Justice

“Use spellcheck always and learn how to write effectively.” –Gary Hope

“Work smarter, not harder. Find tools available to aid you in writing papers and learn how to use them. For example, Zotero is a citation manager that will automatically cite and create a
bibliography for you. You can download an import citations right from Grantham's EBSCOHost Library. I can't even tell you how much time and effort the combination of Zotero and EBSCOHost has saved me.” – Aaron Stransky.

What is the difference between a good student and not-so-good student?

“Planning and organization. Success is in organization and in planning. Without these two essential tools, we could go off in any direction.” – John Meeks

“When students exercise control of the trajectory of their learning, and bend it from nil to excellence, they are good students. Not-so-good students have the disturbing habit of riding on past laurels or the coattails of others.” – James Dorough, Criminal Justice

“A good student provides back-up sources and documentation to support their claims.” – Tacildayus Andrews

“The biggest difference in good and not-so-good students is the student’s level of determination. Grantham gives students many tools to be successful; it is up to the student to use those tools.” – Catherine Gloner

“A good student asks questions and a lot of them - struggling alone is not only frustrating, it often also means doing unnecessarily subpar work and not really getting much out of the class.” –Grace Hamel, English Faculty

“Good students learn from mistakes and correct them. Bad students plagiarize and use Wikipedia.” –Gary Minor, Criminal Justice

“Good students have the ability to absorb the information in the lesson and clearly communicate the understanding of that lesson.” Raymond Castellani, Engineering

“Completing work on time and the ability to communicate in the discussion forums is important to a student’s success. Some responses are so poorly written that the input is discounted or ignored.” –Ti Timney, Computer Science

“Attitude”—Dr. Marilyn Bartels, Provost

“The difference between a good student and a not-so-good student is that the better student will take advantage of the resources provided to them and be proactive, utilizing the tools at their disposal and managing their time well. Good students take charge of their learning and carefully and persistently apply themselves to their tasks.” –Jennifer Gibson
“A good student tries to excel in every aspect of his or her academic preparation, while the not-so-good student is happy with meeting the bare minimums of every assignment.” – Bruce Bailey

“Good students strive to do their very best in every course. They turn in their assignments on time and communicate with their instructors. They have a study plan and stick to it! The not-so-good student enrolled in college but isn’t committed yet to being the best student possible to achieve his/her career goals. He/she doesn’t stick to a study plan, turns in half-completed assignments, doesn’t turn in discussion forums, plagiarizes, and is not honoring him/herself, the instructors, or education as a gift that will serve the student the rest of his/her life.” – Dr. Cynthia Akagi, Dean: School of Allied Health

“The difference between a good student and a not-so-good student is the size of their tool box. Students who have more skills tend to do better. Creating a bigger tool box is something we can all do.” – Matt Diggs, College of Arts and Sciences

“A good student is one who studies. That may seem obvious, but certainly not all students study. Knocking out an assignment to get it out of the way is not studying. A good student wants to learn, is focused on the knowledge he/she can get from the class, and studies the lessons and asks questions until he/she gets it. You want to actually know what you’re doing when you get done with your degree and are working in the field. If a person somehow manages to get his degree without having really learned what he needs to know, what is he going to do when he gets a job and doesn’t know what he’s doing?” – Brent Tracy, Computer Science

“Planning, focus, and follow-through.” – Bari Courts

“A good student submits work on time that is complete and free from spelling errors. The good student knows when to ask questions and when to ask for help. He or she does not wait until the last minute to complete an assignment, and, if it is late, the student takes responsibility.” – Vanessa Paskaitis

“The difference between a good student and a not-so-good student is effort. Students who answer all of the discussion questions, try to meet all of the criteria, and make an effort to contact the instructor when they have trouble are almost always successful.” – Cory Aube, English Faculty

“The students that care about their learning are the good students. They contact the professor when they don’t understand something. They engage other students in the forums and actually ask questions instead of just saying, “Good post.” The not-so-good students don’t read the feedback comments from instructors. This becomes apparent when the student repeatedly makes the same mistakes. They are also students who submit assignments by doing a sloppy cut-and-paste from the internet.” – Aaron Freestone, Mark Skousen School of Business

“There’s an age-old saying that applies quite nicely here: ‘90% of life is just showing up.’ Check into class throughout the week. Answer every question, even if you are unsure. And read your feedback. Students who do not read their feedback are not good students because they never read what they must improve.” – Lesley Skousen

“Attention to detail, full and complete answers, and wanting to succeed.” – Dr. Currie Myers, Criminal Justice
“A good student gives the impression of caring and really trying (which includes good grammar and spelling); a poor student just doesn't seem to care.” –Gary Hope

“Motivation, not ability.” –Dr. Janet Smith, Mark Skousen School of Business

“Good students take the instructor's feedback and improve. Not-so-good students repeatedly make the same mistakes, showing that they have no desire to improve.” –Mark Benek, Criminal Justice
References


### Glossary of Writing Terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>In APA, abstracts are found directly following the title page and are typically a 150-200 word summary of the following article or paper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic paper</td>
<td>Academic papers are, for the most part, designed with two distinct purposes in mind: to analyze, interpret, explain, or argue about a topic; and to demonstrate an intellectual understanding of the course or field for which it is written.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active sentence</td>
<td>Active sentences are sentences in which the subject performs the action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active voice</td>
<td>Active voice entails the use of a subject-verb construction (active sentences) throughout the majority of a piece of writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjective</td>
<td>Adjectives provide information about, clarify, or describe nouns, pronouns, or other adjectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adverb</td>
<td>Adverbs do very much the same thing as adjectives except they clarify and describe verbs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agenda</td>
<td>The underlying motivation for the creation of a text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreement</td>
<td>Consistency in time, point of view, plurality or not, and so on within a text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis</td>
<td>The process of looking closely and critically at a text to determine what it means, how it presents its ideas, its effectiveness, and so on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anecdote</td>
<td>Brief stories or slices-of-life that help to make a point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annotate</td>
<td>To underline or highlight important passages in a text and to make notes in the margins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APA style</td>
<td>The official writing and documentation style of the American Psychological Association (APA), which is Grantham University’s official style of documentation and citation for all courses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
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<td>-----------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appeal</td>
<td>An appeal is an argument that connects to the readers’ needs, such as achievement, belonging, or survival.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix</td>
<td>The Appendix at the end of a text, report, or dissertation, contains appendices that provided additional information pertaining to the text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application paper</td>
<td>An application paper focuses on experiences and qualities that suit the writer for a specific position or program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argument</td>
<td>Argument involves a course in logical thinking intended to convince the reader to accept an idea or to take action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argumentative paper</td>
<td>An argumentative paper presents an argument about a timely, debatable topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artifact</td>
<td>An artifact is an object made or modified by a human culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attributive phrase</td>
<td>A group of words that indicates the source of an idea or quotation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attributive tag</td>
<td>See attributive phrase.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>This term literally refers to the listeners or hearers of a speech, including the intended listeners/hearers, but is commonly used to refer to the intended reader or readers for a piece of writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic listing</td>
<td>A brief, somewhat informal itemizing of main points.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biased words</td>
<td>Words that unfairly or disrespectfully depict individuals or groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>Lists of works that cover a particular subject.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Block quotation</td>
<td>A long quotation of 40 words or more. Block quotations are formatted in a way that sets them apart from the rest of the text by tabbing - in each line, omitting the quotation marks, and leaving the citation outside of the end punctuation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blogs</td>
<td>Online journals (shorthand for “Web log”).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body language</td>
<td>Body language is a communication style that involves the use of physical cues to indicate a person’s level of comfort, interest, engagement, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Body paragraph
A paragraph comprising, in part, the central portion or body of a paper or other, similarly structured document, which is focused on articulating, developing, and supporting a single point of the larger argument presented by the author with his/her thesis statement in the introductory paragraph(s).

Boolean operators
Words or symbols used when searching research databases that describe the relationship between various words or phrases in a search.

Call numbers
A set of numbers used by the Library of Congress that specify the subject area, topic, and authorship or title of a book, magazine, or other text.

Camera-eye
An approach to writing that involves sharing details as though a camera lens moving across a subject.

Cause-effect paper
A paper that examines the conditions or actions that lead to a specific outcome.

Chronology
Order of events as they have occurred in time. We often refer to descriptions of events in chronological order.

Citation
An agreed-upon notation that gives credit to those who informed the ideas within a text that did not originate with the text’s author.

Classical argument
Until recently, the most popular of argumentative styles. This style, invented in ancient Greece, involves two individuals arguing opposite sides of an argument in order to convince an unbiased third person.

Clichés
Overused words or phrases that, through time, have lost their meaning. For example, “It’s raining cats and dogs!” or, “It wasn’t just easy; it was a piece of cake!”

Climax
The most exciting moment in a narrative; the moment at which the person succeeds, fails, or learns something.

Closed question
Questions that can be answered by a simple “yes” or “no”.

Clustering
A form of brainstorming by freely recording words and phrases around a nucleus word.

Coherence
Strong connection between sentences in a paragraph; achieved through transition and repetition.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Collections</strong></th>
<th>The materials housed within a library.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Colloquialism</strong></td>
<td>Colloquialisms are common words which work well in common conversation, but are not suitable for academic writing. Words like, “cool,” “sweet,” “y’all,” and “gonna” are colloquialisms. Often, these can also be whole phrases like, “I was as nervous as a long-tailed cat in a room full of rocking chairs.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comma splice</strong></td>
<td>A common error in writing made when the writer combines two independent clauses together with a comma (and nothing else). (i.e. “There was no way I was going alone, she said she wouldn’t dream of letting me out of her sight.”).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Concessions</strong></td>
<td>Openly recognizing the validity of opposing viewpoints.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conflict</strong></td>
<td>The obstacles or adversaries confronted by people in narratives: person vs. person, person vs. society, person vs. self, person vs. technology, person vs. nature, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conjunction</strong></td>
<td>A word that joins two ideas within a sentence. For example: “I love pizza, and I love tacos.” The conjunction is “and.” Another example would be: “I would love some pizza, but it gives me heartburn.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Connotation</strong></td>
<td>The suggestion made by a word or group of words—the implied meaning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Context</strong></td>
<td>The set of circumstances in which a statement is made; the text and other factors that surround a specific statement and are crucial to understanding it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contraction</strong></td>
<td>The shortening or abbreviation of a phrase of two or more words into a single word for the sake of efficiency and/or for use within informal writing or speech (e.g. do not may be contracted as don’t). While contractions are often found in informal modes of writing and speech, they are not appropriate in academic writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Controversies</strong></td>
<td>Issues about which there are two or more strongly opposing views or highly debatable issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conventions</strong></td>
<td>The standard rules for spelling, punctuation, mechanics, usage, grammar, and formatting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Copyright</strong></td>
<td>Legal ownership of the text of a document, entitling the owner of the copyright to determine if/when/how that text may be reproduced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D</strong></td>
<td><strong>E</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Database</td>
<td>An electronic repository of information organized by subject and/or academic or professional discipline (e.g. scholarly articles).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debatable topic</td>
<td>A topic that is not mere fact, but can be argued from at least two different angles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deductive reasoning</td>
<td>Reasoning that works from general principles or ideas; through specific applications, support, and/or examples; to a conclusion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defensible position</td>
<td>A claim that is debatable, but can be strongly supported by evidence; a claim that is neither fact nor an unsupportable opinion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denotation</td>
<td>A word’s literal meaning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dialogue</td>
<td>The words spoken by people. In writing, dialogue is set apart by quotation marks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directed writing</td>
<td>An exploration tactic using one of a set of thinking moves: describe, compare, associate, analyze, argue, or apply.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct quotation</td>
<td>A word-for-word statement or passage from an original source. In writing, quotations are typically set apart by quotation marks and always cited. See also block quotation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documentation</td>
<td>Crediting sources of information, through in-text citations or references and a list of works cited or references, generally on a page or pages located at the end of a paper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOI</td>
<td>A Digital Object Identifier is an alphanumeric code that online content providers (e.g. databases, scholarly journals) provide as an alternative to the actual URL of a document so that researchers may cite those online documents using a static identifier within their bibliographic citations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drafting</td>
<td>Writing sentences and paragraphs to create an initial draft of a paper—should contain a beginning, a middle, and an end.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EBSCO</td>
<td>The online research database provided to students and faculty by Grantham University for the purposes of conducting academic research</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
necessary for courses of study offered by the University. This database provides bibliographic citations and, in many cases, full texts of articles originally published in peer-reviewed, scholarly journals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Editing</th>
<th>Refining a draft in terms of word choice and sentence style and checking it for conventions.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ellipses</td>
<td>A set of three periods with one space preceding and following each period; a punctuation mark that indicates a deletion of material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>The process of trying or testing (from the French verb, paperer, translated as to try); a written document that explores a particular question or issue, typically offering a thesis and supporting argument in response.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethos</td>
<td>An argumentative strategy designed to build, and then use the audience’s sense of trust and respect for the arguer to promote an idea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Etymology</td>
<td>The origin of a word.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended definition</td>
<td>A type of analytical writing that explores the meaning of a specific term, providing denotation, connotation, and a variety of perspectives on the term.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extreme claims</td>
<td>Claims that include words (all, best, never, worst) that are overly positive or negative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facts</td>
<td>Statements that can be checked for accuracy through empirical evidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair use</td>
<td>Rules governing the use of small (not large) portions of a text for non-commercial purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fake writing voice</td>
<td>A writing voice that sounds overly academic, bland, or unnatural.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feasible</td>
<td>Do-able; reasonable—given time, budgets, resources, and consequences.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Field research  An on-site scientific study conducted for the purpose of gathering raw data.

First draft  The initial writing in which the writing connects facts and details about the topic.

First person  A confessional or conversational style of writing that connects the thoughts of the writer directly to the reader through the use of the pronouns: I, me, we, us and so on. Good for some papers, but in general, is not considered appropriate for academic writing. First person is frowned upon when writing APA Style research papers.

Flush  The justification of the text in a paper (meaning to which margin of the page the text lines up). In APA, with the exception of page numbers, the title of the paper, the title-block, certain level titles, block quotations, the abstract title, and the References page title— all text should be justified flush left. Page numbers are placed flush right, and all of the other exceptions are center justified.

Focus  The specific part of the subject to be covered in a piece of writing.

Focused free-writing  A form of free writing that is approached from a specific angle or as a quick draft of a paper.

Forecasting  Also known as foreshadowing, this is a writing technique that shows a preview of what the reader can expect throughout the rest of a document. In academic writing, forecasting usually happens within the thesis statement or within the transitions between paragraphs or sections.

Foreshadowing  (see forecasting)

Form  The type of writing: for example, report, letter, proposal, editorial, paper, story, or poem.

Formal English  Carefully worded language suitable for most academic writing.

Formatting  The visual organization of a document, including, but not limited to, margins, font, font size, font color, textual justification, line spacing, etc.

Formulaic writing  Writing that stiffly adheres to a prescribed format and, because of that, fails to make an impact.

Forwarding  The process of interacting with an idea through writing. When we are forwarding, we are changing the idea, extending it, reshaping it, and filtering it through our consciousness in order to send the new, altered version out into the world.
Fragment  An incomplete sentence (missing a verb or a subject).
Free-writing A form of non-stop writing used during the early stages of the writing process to collect thoughts and ideas.

G
Glossary A list of important words and terms.
Graphic organizer A chart or diagram used to arrange the main points and essential details of a paper.

H
Hanging indent A hanging indent is the indention of the first line of a paragraph. Using the tab-key is generally the easiest way to create a hanging indent, but one can always use 12 spaces on the space bar.
Hyperlinks Specially formatted text that enables readers to click to another spot on the Internet.

I
Implications Natural results, direct and indirect, whether good or bad.
Inductive reasoning Reasoning that works from particular details toward general conclusions.
In-text citation Like citation, an in-text citation is an agreed-upon notation that gives credit to those who informed the ideas within a text that did not originate with the text’s author. In APA in-text citations are required in brief form within the body of the text, and are fully-cited on the References page(s).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Informal English</td>
<td>Language characterized by a more relaxed, personal tone suitable for personal writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensity</td>
<td>A writer’s level of concern for the topic as indicated by the writing voice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jargon</td>
<td>Technical terms not familiar to the general reader.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal</td>
<td>A notebook used regularly for personal writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journals</td>
<td>Publications providing specialized scholarly information for a narrowly focused audience. Journals may be published monthly, bi-monthly, quarterly, etc. Most journals are now also digitized. Many can be found in Grantham library’s free database. Some online journals require a subscription fee to access.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of language</td>
<td>The level of language a writer uses—informal, semi-formal, or formal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Line diagram</td>
<td>A graphic organizer used to arrange ideas for expository writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logical fallacies</td>
<td>Logical fallacies are false arguments based on fuzzy, dishonest, or incomplete thinking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logos</td>
<td>An argumentative strategy designed to appeal to an audience’s logic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loose sentence</td>
<td>A sentence that provides a base clause near the beginning, followed by explanatory phrases and clauses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main claim</td>
<td>A debatable statement, the thesis or key point in an argument.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>The way that writing is delivered; for example, in a printed publication or online.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metaphor</td>
<td>A comparison that equates two dissimilar things without using <em>like</em> or <em>as</em>; saying that one thing is another.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mnemonics</td>
<td>Memory techniques in which new ideas are associated with more recognizable or memorable words, images, or ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modifiers</td>
<td>Words that limit or describe other words or groups of words; adjectives or adverbs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nominal</td>
<td>A noun form of a verb such as <em>description, instructions, confirmation.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>A part of speech that stands for a person, place, thing, or idea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nucleus word</td>
<td>The central theme in a cluster, connecting all other ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation</td>
<td>Noting information received in person through the senses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omit</td>
<td>To leave out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open-ended question</td>
<td>A question that requires an elaborate answer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opinions</td>
<td>Personally held attitudes or beliefs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Options</td>
<td>Choices provided with an assignment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Order of importance</td>
<td>A pattern of organization often used in persuasive writing in which the writer begins or ends with the most convincing argument.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Order of location</td>
<td>Organizing details according to their position; progressing from near to far, inside to outside, and so on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizing pattern</td>
<td>The way that details are arranged in writing; for example, chronological order or cause/effect order.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Original document</td>
<td>A record that relates directly to an event, issue, object, or a phenomenon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orphan</td>
<td>A single line of a new paragraph at the bottom of a page.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall design</td>
<td>The pattern the writing takes to move ideas along—time order, compare-contrast, and so on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OWLs</td>
<td>Online writing labs where individuals can get answers to their writing questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page design</td>
<td>The elements (typography, spacing, graphics) that create the look of a paper; readability is the focus of design for academic writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper mill</td>
<td>A typically commercial organization, usually represented online through a website, offering academic-style papers or papers, usually for a fee, to would-be plagiarizers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parallelism</td>
<td>Repeating phrases or sentence structures to show the relationship between ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraphrase</td>
<td>To discuss an entire document in one’s own words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive sentence</td>
<td>Sentences in which the subject is acted upon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive voice</td>
<td>A subject-verb construction in which the subject is acted upon, not performing the action as it would be in the active voice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pathos</td>
<td>An argumentative strategy designed to appeal to an audience’s emotions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDF</td>
<td>Portable document file; a file form that preserves a document according to its exact appearance and is readable through Adobe software.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Periodicals</td>
<td>Publications (journals, magazines, newsletters) or broadcasts produced at regular intervals (daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, yearly).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal narrative</td>
<td>Writing about a memorable experience; often includes personal reflection and thoughts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pivotal points</td>
<td>Moments in which a significant change occurs; literally a point in which a person changes direction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plagiarism</td>
<td>The act of presenting someone else’s work as one’s own, whether intentionally or unintentionally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>The thinking and organizing that go into establishing a direction and structure for writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Platitudes</td>
<td>Stale or unoriginal thoughts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Point of view</td>
<td>The perspective from which the writer approaches the writing, including first-person, second-person, or third-person point of view.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portfolio</td>
<td>A collection of selected work by a group or author.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preposition</td>
<td>A word that shows a where/when relationship with the other words in the sentence or clause. Prepositions include words such as up, in, through, over, by, from, and so on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary sources</td>
<td>Original sources that provide first-hand information about a subject.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronoun</td>
<td>A word that replaces a noun in a sentence to help alleviate redundancy. Pronouns include words such as he, she, they, we, it, them, his, her, and so on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proofread</td>
<td>The act of checking a document for errors before submitting it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public domain</td>
<td>Materials provided by the government provided as a part of the “copy left” movement, or, generally speaking, documents over seventy-five years old.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publish</td>
<td>The act of sharing a completed work with another.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>The goal of a piece of writing: for example, to inform, to convince, to analyze, to persuade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualifiers</td>
<td>Words or phrases that limit or refine a claim, making it more reasonable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quotation</td>
<td>A word-for-word statement or passage from an original source. In writing, quotations are always set apart and cited.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>R</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rapport</strong></td>
<td>Personal connection, trust, and teamwork.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rebuttal</strong></td>
<td>A tactful argument aimed at weakening the opposing point of view.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Redirect</strong></td>
<td>To restate the main claim or argument.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Redundancy</strong></td>
<td>Words used together that mean nearly the same thing. Also, the repetitive use of a word or phrase when that word or phrase could be replaced with another.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>References</strong></td>
<td>Also known as <em>sources</em>, references are made up of information that has been gathered from external works in order to provide evidence toward a claim or to draw associations between authors within a paper. References can be journal articles, books, information on websites, magazines, videos, interviews or other documents. Most college writing uses sources, but these references are generally limited to specific forms and types by the course and/or instructor. APA insists that references be scholarly in nature and generally asks that they be peer reviewed. References should always be cited both in the body of text and in the <em>References page</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reference listing</strong></td>
<td>A citation of a document that has been quoted, paraphrased, or summarized within a paper and appears in the <em>References page</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>References page</strong></td>
<td>In APA, the <em>References page</em> is the last page of a paper. This page includes an alphabetical listing of all the sources/references quoted, summarized, and/or paraphrased within the paper. Source/reference listings are expected to follow the APA citation style appropriate for the particular type of source they refer to. Each listing is treated as an individual, but reversed paragraph, with, the first line flush with the left margin of the paper, and with each additional line of the source/reference listing tabbed-in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Refute</strong></td>
<td>To prove an idea or argument false, illogical, or undesirable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Repetition</strong></td>
<td>Repeating words or synonyms where necessary to remind the reader of what has already been said.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research paper</strong></td>
<td>A fairly long paper, complete with a thesis statement, supporting evidence, integrated resources, and careful documentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Restrictions</strong></td>
<td>Limitations of choice within an assignment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Résumé
A brief document that outlines a person’s employment objectives and highlights the person’s job skills, experience, and education.

Revising
Improving and/or redirecting a draft through large-scale changes such as adding, deleting, rearranging, and reworking.

Rhetoric
The art of using language effectively.

Running head
Running heads (aka *running titles*) are brief versions of the title that appear in the top, left of each page, and are presented in all capital letters. Running heads should be no more than 50 characters in length, and no more than five words long. Due to their brevity, running heads are often abbreviated versions of the title of the paper. On the title page, the words *Running head:* precede the title (not in italics or in all capital letters). The remaining pages of the paper include only the abbreviated title without the additional wording.

Search engine
An online research tool (e.g. Google, Yahoo) through which researchers may search the internet for webpages, documents, etc.

Secondary source
Sources that are at least once removed from the original source; sources that provide second-hand information.

Second person
The perspective or voice of direct address, in which the author or speaker addresses the reader or hearer using a second-person pronoun (i.e. you), as if in conversation. Second person is useful when giving individual direction or in some technical writing. But, due to its casual, familiar, and often accusatory tone, it is highly discouraged in academic writing.

Sensory details
Sights, sounds, smells, tastes, textures, temperatures and other details connected to the five senses—showing rather than telling about the subject.

Sentence combining
The act of combining ideas in sentences to show relationships and to make connections.

Sentence expanding
The act of extending basic ideas with different types of phrases and clauses.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sentence outline</td>
<td>A more formal method of arrangement in which a writer states each main point and essential detail as a complete sentence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentence variety</td>
<td>The varying of beginnings, lengths, and types of sentences within a paper in order to make the writing interesting to the reader.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexist language</td>
<td>Language that, unintentionally or not, accounts for only one gender despite being directed toward a mixed audience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showcase portfolio</td>
<td>A collection of appropriate, finished pieces of writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slang</td>
<td>Words considered to lie outside of the standard English language because they are faddish, familiar to a few people, and may be insulting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slanted question</td>
<td>Questions that presuppose a specific answer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sources</td>
<td>Also known as a references, sources are made up of information that has been consulted to provide evidence within a paper. Sources can be journal articles, books, information on websites, magazines, videos, interviews or other documents. Most college writing uses sources, but these sources are generally limited to specific forms and types by the course and/or instructor. APA insists that sources be scholarly in nature and generally asks that they be peer reviewed. Sources should always be cited both in the body of text and in the References page.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spatial organization</td>
<td>A pattern of organization in which the writer logically orders descriptive details from far to near, left to right, top to bottom, and so on. Also see camera-eye.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>The variety, originality, and clarity of a piece of writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>The general area covered by a piece of writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>Condensed representation, in one’s own words rather than through quotation, of the main points of a passage. Summary is designed to extract the meaning of a piece of work in a form that essentializes the original author’s words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surface change</td>
<td>The edited (corrected) words, phrases, and sentences in a piece of writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surface error</td>
<td>A problem in word choice, grammar, mechanics, usage, etc. that do little to harm the transference of meaning, but appear untidy and unprofessional.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tab</td>
<td>A series of 12 spaces placed at the beginning of a paragraph. Can more easily be accomplished by striking the “Tab” key.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tactful</td>
<td>Being sensitive to the feelings of others; avoiding unnecessary offense.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxonomy</td>
<td>A system of classification of items—plants, animals, ideas, movements, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary source</td>
<td>Sources that provide third-hand information, such as wikis; though these sources are a good place to begin to formulate ideas, using them as evidence to drive an academic paper is highly discouraged at the college-level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesis Statement</td>
<td>A sentence or group of sentences that sum up the central idea of a piece of writing; thesis statements serve as a map to the body of a paper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third person</td>
<td>The perspective or voice of indirect observation, in which the author or speaker uses third person pronouns (e.g. he, she, they) to describe the actions and interactions of persons with things and in places at which the author or speaker is/was not present. In fiction, this is the voice of the semi-omniscient or omniscient narrator.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thought details</td>
<td>Impressions, emotions, predictions, and reflections; details that reveal perceptions rather than sensations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title page</td>
<td>The page on which, in the APA style, the title of the paper, the name of the author(s), and the name of the organization are identified. Title pages are the first page of an APA style paper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title block</td>
<td>The identifying information found on the title page of an APA style paper. Title blocks are center-justified, and include, in descending order, the title of the paper, the name of its author, and the organization the paper is being written for (for papers written in college, this organization is almost always the name of the school).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tone</td>
<td>The overall feeling or effect created by a writer’s thoughts and his or her choice of words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic outline</td>
<td>A less formal method of arrangement in which the writer states each main point and essential detail as a word of a phrase.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>Words or phrases that help tie ideas together.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Uninspiring draft
A draft in which the writer fails to connect with his or her readers or makes a lasting impression.

Unity
Oneness achieved in a paragraph through a strong focus on a single, central idea.

Verb
An action word.

Vivid verb
Specific action verbs, such as lunge, trudge, etc. that help to create clear images.

Voice
The tone of the writing, often affected by the personality of the writer.

Widow
A single word of a short line carried over to the top of the next page.

Working thesis
A preliminary answer to a main research question; the focus of one’s research.

Worn-out topic
A paper that is dull or unoriginal because the topic has been overworked. Abortion, Legalizing Marijuana, Global Warming, and Lowering the Drinking Age are all examples of worn-out topics.

Writing portfolio
A selected group of writings by a single author.

Writing process
The steps that a writer follows to develop a thoughtful and thorough piece of writing.