



In Practice: A Guide to Rhetoric, Genre, and Success in First-Year Writing

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Contents

About This Book Melanie Gagich and Emilie Zickel	ix
Chapter 1: The Introduction	
1.1 College Writing Melanie Gagich	3
1.2 Things to Know Melanie Gagich	5
1.3 Resources to Use Melanie Gagich	8
Chapter 2: Reading in Writing Class	
2.1 Why We Read Melanie Gagich	15
2.2 How to Read Effectively Yvonne Bruce	17
2.3 How to Read Rhetorically	20
2.4 What We Read: Popular Sources	24
2.5 What We Read: Academic Sources	26
2.6 Responding to Texts Charlotte Morgan	28
Chapter 3: The Writing Process, Composing, and Revising	
3.1 The Writing Process Sarah M. Lacy and Melanie Gagich	31
3.2 Knowing Your Audience Melanie Gagich	36

3.3 Understanding the Writing Assignment	39
Robin Jeffrey, Emilie Zickel	
3.4 Creating the Thesis	42
Yvonne Bruce	
3.5 Revising Your Draft(s)	45
3.6 Peer Review and Responding to Others' Drafts	48
Emilie Zickel	
3.7 Proof-Reading and Editing Your Final Draft	51
Sarah M. Lacy and Emilie Zickel	
Chapter 4: Structuring, Paragraphing, and Styling	
4.1 Basic Essay Structure	57
Emilie Zickel and Charlotte Morgan	
4.2 Troubleshooting: Body Paragraph Development	59
John Lanning and Sarah M. Lacy	
4.3 Adding Support to Body Paragraphs	63
Amanda Lloyd	
4.4 Breaking, Combining, or Beginning New Paragraphs	66
4.5 Transitions: Developing Relationships between Ideas	68
Monique Babin, Carol Burnell, Susan Pesznecker, Nicole Rosevear, Jaime Wood	
4.6 Tone, Voice, and Point of View	73
Monique Babin, Carol Burnell, Susan Pesznecker, Nicole Rosevear, Jaime Wood	
4.7 Formatting Your Paper	77
Melanie Gagich	
Chapter 5: Writing a Summary and Synthesizing	
5.1 Writing Summaries	85
Melanie Gagich	
5.2 Moving from Summary to Synthesis	90
Yvonne Bruce and Melanie Gagich	
5.3 Synthesizing in Your Writing	93
Yvonne Bruce and Melanie Gagich	
Chapter 6: Thinking and Analyzing Rhetorically	
6.1 What is Rhetoric?	97
Melanie Gagich	
6.2 What is the Rhetorical Situation?	100
Robin Jeffrey, Emilie Zickel	

6.3 What is Rhetorical Analysis?	104
6.4 Rhetorical Appeals: Logos, Pathos, and Ethos Defined	106
Melanie Gagich & Emilie Zickel	
6.5 Logical Fallacies	110

Chapter 7: Making Academic Arguments

7.1 Arguing	115
7.2 Basic Structure and Content of Argument	117
Amanda Lloyd and Emilie Zickel	
7.3 Types of Evidence in Academic Arguments	120
Robin Jeffrey and Yvonne Bruce	
7.4 Counterargument and Response	122
Robin Jeffrey	

Chapter 8: The Research Process

8.1 Developing a Research Question	127
Emilie Zickel	
8.2 Coming Up With Research Strategies	131
Rashida Mustafa and Emilie Zickel	
8.3 Types of Sources: Primary, Secondary, Tertiary	134
8.4 Basic Guidelines for Research in Academic Databases	138
Emilie Zickel	
8.5 Using Effective Keywords in your Research	141
Robin Jeffrey	
8.6 A Deeper Look at Scholarly Sources	143
Emilie Zickel	
8.7 Keeping Track of Your Sources and Writing an Annotated Bibliography	146
8.8 Failures in Evidence: When Even "Lots of Quotes" Can't Save an Paper	149
Emilie Zickel	

Chapter 9: Ethical Source Integration: Citation, Quoting, Works Cited

9.1 Using Sources Ethically	153
Yvonne Bruce	
9.2 Quoting	154
Melanie Gagich	
9.3 Paraphrasing and Summarizing	157
Robin Jeffrey	

9.4 Signal Phrases and Attributive Tags	159
John Lanning and Amanda Lloyd	
9.5 MLA Citation: Works Cited Entries	164
John Brentar and Emilie Zickel	
9.6 MLA Citation: In-text Citations	170
John Brentar and Emilie Zickel	
9.7 APA Citation	173
9.8 Plagiarism Policy	174
Chapter 10: Reading about Writing	
10.1 "What Is Academic Writing?"	179
Lennie Irvin	
10.2 "Reading Games: Strategies for Reading Scholarly Sources"	180
Karen Rosenberg	
10.3 "I Need You to Say I"	181
Kate McKinney Maddalena	
10.4 "On the Other Hand: The Role of Antithetical Writing in First Year Composition Courses"	182
Steven Krause	
Works Cited	183

About This Book

MELANIE GAGICH AND EMILIE ZICKEL

This book combines the *Introduction to Writing in College* by Melanie Gagich and *ENG 102: Reading, Writing and Research* by Emilie Zickel, which were both supported by Cleveland State University's 2017 Textbook Affordability Small Grant. The book was then revised, edited, and formatted by Melanie Gagich, Emilie Zickel, Yvonne Bruce, Sarah Lacy, John Lanning, Amanda Lloyd, Charlotte Morgan, and Rashida Mustafa. This work was made possible through the generous support of the Cleveland State University Office of the Provost.

Within each chapter there are sections written by Melanie Gagich, Emilie Zickel, or other members of the textbook team (see above) and authorial attributions are given. This book also contains other resources integrated under Creative Commons licenses. These open access resources include complete and also remixed chapters from Monique Babin, Carol Burnell, Susan Pesznecker, Nichole Rosevear, and Jamie Wood's *The Word on College Reading and Writing*, links to several essays from the open source textbook series *Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing*, and several links to articles from the open source website *Writing Commons*. Additionally, parts of this book also come out of a remixed version of Robin Jeffrey's, *About Writing*, which have been rearranged, amended, edited, and enhanced with digital reading experience by including videos and visual reading features. Shared and remixed materials will be denoted with attribution information when necessary.

Our Philosophy

When Melanie and Emilie decided to combine our individual textbooks, we decided that we wanted the new **text** to function more like a manual or guide to rhetorical concepts and writing genres, to composing in a college setting, and to helping students succeed in **FYW** at Cleveland State rather than a formal textbook. Together we conceptualized a **text** that does not necessarily answer all student questions or cover all material taught by **FYW** instructors at CSU or at other institutions. Instead, we wanted to create a **text** that is less prescriptive than a traditional textbook and allows for the picking and choosing of content by instructors and by students. We believe this type of **text** fosters student-centered pedagogies because it is a tool for students that supports them during many different writing moments such as when the instructor isn't there to reinforce concepts that have been discussed already in class.

Further, the **text** lacks a unifying **tone** because we feel that one of the central philosophies behind Open Access

Educational Resources is the need for and importance of collaboration and the sharing and “remixing” of others’ content. Our [text](#) was not written by one or even two authors, rather it is a collection of a diverse array of viewpoints and writing styles, which, to us, exemplifies one of the many ways that our book is different from a traditional, printed, and academic textbook. We feel that the inclusion of work by multiple authors can also provide a starting point for conversations in writing class about how writing “actually works in the real world” (Wardle and Downs).

In sum, the book cannot and should not replace the voice of the instructor. We envision it as a manual or guide also because we want all instructors to be able to use it how they see fit. We hope that this [text](#) will reflect not only our voices and the voices of our team of part-time instructors but also offer students resources for navigating and succeeding in college and support for working on writing assignments.

A Note About Citations

This [text](#) was written in and chapters have been edited to reflect the 8th edition of MLA.

A Note About the Use of Color

Within this [text](#) you will find links to works within the book and to outside works. These links will be indicated by the use of the color [green](#).

Also within this [text](#) you will find a series of defined words. These words will be indicated by the use of the color [blue](#) and you can hover over them or click on them to see each definition.

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Chapter 1: The Introduction

1.1 College Writing

MELANIE GAGICH

What is a College Writing Course?

Students often enter college writing courses believing they will be taking an “English” course that revolves around reading literature, writing creatively, and/or focusing on grammar. In fact, that is rarely the case.

At Cleveland State University, each student is required to take either ENG 100: Intensive College Writing or ENG 101: College Writing I and also ENG 102: College Writing II. Although each course is tagged as “ENG”, the official titles of each course include the words “College Writing.” Their official titles show that they are situated within the [academic discipline](#), or the field of, Composition and Rhetoric. As members of that field, college writing instructors create, critique, and/or draw from pedagogical (teaching) theories and practices. Instructors might gather information from or publish in various discipline specific academic journals or conferences such as the College Composition and Communication Conference.

In practice, college writing courses teach students about writing and composing processes, how to think critically, use rhetorical knowledge to evaluate [sources](#), integrate legitimate research in formal writing assignments, and write formal expository texts.

Cleveland State University’s First-Year Writing Sequence

ENG 100/101 helps you learn basic academic writing techniques while also examining rhetorical situations and rhetorical appeals. These skills connect to the “real world” in multiple ways. For instance, think of the last political ad you saw or an article you read online—how do you know if it was legit? Do you know who paid for the ad/article or who will profit from it? If you do know, what does that mean? Do you ask yourself, “whose agenda is this?” when you interact with popular media like reality tv shows, news programs, commentary programs, blogs, articles, etc.? In ENG 100/101, you will address some of these questions in various contexts to help you learn how to think critically about the world around you.

ENG 102 teaches you how to do research—find information—and how to use it, which is necessary for any major. We read, research and write to learn, and additionally by doing so, we gain the ability to read and follow both

directions and instructions—a skillset desired by all employers. Then, unspoken and perhaps not emphasized is the confidence you gain in a first-year writing class when you discover *your* voice which after taking a year of composition results in a more mature outlook. This newfound connection to the human world and the natural world is what the critical thinker experiences. Overall, ENG 100/101 and ENG 102 are complimentary to but also different from most “English” courses you might have experienced in the past.

Why Should I Care About College Writing Courses?

Many students who enter college writing courses may at first feel apprehensive or may not see how these courses connect to their intended majors. In reality, college writing courses teach students to use writing to communicate and use critical thinking skills to become savvier consumers of information. Additionally, according to data gathered by Cleveland State’s Undergraduate Studies and Academic Programs using the third-party software platform, Civitas Illume, a student’s successful completion (earning a C or higher) in both ENG 100/101 and ENG 102 have been linked to increased persistence and graduation rates.

The data show that students who earn a B or higher in their college writing courses have an above average likelihood of graduation. Even though some students might find the idea of earning a B or higher daunting, it is important to remember that you are generally evaluated based on completing process-driven and reflective writing assignments, attending class regularly, and participating. Even more exciting is that the data also suggest that a student who simply raises their grade by one letter, for instance increasing your grade from a C to a B or a D to a C, **also** has a stronger likelihood of graduating. What this means is whether or not you conceptualize yourself as a B or A student in writing, any student who participates in [revision](#) opportunities, attends class, participates in class discussions, and communicates clearly with their instructor can increase their course grade, which positively affects the likelihood that he or she will graduate.

This all goes to support the notion that while writing class does not need to be scary it should be taken seriously and it does matter.

1.2 Things to Know

MELANIE GAGICH

What is a Syllabus?

The syllabus is a contract between you and your instructor. Yes, a contract. By reading the syllabus and not withdrawing from a class, you are entering into a contract with your instructor and the university. This sounds scary. It isn't, just so long as you READ THE SYLLABUS. The syllabus describes required materials, course goals, expectations, mandatory attendance policies, how you will be graded, and so on. Generally, when a question comes up about the course, you can find it on the syllabus.

What is the Attendance Policy?

Time and again, professors are asked by students, “*Do I really have to come to class?*” And, the answer is nearly always the same, “*Yes, you really have to come to class.*”

You might ask, “*Is this true for all classes?*” The answer is, it is definitely true for your First-Year Writing courses (ENG 100/101 and ENG 102). The First-Year Writing Program has a strict attendance policy which is explained below:

The First-Year Writing Program Attendance Policy

- If you do not attend class regularly, you will not pass. If you miss eight or more fifty-minute periods you will receive a course grade of “F” (fail). You may miss up to four fifty-minute periods without penalty. Each absence beyond the fourth will reduce your grade in the course by $\frac{1}{3}$ a letter grade (for an example, an A will become an A-, an A- will become a B+, etc.).
- If you leave early you will be marked absent on that day. If you are ten or more minutes late to class you will be counted as tardy. Four accumulated tardies will count as one absence.
- You will not be granted additional absences after you have reached the maximum allowable

- Absences required by religious observance, disability and Title IX accommodations, university-authorized activities, and military service are exempt from this policy. In order for these absences to be excused, you must provide advance notice to your instructor, no later than the end of the second week of class. For disability and Title IX accommodations, university-authorized activities, and military service, you must provide your instructor with appropriate documentation.

Class Meetings and Minutes	Total Allowed Absences	Total Absences Resulting in Failure
Three Days a Week (50 mins)	4	8
Three Days a Week (65 mins)	3	6
Four Days a Week (50 mins)	4	8
Two Days a Week (75 mins)	3	5
Two Days a Week (110 mins)	2	4
Once a Week (170 mins)	1	3

How do I Communicate with my Professors?

Email

Part of “doing college” means understanding that how you communicate to others impacts how he or she perceives your maturity and/or professionalism. That said, most instructors do not mind receiving and responding to emails but often mind very much if those emails do not include a formal address/sign off, your full name, and your class and section number. Please use the example below as a reference when crafting your emails.

Example Email

Hello Instructor/Professor/Dr. [*be sure to choose the appropriate title*],

This is Sally Sue from your ENG 101 Section 12 class. After rereading the syllabus, I still do not understand XXX. Can we please meet to discuss it?

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Sally Sue

Office Hours

Another thing that may be new to some of you is the opportunity to work and talk one-on-one with your professor.

It is definitely one of the perks of the college environment. Instructors are required to set aside time to be available to students in their offices. In general, it is always good to introduce yourself to your professor because introductions during office hours are a great way to stand out from the crowd. Furthermore, attending office hours can help answer questions concerning difficult assignments or concepts. Check the syllabus to make sure you're visiting during scheduled office hours, unless you have scheduled an appointment with the instructor via email or Starfish.

1.3 Resources to Use

MELANIE GAGICH

Using Face-to-Face Resources

The Michael Schwartz Library

The library is probably the most important and useful resource you have on campus. Entrance to it is located on the 1st floor of Rhodes Tower and it consists of eight floors. At the library, you will find many resources including the following:

- Access to electronic resources, including the web, at more than 100 PCs within the Library.
- On-demand access to over 29,000 [journal titles](#) available on Library PCs and from your home computer.
- An [on-site collection](#) including 975,000 print volumes and an additional 1,000,000 items, such as sound recordings, video recordings, DVDs, and microforms.
- Friendly [staff](#) ready to help you with your information needs.
- Evening and weekend [hours](#).
- In-person and online borrowing privileges for books from [85 OhioLINK libraries](#).
- Access to the [SCHOLAR Library catalog](#), the Web, and other electronic resources from your home computer.
- The latest [research databases](#).
- Free [interlibrary loan service](#), providing access to an almost unlimited number of library materials owned by other libraries world-wide, through a web-based interface putting you in control of your own borrowing activities. (“[Welcome to the Library](#)” by the Director Glenda Thornton)

Research Guides are provided for [ENG 100/101](#) and [ENG 102](#) as well as links to help you [cite sources](#), [access course textbook reserves](#), and access [eBooks](#). You can even get a library tour or access [online library tutorials](#) to help you succeed in not only your writing classes but all of your classes.

Be sure to visit the library and see how else it can help you succeed!

The Writing Center

The Writing Center is located on the 1st floor of the library in the back left corner. You can make an appointment through Starfish, by calling 687-6981, or in person at RT 124. The Writing Center is open Monday – Thursday from 9:30am – 7:00pm and on Fridays from 9:30am – 4:00pm.

The Writing Center is not an editing service. Rather, it is a place to go and get feedback about your writing, not only your grammar. In order to get the most out of your 30-minute session, we suggest the following:

- Bring a paper with instructor feedback;
- Write at least two questions on the paper about issues you want to address;
- Bring the assignment and/or rubric so that you can get help talking out organization;
- Be polite and be on time.

The Writing Center is an excellent place to get help for all of your classes and for all assignments including but not limited to; lab reports, research papers, group projects, writing assignments, and grammar.

The Tutoring and Academic Success Center (TASC)

The TASC office uses “research-based strategies and approaches for learning in order to help students achieve their academic goals and ultimately to graduate. We do this in an informal, student-centered environment that assists students to not only achieve academically but to also socially integrate into college life.” They offer [Success Coaching, Tutoring, Supplemental instruction \(SI\)](#) for various courses, and provide [Structured Learning Assistance \(SLA\)](#) in our ENG 101 courses. You can contact them at 216-687-2012. They are located in Main Classroom room 233 and you can visit their website [here](#).

Structured Learning Assistance (SLA)

Structured Learning Assistance (SLA) is an academic support program that is available to students enrolled in English 101 courses. The SLA leaders work as a part of the Tutoring and Academic Success Center (TASC). SLA features weekly study and practice “labs,” or “sessions,” built into the class time in which students master course content to develop and apply specific learning strategies for the course, as well as strengthen their study skills to improve performance in their current English 101 course. The SLA lab times are formally attached to the student’s class schedule and there is no additional charge to the student for this support. These mandatory sessions are facilitated by successful upper-level students, who, in collaboration with the professor, develop collaborative learning sessions to guide students as they learn how to write. The SLA facilitators clarify lecture points for the students and assist them in understanding the expectations of the professor, while additionally focusing on improved study skills. SLA activities frequently include study guides, collaborative learning/group activities, and study skills — such as discovering your preferred learning style, efficient note-taking, and time management.

The Center for International Services & Programs (CISP)

CISP “provides services to international students through [International Orientation, International Student](#)

Services, as well as domestic and international students through [Education Abroad](#) and the [National Student Exchange](#).” Students can visit their office in Main Classroom room 412 Monday – Thursday from 1 – 3pm. For more information pertaining to the services and opportunities CISP offers please visit their website [here](#).

The CSU Counseling Center

CSU offers counseling services to students, faculty, and staff. If you feel that you could use support for personal, academic, or other stresses or challenges and would like to speak to a CSU counselor, you can contact the Counseling Center at 216-687-2277. They are located at UN 220 and are open Monday – Friday from 9 – 5pm, with sessions are available by appointment from 8 – 5pm on weekdays. They also have walk-in appointments from 1 – 3pm Monday – Friday. If you need to speak to a counselor outside of office hours, you can still dial the Counseling Center number and you will be able to speak to someone, 24 hours a day. For more information about the CSU Counseling Center, please visit their website [here](#).

Using Digital Resources and Tools

Blackboard

Some of you might be familiar with course management systems from high school while for others this might be a very new. CSU’s management system is Blackboard. An instructor may choose to use or not use Blackboard in his or her classroom; however, the [FYW](#) program recommends that instructors do so. Your instructor is urged to use Blackboard as a way to foster communication between students and their classmates and students and their instructors. When integrated into the classroom, students will mostly likely be able to access course documents, check their grades, and participate in online discussions.

Starfish

Starfish is “an online program that makes it easier for undergraduate students to communicate and make appointments with support services and faculty on campus.” Again, your instructor is urged to use Starfish in his or her classroom as a way to increase communication between professors and students.

To access Starfish, students must login to CampusNet, choose the “Students” tab, and then click the “Starfish” link. Once students are logged in, they can use Starfish to

- Find your assigned advisor
- Look for communication from your support network about your academic progress
- Schedule an appointment to meet with an advisor or tutor
- Schedule a tutorial with the Writing Center
- Schedule Supplemental Instruction (for certain courses)
- Course Conferences (with participating faculty)

For more information pertaining to Starfish, please visit their website [here](#).

Cleveland State University Computer Labs

In order to provide opportunities for in-class drafting and research sessions, many **FYW** instructors will reserve a computer lab. Below are the locations of the most commonly used computer labs:

Lab	Location
RT 302	Third floor of the Michael Schwartz Library
RT 401	Fourth floor of the Michael Schwartz Library
RT 502	Fifth floor of the Michael Schwartz Library
LCLC Back Lab/Front Lab	First floor, to the left, near the Writing Center, in the Michael Schwartz Library

Mobile Campus

Because of the limited amount of available computer labs, instructors might require students to bring and use laptop computers during class. Since not all students own or have access to a laptop, CSU offers a Mobile Campus, a 48-hour laptop loan service. Students can find Mobile Campus in the Student Center room 128A and at the circulation desk in the Michael Schwartz library. For more information, please visit Mobile Campus's website [here](#).

Information Services and Technology (IS&T)

IS&T provides computer assistance to CSU students with student-owned PCs, Macs, and laptops. Services include system and disc clean-up, anti-spy and anti-virus software, software installation, virus removal, and printing help. To contact the IS&T help desk, call 687-5050, email help.desk@csuohio.edu, or visit RT 1106 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

University Resources

Office of Disability Services (ODS)

The following statement should appear in your syllabus: *Note for Students with Disabilities:* Educational access is the provision of classroom accommodations, auxiliary aids and services to ensure equal educational opportunities for all students regardless of their disability. Any student who feels he or she may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Office of Disability Services at (216) 687-2015. The Office is located in MC147. Accommodations need to be requested in advance and will not be granted retroactively.

For more information, please refer to the ODS web page at <http://www.csuohio.edu/offices/disability/faculty/index.html>.

The Community Assessment Response & Evaluation (CARE) Team

The CARE team “collaboratively [...] support[s] the wellbeing and safety of students, faculty, staff, and to promote a culture on campus that encourages reporting of concerns.” The CARE Team can help students receive

suicide prevention counseling, health and wellness resources, access CSU's food pantry, and more. You can visit the CARE Team office in the Student Center room 319 or reach them by calling 216 -687-2048. For more information please visit <https://www.csuohio.edu/care/csu-care-team> and use the links on the righthand side to navigate the site.

Chapter 2: Reading in Writing Class

2.1 Why We Read

MELANIE GAGICH

Reading to Build Content Knowledge

Content Knowledge refers to your knowledge about a subject, [topic](#), controversy, current event, or area of study. Creating content knowledge is important to the writing process because you must have something to write about before you can actually begin writing. Many students assume that they can simply read one or two articles and then write an entire essay, but that is hardly ever an accurate assumption. Whether you are writing about yourself, responding to a [topic](#) chosen by the instructor, or crafting a research essay for history class, you need to build knowledge about the content area first.

Scenario 1

In your creative writing class, you are asked to write about a scary moment in your life.

Before writing, you need to sit and think about what scares you, what it means for you to be frightened, what experiences you have had with fright, etc.

This process, even though it is content only about your experience(s), is part of the content knowledge building process because you need to sift through many life experiences in order to determine which one was the scariest. To do so, you must also define what “fear” or “scared” means to you, which might require some outside reading or research. Both defining and pinpointing an experience requires building knowledge about the [topic](#) and occurs before you actually begin writing.

Scenario 2

Your college writing instructor assigns everyone a debatable [topic](#) and you are asked to write about the benefits of the death penalty. You are excited because you have seen a lot of Law and Order episodes and

have decided that the death penalty is a “good thing” for American society. So, you sit down and write your essay using all of your ideas about the death penalty.

Sounds good, right? Wrong. Forming an argument based solely on a television show or on only one source does not lead to a strong or well-informed [text](#). Also, a writer must consider all sides of an argument. In this scenario the student doesn't really have a lot of experience with the [topic](#), which means he or she must build content knowledge first. This will most likely require finding opinion-based (or popular articles), research-based (or scholarly articles), credible statistics from independent researchers, and any other legitimate source to develop an understanding of the [topic](#). From there, an ethical writer (which you are working to become) must evaluate those [sources](#) to ensure credibility because if a writer relies on faulty [sources](#), then his or her work becomes faulty or inaccurate, too. Once all of this content knowledge building work has been completed, then the you are ready to write a paper supporting the death penalty.

Building content knowledge is key part of the writing process, which is why reading effectively is an important skill to master.



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2.2 How to Read Effectively

YVONNE BRUCE

Read Like a Writer

Good writing begins with good reading. Almost all good readers are good writers because they have familiarized themselves with and are not afraid of different styles, genres, diction, grammar, and levels of difficulty.

But many students don't like to read and don't read for pleasure. Unfortunately for them, college is reading intensive. You must be able to read effectively to perform effectively in college, and it helps if you can turn the process from a chore into a pleasure. So how can you learn to approach confidently the difficult texts you will encounter during your study?

In other words, how can you become a reader, or a better reader?

1. Good readers almost always **annotate** the **text** as they read.
2. Good readers know that almost all non-fiction texts—no matter the discipline, level of difficulty, or genre—follow pretty much the same pattern. The main idea comes at the beginning, the body paragraphs support the main idea, and the conclusion wraps up the whole thing. All the way back in grade school, you may have learned this formula for presenting your work: “Say what you are going to say, then say it, then say what you just said.” This describes a PhD dissertation as well as it did your fifth-grade book report.
3. Good writers don't write to obscure; they write to clarify. (Mostly.) In order to be clear, they use the conventions of standard professional or academic non-fiction prose writing. If you know these conventions and their purpose, you will never get lost in someone's written statement. You already know that most non-fiction texts have an intro, a supporting body, and a conclusion (see #2 above). These elements too are conventions. Other conventions to look for:

The title: Most times, the title is a phrase that conveys the author's stance, **thesis** questions, or argument. Occasionally, in popular literature and especially in news and social media, titles can be somewhat misleading because they are meant to generate readership. But titles always give you a clue to the authors' **topic**.

The main idea or thesis: Sometimes students tell us that the **thesis** should come at the end of the first paragraph, but a more accurate place to look for the **thesis** is at the end of the introduction, which may or may not be a paragraph in length. In a book, for example, the introduction may be a full chapter on its own. In other texts, where does the introduction end? It depends—in a scholarly work, it may end before the first subsection. In a lengthy magazine essay or article, after a few paragraphs. Sometimes, in an essay that began as a speech or a in written essay that speaks directly to the reader, the main idea may come immediately at the beginning of the work in its own separate sentence or paragraph and then be followed by a more traditional introduction. Think about what you’re reading and the author’s purpose and look for clues to guide you to the main idea. If you can’t find it at the beginning, look for it in the conclusion, where the author usually restates the main idea.

The body: Where does the the author often go after the introduction? To a history of the **topic**. To shocking statistics or vivid personal stories. To a definition of the problem under discussion. What do all these examples have in common? They set up a **context** for the development of the main idea. They tell you what you have to understand in order to appreciate the train of the authors’ thinking.

Transitions: Look for transitional sentences at the beginning of paragraphs that introduce new ideas and sections of the work. “There are numerous reasons for the rapid decline in the creation of new social media outlets after 2010” clearly is introducing a section that may be several paragraphs or pages in length. “But not all scholars agree with my interpretation of the data” clearly introduces a section of counterargument AND suggests that a restatement of the author’s main idea or a supporting idea has just come before in the previous paragraph. Pay attention to what these transition sentences are telling you.

Conclusions: Hard to write but easy to find in your reading. Look also for “pre-conclusions,” or **transitional** statements like “Before ending, there is one final point that must be made . . .” or “Finally, let me turn to . . .” that suggest the author is wrapping up the main argument. Sometimes, there is no transition to this pre-conclusion, but the author may still introduce a new point that is less important than or peripheral to the main points. Many times, the conclusion proper will begin with a coordinating conjunction (but, so, and). Look for these subtle cues.

4. If you are not already a good reader with an extensive vocabulary, it can be difficult to pick up rhetorical subtleties and to keep previous points in mind as you continue to read—especially with long works. Here, as with so many other difficult tasks, the key is to understand the big picture and break the task up. Using your pen or pencil (see #1 above), mark off the key conventional elements of the **text** (see #3 above) and any other important features you notice at a glance. Then, read the introduction and conclusion. Next, read the first and last sentence of each paragraph. If that doesn’t give you the main idea of each paragraph, keep reading from the outside in until you get it. Write down the main points of these sections in the margins, on Post-its, or in your notes. This focused reading and writing will help you keep track of the main ideas of the whole article or essay or chapter, and when you see what you have written, you may be able to understand the work at a deeper level simply by imagining the connections between your annotations.
5. Good readers are alert to other rhetorical features, like **tone**, purpose, audience, and **context**. Once you have the main ideas of your **text** at least partly understood and written down, then you can start to appreciate these other features, which are the subject of the next chapter, “How to Read Rhetorically.”

Do Quick Research

As you read, you might run into ideas, words, or phrases you don't understand, or the [text](#) might refer to people, places, or events you're unfamiliar with. It's tempting to skip over those and keep reading, and sometimes that actually works. But keep in mind that when you read something written by a professional writer or academic, they've written with such precision that every word carries meaning and contributes to the whole. Therefore, skipping over words or ideas could change the meaning of the [text](#) or leave the meaning incomplete.

When you're reading and come to words and ideas you're unfamiliar with, you may want to stop and take a moment to do a bit of quick research. Google is a great tool for this—plug in the idea or word and see what comes up. Keep on digging until you have an answer, and then, to help retain the information, take a minute to write a note about it.

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2.3 How to Read Rhetorically

When we read *rhetorically*, we are moving beyond simply trying to comprehend what an author is saying at a basic level. Instead, one who reads rhetorically seeks to understand how meaning in a **text** is shaped not only by the **text** itself, but also the **context**.

Rhetorically focusing on the **text** might include observing the following: what the author says, how he or she arranges information, the types of information that he or she includes.

Rhetorically focusing on the **context** might include observing and researching the following: the author's identity, values and biases; the audience's interests and needs; the medium in which the author composes; the purpose for creating the **text**, and more.

Rhetorically Reading the Text: Understanding What the Author is Trying to Say

- **Who is the author?** What else has he or she written? What is the author's occupation? Is the author a journalist, professor, business person, or entertainer? Is the author an expert on the **topic** he or she is writing about?
- **When and where was the piece originally published?** Research the original publication. Does that publication have a perceived **bias**? Is the original publication highly regarded?
- **What is the author's main idea?** The main idea is the author's central **claim** or **thesis**. Describe the author's main idea in your own words. Does the author make his or her **claim** successfully? Is the **claim** held consistently throughout the **text**? Does the **thesis** appear in one sentence or in bits and pieces throughout the **text**?
- **What information does the author provide to support the central claim?** Making a list of each key point the author makes will help you analyze the overall **text**. Hint: each paragraph should address one key point, and all paragraphs should relate to the **text**'s central **claim**.
- **What kind of supporting evidence does the author use?** Is the evidence based more on fact or opinion, and do you feel those choices are effective? Where does this evidence come from? Are the **sources** authoritative and credible?
- **What is the author's main purpose?** Note that this is different than the **text**'s main idea. The **text**'s main idea (above) refers to the central **claim** or **thesis** embedded in the **text**. The author's purpose, however, refers to what he or she hopes to accomplish. Is the author's goal to persuade his or her

readers to adopt a viewpoint or to act in some way? Does the author intend to provide information or to entertain?

- **Describe the [tone](#) in the piece.** Is it friendly? Authoritative? Does it lecture? Is it biting or sarcastic? Comedic or dire?
- **Describe the [diction](#) in the piece.** What word choices does the author make? Does the author use simple or technical language? Is it full of jargon? Does the language feel positive or negative? Formal or conversational? Does the author use figurative language?
- **Is the author [objective](#)?** Why does the author try to persuade you to adopt his or her viewpoint? If the author is biased, does this interfere with the way you read and understand the [text](#)?
- **Does the [text](#) seem to be aimed at readers like you or at a different audience?** What assumptions does the author make about his or her audience? Would most people find these reasonable, acceptable, or accurate? Is the author trying to reach a certain age group, ethnicity, gender, or educational background?
- **Does the author try to appeal to your emotions?** Does the author use any controversial words in the piece? Do these affect your reading or your interest?
- **How is the piece organized?** Where does the [thesis](#) appear? Toward the beginning or the end of the [text](#) and why? Are there sections with bolded subheadings, and if so, do these subheadings accurately reflect the content of the section.
- **Does the piece include images or graphics?** Are there illustrations, photographs, or graphs? Do these images add to or detract from the written [text](#)?

In addition to these textual questions, we need to look at contextual considerations when we read rhetorically.

Rhetorically Reading the Context: Understanding Author Bias and Authority

Most reputable websites and news [sources](#) will list or cite an author, even though you might have to dig into the site deeper than just the section you're interested in to find it. Most pages will have a home page or "About Us"/"About This Site" link where an author will be credited

Often, understanding the author's [bias](#) or authority will require some research that goes well beyond any blurb that might be included with the actual article. Google the author, or consider looking at his or her LinkedIn profile. Look at several different [sources](#) instead of relying on just one website to understand who the author is.

- Does the author support a particular political or religious view that could be affecting his or her [objectivity](#) in the piece?
- Is the author supported by any special-interest groups (i.e. the American Library Association or Keep America Safe)?
- Is the author a highly educated expert on that [topic](#) who is choosing to publish an article for a popular, mainstream audience?
- Is he or she a journalist who specializes in the [topic](#)? A journalist whose specialty is unclear? A citizen who is weighing in?

- Is the author writing from personal experience, or is he/she synthesizing and offering commentary on others' experiences?
- Each of these different levels of expertise will confer a different level of authority on the [topic](#). It is important to understand whether or not an author is truly an expert on the content.

Be careful that you are not using an article that is actually a middle school student essay published in a school newspaper!

Rhetorically Reading the Context: Understand the Publication Ideology and Bias

Certain newspapers or magazines are subject to corporate owners' political [ideologies](#) or biases. Just as you can do some background research on an individual author, do some research on the publication that hosts the article you would like to use. Again, google research can help. Look at several different [sources](#) — do not rely on just one website.

- Does the publication have an ideological [bias](#)? (conservative? liberal?)
- Is the publication religious? Secular?
- Is the publication created for a very specific target audience?
- If you are looking at a website, what is its purpose? Was the site created to sell things, or are the authors trying to persuade voters to take a side on a particular issue?

If you are looking at a website, the sponsor of the site (the person or organization who is footing the bill) will often be listed in the same place as the copyright date or author information. If you can't find an explicit listing for a sponsor, double check the [URL](#): .com indicates a commercial site, .edu an educational one, .org a nonprofit, .gov a government sponsor, .mil a military sponsor, or .net a network of sponsors. The end part of a [URL](#) may also tell you what country the website is coming from, such as .uk for the United Kingdom or .de for Germany.

A note on publication bias

You can find many articles indicating that a [bias](#) exists in academic publishing. This publication [bias](#) means that only certain types of research studies get published in academic journals. In the sciences, the publication [bias](#) favors studies that have positive results (“we got some results!”) rather than negative results (“this did not work as we had hypothesized”). In the Arts and Humanities, some have argued that prestigious academic journals favor articles that come from professors at elite colleges and universities. Other speculation about publication [bias](#) in academic journals focuses on the [bias](#) in the peer reviewer: that a peer reviewer is more likely to accept an article for publication if that article confirms his or her own thinking.

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2.4 What We Read: Popular Sources

What is a Popular Source?

When we say that a source is “popular”, it does not necessarily mean “well liked”.

Popular **sources** are articles that are written for a general audience. These **sources** are published so that members of the general public can access, read and understand the content. There is little jargon or highly specific or technical vocabulary.

Sometimes popular **sources** are freely available to the public, and sometimes the content is available only with a paid subscription.

Popular **sources** include newspaper articles, magazine articles, websites, webpages, letters to the editor, blog posts and more.

Reading Newspaper Articles, Magazine Articles, and Website Articles

“Fake news!” “Media **bias**!”

We hear charges like these often, mostly in reference to the types of popular **sources** that we can find on the internet, on TV, on the radio, or in print. We should not be tempted to write off all popular **sources** as somehow “bad.” We should, however, be willing to evaluate any **popular source**’s authority and credibility before choosing to accept its validity or choosing to include it in an academic assignment.

How can we evaluate newspaper, magazine, and website **sources**? Use **rhetorical reading skills** to understand both the **text** and its **context** before you incorporate it into any assignment.

Understand the Context

Publisher. Who published this article? Remember that a publisher is not always the same as the author of a particular **text**. Does the publishing source cater to a particular audience? Does the publisher have some sort of ideological identity or **bias**? A bit of research on who published the article you are looking at (which newspaper, magazine, website, or organization) can give you some insight into any purpose or agenda that may shape the content of the article.

Author. Is the author an expert on the [topic](#)? A journalist? Someone who has direct experience with the [topic](#) or someone who is offering second hand commentary or analysis?

Assess the Quality of the Text

Identify the author’s main [claim](#). Pay attention to what the author uses to support his or her [claim](#) – do you see relevant, evidence-based support or just emotional examples?

- Do you see statistics used consistently and fairly, with an explanation of where they came from?
- Does the author consider opposing viewpoints, and if so, how thoroughly?
- Do you see [logical fallacies](#) in the author’s argument?

Assess the Quality of the Explanation, if the article is explanatory

Identify the author’s [thesis](#). Pay attention to how balanced the author’s explanation is – does he or she present all sides equally so as to avoid clear judgement? Does the author effectively summarize [sources](#) used? (Please note that magazine and newspaper writing style does not require the types of in-text citations that we use in our papers).

Currency

Depending on the information you are using, the currency of the site could be vital. Check for the date of publication or the date of the latest update. Most of the links on a website should also still work – if they no longer do, that may be a sign the site is too out of date to be useful.

Relevance

Perhaps the article is interesting or easy to read. But is there something about the [text](#) itself or its [context](#) that makes it useful for your assignment?

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2.5 What We Read: Academic Sources

Academic [sources](#) (also called [scholarly sources](#)) are different from what most of us read each day. We are constantly exposed to “popular” media – news websites, TV channels, magazines and newspapers. It is generally only in college that we get exposure and access to scholarly articles and books.

An Academic Source (Scholarly Source) is material that is

- **Authoritative:** The article has been produced by an expert in his or her field (often this means that a person has a Ph.D. in his or her field and/or works as researcher or professor at colleges or universities), and therefore has the authority that expertise affords.
- **Peer-reviewed:** The article has been rigorously read and reviewed by other experts or authorities in that same field. and, only after that rigorous review,
- **Published in a Scholarly Research Journal:** Academic articles are often published in special journals that focus on one [academic discipline](#) or one [topic](#) of study. These articles are published for an audience who is also highly involved in that [academic discipline](#) (often other people who have Ph.D.s in the same field or are pursuing studies within it). While in recent years some freely accessible open source peer reviewed journals have begun publishing, most scholarly research journals require a paid subscription. As a college student, you have access to many academic articles because your university pays for access to academic research databases that give students and faculty members access to these scholarly research journals.

Academic articles tend to be more challenging to read than popular [sources](#). They often contain academic jargon, highly specialized vocabulary that is used within a particular academic field. They tend to be longer than a typical [popular source](#) article in a newspaper or magazine. They may contain many [in-text](#) citations, diagrams, tables, or other visual representations of data.

While academic articles can be intimidating to read, there are strategies that you can use to effectively engage these challenging texts, as Karen Rosenberg discusses in her essay, “[Reading Games: Strategies for Reading Scholarly Sources.](#)”

Moreover, there are ways in which academic articles can be critiqued and evaluated just like popular articles.

Considerations for Evaluating Academic Sources

While academic [sources](#) are often deemed credible because they come out of a rigorous process of [peer review](#)-before-publication and are written both by and for the academic community, we should still take time to examine and evaluate such [sources](#) before we use them. Yes, even [scholarly sources](#) contain embedded biases.

Author

How prolific is the author in his or her field? Has he or she written extensively on the [topic](#) that is addressed in this paper? Often you can check the Works Cited to see if the author has any previous publications on the [topic](#) addressed in the current paper. If so, that could be an indication of the author’s long term commitment to this research [topic](#) or question.

Length of the Article

Sometimes articles will be labeled in academic databases as “scholarly articles” even though they are only a couple of pages long. If your article seems rather short and does not follow the general structure of an academic article (Abstract, Literature Review, Methodology, Results, Discussion, Conclusions, List of Works Cited), then you should spend time considering whether or not the article is a relevant or credible source for the purposes of your assignment? Is there a more thorough or detailed source that you could use?

Date of Publication

How current is the article? If you are looking for a historical perspective on your [topic](#), then an older article may be useful. But if you need current information and your article is 10 or 15 years old, is it as relevant and useful for your assignment?

Relevance

Perhaps you have a wonderful academic article that is authoritative, credible, interesting, full of credible and compelling research. But if the article is not answering your research question or the assignment question in any meaningful way, perhaps the source is not relevant to you. Just because a source is “good” does not mean that it is good for your particular assignment.

Joe Moxley’s article “[Questions to Evaluate the Authority of the Researcher’s Methods](#),” is an excellent resource for thinking about how to approach a critique of scholarly work. His article can be found by clicking on the hyperlink above and by going to directly to the [Writing Commons](#) website.

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2.6 Responding to Texts

CHARLOTTE MORGAN

Responding to texts in college is different from high school. Professors want you to engage in constructive reading whereby you process the complex ideas and meanings frequently found in scholarly texts.

We read, research, and write about what we have learned. [Academic discourse](#) is how we communicate those ideas, or findings. As you become accustomed to source-based writing and reading rhetorically which means that you consider the [context](#) of the source: the author's [bias](#), his audience, writing situation, and use of rhetorical appeals, doing so will become your habit of mind. To complete your assignments, often you will read the [text\(s\)](#) and use the skill sets of academic writing: annotating, summarizing, quoting and paraphrasing to either critique, argue, summarize or synthesize.

The constructive reader or the reflective reader is skeptical. You do not take the [text](#) at face value, nor do you believe the meaning can be found strictly in the words. The authors of academic texts are adept at using logos, ethos, and pathos to support their theses.

How do you respond while reading? You must consider the [context](#), writer [bias](#), etc., and that there exists a deeper meaning which you cannot find by reading the [text](#) once or even twice. You must reflect on what you have read and consider the broader questions raised by the author. Reading and writing are connected in a way that perhaps you were not taught in high school; in college, writing is thinking on paper.

Chapter 3: The Writing Process, Composing, and Revising

3.1 The Writing Process

SARAH M. LACY AND MELANIE GAGICH

What is The Writing Process?

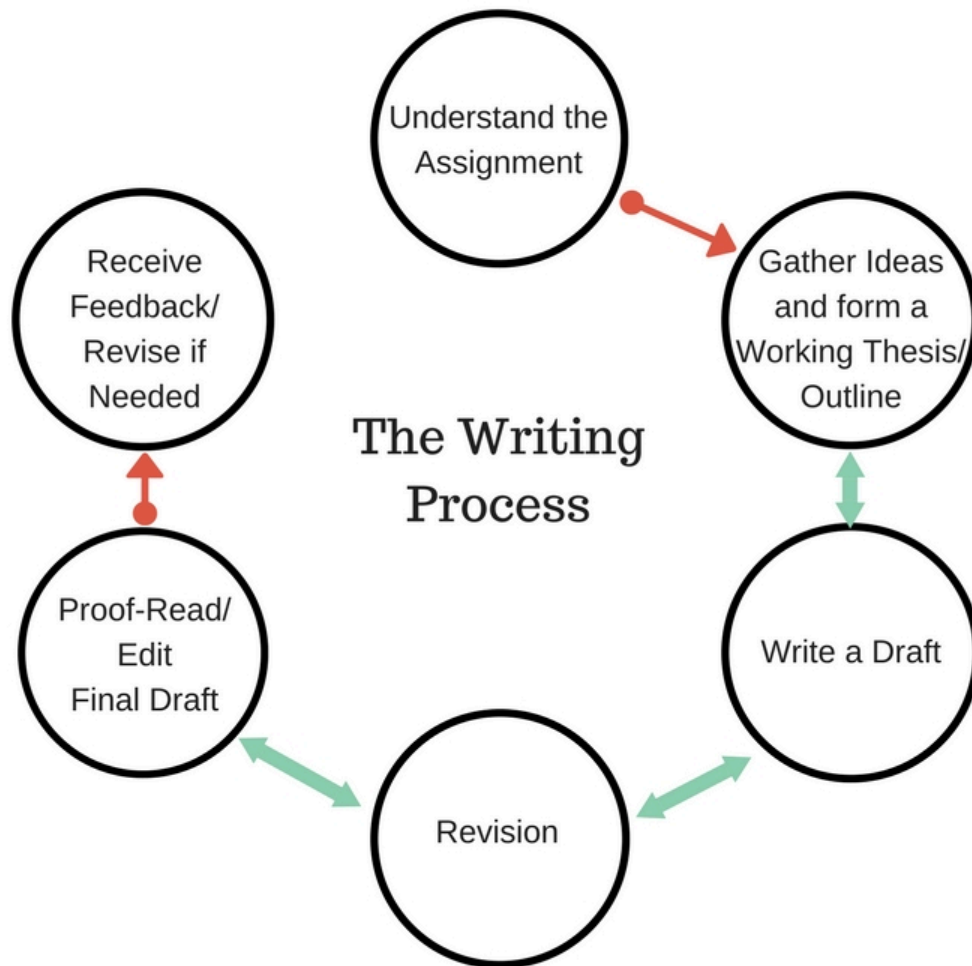
Donald M. Murray, a Pulitzer Prize winning journalist and educator, presented his important article, “Teach Writing as a Process Not Product,” in 1972. In the article, he criticizes writing instructors’ tendency to view student writing as “literature” and to focus our attentions on the “product” (the finished essay) while grading. The idea that students are producing finished works ready for close examination and evaluation by their instructor is fraught with problems because writing is really a process and arguably a process that is never finished.

Murray explains why writing is an ongoing process:

What is the process we [writing instructors] should teach? It is the process of discovery through language. It is the process of exploration of what we know and what we feel about what we know through language. It is the process of using language to learn about our world, to evaluate what we learn about our world, to communicate what we learn about our world. Instead of teaching finished writing, we should teach unfinished writing, and glory in its unfinishedness. (4)

You will find that many college writing instructors have answered Murray’s call to “teach writing as a process” and due to shifting our focus on process rather than product, you will find yourself spending a lot of time brainstorming, drafting, revising, and editing. Embracing writing as a process helps apprehensive writers see that writing is not only about grammatical accuracy or “being a good writer.”

The Writing Process



“The Writing Process” image was created by Sarah M. Lacy

The most important lesson to understand about the writing process, is that it is recursive, meaning that you need to move back and forth between some or all of the steps; there are many ways to approach this process. Allowing yourself enough time to begin the assignment before it is due, will give you time to move from one step to the other, and back as needed. Perhaps the easiest way to think about this process is as a series of steps that you can move from one to the other and back again.

The Writing Process in 6 Steps

The following steps have been adapted from the work of Paul Eschholz and Alfred Rosa, found in their book

Subject & Strategy. The authors focus on discussing writing as a series of steps that can be adapted to meet any writer’s needs; below, the steps have been modified to fit the needs of first-year writers. While reading through the steps below, remember that every writer has a unique approach to the writing process. The steps are presented in such a way that allow for any writer to understand the process as a whole, so that they can feel prepared when beginning a paper. Take special note of all the tips and guidance presented with each step, as well as suggested further reading, remembering that writing is a skill that needs practice: make sure to spend time developing your own connection to each step when writing a paper. The steps are as follows:

Step 1 – Understand the Assignment

Always read over the entire assignment sheet provided to you by your instructor. Think of this sheet as a contract; by accepting the sheet, you are agreeing to follow all guidelines and requirements that have been provided. This sheet is a direct communication from your instructor to you, laying out every expectation and requirement of an assignment. Follow each to ensure you are conducting and completing the assignment properly.

See [Section 3.2](#) for a closer look at how to use an assignment sheet.

Step 2 – Gather Ideas and Form Working Thesis

Once you understand the assignment, you will need to collect information in order to understand your [topic](#), and decide where you would like the paper to lead. This step can be conducted in various ways. Researching to build content knowledge is always a good place to start this step, so make sure to check out [Chapter 8: The Research Process](#) for a more specified look at various research methods.

After you have conducted some research begin brainstorming. You can do this in a variety of ways:

- Free Writing
- Listing ideas
- Generate a list of questions
- Clustering/ Mapping (creating a bubble chart)
- Create a basic outline

Then, you will want to formulate a **Working Thesis**. A working [thesis](#) is different than the [thesis](#) found in a **final draft**: it will not be specific nor as narrowed. Think of a working [thesis](#) as the general focus of the paper, helping to shape your research and brainstorming activities. As you will later spend ample time working and re-working a draft, allow yourself the freedom to revise this [thesis](#) as you become more familiar with your [topic](#) and purpose.

See [Section 4.2: Creating a Thesis](#) for more information on [thesis](#) statements.

Step 3 – Write a Draft

After completing Steps 1 and 2, you are ready to begin putting all parts and ideas together into a full length draft. It is important to remember that this is a first/rough draft, and the goal is to get all of your thoughts into writing, not generating a *perfect* draft. Do not get hung up with your language at this point, focus on the larger ideas and content.

Organization is a very important part of this step, and if you have not already composed an outline during Step 2, consider writing one now. The purpose of an outline is to create a logical flow of claims, evidence, and links before or during the drafting process; experiment with outlines to learn when and how they can work for you.

Outlines are great at helping you organize your outside [sources](#), if you need to use some within a particular assignment. Start by generating a list of claims (or main ideas) to support your [thesis](#), and decide which source belongs with each idea, knowing that you may (and should) use your [sources](#) more than once, with more than one [claim](#).

Step 4 – Revise the Draft(s)

This is the step in which you are likely to spend the majority of your time. This section is different from simply “editing” or “proof reading” because you are looking for larger [context](#) issues; for example, this is when you need to check your [topic](#) sentences and transitions, make sure each [claim](#) matches the [thesis](#) statement, and so on. Return to Steps 1 and 2 as needed, to ensure you are on the right track and your draft is properly adhering to the guidelines of the assignment.

The [revision](#) portion of the writing process is also where you will need to make sure all of your paragraphs are fully developed as appropriate for the assignment. If you need to have outside [sources](#) present, this is when you will make sure that all are working properly together. If the assignment is a summary, this is when you will need to double check all paraphrasing to make sure it correctly represents the ideas and information of the source [text](#).

It is likely that your professor will instruct you to complete Peer Editing. Learn more about this process in [Section 3.4](#).

Step 5 – Proof-Read/Edit the Draft(s)

Once the larger content issues have been resolved and you are moving towards a final draft, work through the paper looking for grammar and style issues. This step is when you need to make sure that your [tone](#) is appropriate for the assignment (for example, you will need to make sure you have remained in a formal [tone](#) for all academic papers), that [sources](#) are properly integrated into your own work if your assignment calls for them, etc. Consider using the checklist offered in [Section 3.6](#).

When entering the final step, go back to the assignment sheet, read it over once more in full, and then conduct a close reading. Doing this will help you to ensure you have completed all components of the assignment as per your instructor’s guidance.

Step 6 – Turn in the Draft, Receive Feedback, and Revise (if needed)

Once your draft is completed, turned in, and handed back with edits from your instructor, you may have an opportunity to revise, and turn in again to help raise your grade. As the goal of the [FYW](#) class is to improve your writing, this is an essential step to consider so that you get the most out of the course. Ask your instructor for more detail.

Works Cited

Eschholz, Paul and Alfred Rosa. *Subject & Strategy: A Writer's Reader*. 11th ed., Bedford/St. Martin, 2007.

3.2 Knowing Your Audience

MELANIE GAGICH

What is Audience?

Knowing and addressing an audience is one of the components of the rhetorical situation (the author, the setting, the purpose, the [text](#), and the audience). For more information about the rhetorical situation, see [section 6.2](#)

Although addressing an audience seems simple enough, it can be difficult for writers to ascertain exactly who they are writing to. This is exacerbated by the proliferation of writing assignments that ask students to “write to an academic audience.” Although not all audience members are academic, according to the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), students in a writing classroom may write to “specific audiences designed into a writing assignment, their colleagues in a [peer review](#) exercise, [or] a teacher who provides final assessment.” The NCTE also point out that “In a rhetorical [context](#), the audience typically is a public one, whether real or imagined. In a composition [context](#), the audience can be an audience of the self, an audience of an implied reader, and/or an audience of people the author knows.”

Think about the last time you wrote a paper; who were you writing to? It is likely that you assumed you were writing to the teacher, so you may have focused on writing “correctly” rather than exploring who you were really trying to address and how that should affect your style, language, [tone](#), evidence, etc.

Now, think about the last time you posted on Facebook or crafted a Tweet. It is likely that you were hyperaware of your audience and how what you posted or shared might affect your audience. Knowing that you already have experience(s) with audience expectations when posting or creating social media texts should help you understand how important knowing your audience is when writing in the college composition classroom.

Types of Audience

Writing to an Imagined Audience

When writing, especially in college classes, you might be asked to write an “imagined” audience, which can be difficult for any writer, but specifically for emerging writers. As stated by Melanie Gagich below:

Invoking an audience requires students to imagine and construct their audience, and can be difficult for emerging or even practiced writers. Even when writing instructors do provide students with a specific audience within a writing assignment, it is probable that this “audience” will likely be conceptualized by the student as his or her teacher. This “writing to the teacher” frame of mind often results in students guessing how to address their audience, which hinders their ability to write academically.

Thinking of audience as someone or a group beyond the teacher will help you see various ways you can use language, evidence, style, etc. to support your message and to help you build credibility as the writer/creator.

Writing to a Real Audience

You may also be called upon to address a real and interactive audience. For instance, if your instructor asks you to write an entry for Wikipedia, create a multimodal [text](#), or present your work to your peers; then, the audience is not imagined but concrete and able to “talk back.” Writing for real audience members can be difficult, especially online audiences, because “we can’t always know in advance who they are” (NCTE), yet writing to these audience members can also be a helpful experience because they can respond to your work and offer feedback that goes beyond a teacher’s evaluative responses. Composing in 21st century spaces makes interacting with, talking back to, and learning from audience members much easier.

Addressing an interactive audience also gives you the opportunity to embrace diversity through the act of sharing your work digitally and to explore what it means to be rhetorically aware. Being rhetorically aware means that you understand how the integration of various language(s), cultural references/experiences, linguistic [text](#), images, sounds, documentation style, etc. can help you form a cohesive and logical message that is carefully shared with an interactive audience in an appropriate online space.

What are Discourse Communities?

Knowing the type of audience you’re being asked to address is the first step to becoming aware of your audience. The second step is to determine whether the audience you’re addressing are members of a discourse community. According to NCTE, a discourse community is “a group of people, members of a community, who share a common interest and who use the same language, or discourse, as they talk and write about that interest.” Though you may not address a discourse community every time you write, when you are asked to address an academic audience you are addressing a discourse community .

Generally, everyone is a member of a discourse community. For example, members of movie trivia sites, video gamers, Cleveland Cavaliers fans, etc. are all examples of discourse community membership. Members can often distinguish each other based on their use (or misuse) of language, jargon, slang, symbols, media, clothing, and more. In [academia](#), discourse communities are connected to academic disciplines. For instance, a literature professor’s interests may be very different from a social science professor’s. Differences will also be evident in their use of documentation styles, manuscript formatting, the language they use, and the journals they submit their work to.

You may wonder why it matters? Why not just write in MLA all the time and use the same word choices and [tone](#) every time you write? Well, it comes back to illustrating your credibility and awareness of the conventions

and communication genres of a discourse community. NCTE explains that “When we write it is useful to think in terms of the discourse community we are participating in and whose members we are addressing: what do they assume, what kinds of questions do they ask, and what counts as evidence?” You earn credibility when discussing a basketball team’s performance when you know all the names of the team member. In a different [context](#), you also demonstrate credibility when you know to use APA rather than MLA in various academic contexts.

- For more information pertaining to audience please visit the [NCTE “Audience” Poster](#) or the [Wikipedia “Audience” page](#).
- For more information pertaining to discourse communities please visit the [NCTE “Discourse Community” Poster](#) or [John Swales’ “The Concept of a Discourse Community.”](#)

3.3 Understanding the Writing Assignment

ROBIN JEFFREY, EMILIE ZICKEL

Before you begin working on an essay or a writing assignment, don't forget to spend some quality time analyzing the assignment sheet. By closely reading and breaking down the assignment sheet, you are setting yourself up for an easier time of planning and composing the assignment.

Understanding what you need to do

- **First**, carefully read the assignment sheet and search for the required page length, due dates, and other submission-based information.
- **Second**, determine the genre of the assignment
- **Third**, identify the core assignment questions that you need to answer
- **Fourth**, locate the evaluation and grading criteria

Writing Genre

What, in the broadest sense, are you being asked to do? What writing genre is expected?

- **Analysis** – Analysis questions often contain words like *how*, *in what ways*, *what are some of the* _____. Analysis asks you to examine small pieces of the larger whole and indicate what their meaning or significance is
- **Synthesis** – If you are asked to draw from and connect several different [sources](#), then you will be synthesizing
- **Explanation** – Any [text](#) in which you merely report (as opposed to attempting to persuade) is going to be an explanation paper. None of your own opinion is being sought. Summaries, annotations, and reports are often explanatory
- **Argument** – Any [text](#) in which you are attempting to get a reader to accept your [claim](#). Argument is

[persuasive writing](#), and it can include things like argument based research papers or critiques/evaluations of others' work.

How to Answer the Assignment Question/s

Sometimes, a list of prompts or questions may appear with an assignment. It is likely that your instructor will not expect you to answer all of the questions listed. They are simply offering you some ideas so that you can think of your own questions to ask.

- Circle all assignment questions that you see on the assignment sheet
- Put a star next to the question that is either the most important OR that you will pursue in creating the assignment

Recognizing Implied Questions

A prompt may not include a clear 'how' or 'why' question, though one is always implied by the language of the prompt. For example:

“Discuss the effects of the No Child Left Behind Act on special education programs” is asking you to write *how* the act has affected special education programs.

“Consider the recent rise of autism diagnoses” is asking you to write *why* the diagnoses of autism are on the rise.

Identifying Writing Requirements

Some instructors offer indications of what certain parts of the essay/composition should contain. Does the assignment sheet offer suggestions or requirements for the Intro paragraph? For the [thesis](#) statement? For the structure or content of the body paragraphs or conclusion paragraphs?

Identifying Evaluation Criteria

Many assignment sheets contain a grading rubric or some other indication of evaluation criteria for the assignment. You can use these criteria to both begin the writing process and to guide your [revision](#) and editing process. If you do not see any rubric or evaluation criteria on the assignment sheet — ask!

Recognizing Disciplinary Expectations

Depending on the discipline in which you are writing, different features and formats of your writing may be expected. Always look closely at key terms and vocabulary in the writing assignment, and be sure to note what type of evidence and citations style your instructor expects.

- does the essay need to be in MLA, APA, CMS or another style?

- does the professor require any specific submission elements or formats?



3.3 Understanding the Writing Assignment by [Robin Jeffrey, Emilie Zickel](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](#), except where otherwise noted.

3.4 Creating the Thesis

YVONNE BRUCE

Now that you have begun or are well into the process of reading and drafting, you will have to create a **thesis** for any paper you are assigned. A **thesis** is simply an expression of the main idea of what you are writing about.

The **thesis** will be determined by the kind or genre of paper you are asked to write, but even a summary assignment—a paper in which you summarize the ideas of another writer without adding your own thoughts—must have a **thesis**. A **thesis** for a summary would be your expression of the main idea of the work you are summarizing. The presence of a **thesis**, and paragraphs to support that **thesis**, is what distinguishes a summary from a list.

Imagine, for example, that you are summarizing last night’s football game to a friend. You would *not* summarize it this way, unless you wanted to put your friend to sleep: “First the Falcons came out on the field, and then the Steelers came out on the field, and then there was a coin toss, and then the Falcons kicked off, and then the Steelers returned the ball for thirty yards, and then . . .”

What you would do instead is organize your summary around what you thought was the most important element of that game: “Last night’s game was all defense! The Steelers returned the ball for thirty yards on the first play, but after that, they hardly even got any first downs. The Falcons blocked them on almost every play, and they managed to win the game even though they only scored one touchdown themselves.”

For most papers, however, you will take a more active role in the content of the composition, creating a **thesis** that expresses your main idea about a **topic**, often in response to what others think about that **topic**.

In some cases you will be allowed to create a **thesis** about a **topic** of your choice; in most cases, you will be required to create a **thesis** about a **topic** related to the subject or theme of the class.

Let’s say you have to create a **thesis** on a **topic** like The American Dream or Technology and Society or The Rhetoric of Climate Change. Maybe you’ve already read some essays or material on these subjects, and maybe you haven’t, but you want to start drafting your **thesis** with a **claim** about your subject. Bring to your **claim** what you know and what you think about it:

“People can’t seem to live without their phones, but I think spending all that time online is detrimental.”

You’re already off to a good start: this **thesis** makes a **claim**, it demonstrates some knowledge or authority, and it includes two sides to the issue. How can you make it better? Remember, you have to be able to write a paper in support of your **thesis**, so the more detailed, concrete, and developed your **thesis** is, the better. Here are a couple suggestions for improving any **thesis**:

1. Define your terms
2. Develop the parts of your **thesis** so it answers as many who, what, when, where, how, and why questions as possible

Defining your terms

In your draft or working **thesis** above, are there any terms that would benefit from more definition? What do you mean by *people*, for example? Can that word be replaced with *young people*, or *teenagers and young adults*? If you replaced *people* with these more specific terms, couldn’t you also then write your paper with more authority, as you are one of the people you’re writing about?

You might also define “can’t seem to live without,” which sounds good initially but is too general without explanation, with something more exact that appeals to your reader and can be supported with evidence or explained at greater length in your paragraphs: people “use their phones in the classrooms, at the dinner table, and even in restroom stalls.”

Making sure your **thesis** answers questions

Your **thesis** is a snapshot or summary of your paper as a whole. Thus, you want your **thesis** to be something you can unfold or unpack or develop into a much longer work. And if your **thesis** makes a **claim**, that means it also answers a question. Thus, you want your **thesis** to answer or discuss the question as deeply and fully as possible. You can do this grammatically by adding prepositional phrases and “because” clauses that bring out the specifics of your thinking and tell your reader who, what, when, where, how, and/or why:

“Teenagers and young adults seem to use their phones everywhere—in the classroom, at the dinner table, even in restroom stalls—*because they want to stay connected to their friends and peers at all times*, but I think spending that much time online is detrimental *to their social skills and mental health*.”

Notice that this **thesis**, while not substantially different from the draft or working **thesis** you began with, has been substantially revised to be more specific, supported, and authoritative. It lays out an organized argument for a convincing paper. Because it is so complete and specific, in fact, it can be easily changed if you find research that contradicts your **claim** or if you change your mind about the **topic** as you write and reflect:

“Teenagers and young adults seem to use their phones everywhere—in the classroom, at the dinner table, even in restroom stalls—*because they want to stay connected to their friends and peers at all times, and research suggests that this connection has primarily positive psychological and emotional benefits*.”



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3.5 Revising Your Draft(s)

You have a draft! In many ways, you have done a lot of the hard work by getting ideas down on paper or on the screen.

There are many steps to drafting and revising, so try to resist going straight to the editing, in other words, looking for grammar errors or a misplaced or misused word. Those are important things to look at eventually, but in the early stages of [revision](#), you have the opportunity to focus more on major concerns (we sometimes call them global concerns) : idea development, essay focus, coherence among your ideas, whether or not you are meeting the assignment goal and purposes.

Here are some strategies for approaching the first [revision](#), the “shape up” phase of your draft. There is a lot of opportunity here, for you to add, delete, rearrange, expand, and realize what you would like to rethink or express differently.

Early Draft Questions: Reading Your Draft to Look at Structure and Content

Your introductory section of the essay

- Do you have a working [thesis](#)? Does that [thesis](#) respond to the question on the assignment sheet?
- Are you beginning the paper with an introductory paragraph that leads the reader up to your [thesis](#)?
- Is your [thesis](#) at the end of the intro?

The body of the essay

- Does each paragraph focus on only one idea? When you begin to discuss a new idea, do you make a paragraph break?
- Have you cited the [sources](#) that you have integrated into the draft?
- Do you have a Works Cited page for those [sources](#) you referenced?

The conclusion of the essay

- The conclusion may be the last thing that you write. Some writers choose to take sentences

that feel out of place or perhaps repetitive and copy and paste them into a draft conclusion paragraph, which can be edited later. Do you have a conclusion? If so, great. If not, keep working on it for the final draft.

As you continue working on your paper, think about using your **rhetorical reading skills** to examine your work.

Early Draft Revisions: Reading Rhetorically

- **What is your main point?** Is the point held consistently throughout the **text**, or does it wander at any point?
- **What information do you provide to support the central idea?** Making a list of each point will help you analyze. Each paragraph should address one key point, and all paragraphs should relate to the **text's** central idea.
- **What kind of evidence are you using?** Is your evidence based more on fact or opinion? Which type of evidence does this assignment require? Where does your evidence come from? Are the **sources** authoritative and credible?
- **What is your main purpose?** Note that this is different than the **text's** main idea. The **text's** main idea (above) refers to the central **claim** or **thesis** embedded in the **text**. Your purpose, however, refers to what you hope to accomplish in your essay (or assignment). Do you need to be **objective** or persuasive? Be sure to revisit the assignment sheet if you are not clear on what the assignment's purpose is!
- **What is your tone in the piece?** Authoritative? Sarcastic? Are you using simple language? Informal language? Does the language feel positive or negative? Most importantly, is the **tone** that you are using appropriate for the audience for your **text**?

Once you have gone through your own early draft review, peer reviews, and any other read-throughs and analyses of your draft, you may be ready for the final stage of **revision**. This is not simply editing — checking for misspelled words or missing commas.

Once again, you have the opportunity to “re-see” your paper, to look closely and deeply at it to make sure that it is making sense, that it flows, that it is meeting the core assignment requirements, to re-envision what the paper can be. You still have time to make major changes, such as providing additions or deleting entire sections. Those are all wonderful things to do at this final **revision** stage in order to make your paper stronger.

Later Draft Revisions: Making Final Changes and Getting Ready to Submit the Assignment

- **Carefully consider all feedback** – Based on that feedback from readers – peer reviewers, tutors, your instructor, friends, etc., where can you make your essay more reader-friendly? Where does it need more effort and focus?

- **Revisit the Assignment Sheet** – If there are evaluation criteria, use them to evaluate your own draft. Identify in the paper where you are adhering to those criteria, where you feel like you still need work.
- **Consider your Sources** – Are you engaging with required source materials as much or as deeply as you need to be? Would your paper be stronger if you reread the [sources](#) another time to better understand them? Do you need more source support in the paper? Do you need to enhance your source integration (signal phrases, citations)?
- **Revisit feedback on previous papers** – Often, we make consistent errors in our writing from paper to paper. Read over feedback from other papers – even from other classes – and review your paper with special attention to those errors. There is still time to come talk to your professor about fixing them if you don't understand how to avoid them!
- **Visit the Writing Center** – It never hurts to have an [objective](#) pair of eyes look over your work. Bring the assignment sheet with you so that the Writing Center tutors can see what the instructor's requirements for the assignment are. Communicate to the tutor about your key areas of concern or areas of focus.
- **Read your paper aloud – slowly** – This can help you to hear any missing words or components. We often miss things when we only read because we read so quickly.
- **Ask for Instructor Feedback** – If there are areas of your paper that you are struggling with, talk to your professor and ask for some guidance. It is best to visit office hours or schedule an appointment with your professor several days before the due date of the essay.

3.6 Peer Review and Responding to Others' Drafts

EMILIE ZICKEL

Students tend to have a love or hate relationship to [peer review](#). Some have had wonderful, helpful, rich histories with classmates offering feedback on their work; others have the perspective that [peer review](#) is pointless.

When it works, both giving and receiving peer feedback can be a great learning opportunity. If you look at other people's work in progress, you undoubtedly get some ideas about how you could do something different or better in your own draft. But even if you are looking at a draft that is weaker than yours, you may learn a lot: about what writing looks like when it is *not* working, perhaps *why* it is not working, or even what specific choices or revisions that writer could make to strengthen the draft. Identifying what makes things work – so important in the learning process – can be hard to detect in our own work.

Remember that in peer review, you don't need to cast judgment on a classmate's work.

You don't need to take on the role of a “grader” or offer suggestions to fix the paper. You don't need to correct things. Sometimes, what is more valuable is if you share your experience as a reader of the draft, explaining what felt easy and clear to you, and also where you struggled to understand what the writer was trying to accomplish. Be honest, accurate, detailed, and descriptive. Write in such a way that you offer your genuine readerly perspective to your partner, not a list of directions or directives.

Rhetorical Reading Questions for Peer Feedback

The use of rhetorical reading questions can offer feedback on the effectiveness of the [text-in-progress](#). Ask yourself the following while reading your own or a peer's draft:

- **What is the writer's main point?** Can you see what your partner's main point is in this draft? Is the point held consistently throughout the [text](#), or did you get lost while reading at any point? If so, can you point out where reference to or reiteration of the main point would have helped your reading experience?
- **What information does the writer provide to support the central idea?** Did

you need more information to feel like the central idea was well supported? Do all paragraphs relate to the **text's** central idea?

- **What kind of evidence does the writer use?** Is it based more on fact or opinion? Can you clearly identify where this evidence come from? Are the **sources** authoritative and credible?
- **Is the writer working towards achieving the assignment's purpose?** This is a question that is easiest to answer if you fully understand the assignment's purpose. What are the goals of the assignment? What are the goals of this particular writer? Do those goals overlap?
- **Describe the tone in the draft.** Is it friendly? Authoritative? Does it lecture? Is it biting or sarcastic? Does the author use simple language, or is it full of jargon? Does the language feel positive or negative? Now, consider the audience for this essay. Does the **tone** seem appropriate for that audience?

Using "I" statements to offer feedback on others' work

Offer observations of assignment goals met/not met

1. I see your **thesis** at the end of your intro paragraph
2. I see transition phrases at the beginning of each new paragraph
3. I can see that you _____, which is a goal of this paper
4. In your _____ paragraph I see....but I do not see....
5. I do not see a Works Cited

Express your experience as a reader

1. My understanding is that the **thesis** of this paper should _____. I did not clearly see _____ in your **thesis**. Instead, I see (explain).
1. I was confused by this sentence (share the sentence) and I took it to mean (explain how you read that sentence).
2. In paragraph _____ I thought that, based on what you said in the first sentence, the whole paragraph would discuss X. But it looks to me like at the end of the paragraph, you begin discussing Y, which felt to me like a new and different idea.

Express places where, as a reader, you were drawn in to the writing

1. I thought that the second paragraph was really clear and interesting because....
2. I like the way that you structured paragraph X because
3. I appreciate your use of (signal phrases? citations? MLA format? transitions? etc) because I have been struggling with that in my own writing. Thanks for the example

Phrases that can be ineffective

These types of phrases are telling the writer what to do and/or simply offering judgment. They are “you” statements, not “I” statements. **Try to avoid these types of peer assessment phrases:**

- **You** should fix _____
- The assignment says to _____—but **you** didn’t do that
- **You** need more _____
- **You** need less _____
- To make the paper better, **you** need to _____



3.6 Peer Review and Responding to Others’ Drafts by [Emilie Zickel](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](#), except where otherwise noted.

3.7 Proof-Reading and Editing Your Final Draft

SARAH M. LACY AND EMILIE ZICKEL

You have drafted, received feedback, revised, redrafted, received more feedback, revised, redrafted...and now you are ready to polish the paper up and hand it in.

To help you engage with this step, consider using a variety of the following strategies:

Proof-Reading and Editing Strategies

- **Close/specific reading**

- This strategy is always important to complete, as it requires intense analysis of your paper and prose. Use any rhetorically-based reading skills you have learned and apply these to this close read.
- Be careful not to only rely on this tactic. It can be very easy to accidentally overlook an issue if you are only reading the essay in one way. Make sure to use this strategy in conjunction with any of these other options.

- **Reading aloud**

- This strategy is specifically helpful when checking the flow of your [sources](#) once integrated into your own work. By reading aloud, you can *hear* how you have synthesized the [sources](#) amongst your own work, allowing you to check that there is no break in the narrative.
- Reading aloud also forces you to experience your writing in a different medium; in so doing, many structural and word choice issues can become clear, among others.

- **Shift your start point**

- What this means is that you start reading over your essay in the middle of the essay, rather than always from the beginning.
- Reading an essay out of order can help your mind experience each part of the essay

in a new way, keeping you from becoming tired during a read though.

- **Print the paper, then edit**
 - Only working on an assignment through one medium (a computer screen, tablet, etc.) can cause your eyes to gloss over the same error over and over again. By printing out your work, you are allowing yourself a chance to physically see your work, which often leads to the recognition of additional errors.
- **Walk away**
 - Sometimes the best move is to give yourself a day or two away from your paper and then come back to it with fresh eyes. Doing so will allow you to gain some perspective on your [topic](#) and some psychological distance from your work.
 - Note that this means you will need to give yourself plenty of time before the paper is due.

In addition to practicing proof-reading and editing strategies, it is also a good idea to create a checklist of common errors that many writers make. Below is a general checklist for the final editing stage of a paper. Any assignment will have additional specific requirements, and those should be found on the assignment sheet. What follows is a general checklist for ensuring general submission readiness:

Final Editing Checklist

- **Document Format**
 - Is your paper laid out in the formatting that the assignment requires? (MLA, APA, CMS, etc). If you are not sure of how to meet the formatting guidelines, Google can help! There is a plethora of information out there about how to format documents, and image searches can give you a visual example.
- **Spacing**
 - Almost all of the papers that you write in college will require a double spacing throughout. Have you checked to be sure that your paper is double spaced without any additional spaces after the header, the title, or any body paragraph?
- **Indentations**
 - Indenting a new paragraph is a rhetorical move that signals to the reader that you are beginning a new idea in a new paragraph. You can hit tab at the beginning of each paragraph to indent.
- **Thesis**
 - Is your [thesis](#) at the end of the Intro section? Does it directly respond to the

assignment question?

- **Transition phrasing**

- Have you used **transitional phrases** at the beginning of new body paragraphs (except for the very first paragraph to follow the intro) to help guide the reader from one idea to the next?

- **Source integration**

- Are you carefully **introducing all source material that you have quoted, paraphrased, or summarized**? When you cite, are your **citations** formatted according to the style guide required by the assignment?

- **Works Cited**

- Even if you have used only one source in the paper, you must include a Works Cited page. Is your Works Cited in alphabetical order by the first letter in the work that you are referencing? Is the Works Cited formatted according to what the assignment requires (MLA, APA, CMS, etc)?

- **Grammar check**

- Have you gone through the essay to ensure that you've corrected spelling or wording errors?

Chapter 4: Structuring, Paragraphing, and Styling

4.1 Basic Essay Structure

EMILIE ZICKEL AND CHARLOTTE MORGAN

Essays written for an academic audience follow a structure with which you are likely familiar: Intro, Body, Conclusion. Here is a general overview of what each of those sections “does” in the larger essay.

Be aware, however, that certain assignments and certain professors may ask for additional content or require unusual formatting, so always be sure to read the assignment sheet as carefully as possible.

Introductory Section

This paragraph is the “first impression” paragraph. It needs to make an impression on the reader so that he or she becomes interested, understands your goal in the paper, and wants to read on. The intro often ends with the [thesis](#).

- begin by drawing your reader in – offer a statement that will pique their interest in your [topic](#)
- offer some [context](#) or background information about your [topic](#) that leads you to your [thesis](#)
- conclude with the [thesis](#)

For more information about composing a strong introduction, you can visit “[How to Write an Engaging Introduction](#),” by Jennifer Janecek, published on *Writing Commons*, is an excellent resource that offers specific tips and examples of compelling introduction paragraphs

Body of the Essay

The Body of the Essay is where you fully develop the main idea or [thesis](#) outlined in the introduction. Each paragraph within the body of the essay enlarges one major point in the development of the overall argument (although some points may consist of several sub-points, each of which will need its own paragraph). Each paragraph should contain the following elements:

- Clearly state the main point in each paragraph in the form of a **topic sentence**.
- Then, support that point with evidence.
- Provide an explanation of the evidence’s significance. Highlight the way the main point shows the logical steps in the argument and link back to the **claim** you make in your **thesis** statement.

Remember to make sure that you focus on a single idea, reason, or example that supports your **thesis** in each body paragraph. Your **topic sentence** (a mini **thesis** that states the main idea of the paragraph), should contain details and specific examples to make your ideas clear and convincing (Morgan).

Information on how to build strong paragraphs can be found [here](#)

Conclusion

Many people struggle with the conclusion; not knowing how to end a paper without simply restating the paper’s **thesis** and main points. In fact, one of the earliest ways that we learn to write conclusions involves the “summarize and restate” method of repeating the points that you have already discussed.

While that method can be an effective way to perhaps begin a conclusion, the strongest conclusions will go beyond rehashing the key ideas from the paper. Just as the intro is the first impression, the conclusion is the last impression—and you do want your writing to make a lasting impression.

Below are some things to consider when writing your conclusion:

- what is the significance of the ideas you developed in this paper?
- how does your paper affect you, others like you, people in your community, or people in other communities?
- what must be done about this **topic**?
- what further research or ideas could be studied?

Jennifer Yirinic’s article, “[How to Write a Compelling Conclusion](#),” which was published on *Writing Commons*, is an excellent resource that can help you to craft powerful and interesting closing paragraph.

4.2 Troubleshooting: Body Paragraph Development

JOHN LANNING AND SARAH M. LACY

Developing a paragraph can be a difficult task for many students. They usually approach the task with certain ideas firmly in mind, most notably that a paragraph is 5-6 sentences and the paragraph is about what they are talking about, which isn't necessarily a bad place to start. But when pushed to explain more specifically what constitutes a good paragraph or how to present the information they will discuss, problems begin to emerge. If you are struggling to craft a fully developed paragraph, you might find the following step-by step approach helpful.

Perhaps the easiest way to think about a “fully developed” paragraph is to think of writing each paragraph in 6 different steps rather than a certain amount of sentences. These steps can be helpful in not only understanding the criteria needed in a paragraph or how they connect to one another to create a conversation in your paper but also to ensure that your audience understands your purpose in presenting this paragraph.

Focusing on the number of sentences may limit how you express the idea being discussed. However, this doesn't mean that the information can be presented without a plan in mind; you should begin with understanding what a paragraph needs to “be” and “do.”

Goals of the Paragraph: What it should “be”

While there is no “right way” to develop a paragraph, there are certain criteria that **an academic** paragraph should work to be:

- **Unified:** Every sentence presented works to explain the main idea for the paragraph.
- **Coherent:** You present the information in a logical order that allows the audience to understand your purpose.
- **Developed:** To achieve this, you must provide enough information so that the audience has a clear understanding of the main idea expressed in the [topic sentence](#).

Developing the Paragraph: Creating what it should “do”

1. Establish a Main Idea (Topic).

- It is important to begin a paragraph with a clear, concise, and limited **topic sentence**. Many problems with unity and coherency begin with a faulty or vague **topic sentence**. Being able to recognize the parts of a **topic sentence** will help you maintain a unified paragraph. If we break a basic **topic sentence** down, there are two distinct parts:

The topic being discussed + Your approach to the topic

- Too often, students focus on the wrong part of the **topic sentence**. They believe that the **topic** or subject (or sub-**claim**) is the most important part of the sentence since “that is what I am talking about.” This is where the trouble with unity begins. There are many ways to discuss the **topic**, so conceivably any information related to that **topic** could end up in the paragraph. Ultimately, the unity breaks down and the reader will not understand the significance of your idea because the information may be having two different conversations, instead of one.
- When there are two different approaches to the same sub-**claim**, the conversation jumps from one to another, dissolving any unity to the paragraph. However, there is only one way to discuss your approach related to the sub-**claim**, and it is through that lens that we look at all the information presented in the paragraph and how we determine if the information belongs in the paragraph or not. See [section 4.4](#) for help deciding when to begin a new paragraph.

2. Provide an Explanation

- This step may be a bit of a trap. Many students are often tempted to reach for their research and begin providing support for the **main idea**. However, this isn’t always the best option. Many times when students do this, they are using their research/ support to do the thinking for them. Before reaching for the research, students should **provide an explanation** regarding their **topic sentence**.
- You can also think of this section as a link between the **topic sentence** and supporting evidence where you provide any necessary contextual information for the evidence.
- The main focus of any paragraph should be what you have to say. If you are putting forth this idea in support of your **thesis**, the audience is going to want to know what you think about it—what is important or significant about this main idea. They may not fully understand the **topic sentence** the way you intend them to, so explain your reasoning to the reader.

3. Provide Support/ Evidence

- Now that your audience should have a better understanding of the main idea/ **topic**, you are ready to **provide support/ evidence**. You want to be very selective when deciding what **textual support** to include in the paragraph. Not all evidence is the same, and not all evidence achieves the same goals (thinking ethos/ logos/ pathos here). The textual support should help to reinforce or illustrate more about your **topic sentence** for the reader, helping them understand it in a more complete way. See [section 4.3](#) for more information about supporting evidence.
- Whether your support takes the form of a direct quote or a paraphrase, it must be properly embedded and documented. See [sections 9.5](#) and [9.6](#) for more information about citations.

4. Interpret the Support/ Evidence

- This is often one of the more difficult aspects for students, and a step in the development that they overlook. No matter how clear you think the textual support provided is, it does not speak for itself. The reason is that the audience may not understand how you intend them to interpret the information, and how that relates back to supporting the main idea of the paragraph. When you explain how this information is relevant to your [topic sentence](#), why it is important or significant, you need to offer insight to that information.
- Don't simply follow up your support with a single sentence that begins with a phrase like "This proves" or "Meaning" and then restate what the evidence said. Know why you included this information and why it is important to your paragraph. You need to connect the dots for your reader, so they see exactly how that information is providing support, and helping your main idea.
- The bulk of the information should be coming from you, not your [sources](#). Your audience wants to what it is that you think, your perspective on the idea, and how you intended to link it back to the [thesis](#).

5. Repeat Steps 3 and 4, if necessary

- If you have more than one piece of textual support that you want to include, you need to repeat the two previous steps to fully develop your paragraph. You will want to vary your evidence. If you use statistics, then you may want to include expert testimony. If the first piece of evidence focuses on logic, you want to tap into one of the other appeals such as pathos to bring a full view of the issue to your reader. However, you don't want to keep simply repeating this sequence: evidence should be used to help achieve your purpose, not to fill space.

6. Connect to the [thesis](#) statement

- When you feel that your audience has a clear understanding of your idea and its significance to your [thesis](#), you can wrap up the paragraph in different ways:
 - emphasize the importance of understanding the idea,
 - make a connection to previous and/or forthcoming ideas
 - overall ensure that the information is being related directly back to the main purpose of the essay as defined in your [thesis](#) statement.

While this is not the only way to write a paragraph, it can be a helpful guide and/or model when you need a structure to begin shaping and organizing your ideas, to help you compose a unified, coherent, well-developed paragraph.

Visit the [methods of development](#) link for help developing and organizing your ideas within paragraph.



4.2 Troubleshooting: Body Paragraph Development by [John Lanning and Sarah M. Lacy](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](#), except where otherwise noted.

4.3 Adding Support to Body Paragraphs

AMANDA LLOYD

Support in the Form of Evidence

Present your supporting evidence in the form of paraphrases and direct quotations. Quotations should be used sparingly; that being said, direct quotations are often handy when you would like to illustrate a particularly well-written passage or draw attention to an author's use of [tone](#), diction, or syntax that would likely become lost in a paraphrase.

Types of support might include the following:

- Facts
- Statistics and data
- Research studies and scholarship
- Hypothetical and real-life examples
- Historical analyses
- Analogies
- Precedents
- Laws
- Case histories
- Expert testimonies or opinions
- Eye-witness accounts
- Applicable personal experiences or anecdotes

Varying your means of support will add credibility to your essay and help maintain your reader's interest. Keep in mind, though, that some types of support are more appropriate for certain academic disciplines than for others. See [section 7.3](#) for more information about the types of evidence used according to [academic discipline](#).

Providing Context for the Evidence

It may occasionally be necessary to provide some **context** for your supporting evidence. You should assume that your audience has not read your source texts in their entirety, if at all, so including some background or connecting material between your **topic sentence** and supporting evidence is frequently essential. Explanatory information that is not contained within your evidence selection or does not appear earlier in your essay might need to be introduced, explained, or defined so that your supporting evidence is perfectly clear to an audience unfamiliar with the source material. For example, your supporting evidence might contain a reference to a concept or term that is not explained or defined in the excerpt or elsewhere in your essay. In this instance, you would need to provide some clarification for your audience. Anticipating your audience is particularly important when incorporating supporting evidence into your essay. See [section 3.2](#) for more information about audience awareness.

Explaining the Evidence

Remember not to conclude your body paragraph with supporting evidence. Rather than assuming that the evidence you have provided speaks for itself, it is important to explain *why* that evidence proves or supports the idea you present in your **topic sentence** and (ultimately) the **claim** you make in your **thesis** statement. Keep in mind that your voice should control your essay and guide your audience to a greater understanding of the source material's relevance to your **claim**.

This explanation can include the following:

- Analysis
- Evaluation
- Comparison or contrast
- Refutation or concession
- Suggested action or conclusion
- Proposal of further study
- Personal reaction

Now that we have a good idea what it means to develop support for the main ideas of your paragraphs, let's talk about how to make sure that those supporting details are solid and convincing.

Good vs. Weak Support

When you're developing paragraphs, you should already have a plan for your essay, at least at the most basic level. You know what your **topic** is, you have a working **thesis**, and you have at least a couple of supporting ideas in mind that will further develop and support your **thesis**. You need to make sure that the support that you develop for these ideas is solid. Understanding and appealing to your audience can also be helpful in determining what your readers will consider good support and what they'll consider to be weak. Here are some tips on what to strive for and what to avoid when it comes to supporting evidence.

Good support

- is relevant and focused (sticks to the point)
- is well developed
- provides sufficient detail
- is vivid and descriptive
- is well organized
- is coherent and consistent
- highlights key terms and ideas

Weak Support

- lacks a clear connection to the point that it's meant to support
- lacks development
- lacks detail or gives too much detail
- is vague and imprecise
- lacks organization
- seems disjointed (ideas don't clearly relate to each other)
- lacks emphasis of key terms and ideas

Attributions

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4.4 Breaking, Combining, or Beginning New Paragraphs

Paragraph Flow

Like sentence length, paragraph length varies. There is no single ideal length for “the perfect paragraph.” There are some general guidelines, however. Some writing handbooks or resources suggest that a paragraph should be at least three or four sentences; others suggest that 100 to 200 words is a good target to shoot for. In academic writing, paragraphs tend to be longer, while in less formal or less complex writing, such as in a newspaper, paragraphs tend to be much shorter. Two-thirds to three-fourths of a page is usually a good target length for paragraphs at your current level of college writing. If your readers can’t see a paragraph break on the page, they might wonder if the paragraph is ever going to end or they might lose interest.

The most important thing to keep in mind here is that the amount of space needed to develop one idea will likely be different than the amount of space needed to develop another. So when is a paragraph complete? The answer is, when it’s fully developed. The guidelines above for providing good support should help.

Some signals that it’s time to end a paragraph and start a new one include that

- You’re ready to begin developing a new idea
- You want to emphasize a point by setting it apart
- You’re getting ready to continue discussing the same idea but in a different way (e.g. shifting from comparison to contrast)
- You notice that your current paragraph is getting too long (more than three-fourths of a page or so), and you think your writers will need a visual break

Some signals that you may want to combine paragraphs include that

- You notice that some of your paragraphs appear to be short and choppy
- You have multiple paragraphs on the same [topic](#)
- You have undeveloped material that needs to be united under a clear [topic](#)

Finally, paragraph number is a lot like paragraph length. You may have been asked in the past to write a five-paragraph essay. There’s nothing inherently wrong with a five-paragraph essay, but just like sentence length and paragraph length, the number of paragraphs in an essay depends upon what’s needed to get the job done. There’s

really no way to know that until you start writing. So try not to worry too much about the proper length and number of things. Just start writing and see where the essay and the paragraphs take you. There will be plenty of time to sort out the organization in the [revision](#) process. You're not trying to fit pegs into holes here. You're letting your ideas unfold. Give yourself—and them—the space to let that happen.

Attributions

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4.5 Transitions: Developing Relationships between Ideas

MONIQUE BABIN, CAROL BURNELL, SUSAN PESZNECKER, NICOLE ROSEVEAR, JAIME WOOD

Transitioning

So you have a main idea, and you have supporting ideas, but how can you be sure that your readers will understand the relationships between them? How are the ideas tied to each other? One way to emphasize these relationships is through the use of clear *transitions* between ideas. Like every other part of your essay, transitions have a job to do. They form logical connections between the ideas presented in an essay or paragraph, and they give readers clues that reveal how you want them to think about (process, organize, or use) the topics presented.

Why are Transitions Important?

Transitions signal the order of ideas, highlight relationships, unify concepts, and let readers know what's coming next or remind them about what's already been covered. When instructors or peers comment that your writing is choppy, abrupt, or needs to “flow better,” those are some signals that you might need to work on building some better transitions into your writing. If a reader comments that she's not sure how something relates to your [thesis](#) or main idea, a transition is probably the right tool for the job.

When Is the Right Time to Build in Transitions?

There's no right answer to this question. Sometimes transitions occur spontaneously, but just as often (or maybe even more often) good transitions are developed in [revision](#). While drafting, we often write what we think, sometimes without much reflection about how the ideas fit together or relate to one another. If your thought process jumps around a lot (and that's okay), it's more likely that you will need to pay careful attention to reorganization and to providing solid transitions as you revise.

When you're working on building transitions into an essay, consider the essay's overall organization. Consider using reverse outlining and other organizational strategies presented in this [text](#) to identify key ideas in your essay and to get a clearer look at how the ideas can be best organized. See the “[Reverse Outlining](#)” section in the

“Revision” portion of this [text](#), for a great strategy to help you assess what’s going on in your essay and to help you see what topics and organization are developing. This can help you determine where transitions are needed.

Let’s take some time to consider the importance of transitions at the sentence level and transitions between paragraphs.

Sentence-Level Transitions

Transitions between sentences often use “connecting words” to emphasize relationships between one sentence and another. A friend and coworker suggests the “something old something new” approach, meaning that the idea behind a transition is to introduce *something new* while connecting it to *something old* from an earlier point in the essay or paragraph. Here are some examples of ways that writers use connecting words (highlighted with red [text](#) and italicized) to show connections between ideas in adjacent sentences:

To Show Similarity

When I was growing up, my mother taught me to say “please” and “thank you” as one small way that I could show appreciation and respect for others. *In the same way*, I have tried to impress the importance of manners on my own children.

Other connecting words that show similarity include *also*, *similarly*, and *likewise*.

To Show Contrast

Some scientists take the existence of black holes for granted; *however*, in 2014, a physicist at the University of North Carolina claimed to have mathematically proven that they do not exist.

Other connecting words that show contrast include *in spite of*, *on the other hand*, *in contrast*, and *yet*.

To Exemplify

The cost of college tuition is higher than ever, so students are becoming increasingly motivated to keep costs as low as possible. *For example*, a rising number of students are signing up to spend their first two years at a less costly community college before transferring to a more expensive four-year school to finish their degrees.

Other connecting words that show example include *for instance*, *specifically*, and *to illustrate*.

To Show Cause and Effect

Where previously painters had to grind and mix their own dry pigments with linseed oil inside their studios, in the 1840s, new innovations in pigments allowed paints to be premixed in tubes. *Consequently*, this new technology facilitated the practice of painting outdoors and was a crucial tool for impressionist painters, such as Monet, Cezanne, Renoir, and Cassatt.

Other connecting words that show cause and effect include *therefore*, *so*, and *thus*.

To Show Additional Support

When choosing a good trail bike, experts recommend 120–140 millimeters of suspension travel; that’s the amount that the frame or fork is able to flex or compress. *Additionally*, they recommend a 67–69 degree head-tube angle, as a steeper head-tube angle allows for faster turning and climbing.

Other connecting words that show additional support include *also*, *besides*, *equally important*, and *in addition*.

A Word of Caution

Single-word or short-phrase transitions can be helpful to signal a shift in ideas within a paragraph, rather than between paragraphs (see the discussion below about transitions between paragraphs). But it’s also important to understand that these types of transitions shouldn’t be frequent within a paragraph. As with anything else that happens in your writing, they should be used when they feel natural and feel like the right choice. Here are some examples to help you see the difference between transitions that feel like they occur naturally and transitions that seem forced and make the paragraph awkward to read:

Too Many Transitions: The Impressionist painters of the late 19th century are well known for their visible brush strokes, for their ability to convey a realistic sense of light, and for their everyday subjects portrayed in outdoor settings. *In spite of this fact*, many casual admirers of their work are unaware of the scientific innovations that made it possible this movement in art to take place. *Then*, In 1841, an American painter named John Rand invented the collapsible paint tube. *To illustrate the importance of this invention*, pigments previously had to be ground and mixed in a fairly complex process that made it difficult for artists to travel with them. *For example*, the mixtures were commonly stored in pieces of pig bladder to keep the paint from drying out. *In addition*, when working with their palettes, painters had to puncture the bladder, squeeze out some paint, and then mend the bladder again to keep the rest of the paint mixture from drying out. *Thus*, Rand’s collapsible tube freed the painters from these cumbersome and messy processes, allowing artists to be more mobile and to paint in the open air.

Subtle Transitions that Aid Reader Understanding: The Impressionist painters of the late 19th century are well known for their visible brush strokes, for their ability to convey a realistic sense of light, for their everyday subjects portrayed in outdoor settings. *However*, many casual admirers of their work are unaware of the scientific innovations that made it possible for this movement in art to take place. In 1841, an American painter named John Rand invented the collapsible paint tube. *Before this invention*, pigments had to be ground and mixed in a fairly complex process that made it difficult for artists to travel with them. The mixtures were commonly stored in pieces of pig bladder to keep the paint from drying out. When working with their palettes, painters had to puncture the bladder, squeeze out some paint, and then mend the bladder again to keep the rest of the paint mixture from drying out. Rand’s collapsible tube freed the painters from these cumbersome and messy processes, allowing artists to be more mobile and to paint in the open air.

Transitions between Paragraphs and Sections

It’s important to consider how to emphasize the relationships not just between sentences but also between

paragraphs in your essay. Here are a few strategies to help you show your readers how the main ideas of your paragraphs relate to each other and also to your [thesis](#).

Use Signposts

Signposts are words or phrases that indicate where you are in the process of organizing an idea; for example, signposts might indicate that you are introducing a new concept, that you are summarizing an idea, or that you are concluding your thoughts. Some of the most common signposts include words and phrases like *first*, *then*, *next*, *finally*, *in sum*, and *in conclusion*. Be careful not to overuse these types of transitions in your writing. Your readers will quickly find them tiring or too obvious. Instead, think of more creative ways to let your readers know where they are situated within the ideas presented in your essay. You might say, “The first problem with this practice is...” Or you might say, “The next thing to consider is...” Or you might say, “Some final thoughts about this [topic](#) are....”

Use Forward-Looking Sentences at the End of Paragraphs

Sometimes, as you conclude a paragraph, you might want to give your readers a hint about what’s coming next. For example, imagine that you’re writing an essay about the benefits of trees to the environment and you’ve just wrapped up a paragraph about how trees absorb pollutants and provide oxygen. You might conclude with a forward-looking sentence like this: “Trees benefits to local air quality are important, but surely they have more to offer our communities than clean air.” This might conclude a paragraph (or series of paragraphs) and then prepare your readers for additional paragraphs to come that cover the topics of trees’ shade value and ability to slow water evaporation on hot summer days. This transitional strategy can be tricky to employ smoothly. Make sure that the conclusion of your paragraph doesn’t sound like you’re leaving your readers hanging with the introduction of a completely new or unrelated [topic](#).

Use Backward-Looking Sentences at the Beginning of Paragraphs

Rather than concluding a paragraph by looking forward, you might instead begin a paragraph by looking back. Continuing with the example above of an essay about the value of trees, let’s think about how we might begin a new paragraph or section by first taking a moment to look back. Maybe you just concluded a paragraph on the [topic](#) of trees’ ability to decrease soil erosion and you’re getting ready to talk about how they provide habitats for urban wildlife. Beginning the opening of a new paragraph or section of the essay with a backward-looking transition might look something like this: “While their benefits to soil and water conservation are great, the value that trees provide to our urban wildlife also cannot be overlooked.”

Evaluate Transitions for Predictability or Conspicuousness

Finally, the most important thing about transitions is that you don’t want them to become repetitive or too obvious. Reading your draft aloud is a great [revision](#) strategy for so many reasons, and revising your essay for transitions is no exception to this rule. If you read your essay aloud, you’re likely to hear the areas that sound choppy or abrupt. This can help you make note of areas where transitions need to be added. Repetition is another problem that can be easier to spot if you read your essay aloud. If you notice yourself using the same transitions over and over again, take time to find some alternatives. And if the transitions frequently stand out as you read aloud, you

may want to see if you can find some subtler strategies.



Exercise: Try Out Some New Transition Strategies

Choose an essay or piece of writing, either that you're currently working on, or that you've written in the past. Identify your major topics or main ideas. Then, using this chapter, develop at least three examples of sentence-level transitions and at least two examples of paragraph-level transitions. Share and discuss with your classmates in small groups, and choose one example of each type from your group to share with the whole class. If you like the results, you might use them to revise your writing. If not, try some other strategies.



4.5 Transitions: *Developing Relationships between Ideas* by [Monique Babin](#), [Carol Burnell](#), [Susan Pesznecker](#), [Nicole Rosevear](#), [Jaime Wood](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](#), except where otherwise noted.

4.6 Tone, Voice, and Point of View

MONIQUE BABIN, CAROL BURNELL, SUSAN PESZNECKER, NICOLE ROSEVEAR, JAIME WOOD

Tone, Voice, and Point of View

Yo! Wassup?

Hey, how you doin'?

Hello, how are you today?

Which of the above greetings sounds most formal? Which sounds the most informal? What causes the change in [tone](#)?

Your voice can't actually be heard when you write, but it can be conveyed through the words you choose, the order you place them in, and the point of view from which you write. When you decide to write something for a specific audience, you often know instinctively what [tone](#) of voice will be most appropriate for that audience: serious, professional, funny, friendly, neutral, etc.

For a discussion of analyzing an author's point of view when reading a [text](#), see [Point of View](#) in the "Writing about Texts" section.

What is point of view, and how do I know which one to use?

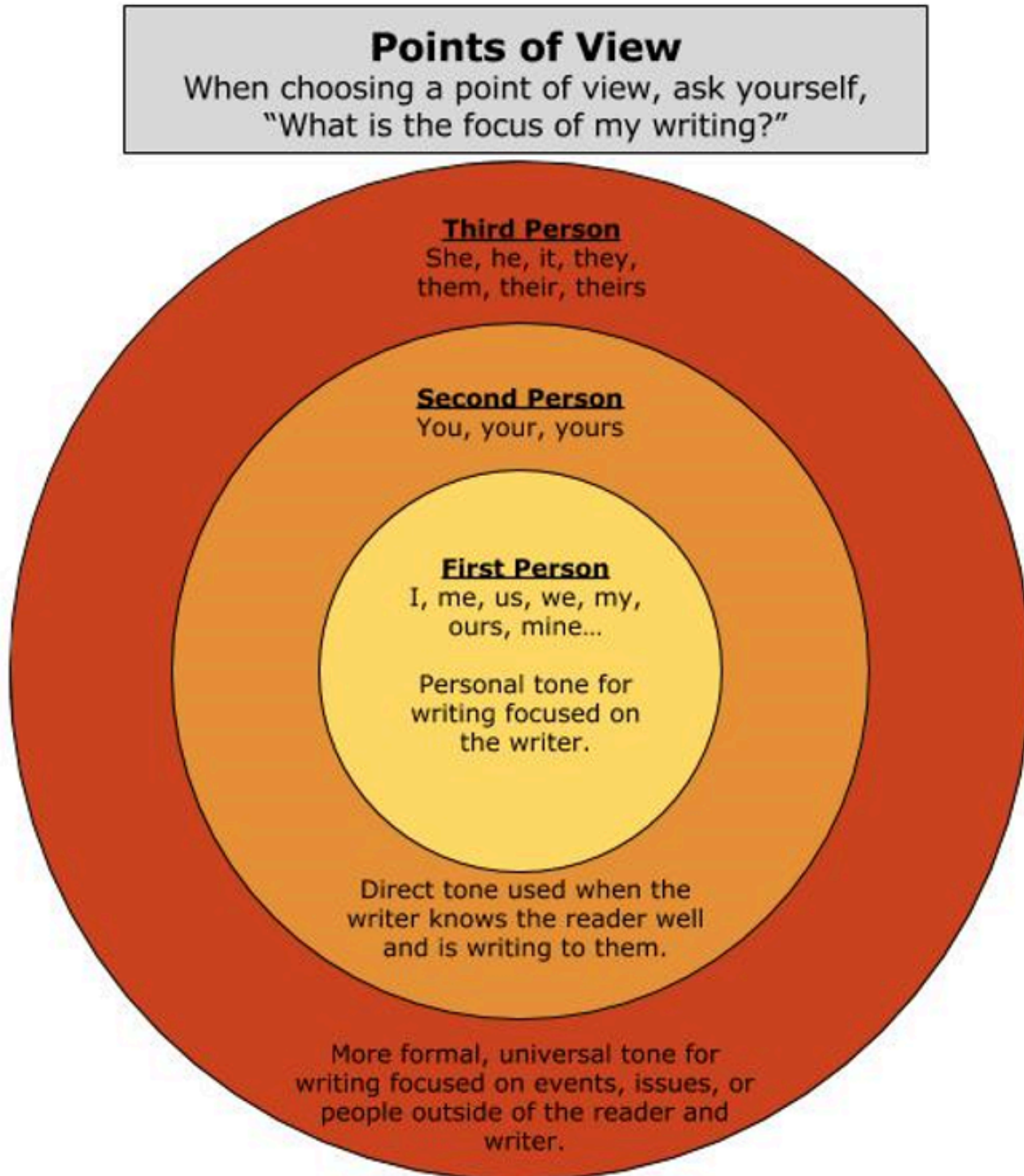
Point of view can be tricky, so this is a good question. Point of view is the perspective from which you're writing, and it dictates what your focus is. Consider the following examples:

- I love watching the leaves change in the fall. (First person point of view)
- You will love watching the leaves change color. (Second person)
- The leaves in fall turn many vibrant colors. (Third person)

Which of the above sentences focuses most clearly on the leaves? Third person, right? The first person sentence focuses on what "I" love and the second person sentence focuses on what "you" will love.

- **First person** uses the following pronouns: I, me, my, us, we, myself, our, ours.... Any words that include the speaker/writer turn the sentence into first person.
- **Second person** uses any form of the word “you,” which has the effect of addressing the reader.
- **Third person** uses pronouns like he, she, it, they, them.... Any words that direct the reader to a person or thing that is not the writer or reader turn the sentence into third person.

That’s a lot to think about. When is it okay to use each of these points of view?



Many of your college instructors will ask you to write in third person only and will want you to avoid first or second person. Why do you think that is? One important reason is that third person point of view focuses on a person or **topic** outside yourself or the reader, making it the most professional, academic, and **objective** way to write. The goal of third person point of view is to remove personal, subjective **bias** from your writing, at least in theory. Most of the writing you will do in college will require you to focus on ideas, people, and issues outside yourself, so third person will be the most appropriate. This point of view also helps your readers stay focused on the **topic** instead of thinking about you or themselves.

The best answer to your question is that the point of view you choose to write in will depend on your audience and purpose. If your goal is to relate to your audience in a personal way about a **topic** that you have experience with, then it may be appropriate to use first person point of view to share your experience and connect with your audience.

The least commonly used point of view is second person, especially in academic writing, because most of the time you will not know your audience well enough to write directly to them. The exception is if you're writing a letter or directing your writing to a very specific group whom you know well. (Notice that I'm using second person in this paragraph to directly address you. I feel okay about doing this because I want you to do specific things, and I have a pretty good idea who my audience is: reading and writing students.) The danger of using second person is that this point of view can implicate readers in your **topic** when you don't mean to do that. If you're talking about crime rates in your city, and you write something like, "When you break into someone's house, this affects their property value," you are literally saying that the reader breaks into people's houses. Of course, that's not what you mean. You didn't intend to implicate the readers this way, but that's one possible consequence of using second person. In other words, you might accidentally say that readers have done something that they haven't or know, feel, or believe something that they don't.



Even when you intend to use third person in an academic essay, it's fine in a rough draft to write "I think that" or "I believe" and then to delete these phrases in the final draft. This is especially true for the **thesis** statement. You want to eliminate the first person from the final draft because it moves the focus—the subject and verb of the sentence—to the writer rather than the main point. That weakens the point because it focuses on the least important aspect of the sentence and also because it sounds like a disclaimer. I might say "I think" because I'm not sure, or "I believe" because I want to stress the point that this is only my opinion. Of course, it's okay to use a disclaimer if you really mean to do so, and it's also fine to use first person to render personal experience or give an anecdote.

Does anything else affect the tone of my writing?

Yes! Many times writers are so focused on the ideas they want to convey that they forget the importance of something they may never think about: sentence variety. The length of your sentences matters. If you start every sentence with the same words, readers may get bored. If all of your sentences are short and choppy, your writing may sound unsophisticated or rushed. Some short sentences are nice though. They help readers' brains catch up. This is a lot to think about while you're writing your first draft though, so I recommend saving this concern for your second or third draft.

Visit the Purdue OWL page, "[Strategies for Variation](#)" for some examples of sentence variety and exercises that will improve your sentence variety superpowers.

4.7 Formatting Your Paper

MELANIE GAGICH

MLA and APA Documentation

There are many types of documentation styles; however, the two you will use most consistently in college writing classes are MLA and APA. You might think that it doesn't matter which one you choose...but it does. A documentation style dictates how the manuscript is formatted, the way you cite outside [sources](#) inside the [text](#) (signal phrases and parenthetical citations), the way you cite bibliographic information (Works Cited or References), and the style of writing that you use. Though each of these distinctions are important, this section focuses on helping you format your paper (or manuscript) in either MLA or APA by providing you annotated example of each option.

Modern Language Association (MLA)

The Modern Language Association began in 1883 as a “discussion and advocacy group for the study of literature and modern languages” (“[Modern Language Association](#)”). The style was created by this group in 1951 in order to provide scholars in this field with a set of shared writing and citation guidelines. MLA is mostly used in the humanities such as English and modern languages. For more help with MLA please visit the [OWL of Purdue's MLA Guide](#).

You should always use Times New Roman 12-point font (unless otherwise directed by your instructor) and one-inch margins. The entire manuscript should also be double-spaced. Below is an annotated example of other important features you should consider and include in your MLA manuscripts:

Joan Smith

Professor Jones **Be sure to spell their name correctly**

ENG 101 Section 57

11 May 2018 **After the date hit "enter" only once**

Writing as a Process: Comparing Murray, Berlin, and Fulkerson

**Indent each
paragraph by
hitting "tab"**

Seeing writing as a process connects with Donald Murray's movement away from the formalist ideology in his text, "Teach Writing as a Process Not Product." He questions and argues against the idea of product-driven writing and advocates for process-driven approaches to writing. Additionally, he places focus and importance on the student as writer. For many, this emphasis labeled him as an expressionist. For example, James Berlin critiques Murray and the ideology of expressionism in his text "Rhetoric and Ideology in the Writing Class." According to Berlin, expressionist rhetoric asks students to work alone and connect outside experiences with their self, which reinforces capitalism and individualism (729). Similarly, Fulkerson also addresses expressionism in a less caustic manner and points out that it involves the teacher being "non-directive" so that students can work issues out on their own which leads to "self-discovery" (344).

Notice the following features of writing in MLA:

The longer introductions to each text

The parenthetical citation formatting

The quotation marks around titles

Remember to use the updated version of MLA.

See the OWL of Purdue for help.

Smith 2

Works Cited

- Berlin, James. "Rhetoric and Ideology in the Writing Class." *Cross-Talk in Comp Theory: A Reader*, edited by Victor Villanueva, NCTE, 2003, pp.717-737. *Chapter from an anthology*
- Fulkerson, Richard. "Four Philosophies of Composition." *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 30, no. 4, 1979, pp. 343-348. *An article from a printed journal*
- Murny, Donald. "Teach Writing as a Process Not Product." *Cross-Talk in Comp Theory: A Reader*, edited by Victor Villanueva, NCTE, 2003, pp. 3-6. *Chapter from an anthology*

Works Cited Info:

Works Cited receives its own page. It is part of your essay, not separate.

Use hanging indents.

Alphabetize the Works Cited Entries.

Italicize the publication (journal, book, website, magazine, etc.)

Place quotation marks around the title and use title caps.

American Psychological Association (APA)

The American Psychological Association, established in 1892, is “the largest scientific and professional organization of psychologists in the United States” with approximately 117,000 members (“[American Psychological Association](#)”). The American Psychological Association created their style guide in 1929 and is most often used in the social sciences such as psychology, education, and linguistics. Scholars in English rarely use APA; however, scholars in the field of Composition and Rhetoric do. For more help with APA please visit the [OWL of Purdue’s APA Guide](#).

You should always use Times New Roman, 12 point font, and one-inch margins. The entire manuscript should also be double spaced. Below is an annotated example of other important features you should consider and include in your APA manuscripts:

Running head: REVIEWING THE STUDY OF MOTIVATION

1

Running head is placed only on the title page

Use ALL CAPS in the header
Keep the header on one line
abbreviate the title, if needed

Each page should be numbered

Joan Smith

Reviewing the Study of Motivation in Second Language Acquisition

Full Title

University

Place your university affiliation here

REVIEWING THE STUDY OF MOTIVATION

Remove "Running head" from header

2

Reviewing the Study of Motivation in Second Language Acquisition

Full title is centered

The
introduction
begins

Broadly speaking, motivation helps to predict language-learning success (Gass et al. p.

453); however, the contextualization of motivational studies includes a shift from the socio-educational model to models that involve both the identities of the speaker and recognition of the globalization of language available because of digital technologies (Dörnyei, 2009; Ushioda, 2010; Lamb, 2004). There have been revision and extension of concepts and definitions, which

Notice the
change in
parenthetical
citations

aid in the creation of a framework for researchers studying the effects of motivation on second language learners and developing hypotheses regarding which types of motivational strategies aid in the most student success (Betzans and Gardner, 2008; Carrió-Pastor and Mestre Mestre, 2013). This paper explores the socio-educational model and definitions of concepts within it

(Gardner, 1985), shows how problems associated with the model led to the L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei, 2009), and lends credit to the notion that revisions and extensions of the

The writing is concise

definitions create spaces and frameworks for further research in the study of motivation.

No quotation marks around titles or use of file caps

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Chapter 5: Writing a Summary and Synthesizing

5.1 Writing Summaries

MELANIE GAGICH

What is a summary?

A summary is a comprehensive and **objective** restatement of the main ideas of a **text** (an article, book, movie, event, etc.) Stephen Wilhoit, in his textbook *A Brief Guide to Writing from Readings*, suggests that keeping the qualities of a good summary in mind helps students avoid the pitfalls of unclear or disjointed summaries. These qualities include:

Neutrality – The writer avoids inserting his or her opinion into the summary, or interpreting the original **text**'s content in any way. This requires that the writer avoids language that is evaluative, such as: good, bad, effective, ineffective, interesting, boring, etc. Also, keep “I” out of the summary; instead, summary should be written in grammatical 3rd person (For example: “he”, “she”, “the author”, “they”, etc).

Brevity – The summary should not be longer than the original **text**, but rather highlight the most important information from that **text** while leaving out unnecessary details while still maintaining accuracy.

Independence – The summary should make sense to someone who has not read the original source. There should be no confusion about the main content and organization of the original source. This also requires that the summary be accurate.

By mastering the craft of summarizing, students put themselves in the position to do well on many assignments in college, not just English essays. In most fields (from the humanities to the soft and hard sciences) summary is a required task. Being able to summarize lab results accurately and briefly, for example, is critical in a chemistry or engineering class. Summarizing the various theories of sociology or education helps a person apply them to his or her fieldwork. In college, it's imperative we learn how to summarize well because we are asked to do it so often.

College students are asked to summarize material for many different types of assignments. In some instances, summarizing one source is often the sole purpose of the entire assignment. Students might also be asked to summarize as just one aspect of a larger project, such as a literature review, an abstract in a research paper, or a works consulted entry in an annotated bibliography.

Some summary assignments will expect students to condense material more than others. For example, when summary is the sole purpose of the assignment, the student might be asked to include key supporting evidence, where as an abstract might require students to boil down the source [text](#) to its bare-bones essentials.

What Makes Something a Summary?

When you ask yourself, after reading an article (and maybe even reading it two or three times), “What was that article about?” and you end up jotting down—from memory, without returning to the original article to use its language or phrases—three things that stood out as the author’s main points, you are summarizing. Summaries have several key characteristics.

You’re summarizing well when you

- use your own words
- significantly condense the original [text](#)
- provide accurate representations of the main points of the [text](#) they summarize
- avoid personal opinion.

Summaries are much shorter than the original material—a general rule is that they should be no more than 10% to 15% the length of the original, and they are often even shorter than this.

It can be easy and feel natural, when summarizing an article, to include our own opinions. We may agree or disagree strongly with what this author is saying, or we may want to compare their information with the information presented in another source, or we may want to share our own opinion on the [topic](#). Often, our opinions slip into summaries even when we work diligently to keep them separate. These opinions are not the job of a summary, though. A summary should *only* highlight the main points of the article.



Focusing on just the ideas that best support a point we want to make or ignoring ideas that don’t support that point can be tempting. This approach has two significant problems, though:

First, it no longer correctly represents the original [text](#), so it misleads your reader about the ideas presented in that [text](#). A summary should give your reader an accurate idea of what they can expect if we pick up the original article to read.

Second, it undermines your own credibility as an author to not represent this information accurately. If readers cannot trust an author to accurately represent source information, they may not be as likely to trust that author to thoroughly and accurately present a reasonable point.

How Should I Organize a Summary?

Like traditional essays, summaries have an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. What these components look like will vary some based on the purpose of the summary you’re writing. The introduction, body, and conclusion of work focused specifically around summarizing something is going to be a little different than in work where summary is not the primary goal.

Introducing a Summary

One of the trickier parts of creating a summary is making it clear that this is a summary of someone else’s work; these ideas are not your original ideas. You will almost always begin a summary with an introduction to the author, article, and publication so the reader knows what we are about to read. This information will appear again in your bibliography, but is also useful here so the reader can follow the conversation happening in your paper. You will want to provide it in both places.

In summary-focused work, this introduction should accomplish a few things:

- Introduce the name of the author whose work you are summarizing.
- Introduce the title of the **text** being summarized.
- Introduce where this **text** was presented (if it’s an art installation, where is it being shown? If it’s an article, where was that article published? Not all texts will have this component—for example, when summarizing a book written by one author, the title of the book and name of that author are sufficient information for your readers to easily locate the work you are summarizing).
- State the main ideas of the **text** you are summarizing—just the big-picture components.
- Give **context** when necessary. Is this **text** responding to a current event? That might be important to know. Does this author have specific qualifications that make them an expert on this **topic**? This might also be relevant information.

So, for example, if you were to get an assignment asking you to summarize Matthew Hutson’s *Atlantic* article, “**Beyond the Five Senses**” (found at www.theatlantic.com) an introduction for that summary might look something like this:

In his July 2017 article in *The Atlantic*, “Beyond the Five Senses,” Matthew Hutson explores ways in which potential technologies might expand our sensory perception of the world. He notes that some technologies, such as cochlear implants, are already accomplishing a version of this for people who do not have full access to one of the five senses. In much of the article, though, he seems more interested in how technology might expand the ways in which we sense things. Some of these technologies are based in senses that can be seen in nature, such as echolocation, and others seem more deeply rooted in science fiction. However, all of the examples he gives consider how adding new senses to the ones we already experience might change how we perceive the world around us.

However, you will probably find yourself more frequently using summary as just one component of work with a wide range of goals (not just a goal to “summarize X”).

Summary introductions in these situations still generally need to

- name the author
- name the **text** being summarized
- state just the relevant **context**, if there is any (maybe the author has a specific credential that makes their work on this **topic** carry more weight than it would otherwise, or maybe the study they generated is now being used as a benchmark for additional research)
- introduce the author’s full name (first and last names) the first time you summarize part of their **text**. If you summarize pieces of the same **text** more than once in a work you are writing, each time you use their **text** after that initial introduction of the source, you will only use the author’s last name as you introduce that next summary component.

Presenting the “Meat” (or Body) of a Summary

Again, this will look a little different depending on the purpose of the summary work you are doing. Regardless of how you are using summary, you will introduce the main ideas throughout your **text** with transitional phrasing, such as “One of [Author’s] biggest points is...,” or “[Author’s] primary concern about this solution is...”

If you are responding to a “write a summary of X” assignment, the body of that summary will expand on the main ideas you stated in the introduction of the summary, although this will all still be very condensed compared to the original. What are the key points the author makes about each of those big-picture main ideas? Depending on the kind of **text** you are summarizing, you may want to note how the main ideas are supported (although, again, be careful to avoid making your own opinion about those supporting **sources** known).

When you are summarizing with an end goal that is broader than just summary, the body of your summary will still present the idea from the original **text** that is relevant to the point you are making (condensed and in your own words).

Since it is much more common to summarize just a single idea or point from a **text** in this type of summarizing (rather than all of its main points), it is important to make sure you understand the larger points of the original **text**. For example, you might find that an article provides an example that opposes its main point in order to demonstrate the range of conversations happening on the **topic** it covers. This opposing point, though, isn’t the main point of the article, so just summarizing this one opposing example would not be an accurate representation of the ideas and points in that **text**.

Concluding a Summary

For writing in which summary is the sole purpose, here are some ideas for your conclusion.

- Now that we’ve gotten a little more information about the main ideas of this piece, are there any connections or loose ends to tie up that will help your reader fully understand the points being made in this **text**? This is the place to put those.
- This is also a good place to state (or restate) the things that are most important for your readers to remember after reading your summary.

- Depending on your assignment, rather than providing a formal concluding paragraph where you restate the main points and make connections between them, you may want to simply paraphrase the author’s concluding section or final main idea. Check your assignment sheet to see what kind of conclusion your instructor is asking for.

When your writing has a primary goal other than summary, your conclusion should

- discuss the summary you’ve just presented. How does it support, illustrate, or give new information about the point you are making in your writing? Connect it to your own main point for that paragraph so readers understand clearly why it deserves the space it takes up in your work. (Note that this is still not giving your opinion on the material you’ve summarized, just making connections between it and your own main points.)

Attributions

This chapter contains material from “The Word on College Reading and Writing” by [Monique Babin](#), [Carol Burnell](#), [Susan Pesznecker](#), [Nicole Rosevear](#), [Jaime Wood](#), [OpenOregon Educational Resources](#), [Higher Education Coordination Commission: Office of Community Colleges and Workforce Development](#) is licensed under [CC BY-NC 4.0](#)

5.2 Moving from Summary to Synthesis

YVONNE BRUCE AND MELANIE GAGICH

Synthesis as Conversation

To **synthesize** is to combine ideas and create a completely *new* idea. That new idea becomes the conclusion you have drawn from your reading. This is the true beauty of reading: it causes us to weigh ideas, to compare, judge, think, and explore—and then to arrive at a moment that we hadn’t known before. We begin with simple **summary**, work through **analysis**, evaluate using **critique**, and then move on to **synthesis**.

How do you synthesize?

Synthesis is defined above, but how do you do it? It’s common skill we practice all the time when we converse with others about topics we have different levels of knowledge and feeling about. When you argue with your friends or classmates about a controversial **topic** like abortion or affirmative action or gun control, your overall understanding of the **topic** grows as you incorporate their ideas, experiences, and points of view into a broader appreciation of the complexities involved. In professional and academic writing, synthesizing requires you to seek out this kind of multi-leveled understanding through reading, research, and discussion.

What **synthesis** is NOT

Synthesizing does not mean summarizing everyone’s opinion: “Julia is pro-life, and Devon is pro-choice, and Jasmine says she thinks women should be able to have abortions if their life is in danger or they’ve been the victims of rape or incest.”

Synthesizing does not mean critiquing opinions: “Rick tried to defend affirmative action, but everyone knows it’s really reverse racism.”

What **synthesis** is

Instead, **synthesis** demonstrates YOUR full, **objective**, empathetic understanding of a **topic** from multiple perspectives. When you synthesize, you “cook” the ideas and opinions of others by thinking, talking, and writing about them, and what comes out is a dish full of many blended flavors but uniquely your recipe:

“Because feelings about gun control are so strong on all sides, and because outlawing semi-automatic weapons will not solve the problem of illegal handguns that are implicated in most gun crimes in the United States, any solution to the problem of our gun violence will likely require greater efforts to reduce illegal weapons, greater responsibility taken by gun manufacturers, and better enforcement of existing legislation rather than new legislation or constitutional change.”

Notice that this [synthesis](#) does not crouch behind limited and thoughtless positions: “You can’t change the Second Amendment!” “Ban all guns!” This [synthesis](#) instead tries to depict hard reality: guns are an integral part of American culture, and so is gun violence, and limiting the latter can’t be done without impacting the former. This [synthesis](#) reserves judgment and aims for understanding.

The next section, 5.3, “[Synthesizing in Your Writing](#),” gives you concrete examples of how to use [synthesis](#) to support your individual interpretation of a [topic](#).

Read More

For a more in-depth explanation of what [synthesis](#) writing is, what its goals are and how you can approach [synthesis](#), visit the *Writing Commons* article “[Identifying a Conversation](#)”

Synthesis as Writing Genre

Why do we seek to understand the ways that authors or [sources](#) “converse” with one another? So that we can **synthesize** various perspectives on a [topic](#) to more deeply understand it.

In academic writing, this understanding of the “conversation” may become the content of an explanatory [synthesis](#) paper – a paper in which you, the writer, point out various various themes or key points from a conversation on a particular [topic](#). Notice that the example of [synthesis](#) in “What [Synthesis](#) Is” acknowledges that guns and gun control inspire passionate responses in Americans, that more than one kind of weapon is involved in gun violence, that guns in America are both legally and illegally owned, and that there are many constituencies whose experience with guns needs to be considered if sound gun-control policy is to be achieved. The writer of this [synthesis](#) isn’t “pretending” to be [objective](#) (“Although gun violence is a problem in American today, people who want to increase gun control clearly don’t understand the Second Amendment”); nor is the writer arguing a point or attempting to persuade the audience to accept one perspective. The writer is making a [claim](#) about gun control that demonstrates his or her deepest understanding of the issue.

Or, another assignment that you may complete in college is a literature review, which applies your [synthesis](#) skills. Literature reviews are often found in the beginning of scholarly journal articles. Literature reviews synthesize previous research that has been done on a particular [topic](#), summarizing important works in the history of research on that [topic](#).

- Literature reviews can be **arranged by [topic](#) or theme**, much like a traditional explanatory [synthesis](#) paper.
- Literature reviews can also be **arranged chronologically**, according to various time periods of

research on a **topic** (i.e., what was published ten years ago, five years ago, and within the last year, for example).

- Finally, literature reviews can be **arranged by discipline or field** (i.e., what is the current research being done by biologists on this **topic**? What is the current research being done by psychologists on this **topic**? What is the current research being done by [insert **academic discipline**] on this **topic**?).

A Literature Review offers *only* a report on what others have already written about. The Literature Review does not reflect the author's own argument or contributions to the field of research. Instead, it indicates that the author has read others' important contributions and understands what has come before him or her.

The Literature Review provides **context** for the author's own new research. It is the basis and background out of which the author's research grows. **Context** = credibility in academic writing. When authors have broad Literature Review, they demonstrate their credibility as researchers.



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5.3 Synthesizing in Your Writing

YVONNE BRUCE AND MELANIE GAGICH

Synthesis in Your Writing

The previous section introduces you to the idea of *synthesis* as conversation, and you are given a definition of *synthesis* throughout this *text*, but how do you indicate *synthesis* in your writing? When you synthesize, you are responding to the voices and ideas of others, so you should be as flexible in your written response to them as you would be in a verbal response to those you were having a discussion with about a complex *topic*. Primarily, your *synthesis* will indicate agreement or disagreement with your *sources*, but it may also recognize patterns of thinking, errors in logic, or the omission of important points—whatever it is you are adding to the conversation.

Synthesis that adds to the conversation in other ways:

- While most of the experts on *topic X* see overfishing as the primary cause of species depletion, only Source D acknowledges that there may be other, environmental causes.
- When I began writing about *topic X*, I expected to learn reason Y. To my surprise, none of the *sources* address this reason, which leads me to believe that . . .
- Because Source A is the expert in the field of *topic X*, most others writing about X accede to A's authority, but a closer examination of A reveals an important omission about X.

Other Examples of Sentence Structures that Demonstrate Synthesis

Synthesis that indicates agreement/support:

- Source A asserts that... Source B agrees when he or she states...
- According to both A & B...
- The combined conclusions of *sources B & C* seem to indicate that...
- The evidence shows that...
- Source B is correct that...

- Source C makes a convincing case when she argues...
- I agree with Source A's conclusion that...

Synthesis that indicates disagreement/conflict:

- Source A asserts that...Yet Source B offers a different perspective by...
- Source C & B would likely disagree regarding...
- My view, however, contrary to what Source A has argued, is...
- I argue that X & Y are the best solution, though Source B offers a different option.
- In contrast, I would like to offer some objections to the opinions expressed by source C...
- While source A makes an intriguing argument, I would disagree...

What the above examples indicate is that **synthesis** is the careful weaving in of outside opinions in order to show your reader the many ideas and arguments on your **topic** and further assert your own. Notice, too, that the above examples are also *signal phrases*: language that introduces outside source material to be either quoted or paraphrased. See [section 9.4](#) for more information on signal phrases and attributive tags.

Chapter 6: Thinking and Analyzing Rhetorically

6.1 What is Rhetoric?

MELANIE GAGICH

What is Rhetoric?

The definition of rhetoric commonly used is “the art of persuasion.” Rhetoric is everywhere and can involve any kind of [text](#) including speech, written word, images, movies, documentaries, the news, etc. So it is important to understand how to navigate the murky waters of persuasion and rhetoric.

The [OWL of Purdue](#) section “A Review of Rhetoric: From ‘Persuasion’ to ‘Identification’” clearly describes some of the intricacies of rhetoric in the following passage:

[...] Aristotle defined rhetoric as “an ability, in each particular case, to see the available means of persuasion” (Aristotle *Rhetoric* I.1.2, Kennedy 37). Since then, Aristotle’s definition of rhetoric has been reduced in many situations to mean simply “persuasion.” At its best, this simplification of rhetoric has led to a long tradition of people associating rhetoric with politicians, lawyers, or other occupations noted for persuasive speaking. At its worst, the simplification of rhetoric has led people to assume that rhetoric is merely something that manipulative people use to get what they want (usually regardless of moral or ethical concerns).

However, over the last century or so, the academic definition and use of “rhetoric” has evolved to include any situation in which people consciously communicate with each other. In brief, individual people tend to perceive and understand just about everything differently from one another (this difference varies to a lesser or greater degree depending on the situation, of course). This expanded perception has led a number of more contemporary rhetorical philosophers to suggest that rhetoric deals with more than just persuasion. Instead of just persuasion, rhetoric is the set of methods people use to *identify* with each other—to encourage each other to understand things from one another’s perspectives (see Burke 25). From interpersonal relationships to international peace treaties, the capacity to understand or modify another’s perspective is one of the most vital abilities that humans have. Hence, understanding rhetoric in terms of “identification” helps us better communicate and evaluate all such situations.

Why Do I Need to Think Rhetorically?

A rhetorical analysis asks you to “examine the interactions between a **text**, an author, and an audience.” However, before you can begin the analysis you must first understand the historical **context** of the **text** and the rhetorical situation.

To locate a **text**’s historical **context**, you must determine where in history the **text** is situated—was it written in the past five years? Ten? One hundred? You should think about how that might affect the information being delivered. Once you determine the background of the **text**, you should determine the rhetorical situation (i.e. who, what, when, where, why). The following questions may help:

- What is the **topic** of the **text**?
- Who is the author? What are the author’s credentials, what sort of experiences has he or she had? How do his or her credentials, or lack of, connect (or not) with the **topic** of the **text**?
- Who is the target audience? Who did the author have in mind when he or she created the **text**?
- Who is the unintended audience? Are they related in anyway to the target audience?
- What was the occasion, historical **context**, or setting? What was happening during the time period when the **text** was produced? Where was the **text** distributed or published?
- How does the **topic** relate to the author, audience, and occasion?
- What is the author’s purpose? Why did he or she create the **text**?
- In what medium was the **text** originally produced?

Meaning can change based on when, where, and why a **text** was produced and meaning can change depending on who reads the **text**. Rhetorical situations affect the meaning of a **text** because it may have been written for a specific audience, in a specific place, and during a specific time. An important part of the rhetorical situation is audience and since many of the articles were not written with you, a college student in a college writing class, in mind, the meaning you interpret or recognize might be different from the author’s original target audience. For example, if you read an article about higher education written in 2016, then you, the reader, are connected with and understand the **context** of the **topic**. However, if you were asked to read a **text** about higher education written in 1876, you would probably have a hard time understanding and connecting to it because you are not the target audience and the **text**’s **context** (or rhetorical situation) has changed.

Further, the occasion for writing might be very different, too. Articles or scholarly works that are at least five years old or older, may include out of date references and may not represent relevant or accurate information (e.g. think of the change regarding gay marriage in the past few years). Older works require that you investigate significant historical moments or changes that have occurred since the writing of **text**.

Targeted audience, occasion, and the date, site, and medium of publication will all affect the way you, the reader, read a **text**. Therefore, it is your duty as a thoughtful reader to research these aspects in order to fully understand and conceptualize the **text**’s rhetorical situation. Furthermore, even though you might not be a member of the targeted audience or perhaps might not have even been alive during the production of a **text**, that does not mean

that you cannot recognize rhetorical moves within it. We will examine the aspects of the rhetorical situation in the following section.

6.2 What is the Rhetorical Situation?

ROBIN JEFFREY, EMILIE ZICKEL

A key component of rhetorical analysis involves thinking carefully about the “rhetorical situation” of a **text**. You can think of the rhetorical situation as the **context** or set of circumstances out of which a **text** arises. Any time anyone is trying to make an argument, one is doing so out of a particular **context**, one that influences and shapes the argument that is made. When we do a rhetorical analysis, we look carefully at how the the rhetorical situation (**context**) shapes the rhetorical act (the **text**).

We can understand the concept of a rhetorical situation if we examine it piece by piece, by looking carefully at the rhetorical concepts from which it is built. The philosopher Aristotle organized these concepts as author, audience, setting, purpose, and **text**. Answering the questions about these rhetorical concepts below will give you a good sense of your **text**’s rhetorical situation – the starting point for rhetorical analysis.

We will use the example of President Trump’s inaugural address (the **text**) to sift through these questions about the rhetorical situation (**context**).

Author

The “author” of a **text** is the creator – the person who is communicating in order to try to effect a change in his or her audience. An author doesn’t have to be a single person or a person at all – an author could be an organization. To understand the rhetorical situation of a **text**, one must examine the identity of the author and his or her background.

- What kind of experience or authority does the author have in the subject about which he or she is speaking?
- What values does the author have, either in general or with regard to this particular subject?
- How invested is the author in the **topic** of the **text**? In other words, what affects the author’s perspective on the **topic**?
- *Example of author analysis for the rhetorical situation: (President Trump’s Inaugural Address)
President Trump was a first-term president and someone who had not previously held political office.*

He did not yet have experience with running the country. He is, however, a wealthy businessman and had a great deal of experience in the business world. His political affiliation is with the Republican party – the conservative political party in America.

Audience

In any **text**, an author is attempting to engage an audience. Before we can analyze how effectively an author engages an audience, we must spend some time thinking about that audience. An audience is any person or group who is the intended recipient of the **text** and also the person/people the author is trying to influence. To understand the rhetorical situation of a **text**, one must examine who the intended audience is by thinking about these things:

- Who is the author addressing?
 - Sometimes this is the hardest question of all. We can get this information of “who is the author addressing” by looking at where an article is published. Be sure to pay attention to the newspaper, magazine, website, or journal title where the **text** is published. Often, you can research that publication to get a good sense of who reads that publication.
- What is the audience’s demographic information (age, gender, etc.)?
- What is/are the background, values, interests of the intended audience?
- How open is this intended audience to the author?
- What assumptions might the audience make about the author?
- In what **context** is the audience receiving the **text**?
- *Example of audience analysis for the rhetorical situation: (President Trump’s Inaugural Address)*
Inaugural addresses are delivered to “the American people”; one can assume that all Americans are the intended audience. However, Americans were divided at the moment of President Trump’s election, with some voters very happy that he was elected and others upset by it. Those opinions tended to split along party lines: Republicans tended to support Trump, whereas Democrats were critical of him. Republicans may be making the assumption that President Trump would be a great leader; Democrats were likely making the assumption that he would be a bad leader. As a candidate, President Trump (like all political candidates) spent most of his time in speeches trying to rally his base of supporters (his audience – Republican voters). In the inaugural address, he knows that his intended audience, his Republican base, is watching and listening with support. But there may be others who are watching his speech who are not a part of the intended audience, and as president, he likely wishes to engage and to reach out to even the Democrats who rejected him.

Setting

Nothing happens in a vacuum, and that includes the creation of any **text**. Essays, speeches, photos, political ads – any **text** – was written in a specific time and/or place, all of which can affect the way the **text** communicates its message. To understand the rhetorical situation of a **text**, we can identify the particular occasion or event that prompted the **text**’s creation at the particular time it was created.

- Was there a debate about the **topic** that the author of the **text** addresses? If so, what are (or were) the various perspectives within that debate?
- Did something specific occur that motivated the author to speak out?
- *Example of setting analysis for the rhetorical situation: (President Trump’s Inaugural Address): The occasion of President Trump giving this speech is his election to the presidency. All presidents are expected to give a speech at their inauguration, therefore, the newly elected President Trump was required to give one.*

Purpose

The purpose of a **text** blends the author with the setting and the audience. Looking at a **text**’s purpose means looking at the author’s motivations for creating it. The author has decided to start a conversation or join one that is already underway. Why has he or she decided to join in? In any **text**, the author may be trying to inform, to convince, to define, to announce, or to activate. Can you tell which one of those general purposes your author has?

- What is the author hoping to achieve with this **text**?
- Why did the author decide to join the “conversation” about the **topic**?
- What does the author want from their audience? What does the author want the audience to do once the **text** is communicated?
- *Example of purpose analysis for the rhetorical situation: (President Trump’s Inaugural Address): President Trump’s purpose in the inaugural address was to set the **tone** for his presidency, to share his vision with Americans, and to attempt to unite the country and prepare it for moving forward with his agenda.*

Text

In what format or medium is the **text** being made: image? written essay? speech? song? protest sign? meme? sculpture?

- What is gained by having a **text** composed in a particular format/medium?
- What limitations does that format/medium have?
- What opportunities for expression does that format/medium have (that perhaps other formats do not have?)
- *Example of **text** analysis for the rhetorical situation: (President Trump’s Inaugural Address) Inaugural addresses are expected for each president. They are delivered in Washington DC – always in the same spot. The **tone** is formal. Inaugural addresses generally lay out a vision for the incoming president’s term.*

A Note about Audience:

What is the Difference between an Audience and a Reader?

Thinking about audience can be a bit tricky. Your audience is the person or group that you intend to reach with your writing. We sometimes call this the intended audience – the group of people to whom a **text** is intentionally directed. But any **text** likely also has an unintended audience, a reader (or readers) who read it even without being the intended recipient. The reader might be the person you have in mind as you write, the audience you’re trying to reach, but they might be some random person you’ve never thought of a day in your life. You can’t always know much about random readers, but you should have some understanding of who your audience is. It’s the audience that you want to focus on as you shape your message.

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6.2 What is the Rhetorical Situation? by Robin Jeffrey, Emilie Zickel is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/), except where otherwise noted.

6.3 What is Rhetorical Analysis?

Rhetoric: The art of persuasion

Analysis: Breaking down the whole into pieces for the purpose of examination

Unlike summary, a rhetorical analysis does not only require a restatement of ideas; instead, you must recognize rhetorical moves that an author is making in an attempt to persuade his or her audience to do or to think something. In the 21st century's abundance of information, it can sometimes be difficult to discern what is a rhetorical strategy and what is simple manipulation; however, an understanding of rhetoric and rhetorical moves will help you become more savvy with the information surrounding you on a day-to-day basis. In other words, rhetorical moves can be a form of manipulation, but if one can recognize those moves, then one can be a more critical consumer of information rather than blindly accepting whatever one reads, sees, hears, etc.

The goal of a rhetorical analysis is to explain **what** is happening in the **text**, **why** the author might have chosen to use a particular move or set of rhetorical moves, and **how** those choices might affect the audience. The **text** you analyze might be explanatory, although there will be aspects of argument because you must negotiate with what the author is *trying to do* and *what you think* the author is doing. Edward P.J. Corbett observes, rhetorical analysis “is more interested in a literary work for what it *does* than for what it *is*” (qtd. in Nordqvist).

One of the elements of doing a rhetorical analysis is looking at a **text**'s rhetorical situation. The rhetorical situation is the **context** out of a which a **text** is created.

- The questions that you can use to examine a **text**'s rhetorical situation are in [Chapter 6.2](#).

Another element of rhetorical analysis is simply reading and summarizing the **text**. You have to be able to describe the basics of the author's **thesis** and main points before you can begin to analyze it.

- The questions that you can use to summarize a **text** are in [Chapter 5.1](#)

To do rhetorical analysis, you will connect the rhetorical situation to the **text**. You will go beyond summarizing and instead look at how the author shapes his or her **text** based on its **context**. In developing your reading and analytical skills, allow yourself to think about what you're reading, to question the **text** and your responses to it, as you read. Use the following questions to help you to take the **text** apart—dissecting it to see how it works:

- **Does the author successfully support the thesis or claim?** Is the point held consistently throughout the **text**, or does it wander at any point?

- **Is the evidence the author used effective for the intended audience?** How might the intended audience respond to the types of evidence that the author used to support the [thesis/claim](#)?
- **What rhetorical moves do you see the author making to help achieve his or her purpose?** Are there word choices or content choices that seem to you to be clearly related to the author’s agenda for the [text](#)?
- **Describe the [tone](#) in the piece.** Is it friendly? Authoritative? Does it lecture? Is it biting or sarcastic? Does the author use simple language, or is it full of jargon? Does the language feel positive or negative? Point to aspects of the [text](#) that create the [tone](#); spend some time examining these and considering how and why they work. (Learn more about [tone](#) in Section 4.5 “[Tone, Voice, and Point of View](#).”)
- **Is the author [objective](#), or does he or she try to convince you to have a certain opinion?** Why does the author try to persuade you to adopt this viewpoint? If the author is biased, does this interfere with the way you read and understand the [text](#)?
- **Do you feel like the author knows who you are?** Does the [text](#) seem to be aimed at readers like you or at a different audience? What assumptions does the author make about their audience? Would most people find these reasonable, acceptable, or accurate?
- **Does the [text](#)’s flow make sense?** Is the line of reasoning logical? Are there any gaps? Are there any spots where you feel the reasoning is flawed in some way?
- **Does the author try to appeal to your emotions?** Does the author use any controversial words in the headline or the article? Do these affect your reading or your interest?
- **Do you believe the author?** Do you accept their thoughts and ideas? Why or why not?

It is also a good idea to revisit [Section 2.3 “How to Read Rhetorically.”](#) This chapter will compliment the rhetorical questions listed above and help you clearly determine the [text](#)’s rhetorical situation.

Once you have done this basic, rhetorical, critical reading of your [text](#), you are ready to think about how the rhetorical situation ([Section 6.2](#)) – the [context](#) out of which the [text](#) arises – influences certain rhetorical appeals ([Section 6.4](#)) that appear in it.

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6.4 Rhetorical Appeals: Logos, Pathos, and Ethos Defined

MELANIE GAGICH & EMILIE ZICKEL

Rhetoric, as the previous chapters have discussed, is the way that authors use and manipulate language in order to persuade an audience. Once we understand the **rhetorical situation** out of which a **text** is created (why it was written, for whom it was written, by whom it was written, how the medium in which it was written creates certain constraints, or perhaps freedoms of expression), we can look at how all of those contextual elements shape the author's creation of the **text**.

We can look first at the classical rhetorical appeals, which are the three ways to classify authors' intellectual, moral, and emotional approaches to getting the audience to have the reaction that the author hopes for.

Rhetorical Appeals

Rhetorical appeals refer to ethos, pathos, and logos. These are classical Greek terms, dating back to Aristotle, who is traditionally seen as the father of rhetoric. To be rhetorically effective (and thus persuasive), an author must engage the audience in a variety of compelling ways, which involves carefully choosing how to craft his or her argument so that the outcome, audience agreement with the argument or point, is achieved. Aristotle defined these modes of engagement and gave them the terms that we still use today: logos, pathos, and ethos.

Logos: Appeal to Logic

Logic. Reason. Rationality. Logos is brainy and intellectual, cool, calm, collected, **objective**.

When an author relies on logos, it means that he or she is using logic, careful structure, and **objective** evidence to appeal to the audience. An author can appeal to an audience's intellect by using information that can be fact checked (using multiple **sources**) and thorough explanations to support key points. Additionally, providing a solid and non-biased explanation of one's argument is a great way for an author to invoke logos.

For example, if I were trying to convince my students to complete their homework, I might explain that I understand everyone is busy and they have other classes (non-biased), but the homework will help them

get a better grade on their test (explanation). I could add to this explanation by providing statistics showing the number of students who failed and didn't complete their homework versus the number of students who passed and did complete their homework (factual evidence).

Logical appeals rest on rational modes of thinking, such as

- **Comparison** – a comparison between one thing (with regard to your **topic**) and another, similar thing to help support your **claim**. It is important that the comparison is fair and valid – the things being compared must share significant traits of similarity.
- **Cause/effect thinking** – you argue that X has caused Y, or that X is likely to cause Y to help support your **claim**. Be careful with the latter – it can be difficult to predict that something “will” happen in the future.
- **Deductive reasoning** – starting with a broad, general **claim**/example and using it to support a more specific point or **claim**
- **Inductive reasoning** – using several specific examples or cases to make a broad generalization
- **Exemplification** – use of many examples or a variety of evidence to support a single point
- **Elaboration** – moving beyond just including a fact, but explaining the significance or relevance of that fact
- **Coherent thought** – maintaining a well organized line of reasoning; not repeating ideas or jumping around

Pathos: Appeal to Emotions

When an author relies on pathos, it means that he or she is trying to tap into the audience's emotions to get them to agree with the author's **claim**. An author using pathetic appeals wants the audience to feel something: anger, pride, joy, rage, or happiness. For example, many of us have seen the ASPCA commercials that use photographs of injured puppies, or sad-looking kittens, and slow, depressing music to emotionally persuade their audience to donate money.

Pathos-based rhetorical strategies are any strategies that get the audience to “open up” to the **topic**, the argument, or to the author. Emotions can make us vulnerable, and an author can use this vulnerability to get the audience to believe that his or her argument is a compelling one.

Pathetic appeals might include

- **Expressive descriptions** of people, places, or events that help the reader to feel or experience those events
- **Vivid imagery** of people, places or events that help the reader to feel like he or she is seeing those events
- Sharing **personal stories** that make the reader feel a connection to, or empathy for, the person being described
- Using **emotion-laden vocabulary** as a way to put the reader into that specific emotional mindset (what is the author trying to make the audience feel? and how is he or she doing

that?)

- Using any information that will **evoke an emotional response from the audience**. This could involve making the audience feel empathy or disgust for the person/group/event being discussed, or perhaps connection to or rejection of the person/group/event being discussed.

When reading a [text](#), try to locate when the author is trying to convince the reader using emotions because, if used to excess, pathetic appeals can indicate a lack of substance or emotional manipulation of the audience. See the links below about fallacious pathos for more information.

Ethos: Appeal to Values/Trust

Ethical appeals have two facets: audience values and authorial credibility/character.

On the one hand, when an author makes an ethical appeal, he or she is attempting to **tap into the values or ideologies that the audience holds**, for example, patriotism, tradition, justice, equality, dignity for all humankind, self preservation, or other specific social, religious or philosophical values (Christian values, socialism, capitalism, feminism, etc.). These values can sometimes feel very close to emotions, but they are felt on a social level rather than only on a personal level. When an author evokes the values that the audience cares about as a way to justify or support his or her argument, we classify that as ethos. The audience will feel that the author is making an argument that is “right” (in the sense of moral “right”-ness, i.e., “My argument rests upon that values that matter to you. Therefore, you should accept my argument”). This first part of the definition of ethos, then, is focused on the audience’s values.

On the other hand, this sense of referencing what is “right” in an ethical appeal connects to the other sense of ethos: the author. Ethos that is centered on the author revolves around two concepts: the credibility of the author and his or her character.

Credibility of the speaker/author is determined by his or her knowledge and expertise in the subject at hand. For example, if you are learning about Einstein’s Theory of Relativity, would you rather learn from a professor of physics or a cousin who took two science classes in high school thirty years ago? It is fair to say that, in general, the professor of physics would have more credibility to discuss the [topic](#) of physics. To establish his or her credibility, an author may draw attention to who he or she is or what kinds of experience he or she has with the [topic](#) being discussed as an ethical appeal (i.e., “Because I have experience with this [topic](#) – and I know my stuff! – you should trust what I am saying about this [topic](#)”). Some authors do not have to establish their credibility because the audience already knows who they are and that they are credible.

Character is another aspect of ethos, and it is different from credibility because it involves personal history and even personality traits. A person can be credible but lack character or vice versa. For example, in politics, sometimes the most experienced candidates – those who might be the most credible candidates – fail to win elections because voters do not accept their character. Politicians take pains to shape their character as leaders who have the interests of the voters at heart. The candidate who successfully proves to the voters (the audience) that he or she has the type of character that they can trust is more likely to win.

Thus, ethos comes down to trust. How can the author get the audience to trust him or her so that they will accept his or her argument? How can the the author make him or herself appear as a credible speaker who embodies the character traits that the audience values?

In building ethical appeals, we see authors

- Referring either directly or indirectly to the values that matter to the intended audience (so that the audience will trust the speaker)
- Using language, phrasing, imagery, or other writing styles common to people who hold those values, thereby “talking the talk” of people with those values (again, so that the audience is inclined to trust the speaker)
- Referring to their experience and/or authority with the **topic** (and therefore demonstrating their credibility)
- Referring to their own character, or making an effort to build their character in the **text**

When reading, you should always think about the author’s credibility regarding the subject as well as his or her character. Here is an example of a rhetorical move that connects with ethos: when reading an article about abortion, the author mentions that she has had an abortion. That is an example of an ethical move because the author is creating credibility via anecdotal evidence and first person narrative. In a rhetorical analysis project, it would be up to you, the analyzer, to point out this move and associate it with a rhetorical strategy.

When writers misuse Logos, Pathos, or Ethos, arguments can be weakened

Above, we defined and described what logos, pathos, and ethos are and why authors may use those strategies. Sometimes, using a combination of logical, pathetic, and ethical appeals leads to a sound, balanced, and persuasive argument. It is important to understand, though, that using rhetorical appeals does not always lead to a sound, balanced argument.

In fact, any of the appeals could be misused or overused. When that happens, arguments can be weakened.

To see what a misuse of logical appeals might consist of, see the next chapter, [Logical Fallacies](#).

To see how authors can overuse emotional appeals and turn-off their target audience, visit the following link from [WritingCommons.org](#): [Fallacious Pathos](#).

To see how ethos can be misused or used in a manner that may be misleading, visit the following link to [WritingCommons.org](#): [Fallacious Ethos](#)

6.5 Logical Fallacies

As noted at the end of [Section 6.4](#), using ethos, pathos, and logos in an argument does not mean that the argument made is necessarily a good one. In [academia](#), especially, we care a lot about making our arguments logically sound; we care about logos. We seek to create work that is rooted in rational discourse. We seek to produce our own rational discourse. We value carefully researched, methodically crafted work. Thus, to be a strong academic writer, one should seek to avoid logical fallacies, which are flaws in reasoning.

Fallacy means false. Think of the concept of a logical fallacy as something that makes an argument problematic, open to attack, or weak. In [academic discourse](#), logical fallacies are seen as failures – as things we want to avoid.

Thinking about fallacies can be confusing because we see them all the time: in advertising, in conversation, in political discourse. Fallacies are everywhere. But as students of rhetoric, part of our job is to spend time identifying these fallacies in both our own writing and in others' as a way to avoid them.

Logical Fallacies – A Short List

1. **Generalization** – *A conclusion or judgement made from insufficient evidence.* When one piece of evidence or information is used to make a broad conclusion or statement.
2. **Cherry picking** – *Picking and choosing only some of the available evidence in order to present only points most favorable to your point of view.* If someone knowingly chooses certain (favorable) pieces of information and conveniently ignores less favorable information, then the argument is not supported by all of the available research.
3. **Straw Man** – *An oversimplification of an opposing perspective so that it becomes easy to attack.* This is unfair and illogical because when one oversimplifies or inaccurately represents an argument and refutes that oversimplified version, one is not actually addressing the argument.
4. **Red Herring** – *Changing topics to avoid the point being discussed.* This is an argument tactic in which one attempts to change the conversation, often by bringing up information that is not relevant to the [claim](#) or point being debated, in order to try to control the conversation. This can be a way to avoid having to address or answer the question at hand, and it harms the quality of an argument.
5. **Ad Hominem** – *“You are an idiot! That’s why you’re wrong!”* This type of logical fallacy occurs when an arguer attacks or insults *the person* making opposing arguments instead of attacking the ideas, the logic, or the evidence within the opposing argument itself. It is a personal attack rather than a way of engaging with someone’s ideas.

6. **Ad Populum** – “*This is about freedom and righteousness, and if you believe in those things, then you should believe my argument.*” This is an example of **misused ethos** – when the author is referencing the values that the audience cares about so that they think only about the values and not about the content of the argument (or, likely, the fact that there is little intellectual substance in what is being said).
7. **Either/or** – “*Either we intervene or we are basically no better than the Nazis.*” This is an argument that attempts to create a situation of absolutes with no options in between. This thinking is fallacious because it assumes that there are only two options, with nothing in between.
8. **Slippery Slope** – “*If we let this happen, then that will happen and then the worst possible thing will happen.*” This is a fallacy that assumes that one thing is going to have a series of consequences or effects—often leading to a worst case scenario. It is false reasoning because 1) it’s impossible to predict the future, 2) it is illogical to suggest that one action will always necessarily lead to the worst possible outcome, and 3) it assumes a very specific chain of future events. This “if we let this happen there will be some horrible end” is **misuse of cause/effect reasoning**, often with some pathos (fear) sprinkled in.

When you are reading others’ arguments, see if any of their reasoning is actually one of these fallacies of logic.

As you draft ideas for your own arguments, test each of your reasons against these definitions: have you used any of these fallacies to build your reasoning? If so, keep revising your line of reasoning!

Chapter 7: Making Academic Arguments

7.1 Arguing

What are the features of argument?

Argument is not simply the loud, assertive, unwavering statement of your opinion in the hopes of conquering the opposition. Argument is the careful consideration of numerous positions and the careful development of logically sound, carefully constructed assertions that, when combined, offer a worthwhile perspective in an ongoing debate. Certainly you want to imagine yourself arguing *with* others—and certainly you want to believe your opinion has superior qualities to theirs—but the purpose of argument in the college setting is not to solve a practical problem or shut down a conversation. Rather, it's to illuminate, expand, and further inform a debate happening on a worthwhile subject between reasonable, intelligent people. In other words, calling the opposition *stupid* is not good argument. And anyway, that's an ad hominem attack.

Some of the key tools of argument are the strategies that students are asked to consider when doing a Rhetorical Analysis. [Chapter 6](#) of this textbook covers Rhetorical Analysis extensively, and it is worth reviewing the basic concepts of [context/text](#), and logos, pathos, and ethos before beginning an argument of your own. As you plan and draft your own argument, you must carefully use the following elements of rhetoric to your own advantage as you craft your own argument:

Rhetorical Appeals

Logos

The use of logic, data/evidence, and sufficient support to establish the practicality and rationality of your ideas. To have a logically sound argument, you should include:

- A debatable and supportable [claim](#)
- Logical reasoning to support your [claim](#)
- Sound evidence and examples to justify the reasoning
- Reasonable projections
- Concessions & rebuttals
- You should avoid logical fallacies

Ethos

The ethical and well-balanced use of all of the strategies above will help you to present yourself as trustworthy and intelligent in your consideration of the [topic](#) and in the development of your argument. Another aspect of your credibility as a writer of argument, particularly in the college setting, is your attention to the needs of the audience with regard to presentation and style. In college, this means: have you used MLA if that is what the reading audience requests? Have you cited [sources](#) in the manner that your reading audience would expect?

Pathos

The use of examples and language that evoke an appropriate emotional response in your reader—that gets them to care about your [topic](#)—can be helpful in argument. For academic essays, pathos may be useful in introductory sections, concluding sections, or as ways to link various parts of the paper together. Still, college writing often puts more emphasis on logos and ethos.

Chapter [6.4](#) provides a detailed explanation of each of these rhetorical appeals. As you plan and draft your argument, look over these explanations to help you brainstorm ways to rhetorically engage your reader in a way that includes elements of logos, pathos, and ethos.

Structure

A well structured argument is one that is carefully and optimally planned. It is organized so that the argument has a fluid building of ideas, one onto the other, in order to produce the most persuasive impact or effect on the reader. You should avoid repeating ideas, reasons, or evidence. You must consider how each idea in your argument connects to the others. Should some ideas come before others? Should you build your reasons from simple to complex or from complex to simple? Should you present the counterargument before your reasons? Or, would it make more sense for you to present your reasons and then the concessions and rebuttals? How can you use clear [transitional phrases](#) to facilitate reader comprehension of your argument?

Style/ Eloquence

When we discuss style in academic writing, we generally mean the use of formal language appropriate for the academic audience and occasion. Academics generally favor Standard American English and the use of precise language that avoids idiom and cliché or dull or simple word choices.

However, some writing assignments allow you to choose your audience, and in that case, the style in which you write may not be the formal, precise Standard American English that the academy prefers. For some writing assignments, you may even be asked to use, where appropriate, poetic or figurative language or language that evokes the senses.

It is important to understand what kind of style of writing your audience expects, as delivering your argument in that style could make it more persuasive.

7.2 Basic Structure and Content of Argument

AMANDA LLOYD AND EMILIE ZICKEL

Basic Components of an Argumentative Essay

When you are tasked with crafting an argumentative essay, it is likely that you are to do so based on a number of [sources](#)—all of which should support your [topic](#) in some way. Your instructor might provide these [sources](#) for you, ask you to locate these [sources](#), or provide you with some [sources](#) and ask you to find others. Whether or not you are asked to do additional research, an argumentative essay should be comprised of these basic components.

Claim: What do you want the reader to believe?

The [thesis](#) in an argument paper is often called a [claim](#). This [claim](#) is a statement in which you take a stand on a debatable issue. A strong, debatable [claim](#) has at least one valid counterargument—an opposite or alternative point of view that is as sensible as the position that you take in your [claim](#). In your [thesis](#) statement, you should clearly and specifically state the position you will convince your audience to adopt.

A closed [thesis](#) statement includes sub-claims or reasons why you choose to support your [claim](#). For example:

- The city of Cleveland has displayed a commitment to attracting new residents by making improvements to its walkability, city centers, and green spaces.

In this instance, walkability, nightlife, and relatively inexpensive housing are the sub-claims or reasons why you would make the [claim](#) that Cleveland is attracting new residents.

An open [thesis](#) statement does not include sub-claims and might be more appropriate when your argument is less easy to prove with two or three easily-defined sub-claims. The choice between an open or a closed [thesis](#) statement often depends upon the complexity of your argument. When in doubt about how to structure your [thesis](#) statement, you should seek the advice of your instructor.

Consult [section 3.4](#) for help constructing a strong open or closed [thesis](#) statement.

Context: What background information about the topic does your audience need?

Before you get into defending your **claim**, you will need to place your **topic** (and argument) into **context** by including relevant background material. Remember, your audience is relying on you for vital information, such as definitions, historical placement, and controversial positions. This background material might appear in either your introductory paragraph/s or your body paragraphs. How and where to incorporate background material depends a lot upon your **topic**, assignment, evidence, and audience.

Evidence or Grounds: What makes your reasoning valid?

To validate the thinking that you put forward in your **claim** and sub-claims, you need to demonstrate that your reasoning is not only based on your personal opinion. Evidence, sometimes referred to as grounds, can take the form of research studies or scholarship, expert opinions, personal examples, observations made by yourself or others, or specific instances that make your reasoning seem sound and believable. Evidence only “works” if it directly supports your reasoning — and sometimes you must explain how the evidence supports your reasoning (do not assume that a reader can see the connection between evidence and reason that you see).

Section 4.3 provides a thorough overview of what evidence is and how evidence fits into body paragraphs. As you plan or draft your argument, use this chapter as a resource to help you organize ideas.

Warrants: Why should a reader accept your claim?

A warrant is the rationale the writer provides to show that the evidence properly supports the **claim**, with each element working towards a similar goal. Think of warrants as the glue that holds an argument together and ensures all pieces work together coherently.

An important way to ensure you are properly supplying warrants within your argument is to use “linking sentences” or a “link” that connects the particular **claim** directly back to the **thesis**. Ensuring that there are linking sentences in each paragraph will help to create consistency within your essay. Remember, the **thesis** statement is the driving force of organization in your essay, so each paragraph needs to have a specific purpose in proving or explaining your **thesis**; linking sentences complete this task. These linking sentences will often appear after your textual evidence in a paragraph. See **Section 4.3** for help linking supporting evidence to your **thesis**.

Counterargument: But what about other perspectives?

In **Section 10.4**, Steven Krause offers a thorough explanation of what counterargument is (and how to respond to it). In summary, a strong arguer should not be afraid to consider perspectives that either challenge or completely oppose his or her own **claim**. When you respectfully and thoroughly discuss perspectives or research that counters your own **claim** or even weaknesses in your own argument, you are showing yourself to be an ethical arguer. Here are some things that counterarguments may consist of:

- summarizing opposing views
- explaining how and where you actually agree with some opposing views

- acknowledging weaknesses or holes in your own argument

You have to be careful and clear that you are not conveying to a reader that you are rejecting your own [claim](#); it is important to indicate that you are merely open to considering alternative viewpoints. Being open in this way shows that you are an ethical arguer – you are considering many viewpoints.

Response to Counterargument: I see that, but...

Just as it is important to include counterargument to show that you are fair-minded and balanced, you must respond to the counterargument so that a reader clearly sees that you are not agreeing with the counterargument and thus abandoning or somehow undermining your own [claim](#). Failure to include the response to counterargument can confuse the reader. There are several ways to respond to a counterargument. You can:

- [concede](#) to a specific point or idea from the counterargument by explaining why that point or idea has validity. However, you must then be sure to return to your own [claim](#), and explain why even that concession does not lead you to completely accept or support the counterargument
- reject the counterargument if you find it to be incorrect, fallacious, or otherwise invalid
- explain why the counterargument perspective does not invalidate your own [claim](#)

Again, [Chapter 10.4](#) offers a much more developed discussion of how to respond to counterarguments.

A note about where to put the counterargument:

It is certainly possible to begin the argument section (after the background section) with your counterargument + response instead of placing it at the end of your essay. Some people prefer to have their counterargument first, where they can address it and then spend the rest of their essay building their own case and supporting their own [claim](#). However, it is just as valid to have the counterargument + response appear at the end of the paper, after you have discussed all of your reasons.

What is important to remember is that wherever you place your counterargument, you

- Address the counterargument(s) fully. Explain what the counter perspectives are. Describe them thoroughly. Cite authors who have these counter perspectives. Quote them and summarize their thinking.
- Then, respond to these counterarguments. Make it clear to the reader of your argument why you [concede](#) to certain points of the counterargument or why you reject them. Make it clear that you do not accept the counterargument, even though you understand it. Be sure to use transition phrases that make this clear to your reader.

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7.3 Types of Evidence in Academic Arguments

ROBIN JEFFREY AND YVONNE BRUCE

All academic writers use evidence to support their claims. However, different writing tasks in different fields require different types of evidence. Often, a combination of different types of evidence is required in order to adequately support and develop a point.

Evidence is what a writer uses to support or defend his or her argument, and only valid and credible evidence is enough to make an argument strong.

Evidence is not simply “facts.” Evidence is not simply “quotes.”

For a review of what evidence means in terms of developing body paragraphs within an essay, you can refer back to [Section 4.3](#).

As you develop your research-supported essay, consider not only what types of evidence might support your ideas but also what types of evidence will be considered valid or credible according to the [academic discipline](#) or academic audience for which you are writing.

Evidence in the Humanities: Literature, Art, Film, Music, Philosophy

- Scholarly essays that analyze original works
- Details from an image, a film, or other work of art
- Passages from a musical composition
- Passages of [text](#), including poetry

Evidence in the Humanities: History

- Primary [Sources](#) (photos, letters, maps, official documents, etc.)
- Other books or articles that interpret primary [sources](#) or other evidence.

Evidence in the Social Sciences: Psychology, Sociology, Political Science, Anthropology

- Books or articles that interpret data and results from other people’s original experiments or studies.
- Results from one’s own field research (including interviews, surveys, observations, etc.)
- Data from one’s own experiments
- Statistics derived from large studies

Evidence in the Sciences: Biology, Chemistry, Physics

- Data from the author of the paper’s own experiments
- Books or articles that interpret data and results from other people’s original experiments or studies.

What remains consistent no matter the discipline in which you are writing, however, is that “evidence” NEVER speaks for itself—you must integrate it into your own argument or [claim](#) and demonstrate that the evidence supports your [thesis](#). In addition, be alert to evidence that seems to contradict your claims or offers a counterargument to it: rebutting that counterargument can be powerful evidence for your [claim](#). You can also make evidence that isn’t *there* an integral part of your argument, too. If you can’t find the evidence you think you need, ask yourself why it seems to be lacking, or if its absence adds a new dimension to your thinking about the [topic](#). Remember, *evidence* is not the piling up of facts or quotes: evidence is only one component of a strong, well supported, well argued, and well written composition.

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7.3 Types of Evidence in Academic Arguments by [Robin Jeffrey and Yvonne Bruce](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](#), except where otherwise noted.

7.4 Counterargument and Response

ROBIN JEFFREY

Almost anything you can argue or **claim** in a persuasive paper can be refuted – and that is a good thing when you are writing an argument. Opposing points of view exist in every good debate, and it's important to anticipate possible objections to your arguments and to discuss them in your paper.

In **Chapter 10.4**, Steven Krause offers an extended explanation of what counterarguments are and, more importantly, why it is important to examine them as a way to strengthen your own arguments. If you are struggling to articulate a counterargument, if you are unsure of how counterarguments fit into to a larger persuasive work, or if you are struggling to respond to counterarguments, Krause can offer you a lot of useful information.

Below, however, is a brief overview of what counterarguments are and how you might respond to them in your arguments.

Types of counterarguments

- Could someone disagree with your **claim**? *If so, why? Explain this opposing perspective in your own argument, and then respond to it.*
- Could someone draw a different conclusion from any of the facts or examples you present? *If so, what is that different conclusion? Explain this different conclusion and then respond to it.*
- Could a reader question any of your assumptions or claims? *If so, which ones would they question? Explain and then respond.*
- Could a reader offer a different explanation of an issue? *If so, what might their explanation be? Describe this different explanation, and then respond to it.*
- Is there any evidence out there that could weaken your position? *If so, what is it? Cite and discuss this evidence and then respond to it.*

If the answer to any of these questions is yes, that does not necessarily mean that you have a weak argument. It means, ideally and as long as your argument is logical and valid, that you have a counterargument. Good

arguments can and do have counterarguments; it is important to discuss them. But you must also discuss and then respond to those counterarguments.

Responding to counterarguments

You do not need to attempt to do all of these things as a way to respond; instead, choose the response strategy that makes the most sense to you, for the counterargument that you have.

- If you agree with some of the counterargument perspectives, you can **concede** some of their points. (“I do agree that . . .”, “Some of the points made by ____ are valid. . . .”) You could then challenge the importance/usefulness of those points.
 - “However, this information does not apply to our **topic** because. . .”
- If the counterargument perspective is one that contains different evidence than you have in your own argument, you can explain why a reader should not accept the evidence that the counterarguer presents
 - For a detailed account of the various ways that evidence can fail in an argument, see Section 7.4, **how evidence fails**
- If the counterargument perspective is one that contains a different *interpretation* of evidence than you have in your own argument, you can explain why a reader should not accept the interpretation of the evidence that that your opponent (counterarguer) presents
- If the counterargument is an acknowledgement of evidence that threatens to weaken your argument, you must explain why and how that evidence does not, in fact invalidate your **claim**.

It is important to use **transitional phrases** in your paper to alert readers when you’re about to present an counterargument. It’s usually best to put this phrase at the beginning of a paragraph such as:

- Researchers have challenged these claims with. . .
- Critics argue that this view. . .
- Some readers may point to. . .
- A perspective that challenges the idea that . . .

Transitional phrases will again be useful to highlight your shift from counterargument to response:

- Indeed, some of those points are valid. However, . . .
- While I agree that . . . , it is more important to consider . . .
- These are all compelling points. Still, other information suggests that . . .
- While I understand . . . , I cannot accept the evidence because . . .

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Chapter 8: The Research Process

8.1 Developing a Research Question

EMILIE ZICKEL

“I write out of ignorance. I write about the things I don’t have any resolutions for, and when I’m finished, I think I know a little bit more about it. I don’t write out of what I know. It’s what I don’t know that stimulates me.”—Toni Morrison, author and Northeast Ohio native

Think of a research paper as an opportunity to deepen (or create!) knowledge about a **topic** that matters to you. Just as Toni Morrison states that she is stimulated by what she doesn’t yet know, a research paper assignment can be interesting and meaningful if it allows you to explore what you don’t know.

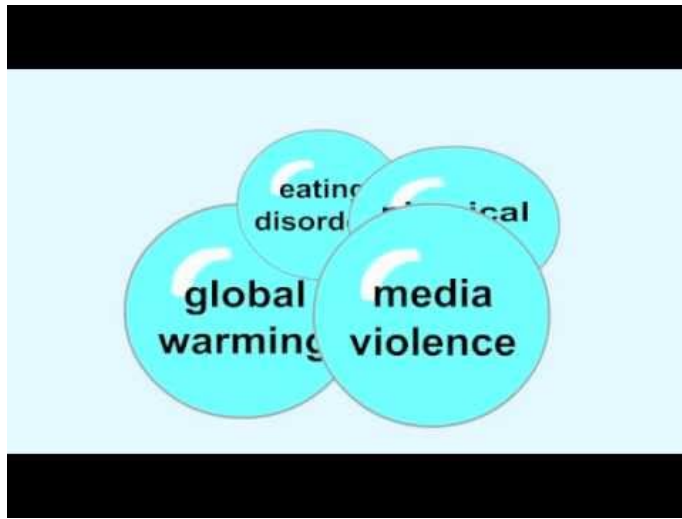
Research, at its best, is an act of knowledge *creation*, not just an extended book report. This knowledge creation is the essence of any great educational experience. Instead of being lectured at, you get to design the learning project that will ultimately result in you experiencing and then expressing your own intellectual growth. You get to read what you choose, and you get to become an expert on your **topic**.

That sounds, perhaps, like a lofty goal. But by spending some quality time brainstorming, reading, thinking or otherwise tuning into what matters to you, you can end up with a workable research **topic** that will lead you on an enjoyable research journey.

The best research topics are meaningful to you

- Choose a **topic** that you want to understand better.
- Choose a **topic** that you want to read about and devote time to
- Choose a **topic** that is perhaps a bit out of your comfort zone
- Choose a **topic** that allows you to understand others’ opinions and how those opinions are shaped.
- Choose something that is relevant to you, personally or professionally.
- Do not choose a **topic** because you think it will be “easy” – those can end up being even quite challenging

The video below offers ideas on choosing not only a **topic** that you are drawn to, but a **topic** that is realistic and manageable for a college writing class.



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Brainstorming Ideas for a Research Topic

Which question(s) below interest you? Which question(s) below spark a desire to respond? A good **topic is one that moves you to think, to do, to want to know more, to want to say more.**

There are many ways to come up with a good **topic**. The best thing to do is to give yourself time to think about what you really want to commit days and weeks to reading, thinking, researching, more reading, writing, more researching, reading and writing on.

1. What news stories do you often see, but want to know more about?
2. What (socio-political) argument do you often have with others that you would love to work on strengthening?
3. What would you love to become an expert on?
4. What are you passionate about?
5. What are you scared of?
6. What problem in the world needs to be solved?
7. What are the key controversies or current debates in the field of work that you want to go into?
8. What is a problem that you see at work that needs to be better publicized or understood?
9. What is the biggest issue facing [specific group of people: by age, by race, by gender, by ethnicity, by nationality, by geography, by economic standing? choose a group]
10. If you could interview anyone in the world, who would it be? Can identifying that person lead you to a

research **topic** that would be meaningful to you?

11. What area/landmark/piece of history in your home community are you interested in?
12. What in the world makes you angry?
13. What global problem do you want to better understand?
14. What local problem do you want to better understand?
15. Is there some element of the career that you would like to have one day that you want to better understand?
16. Consider researching the significance of a song, or an artist, or a musician, or a novel/film/short story/comic, or an art form on some aspect of the broader culture.
17. Think about something that has happened to (or is happening to) a friend or family member. Do you want to know more about this?
18. *The New York Times*' segment "**Room for Debate**" has many compelling and current questions, along with commentary from a variety of perspectives. Choose one of these questions to pursue?
19. Go to a news source (*New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Christian Science Monitor*, etc) and skim the titles of news stories. Does any story interest you?

From Topic to Research Question

Once you have decided on a research **topic**, an area for academic exploration that matters to you, it is time to start thinking about what you want to learn about that **topic**.

The goal of college level research assignments is never going to be to simply "go find **sources**" on your **topic**. Instead, think of **sources** as helping you to answer a research question or a series of research questions about your **topic**. These should not be simple questions with simple answers, but rather complex questions about which there is no easy or obvious answer.

A compelling research question is one that may involve controversy, or may have a variety of answers, or may not have any single, clear answer. All of that is okay and even desirable. If the answer is an easy and obvious one, then there is little need for argument or research.

Make sure that your research question is clear, specific, researchable and limited (but not too limited). Most of all, make sure that you are curious about your own research question. If it does not matter to you, researching it will feel incredibly boring and tedious.

The video below includes a deeper explanation of what a good research question is as well as examples of strong research questions:



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8.2 Coming Up With Research Strategies

RASHIDA MUSTAFA AND EMILIE ZICKEL

You have chosen a **topic**. You have taken that **topic** and developed it into a research question or a hypothesis. Now it is time to begin your research. But before diving deep into Google, it can be helpful to think about what kinds of information you want and/or need.

You may want to begin by asking yourself questions relating to your chosen **topic** so that you can begin sifting through and perusing **sources** that you will use to further your understanding of the **topic**. When you begin the research phase of your essay, you will come across an array of **sources** that look helpful in the beginning, but once you have a clearer idea of what you want to research, you might see that the research you were once considering to use in your essay is now irrelevant. To make your research efficient, start your research with a research strategy.

A research strategy involves deciding what you need to know in order to answer your research question.

- What data do you need?
- What can different *kinds* of **sources** – popular or academic, primary/secondary/tertiary – offer you?
- Whose perspectives could help you to answer your research question?
- What kinds of professionals/scholars will be able to give you the information you seek?
- What kinds of keywords should you be using to get the information that you want?

Where should I look?

As you seek **sources** that can help you to answer your research question, think about the types of “voices” you need to hear from.

- Scientists/researchers who have conducted their own research studies on your **topic**
- Scholars/thinkers/writers who have also looked at your **topic** and offered their own analyses of it
- Journalists who are reporting on what they have observed
- Journalists/newspaper or magazine authors who are providing their educated opinions on your **topic**

- Critics, commentators or others who offer opinions on your **topic**
- Tertiary **sources**/fact books that offer statistics or data (usually without analysis)
- Personal stories of individuals who have lived through an event
- Bloggers/tweeters/other social media posters

Any of these perspectives (and more) could be useful in helping you to answer your research question.

Wikipedia, the place that we have all been told to avoid, can be a great place to get ideas for a research strategy

Wikipedia can help you to identify key terms, people, events, arguments or other elements that are essential to understanding your **topic**. The information that you find on Wikipedia can also offer ideas for keywords that you can use to search in academic databases. Spending a bit of time in Wikipedia can help you to answer essential questions such as:

- Do you fully understand the history of your **topic**?
- Do you understand the current situation/most recent information on your **topic**?
- Do you know about key events that have shaped the controversy surrounding your **topic**?

Wikipedia as a resource, not a source

Should you cite Wikipedia? NO. Should you be using a Wikipedia page as a source? NO. But Wikipedia can give you some wonderful access to the **context** surrounding your **topic** and help you to get started. The video below offers more tips on how you can integrate Wikipedia into your research strategy.



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Wikipedia and Your Research Strategy

Visit the Wikipedia page for your research [topic](#).

1. What **key words** did you find that you can use in further research?
2. What aspects of **controversy surrounding your topic** (people, events, dates, or other specifics) can you use in further research?
3. What [sources](#) (from the **Wikipedia page's List of References**) will you pursue and perhaps locate and read?

8.3 Types of Sources: Primary, Secondary, Tertiary

For a review of what popular sources are, see [Section 2.4](#)

For a review of what academic sources are, see [Section 2.5](#)

In earlier chapters, you learned about what the differences are between popular and [scholarly sources](#). If you are still unsure about the difference between those types of [sources](#), here is a quick and useful reference:



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The determination of a [text](#) as “popular” or “scholarly/academic” is one way to classify it and to understand what type of information you are engaging with. Another way to classify [sources](#) is by considering whether they are primary, secondary or tertiary. Popular [sources](#) can be primary, secondary, or tertiary. [Scholarly sources](#), also, can be primary, secondary, or tertiary.

What is a Primary Source?

Primary **sources** are texts that arise directly from a particular event or time period. They may be letters, speeches, works of art, works of literature, diaries, direct personal observations, newspaper articles that offer direct observations of current events, survey responses, tweets, other social media posts, **original scholarly research** (meaning research that the author or authors conduct themselves) or any other content that comes out of direct involvement with an event or a research study.

Primary research is information that has not yet been critiqued, interpreted or analyzed by a second (or third, etc) party.

Primary **sources** can be popular (if published in newspapers, magazines or websites for the general public) or academic (if written by scholars and published in scholarly journals).

Examples of primary **sources**:

- journals, diaries
- blog posts
- a speech
- data from surveys or polls
- scholarly journal articles in which the author(s) discuss the methods and results from their own original research/experiments
- photos, videos, sound recordings
- interviews or transcripts
- poems, paintings, sculptures, songs or other works of art
- government documents (such as reports of legislative sessions, laws or court decisions, financial or economic reports, and more)

What is a Secondary Source?

Secondary **sources** summarize, interpret, critique, analyze, or offer commentary on primary **sources**.

In a secondary source, an author's subject is not necessarily something that he or she directly experienced. The author of a secondary source may be summarizing, interpreting or analyzing data or information from someone else's research or offering an interpretation or opinion on current events. Thus, the secondary source is one step away from that original, primary **topic/subject/research** study.

Secondary **sources** can be popular (if published in newspapers, magazines or websites for the general public) or academic (if written by scholars and published in scholarly journals).

Examples of secondary **sources**:

- book, movie or art reviews
- summaries of the findings from other people’s research
- interpretations or analyses of primary source materials or other people’s research
- histories or biographies
- political commentary

What is a Tertiary Source?

Tertiary **sources** are syntheses of primary and secondary **sources**. The person/people who compose a tertiary **text** are summarizing, compiling, and/or paraphrasing others’ work. These **sources** sometimes do not list an author.

Tertiary **sources** can be popular or academic.

Examples of tertiary **sources** include:

- encyclopedias
- fact books
- dictionaries
- guides
- handbooks
- Wikipedia



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Thinking about Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Sources and your Research Strategy

1. What kinds of primary **sources** would be useful for your research project? Why? Where will you find them? Are you more interested in popular primary **sources** or scholarly primary **sources** — and why?
2. What kinds of secondary **sources** could be useful for your project – and why? Are you more interested in popular secondary **sources** or scholarly secondary **sources** – and why?
3. What kinds of tertiary **sources** might you try to access? In what ways would this tertiary source help you in your research?

8.4 Basic Guidelines for Research in Academic Databases

EMILIE ZICKEL

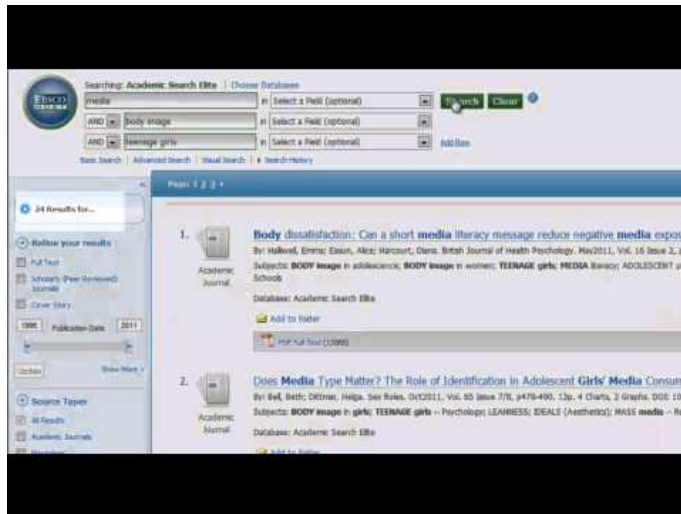
Many of your professors will expect you to use academic research databases for research papers in college. Getting used to doing research in an academic [database](#) can be challenging, especially if you have only used Google for research. Becoming familiar with the way that research databases work can take some time. However, with some understanding of what academic research databases can do for you, and with some practice and tinkering around, you will soon be more comfortable doing your research in these databases instead of Google.

The guidelines offered in the videos below offer basic but important information about using research databases effectively. While the content on the rest of this page applies most specifically to Academic Search Complete (also called EBSCO), the tips are relevant to any research [database](#).

How Can You Use an Academic Research Database Effectively?

- Avoid typing your whole research question into the search field. Use only keywords, in various combinations
- Use several keywords at once, and be willing to change each word for a synonym if you hit a dead end with one set of words
- Use “AND” or “OR” to retrieve more results or to limit your results
- Use the [database](#)’s own Subject Terms to help you to refine your searches within that [database](#)

The video below explains what doing all of those things means in a practical sense.



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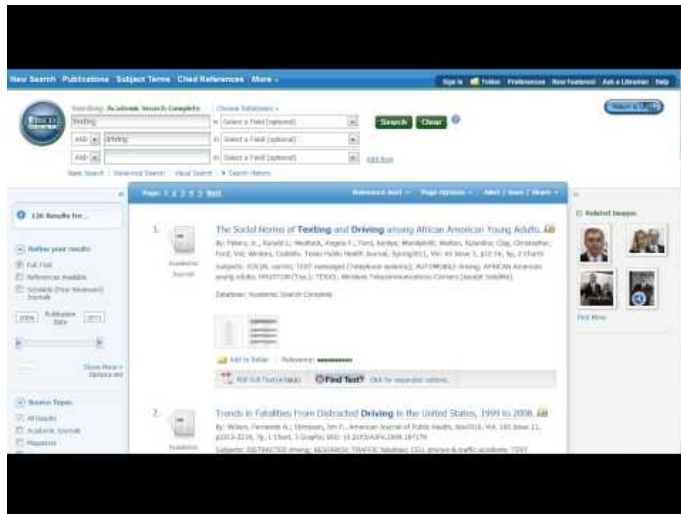
What is Academic Search Complete?

Academic Search Complete is one of the more user-friendly databases for conducting college research. It is a great “starter” [database](#) for several reasons. In Academic Search Complete, you can find popular articles from some of the more credible newspapers and magazines. You can also locate scholarly articles from a variety of academic disciplines. Academic Search Complete provides a wide array of information on a range of topics, and chances are that you will find something useful for your project there.

When you realize how many filters you can apply to your search query so that you only get certain types of information, you will see how valuable this [database](#) (or [database](#) researching in general) can be.

The video below offers a quick overview of how you can use Academic Search Complete to

- Limit your search results to only get peer reviewed (scholarly) articles
- Limit your search results to get articles that are accessible via download
- Refine your searches so that you get the information most relevant to your research project
- Refine your search to specific dates so that only articles from a certain time period are found
- Access articles that you find
- Locate article abstracts
- Find subject terms and understand how they can be useful to your research strategy



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A Note about Google Scholar vs Academic Search Complete

Many students report using and liking Google Scholar. If Google Scholar works for you – and it certainly can work well – then by all means continue to use it along with Academic Search Complete. What may happen, however, is that while you can find article titles via Google Scholar searches, you may not get access to the full article because you do not have a paid subscription to the journal in which the article is published.

Academic Search Complete, and the many, many other academic research databases that can be accessed from the university library “[Research Databases](#)” page, will give you access to most articles. If you find a title via Google Scholar that you cannot access, try to find it in Academic Search Complete or another [database](#).

8.5 Using Effective Keywords in your Research

ROBIN JEFFREY

Good research involves creative searching. If you have taken the time to think through what types of information you want and what types of [sources](#) you want that information from, then you are already off to a great start in terms of searching creatively.

But another key step in good research is in thinking about using effective keywords.

Some tips for getting the results that you want from a search

- **Use quotation marks.** Are you searching a phrase? Put it in quotation marks: “textbook affordability” will get you results for that exact phrase.
- **Use AND/+.** Are you searching for two terms that you think are topically related? Use AND (or +) to connect them: education AND racism, or, education + racism, will only bring up results that include both terms
- **Use NOT/- to limit what you don’t want.** Are you searching for a term that’s commonly associated with a [topic](#) you don’t want to learn about? Use NOT (or -) in front of the keyword you don’t want results from: articles NOT magazines, or, articles – magazines, will bring up results that are about articles, but exclude any results that also include the term magazines.
- **Use an asterisk to get a variety of word endings.** Do you want to get back as many results on a [topic](#) as possible? Use * at the end of a word for any letters that might vary: smok*, will bring up results that include the term smoke, smoking, and smokers.
- Remember to **search terms**, not entire phrases or sentences. And swap out synonyms for your core keywords. This video helps to explain how you can play around with key terms:



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Research Strategy: Coming Up with Keywords for Your Topic

1. What are at least two phrases related to your research [topic](#) that you can search “in quotation marks”?
2. What are your NOT words — the words that you want to exclude from your search?
3. For which words would the asterisk be helpful?
4. What are three core keywords (using the guidelines in the video above) that you can use in a search for your [topic](#)? What are synonyms for each of those three words?

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8.6 A Deeper Look at Scholarly Sources

EMILIE ZICKEL

While reading academic articles (scholarly journal articles) can be one of the more intimidating aspects of college-level research projects, there are several aspects to the purpose, format, and style of scholarly/academic journal articles that are rather straightforward and patterned. Knowing the template that scholarly articles follow can enhance your reading and comprehension experience and make these intimidating reading materials much less daunting. Moreover, understanding the purpose of scholarly publication can help you to understand what matters most in these articles.

Basic Format

Information in academic journal articles is presented in a formal, highly prescribed format, meaning that scholarly articles tend to follow a similar layout, pattern, and style. The pages often look stark, with little decoration or imagery. We see few photos in scholarly articles. The article title is often fairly prominent on the first page, as are the author(s)' name(s). Sometimes there is a bit of information about each author, such as the name of his or her current academic institution or academic credentials. At either the top or bottom of the first few pages, you can find the name of the the scholarly journal in which the article is published.

Abstract

On the first page of the article, you will often find an abstract, which is a summary of the author's research question, methodologies and results. While this abstract is useful to you as a reader because it gives you some background about the article before you begin reading, you should not cite this abstract in your paper. Please read these abstracts as you are initially seeking [sources](#) so that you can determine whether or not reading the article will be useful to you, but do not quote or paraphrase from the abstract.

Works Cited

At the end of academic articles, you will find a list of Works Cited (sometimes called a List of References). This is generally quite long, and it details all of the work that the author considered or cited in designing his or her

own research project or in writing the article. Helpful hint: reading the Works Cited in an article that you find to be particularly illuminating or useful can be a great way to locate other [sources](#) that may be useful for your own research project! If you see a title that looks interesting, see if you can access it via our library!

Literature Review

[Scholarly sources](#) often contain Literature Reviews in the beginning section of the article. They are generally several paragraphs or pages long. Some articles are *only* Literature Reviews. These Literature Reviews generally do not constitute an author's own work. Instead, they are summaries and syntheses of other scholars' work that has previously been published on the [topic](#) that the author is addressing in his or her paper. Including this review of previous research helps the author to communicate his or her understanding of the [context](#) out of which his or her research comes.

Like the abstract, the Literature Review is another part of a scholarly article from which you should generally not quote. Often, students will mistakenly try to cite information that they find in this Literature Review section of scholarly articles. But that is sort of like citing a SparkNotes version of an essay that you have not read. The Literature Review is where your author, in his or her own words, describes previous research. He or she is outlining what others have said in their own articles, not offering his or her own new insight (and what we are interested in in scholarly articles is the new information that a researcher brings to the [topic](#)). If you find that there is interesting information from the [sources](#) that your author discusses in the Literature Review, then you should locate the article(s) that the author is summarizing and read them for yourself. That, in fact, is a great strategy for finding more [sources](#)! For more information on Literature Reviews, see section 5.2 “[Moving from Summary to Synthesis](#)”.

The “Research Gap”

Somewhere near the end of the Literature Review, authors may indicate what has not been said or not been examined by previous scholars. This has been called a “[research gap](#)” – a space out of which a scholar's own research develops. The “[research gap](#)” opens the opportunity for the author to assert his or her own research question or [claim](#). Academic authors who want to publish in scholarly research journals need to define a [research gap](#) and then attempt to fill that gap because scholarly journals want to publish new, innovative and interesting work that will push knowledge and scholarship in that field forward. Scholars must communicate what new ideas they have worked on: what their new hypothesis, or experiment, or interpretation or analysis is.

The Scholar(s) Add His/Her/Their New Perspective

Then, and sometimes for the bulk of an academic article, the author discusses his or her original work and analysis. This is the part of the article where the author(s) add to the conversation, where they try to fill in the [research gap](#) that they identified. This is also the part of the article that is the primary research. The author(s) may include a discussion of their research methodology and results, or an elaboration and defense of their reasoning, interpretation or analysis. Scholarly articles in the sciences or social sciences may include headings such as “Methods”, “Results”, and “Discussion” or synonyms of those words in this part of the article. In arts or humanities journal articles, these headings may not appear because scholars in the arts and humanities do not

necessarily perform lab-based research in the same way as scientists or social scientists do. Authors may reference others' research even in this section of original work and analysis, but only to support or enhance the discussion of the scholar's own discussion. **This is the part of the scholarly article that you should cite from, as it indicates the work your author or authors have done.**

Conclusion

To conclude a scholarly journal article, authors may reference their original research question or hypothesis once more. They may summarize some of the points made in the article. We often see scholars concluding by indicating how, why, or to whom their research matters. Sometimes, authors will conclude by looking forward, offering ideas for other scholars to engage in future research. Sometimes, they may reflect on why an experiment failed (if it did) and how to approach that experiment differently next time. What we do not tend to see is scholars merely summarizing everything they discussed in the essay, point by point. Instead, they want to leave readers with a sense of why the work that they have discussed in their article matters.

As you read scholarly sources, remember

- to look for the author's research question or hypothesis
- to seek out the “[research gap](#)”: why did the author have this research question or hypothesis?
- to identify the Literature Review
- to identify the the point at which the author stops discussing previous research and begins to discuss his or her own
- **Most importantly:** remember to always try to understand what new information this article brings to the scholarly “conversation” about this [topic](#)?



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8.7 Keeping Track of Your Sources and Writing an Annotated Bibliography

Keeping Track of Your Sources

Through the process of research, it is easy to get lost in a sea of information. Here are some tips and tools that you can use throughout the stages of your research process to keep [sources](#) organized.

As you find articles, keep them! Here are some ways that you can store articles that you find:

1. **Create a Google Doc or a Word file** to keep track of the [sources](#) that you want to read. Copy and paste the full citation (many databases, like Academic Search Complete, create a Works Cited reference for you). Or, if you are using a source that you found via google, copy and paste the [URL](#) of the source (it will need to be cited properly by author name, article title, source, etc. if you use it in a paper).
2. **Import [sources](#)** that you may want to use to [Zotero, a free software tool that you can download to store, cite and organize potential sources.](#)
3. If you are searching in Academic Search Complete, **Create a “Folder” in Academic Search Complete** to save the articles that look interesting
4. **Emailing hyperlinks** of web [sources](#) to yourself often seems like the easiest idea. However, be aware that if you email URLs of articles that you find in the library’s research databases, they will not open if you are not logged in to CSU’s library. Instead, email the citation (with article title, author name) to yourself so that you can go back and find the article later.
5. **Print.** If you find an article that you are fairly sure will be useful, go ahead and print it out. You may want to have a folder dedicated to your research project where you keep print outs of all the articles you plan to use. You will end up saving yourself time if you add the Works Cited info in with all of your other [sources](#).

Always keep a working digital bibliography of the [sources](#) that you are considering or using. If you construct your Works Cited as you go along, you will save yourself a lot of time.

Components of an Annotated Bibliography

An annotation often offers a summary of a source that you intend to use for a research project as well as some assessment of the source's relevance to your project or quality and credibility. Here are the key components of a typical annotation:

Works Cited Reference

You will provide the full bibliographic reference for the source: author, title, source title, and other required information depending on the type of source. This will be formatted just as it would be in a typical Works Cited.

Summary of the source

- After the works cited reference, begin to discuss the source. Begin with a summary of the source.
- At the very beginning of your summary, mention the title of the **text** you are summarizing, the name of the author, and the central point or argument of the **text**. Describe the key sections of the **text** and their corresponding main points. Try to avoid focusing on details; a summary covers the essential points.
- Use signal phrases to refer to the author(s)
- Always maintain a neutral **tone** and use the third-person point of view and present tense (i.e. *Tompkins asserts...*).
- Keep the focus of the summary on the **text**, not on what you think of it, and try to put as most of the summary as you can in your own words. If you must use exact phrases from the source that you are summarizing, you must quote and cite them.
- **Check the Annotated Bibliography assignment sheet for additional content requirements.** Instructors often require more than a simple summary of each source. Do you need to go beyond summarizing each source? Do you need to evaluate the source's credibility or relevance? Do you need to offer an explanation of how you plan to integrate the source in your paper? Do you need to point out similarities or differences with other **sources** in the annotated bibliography? Any (or all) of those things *may* be required in an annotated bibliography, depending on how or if your instructor has designed this assignment as part of a larger research project.

Formatting

Annotated bibliographies require formatting, which is different depending on what type of style guide you must adhere to: MLA, APA, CMS, etc. Be sure to check the formatting and style guidelines (resources abound online, including visual models) for your annotated bibliography assignment.

The [Annotated Bibliography Samples](#) page on the [Purdue OWL](#) offers examples of general formatting guidelines for both an MLA and an APA Annotated Bibliography.

This page contains material from “[About Writing: A Guide](#)” by Robin Jeffrey, [OpenOregon Educational](#)

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8.8 Failures in Evidence: When Even "Lots of Quotes" Can't Save an Paper

EMILIE ZICKEL

In a strong essay, the author or writer's own **thesis** and reasoning drive the argument, and then credible, valid evidence is used to support that reasoning. Arguments, in particular, are interactions between writer and audience. The author wants to persuade the audience to accept his or her **claim**, so he or she tries to provide sufficient compelling evidence that will sway the audience to his or her perspective.

Research questions might be easy to come up with. Claims or **thesis** statements can be easy to come up with. Even reasons or ideas to support the **thesis** or **claim** may be fairly easy to come up with. But for your ideas in a paper to be valid, for them to be accepted by a reader, they must be supported and developed with solid, credible, sufficient, accurate, relevant and compelling evidence.

Evidence is not simply "a bunch of quotes". Nor is evidence a bunch of facts or statistics from an article, no matter how credible that article may be. For evidence to truly work in the sense of supporting an **thesis/claim**, it has to be accurate, sufficient to prove your point, directly related to the reason, ethically chosen, current, and credible. That is a lot to think about. It is certainly more than "a quote that looks good".

Here are some things to think about avoiding when attempting to develop a strong source-based essay. Just as understanding what logical fallacies are so you can avoid them in your own writing, understand what weak evidence is can help you to avoid falling into the trap of using it in your own work.

Failures in evidence occur when a reader says, "I do not accept your evidence". Here is why that might happen:

- The evidence that you have provided is *inaccurate*: You've misread information or misquoted; you are not interpreting the quoted material in an accurate manner
- The evidence that you have provided is *insufficient*: You are using just a small piece of evidence to support your reasoning. You need more. You probably have a "generalization" fallacy.
- The evidence that you have provided is *unrelated to the reason*: Your evidence does not clearly or

directly relate to the point that you are trying to make.

- The evidence that you have provided is *incomplete or too narrowly chosen*: You have “cherry picked” certain examples or pieces of information to the exclusion of others, so while you do have evidence to support your point, you are also neglecting a lot of other information
- The evidence that you have provided is *old*: The information that you are citing is not relevant anymore. It is outdated!
- The evidence that you have provided does not come from an *authoritative source*: The source of your evidence is not credible; the person being cited is not an authority on the [topic](#)

One of the bigger issues with evidence is not so much with the evidence itself, but with the way that you integrate it into the paper. A reader needs to understand clearly how and why the evidence you chose relates to the point that you are making. As noted in [Section 4.3](#), evidence must always be explained. Whenever you integrate evidence into your papers, it is important to answer the question “How does this evidence support the point that I am making?”. Never assume that the reader sees what you see in evidence. Always make it as clear as possible how the evidence supports the reason. It may be useful to you to draft your papers with [Section 4.3](#) ready for reference so that you can avoid the pitfall of evidence with no explanation.

Chapter 9: Ethical Source Integration: Citation, Quoting, Works Cited

9.1 Using Sources Ethically

YVONNE BRUCE

Students are often concerned with the details of correct citation—when to include an author’s name in parentheses, how to format an MLA bibliography, how to indicate a quotation within a quotation—and while these are all important and helpful to know, what is more important is understanding the larger ethical principles that guide choosing and using [sources](#). Here are a few of these larger ideas to keep in mind as you select and synthesize your [sources](#):

- You must represent the [topic](#) or discipline you are writing about fairly. If nine out of ten [sources](#) agree that evidence shows the middle class in the United States is shrinking, it is unethical use the tenth source that argues it is growing without acknowledging the minority status of the source (see also [Chapter 5](#)).
- You must represent the individual source fairly. If a source acknowledges that a small segment of the middle class in the United States is growing but most of the middle class is shrinking, it is unethical to suggest that the former is the writer’s main point.
- You must acknowledge [bias](#) in your [sources](#). It is unethical to represent [sources](#) that, while they may be credible, offer extreme political views as if these views are mainstream.
- Just because your source is an informal one, or from Wikipedia or the dictionary doesn’t mean that you don’t have to acknowledge it. Quoting a dictionary definition is still quoting: you need quotation marks. Wikipedia is not “common knowledge”: cite it.
- You must summarize and paraphrase in your own words. Changing a few words around in the original and calling it your summary or paraphrase is unethical. How would you feel if you recognized what you worked so hard to write in someone else’s paper? “I changed some words,” they’d say. But you would still recognize your *style*. Don’t steal someone else’s (see also [Chapter 9.3](#)).

9.2 Quoting

MELANIE GAGICH

What are Direct Quotes?

Direct quotes are portions of a **text** taken word for word and placed inside of a work. Readers know when an author is using a direct quote because it is denoted by the use of quotation marks and an in-**text** citation.

Example:

In his seminal work, David Bartholomae argues that “Every time a student sits down to write for us, he has to invent the university for the occasion-invent the university...”(4).

Direct quotes might also be formatted as a “block quote”, which occurs if the borrowed language is longer than four (4) lines of **text**. In MLA, A block quote requires the author to indent the borrowed language by 1/2 an inch, place the citation at the end of the block, and remove quotation marks.

Example:

In his seminal work, David Bartholomae argues that

Every time a student sits down to write for us, he has to invent the university for the occasion-invent the university, that is, or a branch of it, like History or Anthropology or Economics or English. He has to learn to speak our language, to speak as we do, to try on the peculiar ways of knowing, selecting, evaluating, reporting, concluding, and arguing that define the discourse of our community. (4).

Be sure to be careful when directly quotes because failing to write the **text** exactly as it appears in the original **text** is not an ethical use of direct quotes. Also, failing to bracket the quote with quotation marks and/or citing it inside the **text** is also unethical and both mistakes are a form of plagiarism.

When Should I Use Direct Quotes?

Generally, direct quotes should be used sparingly because you want to rely on your own understanding of material and avoid over-relying on another’s words. Over quoting does not reinforce your credibility as an author; however, you should use direct quotes when “the author you are quoting has coined a term unique to her or his research and relevant within your own paper”(The Owl of Purdue).

The Basics of Directly Quoting

1. All quoted material should be enclosed in quotations marks to set it off from the rest of the **text**. The exception to this is block quotes, which require different formatting.
2. Quoted material should be an accurate word-for-word reproduction from the author’s original **text**. You cannot alter any wording or any spelling. If you must do so, you must use a bracket or an ellipsis (see number 2 in the section below).
3. A clear **signal phrase**/attribution tag should precede each quotation.
4. A **parenthetical citation** should follow each quotation.

The Hard Part of Directly Quoting: Integrating Quotes into Your Writing

1. You, as the author of your essay, should explain the significance of each quotation to your reader. This goes far beyond simply including a **signal phrase**. Explaining the significance means indicating how the quoted material supports the point you are making in that paragraph. Remember: just because you add a quote does not mean that you have made your point. Quotes never speak for themselves. How and why does that quoted material make the point you think it does? Here are some helpful phrases for explaining quoted materials. “X” is the author’s last name
 - a. (quoted material). What X’s point demonstrates is that . . .
 - b. (quoted material). Here, X is not simply stating _____, she is also demonstrating _____.
 - c. (quoted material). This is an example of _____ because _____.
 - d. (quoted material). This statement clearly shows _____ because _____.
 - e. It may be helpful to visit **Chapter 4.3** for more information about building strong paragraphs in which you not only provide evidence (such as quotes), but also explain that evidence.
2. Sometimes, in order to smoothly integrate quoted material into your paper, you may need to remove a word or add a word to make the quote make sense. If you make any change to quoted material, it must be formatted correctly using an ellipsis or brackets
 - a. Use brackets [these are brackets] to change a word. **This article** from *Writing Commons* explains what brackets are and how to use them
 - b. Use an ellipsis (this is an ellipsis...) to indicate omissions. **This article** from *Writing Commons* explains what brackets are and how to use them

3. When in doubt, strive to allow your voice – not a quote from a source – to begin each paragraph, precede each quote, follow each quote, and end each paragraph. Quotes that are integrated well into a paper allow you to control the paper. That is what a reader wants to see: your ideas and the way that you engage [sources](#) to shape and discuss your ideas.

Attributions

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It also contains an excerpt from David Bartholomae’s “[Inventing the University](#).”



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9.3 Paraphrasing and Summarizing

ROBIN JEFFREY

While quoting may be the first thing that many people think of when they think about integrating [sources](#), paraphrasing, summarizing, and citing data are also ways to incorporate information from outside materials into your essays or projects.

This page builds off of Chapter 9.2's discussion of quoting and outlines the specific considerations for paraphrasing and summarizing as two other ways to integrate material into your work.

Paraphrasing

1. Paraphrases allow you to describe specific information from a source (ideas from a paragraph or several consecutive paragraphs) *in your own words*.
2. Paraphrases are like translations of an author's original idea. You retain the detail of the original thought, but you express it in your own way.
3. Paraphrases of the [text](#) should be expressed in your own words, with your own sentence structure, in your own way. You should not simply "word swap", that is, replace a few words from the original with synonyms .
4. If you must use a few of the author's words within your paraphrase, they must have quotation marks around them.
5. Paraphrases often include attributive tags or signal phrases to let your readers know where the paraphrased material begins.
6. Paraphrases should be followed by parenthetical citations.
7. As with a quote, you need to explain to your reader why the paraphrased material is significant to the point you are making in your paper.

Summarizing

1. Summaries allow you to describe general ideas from a source. You do not express detailed information as you would with a paraphrase.
2. Summaries are shorter than the original **text**.
3. Any summaries of the **text** should not include direct wording from the original source. All **text** should be in your words, though the ideas are those of the original author.
4. A **signal phrase** should let your readers know where the summarized material begins.
5. If you are offering a general summary of an entire article, there is no need to cite a specific page number.

9.4 Signal Phrases and Attributive Tags

JOHN LANNING AND AMANDA LLOYD

Academic writing requires the use of signal phrases to properly embed quoted material and document information. While basic signal phrases require the use of the author's name and a strong verb, attribution tags emphasize different types of information related to the source in order to set up the quoted material and can help shape your reader's response to the information presented. What you have to say is more important than the passage you are citing, so you want the information leading into your evidence/ support to work to your advantage.

A basic **signal phrase** is a device used to smoothly integrate quotations and paraphrases into your essay and consists of an author's name and an active verb indicating how the author is presenting the material. It is important for beginning academic writers to use signal phrases to clearly attribute textual evidence to an author and to avoid interrupting the flow of an essay.

Referring to the Author within a Signal Phrase

In most instances, a **signal phrase** should contain only the last name of the author or authors of the source **text** (as opposed to the author's first *and* last name). APA style guidelines require no reference to a first name at any point in an essay and few if any gender specific pronouns. But in MLA papers, if you are referring to an author for the first time in your essay, you should include that author's first name. Any future **signal phrase** should refer to the author by last name only or with a pronoun when it's perfectly clear to whom the pronoun refers. For example:

- Michael Pollan observes, “Americans today are having a national conversation about food and agriculture that would have been impossible to imagine even a few short years ago” (29).
- Pollan continues, “But the national conversation unfolding around the subject of food and farming really began in the 1970s” (29).
- He then specifies, “I would argue that the conversation got under way in earnest in 1971, when [Wendell] Berry published an article in *The Last Whole Earth Catalogue*” (29).

Notice how each **signal phrase** verb is followed by a comma, which is then followed by one space before the opening quotation mark.

Signal Phrase Verb Tense

In the examples above, notice how the **signal phrase** verbs are written in present tense. When you are asked to write a paper that follows MLA guidelines, signal phrases should always be written in present (not past) tense. When writing a paper using APA style, **signal phrase** verbs should be written in past tense.

Varying Your Verbs

You should also vary your **signal phrase** verbs (rather than simply using “states” throughout your entire essay) in order to maintain your readers’ interest and to indicate the author’s intended use of the excerpted material. See below for examples of strong **signal phrase** verbs.

Why Use Signal Phrases and Attributive Tags?

While many students may see attributive tags as filler, they can provide the audience with valuable insight into how you, the writer, intend the quoted material to be read/viewed. In addition to setting up the source evidence, attribution tags can also be used as meaningful transitions moving your readers between your ideas and those of your support.

In most instances, the first time the author is mentioned in an MLA style essay, it is a good idea to provide an attributive tag as well as the author’s first and last name.

While providing the author’s credentials and title of the source are the most common attributions used, there are others we should be aware of:

Types of Attributive Tags (attributive tag is underlined in each example)

Type: Author’s credentials are indicated.

Example: Grace Chapmen, Curator of Human Health & Evolutionary Medicine at the Springfield Natural History Museum, explains...

Purpose: Presenting an author’s credentials should help build credibility for the passage you are about to present. Including the author’s credentials gives your readers a reason to consider your **sources**.

Type: Author’s *lack of* credentials is indicated.

Example: Matthew Spencer, whose background is in marriage counseling, not foreign policy, claims...

Purpose: Identifying an author’s lack of credentials in a given area can help illustrate a lack of authority on the subject matter and persuade the audience not to adopt the author’s ideas. Pointing to an author’s lack of credentials can be beneficial when developing your response to counter-arguments.

Type: Author’s social or political stance, if necessary to the content, is explained.

Example: Employing nonviolent civil disobedience, Roland Hayes, prominent civil rights activist, preaches...

Ralph Spencer, who has ties to the White Nationalist movement, denies...

Purpose: Explaining the author’s social or political stance can help a reader to understand why that author expresses a particular view. This understanding can positively or negatively influence an audience. Be careful to avoid engaging in logical fallacies such as loaded language,

Type: Publisher of the source is identified.

Example: According to a recent CNN poll...

Purpose: Identifying the publisher of the passage can help reinforce the credibility of the information presented and you can capitalize on the reputation/ credibility of the publisher of the source material.

Type: Title of the Source is included.

Example: In “Understanding Human Behavior.” Riley argues ...

Purpose: Informs the reader where the cited passage is being pulled from.

Type: Information that establishes context is presented.

Example: In a speech presented during a Free Speech rally, Elaine Wallace encourages ...

Purpose: Presenting the context that the original information was presented can help the audience understand the author’s purpose more clearly

MLA Signal Phrase Verbs

Acknowledges	Counters	Notes
--------------	----------	-------

Admits	Declares	Observes
--------	----------	----------

Agrees	Denies	Points out
--------	--------	------------

Argues	Disputes	Reasons
--------	----------	---------

Asserts	Emphasizes	Refutes
---------	------------	---------

Believes	Finds	Rejects
----------	-------	---------

Claims	Illustrates	Reports
--------	-------------	---------

Compares	Implies	Responds
----------	---------	----------

Confirms	Insists	Suggests
----------	---------	----------

Comments	Maintains	Thinks
----------	-----------	--------

Contends	Mentions	Writes
----------	----------	--------

APA Signal Phrase Verbs

Acknowledged

Countered

Noted

Admitted

Declared

Observed

Agreed

Denied

Pointed out

Argued

Disputed

Reasoned

Asserted

Emphasized

Refuted

Believed

Found

Rejected

Claimed

Illustrated

Reported

Compared

Implied

Responded

Confirmed

Insisted

Suggested

Commented

Maintained

Thought

Contended

Mentioned

Wrote



9.5 MLA Citation: Works Cited Entries

JOHN BRENTAR AND EMILIE ZICKEL

The Modern Language Association (MLA) system of documentation governs how writers format academic papers and cite the [sources](#) that they use. This system of formatting and citation is used most by academic disciplines in the arts and humanities.

Citations

Citations according to MLA consist of two elements: [in-text](#) citations (also called parenthetical citations); and a bibliography called a Work Cited (or Works Cited, if multiple [sources](#) are cited) list.

Writers use citations to acknowledge that they have used ideas from external [sources](#) to help develop their essays. Citations allow readers to go back to those [sources](#) to determine whether a writer has used a source accurately and appropriately. Whenever you use [sources](#), whether in direct quotation or in paraphrase, you must use [in-text](#) citations. Writers very often combine [in-text](#) citations with attributive signal phrases to make clear to the reader exactly what material has come from what source. Every [in-text](#) citation you make will be keyed to an entry in your Works Cited list, at which you supply your reader with the full bibliographic information for your [sources](#).

Works Cited Entries

- Every source that you quote, paraphrase, or summarize in an essay must be included in your Works Cited list
- Your Works Cited list should always be on its own new page, after the end of the [text](#) of the essay
- At the start of your list, at the top margin of the page, include a heading containing the words Work (or Works) Cited, centered, without bolding, italics, quotations marks, or all-caps
- Works Cited entries are in the same font and double spacing as the rest of the paper
- Unlike the [text](#) of the essay, works cited entries do not begin with an indentation. Rather, they use hanging (also known as reverse) indentation, in which the first line of an entry is not indented, but all successive lines are indented, by .5”.
- [Sources](#) need to be listed in alphabetical order by the first letter in each entry.

- If you have a source with no author, then that source will be alphabetized according to the first letter of its title
- The entries will not be numbered or presented as a series of bulleted points.

General order or content in a Works Cited Entry

MLA specifies that certain elements appear in a certain order in a work cited entry. Each element will be followed by a specific piece of punctuation. When you cite **sources**, never take the information from the cover of the source; rather, always refer to title pages. Here are each of the elements and additional information about them:

- Author Name(s)
 - Author names must be given exactly as they appear in the source, including middle initials and generational suffixes such as Jr. or III.
 - If there is one author, give the full name, inverted so that the last name precedes the first. Place a comma after the last name.
 - *Example:* Jones, Robert.
 - If there are two authors, give both names; place the word “and” before the second author’s name, which will not be inverted.
 - *Example:* Smith, Susanna, and John R. Johnson.
 - The order of the authors matters: cite them in the order in which the source names them.
 - If there are three or more authors, list only the first, followed by the abbreviation “et al.” which is short for the Latin *et alii* (meaning “and others”).
 - *Example:* Williamson, Robin, et al.
 - If there is no author, begin the entry with the title of the source.
- Title of Source
 - MLA has specific rules for capitalizing titles. The first and last words of a title or subtitle are always capitalized. Capitalize all words falling in the middle of the title, except for these:
 - The articles (a, an, the)
 - Prepositions (to, at, in, for, below, beyond, beneath, etc.)
 - Coordinating conjunctions (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so)
 - If the source is a book, italicize its title: *Great Expectations*.
 - If the source is an article, place its title within quotation marks: “Four Kinds of Thinking.” (note that the period goes inside the end quotation mark).
- Container
 - Containers are larger works within which smaller works are published. Here are examples of different containers:

- Books
 - Books contain chapters. If different chapters have been written by different authors, the chapter is your source, and its container is the book.
 - A specialized kind of book is an anthology, which is a collection of articles (usually previously published elsewhere), written by different authors. In this case, the article in an anthology is your source, and the book is the container.
- Periodical publications (newspapers, magazines, and scholarly journals)
 - An article in a periodical is the source; the periodical itself is the container.
 - If the name of a newspaper or magazine begins with the word “the,” omit it. Thus, write *New York Times*, rather than *The New York Times*.
- Websites
 - An individual page at a website is a source; the website itself is a container.
- Similarly, television shows contain episodes, and albums contain songs.
- Containers are always italicized, and there will be a comma following the name of the container, **except** when you are citing a book whose entire contents have been written by the same author(s). In this case, the source **is** the book.
- Other Contributors
 - These can be translators or, in the case of an anthology, editors/compiler. For a translator, place the translator names(s) after the words “translated by; for editors/compiler, place the name(s) after the words “edited by” or compiled by.” Do not invert any of these names.
 - Place a comma after other contributors.
- Version
 - A book may appear in different editions. If a book is published in a numbered edition subsequent to the first, write it as an ordinal number, followed by the abbreviation “ed.”: 2nd ed.
 - Other kinds of editions may be “abridged,” “expanded,” etc. Place that word before the abbreviation “ed.”
 - Place a comma after the version (yes, in this case there will be a comma following a period).
- Number
 - Books may be published in multiple volumes. To cite a multivolume work, place its number after the abbreviation “vol.”
 - Scholarly journals are usually published according to volume and issue number. To cite these, place the volume number after the abbreviation “vol.” and the issue number after the

abbreviation “no.”

- Do not cite volume and issue numbers for newspapers and magazines, even if your source gives them.
- Publisher
 - For books, give the name of the publisher, which will be listed on the title page.
 - Do not include descriptive words such as “company,” “corporation,” or “limited” or abbreviations of them.
 - If a book has been published by a university press, shorten those words to the abbreviation UP, such as Ohio State UP. Abbreviate them even if they are separate: U Chicago P stands for the University of Chicago Press.
 - For periodicals, do **not** list a publisher, even when it is given.
 - For websites, list the entity responsible for the site. To find a website’s publisher, scroll to the bottom of the page and note the copyright holder.
 - Note, if the website is an online periodical, omit the publisher name.
- Date of Publication
 - For a book, give the year as listed on its copyright page (the reverse side of the title page). If you are citing a whole book (that is, not an anthology), place a period after the date, unless you are citing optional information, in which case you will place a comma after the date.
 - For an article in a periodical, give as much of the date as you are given, in date-month-year format
 - Abbreviate the names of all months, **except** for May, June, and July. All abbreviations of month names are three letters (e.g. Dec.), with the exception of September, which is Sept.
 - For a bimonthly publication, place a hyphen, **not** a slash, between the months.
Example: July-Aug.
 - Place a comma after the date.
 - For an online document, again give as much of the date as you are given. Often, that will be an exact date of posting or of last update. If there is no specific date of publication given, scroll to the bottom of the page for the copyright date as use that.
 - Place a comma after the date.
- Location
 - Page numbers
 - If you are citing part of a book (for instance, an article in an anthology), give the inclusive page numbers (that is, the page the source starts on and the page it ends on), preceded by the abbreviation “pp.”

- If you are citing an article in a periodical, again cite the inclusive page numbers, preceded by the abbreviation “pp.” If the source appears on only one page, precede the number with “p.”
 - When the end page number is in the same hundreds as the beginning page number, omit the hundreds digit in the end page number. Do not write pp. 243-247. Instead, write pp. 243-47. The same goes for thousands: pp. 1147-83. Do not omit the hundreds digit when the page numbers are in separate hundreds or are both below one hundred. Thus, do not write pp. 84-07 for a work beginning on page 84 and ending on page 107.
 - Often, newspapers have lettered sections and numbered page within those sections. Place the section letter first, followed by the page number. *Example:* B1.
 - Often, magazine and newspaper articles are published on non-consecutive pages. For instance, an article may start on page 47, run to page 49, and then jump to page 104. In such cases, print only the beginning page number, followed by a plus sign: pp. 47+.
- URLs
 - When citing an online source, give the entire Uniform Resource Locator ([URL](#), also known as the web address) exactly as it appears in the navigation bar of your browser, except omit the http:// or https:// that precedes the [URL](#).
 - If your word processing software changes the [URL](#) to a hyperlink, right click on it and remove the hyperlink.
 - Place a period after the [URL](#).

MLA also allows you to cite further optional information. If you have accessed a periodical article from a research [database](#), such as Academic Search Complete, the Electronic Journal Center, or Lexis Nexis, you can also cite the following information.

- The name of the [database](#), italicized and followed by a comma.
 - Note: EBSCOhost is **not** a [database](#) itself; rather, it is the compiler of several different databases. Do **not** cite EBSCOhost; look for the name of the specific [database](#), which will be in the banner of the page.
- The Digital Object Identifier (DOI), which is a unique, permanent identifier.
 - *Example:* doi:10.1016/j.aap.2008.08.011
 - Place a comma after the DOI.
- The date you accessed the source, again in date-month-year format, and followed by a period.

Examples of Works Cited Entries

An article in a scholarly journal

Erke, Alena. “Red Light for Red-Light Cameras? A Meta-Analysis of the Effects of Red-Light Cameras

on Crashes.” *Accident Analysis and Prevention*, vol. 41, no. 5, Sept. 2009, pp. 897-905, doi:10.1016/j.aap.2008.08.011.

An online document with author listed

Levitt, Justin. “A Comprehensive Investigation of Voter Impersonation Finds Thirty-One Credible Incidents out of One Billion Ballots Cast.” *Washington Post*, 6 Aug. 2014, www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2014/08/06/a-comprehensive-investigation-of-voter-impersonation-finds-31-credible-incidents-out-of-one-billion-ballots-cast/?utm_term=.43ef2ee40253. Accessed 13 Mar. 2017.

An online document with no author listed

“The Trouble with Trucking.” *New York Times*, 11 Aug. 2018, www.nytimes.com/2018/08/11/opinion/sunday/the-trouble-with-trucking.html. Accessed 12 Aug. 2018.

An article or chapter within a larger work

Williams, Timothy. “Cities Mobilize to Help Those Threatened by Gentrification.” *The Engaged Reader: Issues and Conversations for Composition*, edited by William Breeze et al., 2nd ed., Van-Griner, 2017, pp. 155-58.

A final Note about Works Cited Entries:

Sometimes you may have difficulty deciding whether a source has been published in a magazine or a scholarly journal; after all, the word “journal” appears in the names of some magazines (for example, *Library Journal*). Here are some tips that can help you:

- Kind of paper (especially useful if you have a hard copy). Magazines are printed on glossy paper, scholarly journals on matte paper.
- Graphics: magazines print color graphics; if a journal article has graphics, they will be black and white and usually in the form of tables or graphs.
- Citations: only rarely will magazines have in-text citations and bibliographies; journals will almost always have them.
- Advertisements: magazines usually have color advertisements; if journals have ads, they will be for other works published by the same publisher as the journal.

9.6 MLA Citation: In-text Citations

JOHN BRENTAR AND EMILIE ZICKEL

In-text Citations

When using a [signal phrase](#), remember, at first mention, to give the full author name as it appears in the source. After that give only the last name. When you use such a phrase, you will not place the author name in the citation. For those [sources](#) with page numbers—books and articles which were originally published in print publications, even if you accessed them using a research [database](#) like Academic Search Complete—place the page number in the citation, without the word “page” or the abbreviation “p.” The rules for citing a work with multiple authors is the same as that for works cited entries.

- *Example of a first mention:* In discussing the act of reading, Donald Hall states that “it seems to me possible to name four kinds of reading, each with a characteristic manner and purpose” (15).
- *Example of a successive mention:* Huynh and Maroko indicate that “neighborhoods are not static but dynamic entities that can experience change across a number of dimensions” (212).

If you do not name your author(s) in a [signal phrase](#), then you must place the last name(s) only in the citation. In doing so, do not place a comma between the author name(s) and the page number. For more information on signal phrases, visit [section 9.4](#).

- *Example:* In one study of the effects of gentrification upon health, the researchers conclude that “The health implications of gentrification have not been explored comprehensively, despite the likelihood of its effect on neighborhood socio-economic status” (Huynh and Maroko 212).

If your source does not list an author, then you must refer to the work by its title. If you name the title of the source in your [signal phrase](#), give the entire title exactly as it appears in the source.

- *Example:* The article, “Poverty in the United States: Census Population Report,” reveals that the official poverty rate rose from 13.2% in 2008 to 14.3 % in 2009 (298).

If you do mention the article title in your [signal phrase](#), then you must place a shortened version of it in your [in-text](#) citation.

- *Example:* Census Bureau data indicate that nearly 44 million Americans lived below the poverty line in 2009 (“Poverty” 298).

Some [sources](#) have no page numbers. The prime example are web-based [sources](#). When you cite an online source and name the author(s) in your [signal phrase](#), there will be no in-text citation, as there are no page numbers for web articles.

- *Example:* In discussing the pedagogic approach that St. Louis area schools took in aftermath of the 2014 Ferguson violence, Jonathan Zimmerman and Emily Robertson, in their article, “The Case for Contentious Curricula,” note that “not surprisingly, their approaches varied.”

If you are citing a web-based article and do not mention your author(s) in your [signal phrase](#), then you must place the last name(s) in a citation (again without page numbers).

- *Example:* Whereas the approaches may have varied from progressive action to silence, “the major focus of concern remained the psychological well-being of the students, not their intellectual or political growth” (Zimmerman and Robertson).

The notes above about articles without authors listed applies to web-based works as well.

- *Example:* Focusing on the economic woes of long-haul truckers, the article, “The Trouble with Trucking,” points out that “Over the past several decades, inflation-adjusted driver pay has fallen sharply.”
- *Example:* The economic woes of long-haul truckers can be summed up this way: “Over the past several decades, inflation-adjusted driver pay has fallen sharply” (“The Trouble”).

Whereas previous editions of MLA allowed writers to refer to paragraph numbers for works without page numbers, it now instructs writers not to refer to paragraph numbers unless the work contains explicitly numbers its paragraphs.

Additional Notes on In-text Citations:

If your source has one or two authors, list all the authors in either your [signal phrase](#) or in-text citation.

- *Example:* Singh and Remenyi opine that “the extent of cheating at universities is hard to gauge” (36).
- *Example:* More instructors have replaced examinations with term papers, which has led to the increased incidence of plagiarism, as “the system is especially vulnerable to cheating” (Singh and Remenyi 36).

However, if your source has more than two authors, you should list only the first author followed by the abbreviation “et al.” (short for the Latin phrase *et alii*, literally “and others”).

- *Example:* Brenda I. Bustillos et al. note that “when a campus roadway configuration is changed, introducing new parking facilities or other transportation services also changes campus traffic circulation patterns” (5).

- A main concern is that “only limited prior studies have been identified to address traffic management on campus” (Bustillos et al. 5).

Remember!

- **Print sources** are any source that are on paper or were originally printed on paper, even if you found a copy of it from an online research **database** like Academic Search Complete. These **sources** have page numbers. These page numbers need to appear in your **in-text** citations.
- **Web sources**, in many instances, do not have page numbers. Do not make them up! Page 1 of your computer screen is *not* the same as an actual page one in a print source.

9.7 APA Citation

This page is currently under construction.

In the meantime, here are some helpful resources to get you started on APA formatting and citation, all courtesy of the Purdue OWL(Online Writing Lab), a great resource that you should check out and use extensively if you are not already doing so!

Click [here](#) for information about general layout and formatting in an APA paper.

Click here for information about [in-text citations](#), which look quite different than what we see in MLA.

- [this page](#) will help you understand how to introduce authors/[sources](#) in APA, which, again, looks different from MLA

Click [here](#) for information about APA formatted Works Cited, particularly electronic [sources](#) (which are what we often use in research projects).

9.8 Plagiarism Policy

Plagiarism is something that many people understand to be a bad thing, but few people truly understand. Plagiarism can be intentional (such as copying and pasting large chunks of a website into your paper), or it can be unintentional (such as a weak paraphrase or a lack of reference to authors or [sources](#)). But plagiarism is plagiarism, whether it is intentional or not, and it is a serious offense in academic writing.

It can be helpful to understand what plagiarism is if you seek to avoid plagiarizing in your own papers. This video offers a thorough explanation of how one might plagiarize if he or she is not carefully integrating [sources](#) into an essay.



A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the [text](#). You can view it online here: <https://pressbooks.ulib.csuohio.edu/csu-fyw-rhetoric/?p=675>

Following the guidelines for the ethical use of source materials in your papers can help you to avoid plagiarism in your work. Plagiarism is a serious offense and colleges take instances of plagiarism very seriously.

If you are struggling to figure out how to cite a source or how to integrate it into your work while giving your author(s) proper credit, you can

- ask for your instructor

- visit the [Writing Center](#)
- set up a meeting with a [university librarian](#)

Each school has a plagiarism policy that both defines what plagiarism is and outlines the consequences that will arise in the event that a student is caught plagiarizing.

Here is the Cleveland State University policy: [Cleveland State University policy on academic misconduct](#)

Chapter 10: Reading about Writing

10.1 "What Is Academic Writing?"

LENNIE IRVIN

"What is Academic Writing" written by Lennie Irvine can be found [here](#).

In this essay, Irvine aims to provide an in-depth explanation of all of the things that academic, college-level reading and writing are. You, a first year college student, are his audience. His purpose is to demystify the expectations that you will face in both your Composition courses (English 100, 100, and 102) and other writing-based courses. To achieve that purpose, he discusses some of the ways in which college reading and writing may be different from the writing that you have done previously. He outlines some myths about what writing is and what writers do. He defines typical genres of writing that you will be asked to produce in college and offers strategies and suggestions for approaching writing assignments in a critical way.

This article was originally published on [WritingSpaces.org](https://writingspaces.org), an Open Textbook Project. The site features many articles about writing and composition that may be useful to you.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the [text](#). You can view it online here:

<https://pressbooks.ulib.csuohio.edu/csu-fyw-rhetoric/?p=29>



10.1 "What Is Academic Writing?" by [Lennie Irvin](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](#), except where otherwise noted.

10.2 "Reading Games: Strategies for Reading Scholarly Sources"

KAREN ROSENBERG

"Reading Games: Strategies for Reading [Scholarly Sources](#)" by Karen Rosenberg can be found [here](#).

In this essay, Rosenberg shares with you her personal experiences as a student who needed to learn how to read academic material more effectively. She explains not only why professors ask you to read academic/scholarly journal articles (as opposed to simply using Google-able [sources](#) for research projects), but also how you can strategically approach reading such complex texts to get the most out of them. Her [tone](#) is informal and conversational; she wants to connect with you in order to support your success even as you engage with source material that may be out of your comfort zone.

This article was originally published on [WritingSpaces.org](#), an Open Textbook Project. The site features many articles about writing and composition that may be useful to you.

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10.3 "I Need You to Say I"

KATE MCKINNEY MADDALENA

"I Need You to Say 'I': Why First Person is Important in College Writing" by Kate McKinney Maddalena can be found [here](#).

One of the rules that many writers have heard throughout high school is that in an academic essay, "I", signifying the presence of your own voice, is not appropriate. Maddalena offers a counterargument to that anti-I perspective in this essay. She provides a thorough explanation of all of the reasons why and where first-person references might actually *enhance* your writing, and also why and how first-person references could weaken it. Knowing how and when to use your own "I" is a big step in finding your voice as an academic writer. If you find yourself struggling to differentiate your authors' ideas from your interpretations or analyses of those ideas, this is an article that can clarify how to do so more effectively.

This article was originally published on [WritingSpaces.org](#), an Open Textbook Project. The site features many articles about writing and composition that may be useful to you.

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<https://pressbooks.ulib.csuohio.edu/csu-fyw-rhetoric/?p=36>



10.3 "I Need You to Say I" by [Kate McKinney Maddalena](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](#), except where otherwise noted.

10.4 "On the Other Hand: The Role of Antithetical Writing in First Year Composition Courses"

STEVEN KRAUSE

"On the Other Hand: The Role of Antithetical Writing in First Year Composition Courses" by Stephen D. Krause can be found [here](#).

In this essay, Krause is inviting writers to engage in a somewhat unconventional planning exercise : to explore the antithesis in their writing projects. Krause explains how doing so tests out the strength of an argument and creates an opportunity to generate content for the essay. An antithesis is a counter-perspective, a counter argument. When we draft arguments, we sometimes get so caught up in checking off all of the boxes of what we need – a [claim](#) at the end of the intro paragraph, reasons, a counterargument, etc – that we do not pay enough attention to what persuasion actually means, and how persuasion is audience-centered. Read this essay to find strategies for developing counterargument and response.

This article was originally published on [WritingSpaces.org](#), an Open Textbook Project. The site features many articles about writing and composition that may be useful to you.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the [text](#). You can view it online here:

<https://pressbooks.ulib.csuohio.edu/csu-fyw-rhetoric/?p=70>



10.4 "On the Other Hand: The Role of Antithetical Writing in First Year Composition Courses" by [Steven Krause](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](#), except where otherwise noted.

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