UWC Resources
Edited by:
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Contributions by UWC Staff – Past and Present
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Citation Style Guides
Examples of Citation Styles Using Book with One Author

Contributors: UWC Staff

All indentations are one-half of an inch.

**APA: American Psychological Association—References**

**MLA: Modern Language Association—Works Cited**

**CSE: Council of Science Editors—Citation-Sequence or Citation-Name References**

**CSE: Council of Science Editors—Name-Year References**

**CMS: Chicago Manual of Style**

Bibliography

**Footnote or Endnote**

**AP: Associated Press Stylebook**
AP does not typically use a reference or works cited list. Students should use the AP Stylebook for specific questions about in-text citations.
Brief Guide to APA Formatting

Contributors: UWC Staff

What is APA?
APA is short for the American Psychological Association, which produced its first scientific publishing guide (The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association) in 1929. The short guide below is drawn from the Sixth Edition APA manual and provides answers to the University Writing Center’s most common asked APA questions.

Header
The header of all pages should include a running head with the title of the paper in all capital letters, left justified, and the page number in the upper right hand corner. On the title page it should appear: “Running Head: THE TITLE OF MY PAPER” and on every other page: “THE TITLE OF MY PAPER”. The running head can be shorter than the title itself and should not exceed 50 characters, including spaces.

Margins and Spacing
The margins should be one inch all the way around on every page. Every page should be double spaced.

Title Page
This page should include (each with its own line and in this order): the title of the work, the author, and the institutional affiliation (generally the school, but some teachers may prefer the class name). This page may also include an author’s note that includes: departmental affiliation, change in affiliation, acknowledgments, special circumstances, and contact information.

Abstract
The abstract is not always required but is considered important in most scientific writing. This should be the second page of the paper, and the abstract should be the only section on that page. The abstract should be short, concise, and serve as a summary of the paper. The abstract should include things like: the problem, method, findings, and a short conclusion.

The Paper Itself
The actual paper should begin on the third page. The first page of this section should have the title, centered at the top of the page.

Introduction
Begin with the introduction; it does not require a heading. This section should include why the problem is important, how it relates to the field and previous work, the hypothesis, implications of the study. The introduction can be anywhere from a paragraph to several pages, depending on requirements, but it should be as concise as possible.

Methods and Materials
This section requires a centered and bolded heading; any subsections require a left justified bolded heading. The methods should give a detailed description of how the study was conducted. Anyone should be able to reproduce it exactly. It should include: sampling procedures, any measurements, and the overall design.
Results

As with Methods and Materials, the results section needs a centered and bolded heading. This section should summarize the data and include all relevant results and any analysis performed, it should NOT include discussion of these results. Tables and figures should be included here.

Discussion

This section requires the typical heading format. The discussion is the place for interpretation of the results and their implications. This is the section where possible biases and other weaknesses may be discussed.

Reference List

This should be placed at the end of the paper and should be the only thing on the page. The references section begins with the typical section heading. The citations should be arranged in alphabetical order by author.

In Text Citations

One Author

If the author’s name is included in the body of the text, and it is not a direct quote, only the year of publication need be included in the citation. Include the year directly following the author’s name. Example: Cyborg (2009) found that these emotional outbursts increased brain activity in the frontal lobe.

If both the author’s name and the year are within the text, no parenthetical citation is needed. Example: In 2012, Whalebone found this type of educational instruction was no longer relevant. If neither the author’s name nor the year is within the text, cite the author’s last name and the year separated by a comma and located within parentheses. Example: The thumbs-up sign was then accepted as a cultural norm (Sloth, 2011).

Two Authors

If the work has two authors, cite both names each time the reference is listed. If the two authors are within the text, use the word “and.” Example: Moron and Fishead (2012) discovered whale bones at the remote beach.

If the two authors are listed in parenthesis at the end of the sentence, use an ampersand. Example: The findings were inconclusive (Moron & Fishead, 2012).

Three, Four, or Five Authors

If the work has three, four, or five authors, cite all of the authors the first time that the reference occurs in the text and only the first author’s name followed by et al. and the year in all subsequent in-text references. Example: After the authorities discovered his third murder, the criminal psychologist suspected that he was a sociopath (Smith, Wesson, Siskel, and Ebert, 2010). He was then diagnosed and committed to a psychiatric facility (Smith, et al., 2010).

Six or More Authors

If the work has six or more authors, cite only the first author followed by et al. and the year. Example: It was then that the detective agents believed the entire episode was a scam (Flora, et al., 2008).
No Author

If the work has no author, the first few words of the title should be used. Article titles, chapters, and web pages should be enclosed in double quote marks and titles of periodicals, books, brochures, and reports should be italicized. Sample sizes were found to be too small as to be relevant (“Sample Size,” 1996)

Direct Quote

If the information is a direct quote, it must be enclosed with double quote marks and the page number must be included in the citation. Example: Johnson (2008) stated that “the sample size was too small as to be relevant” (p. 19), negating the importance of the study.

If the quotation is more than forty words, omit the quotation marks and place it freestanding in the text, indented by one-half of an inch.

Reference List Citations

All works listed in the reference list must be referenced in the text. The first line should be left-aligned and subsequent lines are indented five spaces.

Complete citations on a reference page usually include: author and/or editor information (multiple authors should be arranged in alphabetical order), the publication company information and date of publication, title of the work, and various other bits of information.

Online Newspaper Article Example


Journal article with DOI Example

(DOI stands for “Digital Object Identifier” and is often located on the cover page of an article downloaded from an online library.)

Author(s). (year). Article title. Journal title, volume(issue), pages. doi:99999998

Journal article without DOI Example


Magazine Article Example


Online magazine article Example


Newspaper article


[If article is not on continuous pages, separate discontinuous pages by commas: pp. B1, B4, B6-B8]

Online newspaper article

Author(s). (year, month day). Article title. Newspaper title. Retrieved from http://www...
**Entire book in print**
Author(s). (year). *Title*. Location: publisher.

**Entire book found online**

**Book with an editor in print**
Editor(s). (Ed.). (year). *Title*. Location: publisher.

**Chapter of a book or entry in reference books**
- Editors should be listed with their first name initial first then the last name.
  Author(s). (year). Title of chapter/entry. In Editor(s) (Eds.), *title of book* (pp. pages). Location: publisher.

**Entry in a reference book with no byline**

**Music recording**
Writer. (copyright year). Song title [recorded by artist]*. On *album title* [recording medium: CD, record, etc.] Location: Label. (date of recording)**

*if different from writer
**if different from song copyright date
Note: For in text citations use artist and track numbers: (artist, year, track #)

**Motion picture**

**Youtube video with original creator and poster**
Creator(s) (Creator(s)). Poster username (Poster). (year posted, month day). Title [Video] retrieved from [http://www...](http://www...)

**Youtube video poster only**

Note: This synopsis includes only most frequently used citation and format templates. Many other formatting templates can be found in the sixth edition APA handbook.

**Reference List**
Brief Guide to CSE Citation Style

Contributor: UWC Staff

What is CSE?
CSE stands for the Council of Science Editors; this citation style was formerly referred to as CBE, after the Council of Biology Editors (prior to their change of name in 1999). CSE formatting is used almost exclusively for scientific papers.

In-text Citations
CSE privileges the author’s last name and date of publication. If you are citing a work by multiple authors, write out the word “and” (as opposed to “&”) to separate the names. Use “et al.” if citing a work by more than two authors, and identify the title if including a source with no author.

Examples:
- **Book with one author**: (Ross 2005)
- **Book with two authors**: (Eliot and Smith 2006)
- **Journal article with multiple authors**: (Thomas et al. 2007) Website: (The Ecology of Organisms [updated 2009])

Bibliographical Citations in CSE
Works cited pages will always be referred to as “bibliographies.” List each bibliographical entry in alphabetical order by the last name of the first author. You do not need to double-space the entries or include an indent. Make sure, however, to check with your professor or publisher for their specific requirements.

Examples:
- **Special Note**: “Journal titles must be abbreviated using CSE style citations. Rules for journal abbreviation are complex and the correct abbreviation is not always obvious; a list of journals and their abbreviations may be found at the ISI Web of Science website. In addition, resources for journal abbreviations by discipline can be found in Scientific Style and Format in Appendix 29.1 (p. 569). In the example below, the abbreviated form of the journal title Biological Conservation is used” (CSE/CBE style: print sources [updated 2010]).
- **Website**: Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) [Internet]. [updated 2007 Feb 27]. Columbus (OH): Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry; [cited 2007 Jul 24]. Available from http://www.dnr.state.oh.us/forestry/health/eab.htm
Sources & Further Information

CSE style guide and other resources [Internet]. [updated 2011 Feb 10]. Columbus (OH): Ohio State University Libraries; [cited 2011 Sept 15].
Brief Guide to MLA Formatting

Contributor: Sierra Becze

Overall/General
MLA formatted to an 8.5 x 11 piece of paper. The text will be double spaced and 12 point, Times New Roman font. The sides of the papers should have a margin of one inch all around.

Heading
The heading of a MLA paper should remain consistent with the right-hand margin and be one-half inch from the top, and consist of the author’s last name along with the page number. Unlike styles, MLA does not call for a cover page. Instead, in the left hand corner of the page, write your name, instructor’s name, course, and date. This part, along with the rest of your paper, should be double spaced.

In-Text Citations
When you include information from a source, you need to cite it. Whether the information includes direct quotations or summary, you will need to include a parenthetical (in-text) citation. To do this, you will want to add the author’s last name and page number of the text you found it from in parenthesis at the end of the sentence (see Example A). If the source you are quoting does not have any page numbers labeled, you can omit this. If the source does not have an author, you will put the title of the work in quotations in place of the author’s name and the page number (see Example B).

Example A

Simon Rodrigo
Dr. Frank E. Stien
Philosophy 207
29 October 2016

Social Contract: A Look into Human Nature
would react in a situation if he was put in the middle of an uncivilized state without rules or laws (Christman 30). This explains why a social contract between the people and the government is

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**Example B**

trust lies within the government and the state. If the head of the state becomes unfair and unjust in the eyes of the people, the people would react in a state of war (“Social Contract Theory”).

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**Works Cited Overview**

When creating your Works Cited page, you must start on a new page that comes at the end of your paper. The margins and page number will be the same as the rest of the pages. At the top, write Works Cited without underlining or italicizing it. The citations should be double spaced just like the other portion of the paper. The citations should also be listed in alphabetical order by author’s last name. If there is not an author listed, use the title of the work in place of the author’s name.

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**Additional Resources:**

For additional resources on this topic, using the *MLA Handbook, The Little Seagull Handbook,* and *Purdue Owl’s* website is a good start. While we do offer these texts at the UNR Writing Center, the citations for each can be found below in case one wants to find them anywhere else.


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**References:**

Course & Discipline Specific Writing
Bio 192 General Tips

Contributor: Maddie Bosque

Biology 192 focuses on writing in the sciences, and creating approachable, readable lab reports, so it’s important to learn some key aspects of what makes a successful piece of science writing.

**Keep it Simple**

It’s important to keep details about the experiment in your paper, but be sure to avoid adding in information that isn’t important. By taking out the “fluff” of your lab report, it helps the reader stay focused on what the lab was all about, rather than leading them astray with too many unimportant details.

**Keep it Precise**

Using ambiguous terms can be detrimental to your lab report. If your reader has to guess or assume something in your lab, then you haven’t been clear enough. For instance, if you were describing how to cook something to a friend, and used the language “set the oven for a high temperature and let the casserole bake for a while”, his or hers definition of “high temperature” and “for a while” might be vastly different than yours. Instead, if you said “set the oven for 350 degrees and let the casserole cook for 30-35 minutes”, your friend will be able to cook the casserole just as you would have.

**Use The Right Language**

One thing that can be tricky in science writing is trying to decide what tone and language should be used in the lab report. Keep in mind that in general, other people in the science will be reading your report, but that doesn’t mean you have to throw in lots of fancy words to make the lab you conducted “fancier” than it really was. Keep your language professional and clear, but don’t complicate your lab with complex words and definitions. Let your work speak for itself! On the other hand, don’t “dumb down” your writing, even if it’s well-intentioned. While it’s important to make sure a wide audience can understand and interpret your lab, you don’t want to come off as though you are talking down to your readers. Again, if you keep your tone professional and precise, you won’t need to worry about your reader understanding your writing.

**Use a Passive Voice**

Keeping a passive voice throughout a lab report is something a lot of students struggle with; after all, if I conducted the experiment, why shouldn’t I be able to use language such as I, me, and we? The main reason why lab reports do not contain active voice, or using first person pronouns, is that it draws attention away from the lab itself, and may be confusing to the reader. For instance, if you said “we collected ten bags of soil for our experiment”, you may be referring to you and your lab group, but the reader might feel as though you are including them in that group of people. This can be confusing and often distracting to the actual report of what happened during the experiment. Sometimes
passive voice can be considered “boring”, but use details and descriptions of your lab to keep the reader.
Avoid phrases like “I believe” or “I think” at all costs. A lab report should be free of all emotions, opinions, or biases. Treat a lab report like a recipe, you wouldn’t expect to see the chef’s thoughts or opinions about the dish in the recipe portion of their cookbook, so stay away from expressing your thoughts or opinions about the lab report and focus on the facts that the reader needs to know and understand. This keeps your lab objective and valid.

**Know Your Limits**

Nobody is expecting you to be a science genius by the end of your experiment, or the end of Biology 192 either. You might not know every important aspect and implication of your lab, and that’s okay. It’s important to avoid making drastic conclusions or assumptions in your lab report. You might note that you found a correlation between two or more things in your experiment, but keep in mind that many factors go into an experiment, and you don’t want to generalize your results. For instance, if noticed that every time you wore a red shirt to school, it started to rain, you could mention this weird phenomenon to your friends, but don’t assume that your shirts are magical and control the weather, either.
BIOL 395: Writing Laboratory Reports

Contributors: UWC Staff

Purpose of the laboratory report:
The ability to write a clear, concise laboratory report is an important skill that must be learned to succeed in this course. Moreover, report writing is a standard skill for many different fields. To acquire these skills will require time, hard work, and practice. You are encouraged to get help from as many different sources as you can. Here are several strong suggestions:

• Your lab notebook will be your primary source: keep it organized and complete.
• Write your report early, so that you will have time to edit and revise your report.
• Ask other people to read your report before you submit it. You are encouraged to go to the University Writing Center where tutors are very willing to help you.

Organization of the laboratory report:
You will be obtaining most of the information you need about writing your reports from the assigned textbook. The following are points we want to emphasize and directions related specifically to this course.

General information:

Formatting:
Reports submitted in hard copy should be double-spaced, single-sided. Label each page with your name and a page number in one corner.

Writing:
A scientific paper / lab report uses standard prose style, i.e., paragraphs, complete sentences, appropriate tense (usually past tense). Switching tense or viewpoint within a paragraph is not good writing. Your grade will be based, in part, on appropriateness and clarity of your writing.

Vocabulary and spelling:
Be sure you know what the words you are using mean. Make sure all spelling is correct – use a spell checker.

Figures and tables:
Anything that is not text should be labeled as either a figure or a table. Figures and tables are labeled and numbered separately, e.g. Figure 1 and Table 1. All figures and tables must be referenced specifically in the main text. For example, "Figure 2 shows..." or "Samples were all within the standard curve range (Fig. 2)."

• All substantial tabular data should be presented as a table with a number and title, and any footnotes required to explain the table. Look at the textbook for examples of good form.

• Figures are all presentations other than tables. They include graphs, gels, diagrams, etc. All figures require a number, title, and legend. The legend should include sufficient information to understand the figure without having to read the methods section of the report. Presentation is important. Points will be taken off for sloppy figures.
Length:
How long should the report be? Long enough for you to say everything that needs saying and no longer. It differs for each lab report. Generally this works out to be 10 +/- 3 pages.

Citations:
There is (almost) no quoting in science, and certainly none in writing scientific reports. If you include any quotes in your report, you will have a few points taken off the first time, and receive a zero for the entire section the next time. If you read a bit of information and want to include it, then absorb it, rewrite it in your own words, and cite it. The standard format we use for in-text citations is like this: single author (Bousum, 2008), two authors (Bousum and Kidd, 2008) or more (Bousum et al., 2008).

Major Sections:
The laboratory report should closely adhere to the following format. Each section has a clear place and purpose.

Title:
Indicate the title and the laboratory exercise number as in the syllabus. Be sure your name and the submission date are on the front page. Reports do not require a separate title page.

I. Introduction:
For the purposes of this course, the introduction may be shorter than generally seen in real scientific papers (a page or two). Be sure to include a clear identification of the subject of the report (what are we doing and why are we doing it?) and a brief description of the approach (a broad description, not a list of methods). Some background information (with citations) should also be included.

II. Materials and Methods:
This section describes what you did. Subheadings may be useful for organizing procedures. Like other sections, M&M should be written in prose form – meaning, no lists or bullet points. The preferred writing style is passive voice: “A was added to B and then vortexed for five minutes”, almost as though all the apparatus and tubes were just floating around doing all their operations by themselves. There may be rare times when I or we simply must be used, and that is acceptable. Describe the materials and methods in detail: the steps you performed, the reagents you used, the centrifuge speed, etc. It should be sufficiently detailed that another person could repeat the work directly from your report. For example, "The cells were pelleted by centrifugation" leaves out several important pieces of information, such as which centrifuge, what kind of tube, how long, and what speed was used. Use of any new equipment should be described. On the other hand, don't include trivial details. I know this is hard to be confident about in your position, and you won't be penalized for including something we consider trivial. But, for example, don't mention that you threw your pipet tips in the dry waste container!

Always state what you actually did, not what the instructions say. For example, if the instructions tell you to make “an appropriate dilution for absorbance measurement”, you might state: "A 1:5 dilution of the sample was prepared for absorbance measurement at 260nm." If the instructions tell you to dissolve your pellet in 0.5 ml of TE buffer, and you accidentally dissolved it in 1 ml, say precisely that. You should also point out that "1 ml was twice as much buffer as suggested in the procedure, but a good reading was obtained (or wasn't)." Thus, it is important to keep detailed notes describing each procedure, even those you did not personally perform.
Explain the purpose of each step in the experiment. A brief phrase or sentence is sufficient; for example, “Five ul of 10% SDS were added to lyse the cells.” Thus, in order to understand the procedure, it is important to ask questions during class.

For experiments involving sets of dilutions or reactions, tables are a clear and useful method of presenting this information. However, do not include any results in this section. You can refer to a figure/table that is placed in the results section if procedural information is also presented there.

You often cannot (sensibly) present procedures in the same order that they are presented in the lab handout (or the same order in which you performed them). This is because the lab handout is a set of directions that is intended to efficiently get you through each part of the exercise in the 4 hours allotted. While one set of tubes is incubating for an hour, you may be working on another preparation. The order of presentation in the lab report should reflect related procedures.

III. Results:
In this section, you present the data you obtained and describe those results in words. The data should be presented in a clear manner by the use of properly labeled graphs, tables, drawings, or photographs. Each set of data should have a legend containing sufficient information to understand it without referring to the main text.

In the narrative part of the results, call attention to important points made by the data, and quantify when appropriate. For example, “Eight of the 10 nucleic acid samples contained at least 50% more RNA than DNA”; “Gel lanes 1, 4, and 5 showed evidence of DNA degradation, so these samples were not included in the calculations.” Carefully identify and distinguish units of quantity (such as mg or ml) and concentration (mg/ml) throughout the report.

Calculations, When necessary, should be put in this section. Every step in calculations needs to be explained. (Pretend that you are explaining how to do these calculations to someone who has never done them before and you should do well.) Show the general equation first, then how your values plug in. Units in calculations must be followed closely. Equations and calculations can be set apart from the general paragraph structure on separate lines. However, they should be included in the portion of the narrative that describes the relevant part of the experiment.

The Results section should be organized so that it flows logically from one part of the experiment to another. Subheadings that match the subheadings in Materials and Methods can make reading (and writing) easier for longer reports. For each experimental procedure, a sentence or two should describe the purpose and approach, followed by the results obtained. You shouldn't repeat any detailed procedures in the results section, but you often need to refer to them. For example, "We calculated protein concentration using the BCA Assay. Figure 1 shows the standard curve generated from this assay"; “In order to measure the fragment lengths, we ran the samples on a 2% agarose gel (Fig. 3).”

Do not interpret the results or draw conclusions until the Discussion Section.

IV. Discussion:
The Discussion includes interpretations and any conclusions you have drawn from your results. We will also provide you with a set of questions to answer. These questions should be answered separately at the end of your Discussion as a list — rewrite the question or simply number them as they appear in the lab instructions. Examples of additional information that may be appropriate in a Discussion section:

- Whether you results were expected or unexpected.
• Possible sources of error or ambiguity. For example, if errors or difficulties in carrying out the procedure may have had an effect on your results, do not simply say, "We made some mistakes that might have affected our outcome." Be specific. For example, "Because the lysate was quite viscous and difficult to pipet, we may have taken more than 2 ul for the DNA determination. This would lead to an overestimate of DNA content."
• A comparison of your results with those of others (in your class or in the literature). Possible explanations for results that differ from others.

V. References/citations:
Any information you obtain from outside sources must be properly cited. You do not need to cite the lab handout itself. A minimum of 4 references is required, and these must be from books (maximum of 2) and journal articles. If you choose to use any of the references at the end of the lab exercise handout, these cannot be included in the 4. You may use as many references as you want beyond the minimum, and respectable internet sites are OK. You will have to submit, along with your report, the front page of the 4 required articles or book chapters you used. Your TA may have more specific instructions on this requirement.
For your references and citations, use a style recommended by the McMillan book that includes complete article titles, and be consistent. Pay careful attention to the proper methods for citing internet sources. The following website is one (of several) good sources of information about citation styles in science:
http://bc.c.bedfordstmartins.com/resdoc5e/RES5e_ch11_s1-0001.html
Your Teaching Assistant may choose to specify the reference style he or she wants in your reports.
Writing as a science student can seem like the most arduous and boring task on the planet. Whether you don’t understand where to start or just don’t have the motivation, this resource will hopefully make the whole process a little more interesting and clear for those of us who live and breathe science.

In order to achieve this, we’re going to make comparisons between your science knowledge and writing a paper. A common base of scientific study is the cell, which allows for life to function as we know it. Just like papers, cells have different parts that are necessary to fulfill their purpose and create life.

A cell would not exist without a cell membrane, just like your paper would not exist without you. You are the most important component of this entire process. Without you, there would be no paper. The cell membrane keeps the pieces inside; it gives the cell structure. The membrane is semi-permeable and allows for the movement of objects into and out of the cell, just like you as a writer. You hold the entire paper together, and when anything needs to be added or deleted, you’re right there to do it.

The mitochondrion is the powerhouse of the cell; it takes in nutrients and creates energy for the cell. The purpose of your paper does the same—if there is no purpose, then your paper may end up being lackluster. Everything that needs to go into the paper is run through this purpose; the purpose provides the energy and sustainability of the entire paper.

The cytoplasm of the cell is a thick solution filling the cell, holding all of the organelles in place. In comparison, the structure of your paper holds all of the ideas and thoughts in place. Without structure, everything in a paper would fly around and not necessarily be readable or understandable.

The cytoskeleton establishes a cell shape and provides mechanical strength for the cell. Your introduction shapes the paper as a whole, providing the information necessary to tell the reader the direction of your paper.

The nucleus stores hereditary material and coordinates cell activities. The thesis declares what the paper is covering and how, much like the nucleus declares the cell’s purpose through DNA storage.
Microtubules are responsible for organization of intracellular structure and intracellular transport, and the supporting evidence is what we can link this organelle to in your paper. The supporting evidence provides structure for your argument and claims, as well as transporting your reader to the end-point of the paper.

Ribosomes are the protein builders or synthesizers of the cell. They connect one amino acid at a time to build long chains. In the same way that ribosomes synthesize the genetic information to create proteins, you need to synthesize your evidence to make your point. Going through the synthetization process is important for both the existence of cells and papers. Without this process, both a paper and a cell would fail to execute necessary developments.

Lysosomes serve to digest things in the cell: they may digest food or break down the cell when it is time for it to die. When does your paper “die”? The conclusion. Think of all of the information you provided before the conclusion as food. Your conclusion will take all of that information and digest it, providing the reader with a take-away or a main point.

Are you still struggling with the paper after this comparison? Fear not, for the vesicle has arrived! Vesicles function in a cell for transportation in and out of the cell, and the University Writing Center functions the same way! You can come in and meet with any of the writing consultants or make an online appointment to help you determine what needs to be transported into or out of your paper. We’re here to help!
Core Humanities: A Survival Guide

Contributor: Nathaniel George

When it comes to essays for Core Humanities, even the most literature-inclined students may struggle to write one of the many papers assigned in CH 201, 202, and 203. The two main issues that students face in Core Humanities classes are writing a thesis and meeting a word count. Here, we will address these issues in depth, and hopefully guide you towards success in Core Humanities.

Writing a Thesis

When writing a Core Humanities essay, the thesis statement may be overlooked. Students often scrawl it down absentmindedly and then disregard it. However, this statement is the most important sentence in your essay. It provides insight into the topic while simultaneously answering the question provided. Each sentence that you write in the body of your essay must possess a link to the thesis, so it is crucial to have a strong thesis to relate back to. If this sounds daunting, remember that this statement is simply your answer to the question your teacher is asking in the prompt.

So, how do you write an effective thesis statement?

- First, look at the prompt and identify what question(s) the teacher is asking.
- Mentally decide what stance you will take on this particular question.
  - i.e. Answer the question in your head.
- Finally, write down your answer to the question. Be concise, but ensure that every component of the question is answered.

Example:

If you are still having trouble figuring out how to write that perfect thesis statement, don’t worry. Examples are a CH student’s best friend, so below is a prompt and thesis from a CH 202 class at the University of Nevada, Reno.

In many ways, Christianity is different from the other religions we’ve discussed thus far, in certain ways it is similar. Seek out the similarities between Christianity and any polytheistic religious movement we’ve studied so far.

To build a thesis that answers the question entirely, we must identify each similarity we have found between the two religions. We do not need to go into detail; we’ll save that for the essay. But we still need to concisely and clearly establish the overarching similarity that we will write about. So how would we answer the above prompt?

Possible Thesis:

While varying in many aspects, the Mesopotamian and Christian religions find common ground in their utilization of morality as a basis for their principles of behavior.

So why is this an effective thesis? Most importantly, this statement fully answers the prompt and gives insight into what the essay is about. The reader can safely assume that the body of the essay will explain how utilization of morality brings these two religions together. Further, this thesis is concise and does not include excess information.
Meeting the Word Count

When it comes to meeting the word count, there are a few different scenarios that you may face. The first is being less than 100 words from the word count.

Less than 150

- In this case, it may not be necessary to add a completely new idea to your essay. Read carefully through your essay, and observe whether any examples could use more explanation or a link to the thesis.
- See if an existing paragraph could use more textual support, and find a quote to help support it. Make sure your introduction has enough detail to adequately summarize your essay.
- Rid your essay of contractions (don’t, didn’t, wont) and replace them with their non-abbreviated alternative (do not, did not, will not)
- This may only get you a few extra words, but it is also proper writing etiquette to avoid using contractions when possible

150 to 500

- Here, you are going to have to add a new idea to your essay
- Express this idea in paragraph form, and make sure that you are using this space to provide further support to your thesis
- Remember that you must add this new idea to your prompt!

More than 500

- It is common to be in this position when writing essays over 2,000 words.
- You are going to have to return to your outline and incorporate a few new ideas
- Again, remember to put these into your thesis as well
- If you cannot find any more information and you are still more than 500 words below the mark, you may have to change the direction of your thesis. Even if you may not agree with the new direction of the thesis, it may have more evidence to support its cause.

Hopefully, with the help of this guide, you will become more confident in your responses to the many CH essays you will encounter.

Special thanks to professor Joseph Taglieber for providing the prompt used in the example.
Among engineering students, many have been lead to believe that writing skills are of trivial importance to them. As a result, writing often takes a backseat to more numerically-based skills such as computation and calculation. However, without proper writing skills, the prospective engineer has no way to communicate his/her ideas with the rest of the world. In the professional engineering field, writing skills are highly desirable to potential employers who will inevitably require you to be able to properly document your findings.

Writing in engineering is often referred to as “technical writing,” which is a style of writing where technical details are incorporated into a concise, logical, and intelligible report. The greatest struggle in engineering is conveying engineering-heavy ideas with clarity and concision—such that any audience is able to understand the engineering-heavy design.

**Audience**

To ensure that your writing is understood by your audience, you must first identify exactly who your audience is. For example, if you are writing a report destined for the general public, then you must carefully define and explain every technical detail that you incorporate, or you run the risk of your ideas being misunderstood. However, if you are writing a report intended for the head of an automobile company, then it is not necessary to include the general details of an automotive part, as the recipient is assuredly well informed already.

Once your audience has been identified, it is time to engage in the most exciting component of engineering: report writing (sarcasm intended).

**Report Outline**

Unless your professor or boss instructs you otherwise, it is advised that you follow an outline similar to the following when constructing an engineering report.

**Cover Page**

- Include the name of the university, the class title, the title of the report, the name of the authors and the date.

**Table of Contents**

**Abstract**

- Compare this to an introduction and conclusion from an English paper smashed together. In the abstract, you will briefly outline the entirety of the report, complete with the hypothesis and the findings.
- Be brief, but ensure that you encompass the main ideas presented in the report.

**Background**

- Here you must make an argument for why your research matters. To do this, you must address a problem and explain why this problem needs resolution. Further, you must reintroduce the problem statement and give background to concepts and grounds for what you are addressing.
- You must also include the objective for the experiment and explain what you will be doing to resolve the problem presented.
Apparatus/Literature Review

- If performing research using solely scientific equipment, then all you need to do here is list the tools you will be utilizing.
- However, most often you will be utilizing written documents as well as scientific equipment. In this case, you must write a literature review for each source used.
  - This literature review is similar to an annotated bibliography you might create for an English class research paper. If necessary, see University Writing Center resource Writing an Annotated Bibliography for details.
  - However, a proper literature review goes more in depth than the annotated bibliography and offers critical examination of the source and its relation to the topic at hand.

Experimental Procedure

- This will often be the longest section of your research document and will include all of the procedures, in detail, that you executed in order to find your data.
- This should be written as a passive-voiced series of steps, not as one huge paragraph.
- This is the most important piece of the report because anyone should be able to pick up your report and recreate the experiment with near-identical results. Do not include technical words without explanation unless it can be safely assumed that the reader is already familiar with the terms.

Results

- This is where you can proudly display the data that you obtained in your experiment.
- You can display this information through whatever method seems most appropriate: a chart, a table, a graph, etc.
- Explain any limitations or errors you may have come across during the process of conducting the experiment and whether or not these drawbacks played a significant role in your findings.
- If there are relationships or discrepancies in the data that do not have an obvious explanation, explain why this occurred.

Discussion

- Explain the real-life application of the data, and how this can be used to help address your question.
- Address whether your question was properly answered and/or resolved through the data you analyzed.

Conclusion

- Discuss further information that needs to be gathered on your topic/problem.
- Most importantly, reiterate why this research is important.
- If writing about a specific field of engineering, make sure to document the importance of this study relative to that particular field.
As you may expect, writing an engineering report is different from writing an English report. In an engineering report, you are free to use headings and subheadings to organize your report. Further, you will want to incorporate page numbers and headings to make the report easier to navigate. Although this is a brief overview, it covers all the bases to help you get started with your engineering report. Remember, technical writing is not extremely different from other academic writing, so don’t abandon all the general writing skills you have learned along the way.

References
HESI A2: Grammar

Contributor: Aly Sicat

The HESI A2 examination stands for Health Education Systems Incorporated Admissions Assessment and acts as a way to test a student’s potential success in an intense nursing program. The Orvis School of Nursing uses the scores from the exam in their selection process; while your GPA earns you an interview spot, ultimately, the result of your interview and your HESI score determine whether or not you get into the nursing program.

This resource will explain some of the grammatical concerns that are important for you to know on this English portion of the HESI A2. While most people use these points of grammar every day, some people are not confident identifying or putting names to them. That’s why we’re here—through practice and seeing examples of grammar in action, you can become a pro at understanding and naming any type of grammatical function. With that in mind, you can use this resource to:

1. Identify both simple and complex grammatical structures by name
2. Understand how to use these structures in sentences

General Sentence Grammar

Subjects

On the HESI A2, you may be asked to identify which part of a sentence is the subject and which part of a sentence is the predicate. Notice that the subjects in each example are in bold, while the verbs (which are part of the predicate) are underlined.

Most people understand the subject of the sentence as the person/place/object that is undergoing or doing some action. Sometimes the HESI A2 will ask you to identify the subject noun (or noun phrase) in a sentence. When asked to find the subject, look for who or what is “doing” the action in the sentence. Seek out the verb, and then you can figure out which noun attaches to that verb.

Because verbs are technically part of the predicate, it may seem useful to find that first, but once you’ve figured out the subject and verb of the sentence, finding the predicate phrase becomes simple. With the subject in hand, you can reliably assume that the predicate will follow.

Here are some common types of sentences you may see with a variety of subject nouns and phrases.

1. Robert opened a checking account at his local credit union.
2. The group of teenage girls was excited to see the premiere of the new film.
3. Tomatoes don’t grow well in our tiny little garden.

Predicates

Now that we’ve found the subject, we can look for the predicate in these sentences.

The predicate tells us about the action of our subject. With the subject, we ask “who” is doing the action, but with the predicate we ask “what” and “how.”

Let’s take a look at our previous sentences to identify the predicate. The verb half of the predicate is bolded, while the actual predicate phrase is underlined.
1. Robert **opened** a checking account at his local credit union.
2. The group of teenage girls **was excited** to see the premiere of the new film.
3. Tomatoes **don’t grow** well in our tiny little garden.

In sentence 1, the subject “Robert” is completed by the predicate “opened a checking account...” because that last phrase gives us information about “what” action Robert is doing and “how” he is accomplishing the action.

While some sentences, like the first one, will be fairly straightforward, remember that groups of people or things can also be subjects (as in sentence 2), or even inanimate objects like foods, buildings, or locations (as in sentence 3). One tricky thing to note is in sentence 3: be careful with “there,” as many times it is not the subject but merely an indication that the subject will soon follow.

**Parts of Speech**

It is also important on the HESI A2 to understand the parts of speech and to understand the different variations within those parts of speech. This section will provide an overview of the different parts of speech.

Some of the following explanations are complex. While you might not be tested on each part of speech, you can assume that you will see some of them in the detailed way they are explained below. It’s useful to have these longer descriptions, then, because they will prepare you for most grammatical situations on the HESI A2.

a. **Nouns**
   - **Proper** nouns are nouns that refer to unique, specific things (e.g. Saturn, Africa, BMW) versus **common** nouns that refer to general things (e.g. car, city, glass).
   - **Countable** nouns can become pluralized (e.g. chair becomes chairs), whereas **uncountable** nouns cannot take a different plural form (e.g. “milk” does not become “milks”).
   - **Abstract** nouns refer to concepts (e.g. pride), while **concrete** nouns refer to real-world entities (e.g. fish, table).

b. **Pronouns**
   - **Personal** pronouns are typically distinguished by the gender, number, and the “person” (first, second, or third) (e.g. he, she, they).
   - **Reflexive** pronouns refer back to the subject (e.g. “They hurt themselves”).
   - **Possessive** pronouns indicate who owns what (e.g. “That is her pen”).
   - **Indefinite** pronouns refer to unspecified entities or objects (e.g. something, somewhere, anyone, nobody).
   - **Interrogative** pronouns are used when the noun is an unknown person or object, like “who” when the unknown person is the subject of the sentence and “whom” when the unknown person is the object of the sentence.

c. **Adjectives**
   - **Attributive** adjectives are part of a noun phrase where they modify that noun (e.g. “gloomy” in the noun phrase “gloomy clouds”).
   - **Predicative** adjectives are linked by nouns, pronouns, or verbs to describe nouns (e.g. “This group is really peppy”).
• **Nominal adjectives** are adjectives that act like nouns, as the noun is assumed or left out (e.g. “Between the happy and sad movies, I preferred the happier”).

d. **Verbs**

- **Intransitive** verbs don’t have a direct object that they are modifying, and they are always actions (e.g. “She sneezed”).
- **Transitive verbs**, on the other hand, have a noun phrase that is modified or “acted upon” by that verb (e.g. “She gathered all of the leaves”).
- **Ditransitive** verbs have both a direct object that is being acted upon (underlined) and an indirect object (underlined, italicized) that gives us important identifying information (e.g. “She gave her mother several keepsakes”).

e. **Adverbs**

- Many adverbs are formed by adding the ending “-ly” to an adjective so that it will modify the way an action is done (e.g. “She performed beautifully”).
- **Independent** adverbs are standalone words, but they can modify verbs in much the same way (e.g. “We played our music very well” or “It is quite hot”).

f. **Prepositions**

- **Prepositions** (e.g. “on,” “in,” or “between”) indicate a prepositional phrase that describes the location of things.
- Prepositions can be adjuncts to nouns, meaning that the preposition “belongs” to the noun and attaches to it (e.g. “The food in France”).
- Prepositions can be predicative expressions, meaning that they link with a helping verb (e.g. “Our dog is in the garage”)
- Prepositions can also be used alongside verbs, modifying the way that verb is completed or giving us additional information (e.g. “The bear slept throughout winter”).

g. **Conjunctions**

- **Coordinating** conjunctions (and, but, so, yet, or, nor, for) help us link large things like independent clauses together.
- Coordinating conjunctions are different than **correlative** conjunctions, which we can only use for groups of words or noun phrases (e.g. “You can have **either** chocolate or liver”).
- Lastly, **subordinating** conjunctions help link together an independent clause (a standalone sentence) and a dependent clause (a sentence that cannot stand alone) (e.g. “We went to the dog park, but we forgot our dog”).

h. **Interjections**

- Interjections are somewhat unique, so remember interjections are (a) usually only one word and (b) convey a certain emotion or emotional state (e.g. “Woah!” for surprise versus “Dang!” for frustration).
Commonly Made Mistakes

As a last category to watch out for on the HESI A2, there may be questions asking you to choose between words that are commonly mistaken for other words. We’ve included some of the common mistakes that you might see on the grammar section.

- **Their vs. There vs. They’re**

  The important thing is to remember the function of these words. “Their” is a possessive pronoun, meaning that it indicates who owns something—an easy mnemonic is to look for the “I,” because if an object belongs to me (or “I”), then it would be referred to as “their object.” “They’re,” on the other hand, is a contraction for “they are,” which can be simple if you remember that the “are” is just tacked on the end of the word (they’re). Lastly, “there” refers to a vague location, but it is easy to remember if you can distinguish the other two first.

- **Its vs. It’s**

  “It’s” is a contraction, short for “it is.” “Its” is a possessive pronoun. With just an apostrophe standing between these two forms, try to remember it like this: just like other possessive words (“mine” or “my”), “its” is a singular word with no conjunction or apostrophe. However, because the word “it’s” has an apostrophe to break it up, we can understand that it is two words connected together by that apostrophe.

- **Affect vs. Effect**

  This is a common mistake at all levels of education, but you can use this neat mnemonic to remember the distinction: “affect,” the word that begins with A, is the action, or the verb form. If you can remember that, then you can also remember that “effect” must be the noun version.

- **Lie vs. Lay**

  This one can be tricky, but it comes down to where the direct object (the thing being acted upon) is. If no object is being set down, then “lie” is the word you want (e.g. “He lies down on the sofa”). If there is an object that is being placed on something, then “lay” is the correct choice (e.g. “He lays the poster on the table.”).
The HESI A2 examination stands for Health Education Systems Incorporated Admissions Assessment and acts as a way to test a student’s potential success in an intense nursing program. Orvis School of Nursing uses the scores from the exam toward the end of the selection process; while your GPA earns you an interview spot, ultimately, the result of your interview and your HESI score determine whether or not you get into the nursing program. Half of the points in the exam focus on English skills based around your ability to read critically and to correct grammar mistakes. This may seem daunting to STEM students, but the Writing Center is here to help.

What To Think About When Reading

a. Identifying the Main Idea
Keep the main idea in mind when you are reading passages in the Reading Comprehension section. You may be asked to identify this main idea. To clarify, the main idea of the passage is what the passage is trying to say overall; a statement about the main idea is usually included in the thesis or the argument. It might help to also think about the writer’s tone and purpose. Why is the author writing this? Are they trying to persuade, to argue, or to propose? Or maybe to advertise? What is the author trying to get from their audience? You can start by looking at their tone or how the passage is written. Are they using any rhetorical tools, like pathos or logos? How are they presenting the information? Is it purely factual, or are they calling attention to emotional facets of the information? The language an author uses can give you a lot of insight as to why they might be writing a passage. Look out for any rhetorical devices that might be present and think about why that author is using them. Once you’ve figured out the tone of the passage overall, you can begin to guess at why the author may have written that way.

If you’re having trouble deciding what the tone and the main idea are, a good strategy is to summarize. Try marking important information in the passage so that you can bullet point a quick summary that most accurately describes those key points. Be careful with how general or specific the summaries are--a summary is usually somewhere in the middle.

b. Identifying Supporting Details
In addition to the main idea, try to make note of any important supporting details or evidence. Look for details that enhance, add context to, or otherwise complicate the main point of the section. Look for analogies, examples, and synthesis of outside sources. There will often be questions related to details that are found throughout the passage, and it can save time if you identify supporting details as you go rather than having to look back through the passage again.

c. Finding the Meaning of Words in Context
Some questions will ask you to define a word in context, meaning that you are defining the word relative to the rest of the information. This can be tough because the words chosen are often ones with multiple (and sometimes unrelated) definitions. Try to think of how and why the word is used in this context. For example, if you were reading about a "disease evolving," the test evaluators probably aren't talking about Darwin's specific theory of evolution but of the idea of gradually developing.
d. Making Inferences

Part of your task is to make inferences about a text. Based on the information you read, you may have to make an "educated guess" about facts not included in the passage. For instance, if you were reading about the negative effects of coffee, you might have to infer that people who drink a lot of coffee are at a higher risk of disease. When looking at test choices, think about related information from the passage to see if there is any support for your inference.

Example Passage

With these categories in mind, let's take a look at what a sample passage might look like.

Lightning and Fire

Imagine that you're watching a volcano erupt while standing at a safe distance when, suddenly, you see flashes of lightning through the immense ash cloud spreading in front of you. You're confused, as it was a nice day today with no clouds. Wouldn't it be strange to witness this phenomenon? What you would be seeing is called volcanic lightning, also referred to as dirty lightning.

Volcanic lightning rarely begins right when an explosion starts, and it doesn't always happen in volcanic eruptions. Lightning usually forms when particles separate, doing so as a result of a collision or a larger particle breaking apart. Afterwards, a difference in the aerodynamics of these particles separates positive and negative charges. When the separation between these positive and negative charges grows, the air can't resist the flow of electricity, and lightning is created. However, the cause of volcanic lightning is still debated, but many scientists have speculated the way the process starts. Instead of positive and negative charges, some scientists have indicated that electrical charges occur when debris (like rocks and ash) make static charges by crashing into each other. The amount of water released during a volcanic eruption can also spur this lightning. So if you're ever near a volcano, or even if you can see an eruption off in the distance, make sure you look for lightning bolts in the plume.

Here are some questions you might see.

What is the passage about?

Ask yourself this question when you're thinking of the main idea. What's the most prominent idea in the passage above? It probably has something to do with the formation of volcanic lightning, and how that process might be different from normal lightning. Notice we don't need all the detail in the world--all we need is what the biggest, most important idea is.

What is the author's purpose in writing this passage?

If we look at the tone of the passage overall, it's pretty informative. It's clear the author isn't trying to manipulate or persuade us--the passage lacks any emotion at all, nor does it have directly address the reader except to have them imagine the phenomenon.

What is not implied in this passage?

These questions can be really tricky because although the correct answer may be related to the passage, inference means that the passage does not directly have any information stated about it. For example, something that may not be implied in this passage is the statement “volcanoes are dangerous to humans.” While the narrative at the beginning may elicit emotions of fear and confusion, and previous knowledge may tell you that you shouldn’t get close to a volcano, nowhere does the passage talk about the effects of touching lava, the consequences of witnessing dirty lightening, or reasons why eruptions may be bad.
Sometimes it is difficult to know how to best approach writing about television, film, or web media. Much of this process begins with understanding your assignment: this will have an impact on your purpose, audience, opinion, analysis, and research.

**Is it a movie review?**
This is written broadly for readers unfamiliar with the subject: people who might go see the film if they were given a spoiler-free outline of the story, some interesting side information about it, and a positive personal opinion about the film. This is a fairly common assignment, and can often be approached by splitting the paper in half between the story outline and personal perspective. Remember, a movie review can be positive or negative, but these opinions need to be backed up by objective observations and insightful connections.

**Is it a theoretical essay?**
This is written narrowly for readers very familiar with cinematic history, culture, and theory: people who are likely students or professors in the arts, interested in the ways films connect with other films, other art forms, or other theoretical perspectives. This assignment is essentially a research and synthesis paper: you will be expected to integrate the perspectives of one or more theorists into a paper that uses the source material to say something about film theory. Personal opinion, if appropriate at all, will be more about the application of the theory than the film itself.

**Is it a critical essay?**
This is written for readers with intermediate knowledge of film: people who will have already seen the film in question and desire a greater understanding of the work. This is a common assignment. It is best approached by finding (or following a prompt toward) a meaningful aspect of the film that can be explored further from a critical, analytical perspective. For example, you might choose the memorable opening or closing sequence of the film, a particular lighting/color style, or the anatomy of a chase scene. In order to defend your analysis, you may need to connect your argument to other examples in media or other theorists and critical writers.

**A note about using opinions:**
Art very often elicits powerful, subjective responses from people. When we write about film and media we can often struggle with our own tastes and preferences. The key is to know when these opinions are valuable to the argument and when they are harmful. In general, opinions are most insightful when they are balanced with personal reflections and reactions—not to mention a healthy dose of objectivity.
Writing Lab 1: Molecule or Outline?

Contributor: Aly Sicat

Pre-lab:
When you’re trying to figure out ideas for your Core classes, but your brain seems to just be focused on compounds and bonding, what might help? While a natural link doesn’t seem obvious between chemistry and writing, you can use some of the things you’re learning in those intense chemistry courses as a guide for your writing. In fact, doing so might even lead to a more organized paper.

One of the most basic skills in organic chemistry is the ability to name alkanes. These simple, non-reactive molecules may not seem like much in the lab, but they may come in handy when outlining papers.

In the following lab example, we’ll be looking at 2, 4, 6-trichloro-3, 5-dibromoheptane. That molecule name seems complex, but it helps us identify which groups are placed on which carbons. We can think of each of the branching groups as elements of your paper. The chlorines (Cl) and Bromines (Br), can be understood as your claims/arguments, counterarguments, and examples. So when we see the following molecule chain, we can instead think of the structure as represent a paper: 1, 7-thesis-2, 3, 4, 5, 6-claimsupportheptane

![Figure 1: 2, 4, 6-trichloro-3, 5-dibromoheptane](image)

Step 1: Identifying the Carbon Chain
In a carbon chain, recall that each apex and end of a line (unless otherwise labeled) means that there is a carbon there. Think of these as the parts of your paper.

The parent chain is the longest string of carbons in a molecule and tells you how to begin naming your molecule. This carbon chain acts as a map, displaying where double bonds lay and where groups hang off. As a result of this chain’s central usefulness, it’s important when drawing and identifying the parent chain that it is as clear and distinguishable as possible.
This is also true of writing—it is important for your paper (and later for your audience) that you identify what claims you are making, where you will be making those claims, and, finally, to make those claims within your paragraphs. Without identifying your parent chain, chemists don’t know where to find the double bonds or groups in a molecule, and without a main argument or a point, your audience can’t find or understand your subclaims and arguments.

If we look at our molecule and flip it so it’s standing, we can think of it as a base for your outline.

Because there are **seven carbons** on our parent chain, we can assume that we have seven separate claims in our paper. You can adjust this to your needs; if you need eight paragraphs to prove your thesis, then make your molecule an octane.

**Step 2: Identifying Groups**

Groups are molecules that are not part of the parent chain. If we think about this like a paper outline, we can understand these groups as claims and evidence. So, we can think of Chlorine and Bromine as representing assertions and sources.

While it is important to know your parent chain (aka your **main argument**), it is similarly important to understand where your paragraphs should be. If we know where each group is in the molecule, we can both identify the molecule and fully understand its chemistry; likewise, if we understand where each of our paragraphs is in a paper, we can better understand the writer’s argument as a whole, as the paper will be organized in a logical, order.
Step 3: Look for Hyrdogens

Notice that Carbon 1 and 7 do not have extra groups like the ones we discussed above. Think of these two carbons as special carbons. In order to make our molecule (and our paper) **stable**, we must attach something else to these carbons. Carbons are “happiest” when they have 4 points, or bonds, connected. Therefore, these special carbons need 3 more bonds to make them complete. In order to do this, as chemists, we think of hydrogen to attach to these carbons. Hydrogen only needs one other bond, making it an ideal candidate to attach to each of the lone carbons at either end of the molecule.

To put this explanation into a paper perspective, think about a paper that only has body paragraphs full of arguments and subpoints. Doesn’t this paper seem to be missing something? Isn’t there some way that we could introduce the paper’s argument to bring our reader in, and later make the reader understand what the paper sets out to accomplish?

Following these questions, the “hydrgens” that make a “happy” and stable shell are your thesis and your argumentative purpose. The top (carbon 1) and the end (carbon 7) should have the most focused and clear statements of your argument (hydrgens).

Also note that the carbons connected to groups only need one hydrogen. This indicates that while carbon 1 and carbon 7 should be the most direct statements of your thesis, the hydrgens (argument and argumentative purpose) needed to fill the end carbons should still be apparent. In other words, all of your claims (or groups) should always relate back to and support your main idea.
Post-lab:

The final molecule is a result of taking 2, 4, 6-trichloro-3, 5-dibromoheptane and making it 1, 7-thesis-2, 3, 4, 5, 6-claimsupportheptane. With this data we’ve collected, hopefully you can take draw your own essay molecules to catalyze your way to a more organized paper.
English Language Learners
Active vs. Passive Voice (“left” vs. “was leaving”)

Contributors: UWC Staff

The verb form “was leaving” and the verb form “left” are both past tense, but the difference is that one is passive and one is active.

Active Voice
Active voice is used when a writer wants the sentence to have more emphasis on the verb action and does not want the subject of the action obscured. This is the preferred type of voice for most writers.

Jessica walked to the store and ran into Mike on the way there.
Here, the emphasis is on Jessica walking (active voice), more than on Mike interrupting her while she was walking.

The waitress gave Brian a soda at the restaurant.
In this sentence, the verb “gave” is used which necessitates a subject to do the giving. With this active voice the subject-the waitress—cannot be avoided.

Passive Voice
Passive voice is used when the emphasis is not on the action, but on some other part of the sentence. Passive voice can also be used when you want to use a verb that normally requires a specified subject, but you don’t want to explicitly name the subject.

Jessica was walking to the store when Mike ran into her.
Here, because of passive voice, the emphasis is on Mike running into Jessica, rather than the fact that she was walking.

Brian was given a soda at the restaurant.
Here, by using “was given” the subject—the person who gave Brian the soda—is obscured. Passive voice can be a way to avoid the subject, if necessary.
Adjectives vs. Adverbs (“beautiful” vs. beautifully)
Contributors: UWC Staff

Adverb: Describes the Verb
An adverb modifies verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs. It does not modify a noun. Many times, adverbs end in “ly.”

*The girl walked beautifully to the store.*

Here, the word “walked” is being modified by the description word “beautifully.” We are using an adverb instead of an adjective because we are modifying a verb, not a noun.

Note: not all adverbs end in “ly” but most adjectives that can returned into adverbs, end in “ly.” Thus, other examples of adverbs are: always, never, often, because, since, anywhere, outside.

Adjective: Describes the Noun
An adjective modifies only words that are nouns. It can come before the noun, or can come after a verb, but it modifies the noun.

*The beautiful girl walked to the store.*

Here, the word “girl” is being modified by the description word “beautiful.” We are using an adjective instead of an adverb because we are modifying a noun.

Because adjectives and adverbs are both description words, sometimes it’s confusing when you should use one and when you should use the other. One big factor is determining whether or not the word being modified is a noun.
Basic Sentence Pattern in English

Contributor: Matthew Baker

In English, our sentences usually operate using a similar pattern: subject, verb, then object. The nice part about this type of structure is that it lets your reader easily know who is doing the action and what the outcome of the action is.

A **subject** performs the action in a sentence.

- For instance, in the sentence, “Matt eats pizza,” *Matt* is the subject because he is the one eating the pizza.

A **verb** is a word that usually indicates some type of action. There are two basic types of verbs in English: **action verbs** and **linking verbs**. An action verb represents something the subject of a sentence does, whereas a linking verb connects the subject to a specific state of being. In other words, a linking verb describes a subject instead of expressing an action. Linking verbs are also known as **state of being verbs**, and the most common one in English is the verb *to be*.

- If we consider the above sentence, “Matt eats pizza,” the verb is *eats*, which is an action verb because it tells us what Matt does—he *eats*.
- In this sentence, “Matt is hungry,” our verb is *is*, which is a form of *to be*, a linking verb. Notice how Matt does not do anything in this sentence. Instead, the verb *is* describes how Matt feels—hungry. *Is* links Matt with hunger.

An **object** usually appears after the verb. There are two (2) types of objects in the English language: **direct** and **indirect**.

A **direct object** takes or receives the action of the verb. In other words, the subject of the sentence acts on the direct object.

The direct object in our sample sentence “Matt eats pizza” is *pizza*. Matt eats what? Pizza.

An **indirect object** tells us to whom or for whom an action is done. To understand this concept, we need to come up with a longer sentence.

- Our new sample sentence will be, “Matt cuts the pizza for Nate.” In this sentence, our subject is *Matt*, our verb is *cuts*, the direct object is *the pizza*, and our indirect object is *Nate*. The pizza is cut for whom? Nate because Matt cuts the pizza for him.

So, remember, this is the basic pattern of an English sentence: **SUBJECT + VERB + OBJECT**.

**Here are some extra examples:**

*John kicks the can.*

In this sentence, *John* is our subject, *kicks* is our action verb, and *can* is the direct object.
Maggie folds the blanket for Matt.
In this sentence, Maggie is our subject, folds is our action verb, blanket is the direct object, and Matt is our indirect object.

Nate is an actor.
In this sentence, Nate is our subject and is links the word actor to Nate. In other words, is describes Nate’s profession.
Brief Guidelines for Article Usage: a, an, the

Contributors: UWC Staff

In English, articles (a, an, the) are like adjectives. They come before and modify nouns. However, articles do not have clearly defined meanings, like adjectives. Instead, articles simply provide information about the status of the nouns they modify (Lynch, Brizee, & Angeli, 2011).

Notice how the meaning of this sentence changes with the article:

George said the computer is broken.

Here, the suggests that George refers to a specific computer, one that the speaker of this sentence, as well as the speaker’s intended audience, recognizes. The broken computer could be a certain one among many computers.

George said a computer is broken.

In this sentence, a suggests that the broken computer is any one among many computers that the speaker and audience might know. The computer is nonspecific.

English uses two kinds of articles: definite (the) and indefinite (a, an).

A/an serve the same grammatical purpose. A is used before consonant sounds (a pie, a green apple, a European vacation), while an is used before vowel sounds (an apple, an expensive trip, an hour).

Using a/an

Use a/an with singular count nouns that are unknown to the audience. (Count nouns are things that can be counted—one tree, four trees; two instances, seven instances; etc.)

Use a/an when a noun is nonspecific, or any one among many.

Yesterday, a truck parked in front of my house.

This truck is one the audience has not seen before—or, at least, the speaker assumes the audience doesn’t know anything about this truck. It could be any one of many trucks.

Tending a garden takes dedication.

The garden is nonspecific. The speaker could also have said, in a more general way, tending gardens takes dedication.

A vs. An

Generally, “an” will only be used before words that start with a vowel (a, e, i, o, u) or word and numbers that sound like they start with a vowel.

I need an apple.

Here “an” is used because the word apple starts with the vowel “a”.

She has an hour for lunch.

Though the word hour starts with the consonant “h”, it is pronounced “au-er”.

Not using a/an

Do not use a/an before noncount nouns. (Noncount nouns are things that cannot be counted—happiness, hardship, tea, sugar, etc.)

I needed an advice.

Advice cannot be counted, so it does not take an indefinite article.
Using the

Use **the** with nouns that are specific, or to refer to a specific member of a group.
Use **the** with nouns that are known to the audience, in the context of the sentence.

When nouns are known to an audience, one of the following is usually true:

1. The object or person is the only one in its category.
2. Previous information given makes the noun already identified/specified.
3. A word before the noun modifies it so that the meaning becomes limited.
4. The noun is assumed to be a shared social experience.
5. Exception for plurals: signaling a group.

*Yesterday, I saw the truck with a dent in its hood.*

The speaker refers to a specific truck, one that has a dent in its hood. This information restricts the identity of the truck. Perhaps the speaker has told the audience about this truck before.

*He told me I shouldn’t worry about it. I needed the advice.*

The speaker refers to a specific piece of advice given to him or her, on a specific occasion. The *advice* mentioned in the second sentence is defined in the first, so *advice* is specific, and **the** is used.

**Exception for plurals**

If an already identified noun is plural, but is being used a single unit, the article “the” can be used to signal that this group is to be thought of as a single unit.

*The dogs were barking all night long.*

Here, even though “dogs” is plural, the use of the article “the” before it signifies that these specific dogs are one unit.

**Not using the**

Do not use **the** with plural or noncount nouns (nouns that cannot be counted) to mean “all” or “in general” (Hacker, 2004, p. 57).

*In many temperate climates, the wheat is an important grain.*

*Wheat* cannot be counted. The sense of “in general” is suggested without the definite article.

**Finer details**

Sometimes noncount nouns (things that cannot be counted) are used in sentences as count nouns (things than can be counted). This often depends on context.

*I drink coffee every day.*

Here, *coffee* is a noncount noun, and does not take an article. The speaker refers to coffee in general.

*I asked for a coffee.*

In this sentence, *coffee* is used as a count noun. The sentence could also be expressed as *I asked for a cup of coffee*, in which *cup* is a count noun.

**Do not use the with singular proper nouns** (names of people, streets, cities, states, continents, most countries, single lakes, single mountains, etc.) (Hacker, 2004, p. 57). For example, it is correct to use the words *Barack Obama, Pennsylvania Avenue, New York City, Virginia, North America, Canada, Lake Tahoe, Mount Rose,* and *Catalina Island* without using the definite article.
However, use the before some singular proper nouns naming large regions, deserts, peninsulas, oceans, seas, gulfs, canals, and rivers (Hacker, 2004, p. 57). For example, it is correct to say the West coast, the Mojave Desert, the Nile, the Gulf of Mexico, and the Pacific Ocean.

Use the with plural proper nouns. For example, the Great Lakes, the United States, the Rocky Mountains, the Falkland Islands.
When No Article is Needed: There is No Need for Classification

_The boy went to school by bus._

Notice that there is no article in front of “bus.” Situations like this arise when classifying and/or identifying the noun is not relevant. It is non-relevant if the noun is a single entity or part of a class of objects.

_Having to live in prison would be really boring._

A specific prison or an aforementioned prison is not relevant. The speaker is saying that being in any prison would be boring.

_Some people go to church every Sunday._

What church is being talked about is irrelevant. There is no specificity because the speaker is simply talking about churches as a general concept.

**Additional resources**

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute’s writing center provides an in-depth discussion by John R. Kole of countability and definiteness of nouns. The article also features a list of common noncount nouns and some practice exercises: [http://www.rpi.edu/web/writingcenter/esl.html](http://www.rpi.edu/web/writingcenter/esl.html)

This resource from the writing center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill includes a flowchart for article usage and is especially useful for visual learners. The author advises that students practice using the flowchart by looking for articles in published writing and consulting the flowchart for clarification: [http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/articles.html](http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/articles.html).

**Reference List**


Contractions

Contributor: Sierra Becze

When to Use Them and When to Not

While contractions are used in everyday speech, there are certain situations where you can use them effectively and other situations where you may choose not to. For example, using contractions in academic writing, such as a research paper, is usually not encouraged because it can make your writing sound informal. In writing situations that are informal, such as blog posts or personal narratives, using contractions is acceptable, unless your professor states otherwise. Informal pieces also have a more conversational tone to them compared to an academic paper that has an authoritative tone.

How to Use Contractions

Contractions are a way to mash together two words in order to make them shorter. They also are a way to make your writing seem more conversational and have the reader feel included in the writing. Apostrophes are a necessary when creating contractions; apostrophes replace letters that are dropped from the second word of the contraction.

Examples

Contractions that take out the first letter of the second word:

- I’m = I am
- They’re = They are
- I’d = I had
- She’s = She is
- How’s = How is

Contractions that take out the second letter of the second word:

Note: Contractions that use the word “not” will replace the “o” with an apostrophe (’).

- Shouldn’t = Should not
- Wouldn’t = Would not
- Couldn’t = Could not
- Don’t = Do not
- Isn’t = Is not
• Wasn’t = Was not
• Hasn’t = Has not

Contractions that drop the first two letters of the second word:
  Note: Words using “will” replace the “wi” with an apostrophe (’).
• It’ll = It will
• He’ll = He will

Exceptions: Contractions that do not follow rules:
• Won’t= Will not

**Contractions vs Possessive Pronouns**
The English language includes words that sound the same but have different spellings and meanings. Often contractions can be confused with possessive pronouns. While contractions use apostrophes, possessive pronouns do not.
  • Your = Possessive pronoun for “you”
    o Example: Your dog is very cute.
  • You’re = Contraction for “you are”
    o You’re the best student in the class.
  • Its = Possessive pronoun for “it”
    o The spider ate the fly that was in its web.
  • It’s = Contraction for “it is”
    o It’s fine that you cannot come into work tomorrow!
  • They’re = Contraction for “they are”
    o They’re coming into town tomorrow.
  • Their = Possessive pronoun for “they”
    o Their dog ran away but thankfully they found him.
  • There= Shows location of an idem
    o The stapler is over there.
“Its” vs. “It’s”

Contributors: UWC Staff

The difference between “its” and “it’s” can be confusing because they are said exactly the same way. However, in writing, it is important to make the distinction.

**Using “its”**

We use “its” when the word “it” is functioning as a pronoun and you want to show possession.

- The kitchen in the house is its only good quality.
- The book has its good and badly written parts.

This can be counterintuitive because, normally, the apostrophe is used to show possession. However, in the case of “its,” no apostrophe actually shows possession.

**Using “it’s”**

We use “it’s” when contracting the phrase “it is.”

- It’s a shame that I switched majors.
- I feel like it’s a bad thing to go shopping at the last minute.

A good way to know whether you should use “its” or “it’s” is do this: take out the “its” or “it’s” and replace it with “it is.” If the sentence still is grammatically correct then you can use “it’s.” If not, then “its” is probably appropriate.
Possessives:

Should the Apostrophe be Before or After the “s”? (‘s vs. –s’)
Contributors: UWC Staff

The apostrophe is largely used to show possession, but when it comes to words with an “s” at the end, sometimes the placement gets confusing. Luckily, it’s relatively easy to know whether or not the apostrophe comes before or after the “s.”

The apostrophe comes after the “s” if the word is plural.

*The students’ papers were graded very harshly.*

Since we are talking about more than one student, the apostrophe goes after the “s.”

The apostrophe comes before the “s” if the word is singular.

*The student’s paper was graded very harshly.*

Here, there is only one student being talked about, so the apostrophe goes before the “s.”
Subject-verb Agreement and Basic English Verb Conjugation

Contributor: Matthew Baker

Subject-verb agreement means that your verb must be conjugated, or changed, to fit (or agree) with the subject. Subjects can be singular or plural. Think of singular and plural as mathematical concepts: Singular = 1; Plural = 2 or more.

**Matt** eats pizza.

In this sentence, the subject is **Matt**, which is *singular*; therefore, our verb is *eats*.

**Matt and Nate** eat pizza.

In this sentence, the subject is **Matt and Nate**, which is *plural*; thus, we have to change our verb to *eat*. Notice that third person singular verbs in the present tense take an *s* at the end, but plural verbs in the present tense do not. This pattern is typical of most regular verbs in English. Another easy way to remember this concept for regular present tense verbs is by thinking of the *s* at the end of third person singular verbs as the *third person singular s*. So whenever you have a subject that is in the third person (Matt or he/she/it), you will need to conjugate the verb with an *s* at the end.

A regular verb is one that conforms to the rules of grammar, whereas an irregular verb is one that does not.

Keep in mind that each sentence you write will need to have agreement between its subject and verb. The following chart explains how to conjugate a regular present tense verb:

**TO EAT (Present Tense)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I eat</th>
<th>We eat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You eat</td>
<td>You eat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He/She/It eats</td>
<td>They eat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- I eat pizza.
- You eat pizza.
- Matt eats pizza; Janice eats pizza

**TO BE (Present Tense)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I am</th>
<th>We are</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You are</td>
<td>You are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He/She/It is</td>
<td>They are</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Nate and I (we) are hungry
- You all are hungry.
- Nate and Matt (they) are hungry.

Unfortunately, there are some exceptions to this rule, and one you will encounter frequently will be the verb to be. The following chart explains how you can conjugate this verb in the present tense.
In English we have many different verb tenses, but the most common one you will use besides the present tense will be the past tense. Normally in the past tense, you do not need to worry about subject-verb agreement because you can conjugate most regular past tense verbs to the singular or plural by adding an -ed to the end of the verb. The following chart shows you how to conjugate the regular past tense verb to talk.

**TO TALK (Past Tense)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I talked</th>
<th>We talked</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You talked</td>
<td>You talked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He/She/It talked</td>
<td>They talked</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- I talked to my mother.
- You talked to your mother.
- Matt talked to his mother; Janice talked to her mother.
- Nate and I (we) talked to our mothers.
- You all talked to your mothers.
- Matt and Nate (they) talked to their mothers.

Just like with verbs in the present tense, however, some verbs do not follow the rules in the past tense. Even though to eat is a regular present tense verb, it is not a regular past tense verb. Unfortunately, these irregular past tense verbs do not have a handy rule to learn; therefore, you will have to memorize them or keep a resource handy whenever you want to use them.
TO EAT (Past Tense)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I ate</th>
<th>We ate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You ate</td>
<td>You ate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He/She/It ate</td>
<td>They ate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- I ate pizza.
- You ate pizza.
- Matt ate pizza; Janice ate pizza
- Nate and I (we) ate pizza.
- You all ate pizza.
- Matt and Nate (they) ate pizza.
Verb Tenses

Contributor: UWC Staff

**Past tense**

Refers to any action done in the past.

Most past tense verbs end in –ed.

**Regular Verbs**

- I *walked* to class
- I *stopped* eating after lunch
- I *jumped* into the pool

**Irregular Verbs**

Irregular verbs do not follow the basic pattern and instead follow an alternate one

- I *went* to the store (Go)
- I *built* a house last December (Build)
- I *heard* about that movie the other day (Hear)

**Present tense**

Refers to something that is happening right now.

They end in –s or –es

**Regular Verbs**

- She *walks* to the park
- The boy *eats* from the bowl on the table
- She *goes* to the store for candy

**Irregular Verbs**

Does not follow the root of the present but follows alternate pattern

- I *drink* from the water fountain
- I *write* when I’m bored
- I *eat* all the time

**Future tense**

An action that will be completed in the future

All future tenses start with will

- I *will go* out later today
- They *will pack* our lunch in the morning
- I *will eat* the cupcake after lunch

**References**

https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/601/1/

What are Prepositions? (at, in, on)

Contributors: UWC Staff

Definition of Prepositions
Prepositions are grammatical words that have no inherent meaning like a noun or verb would. Instead, they contribute to the grammatical meaning of the sentence. What preposition a writer should use depends upon the context of the sentence. The prepositions at, on, and in are the most common, but, of, for, and about are also discussed in the following pages.

The most common uses of prepositions are to show location. However, in English, location can be literal or metaphorical. The 3 main types of preposition uses for at, on, and in are:

- Spatial/Physical
- Time
- Metaphorical

Spatial (Physical) Preposition Uses
Spatial prepositions are used to show a physical location. How specific the location is, depends upon the preposition that you choose to use.

At

The preposition “at” is used to show a general point or place.

We met at Starbucks for coffee.

Using “at” here is somewhat ambiguous, as “we” could have met outside of Starbucks, inside of Starbucks, or in the Starbucks parking lot. However, what is relevant is that “we” met somewhere near Starbucks.

I ran into Jonathon at work today.

On

The preposition “on” is used to show location when connected to a surface without walls or specific boundaries.

She put the glass on the table.

We walked on the dirt road for miles.
The preposition “in” is used for locations where boundaries are present (such as walls) that define being “inside.”

While I was in New York I bought a sweater. A big city like New York is often seen as having large buildings that can “encase” you if you are in the city.

I was in Starbucks when I bought a coffee. Because of the use of “in,” it is assumed that the individual is literally inside the walls of Starbucks. Contrast this with the use of “at.”

### Time Proposition Uses

**At**

The preposition “at” is used to describe a small unit of time, such as hours or minutes.

We will meet at nine o’clock on Saturday.

“At” is used to show the specific, small unit of time of nine o’clock.

At 10:32 in the morning, my car was hit.

**On**

The preposition “on” is used to describe a restricted amount of time, which includes dates and days of the week.

We will meet at nine o’clock on Saturday.

Here, we are talking about a day of the week, so we use the preposition “on” since this preposition is used for more lengthy time references than “at.”

The party will be on June 22nd.

**In**

The preposition “in” is used to describe a broad and/or lengthy unit of time. This includes: years, seasons and months.

We can plan the event for some time in October.

Here, “in” is used because we are talking about a more extensive point in time than hours or even days. We are talking about an entire month.

In 1776, the U.S. declared independence.

### Metaphorical Time Preposition Uses

Prepositional use in metaphors is a complicated aspect of prepositions. To help the process, think of abstract ideas as being a physical box. Some examples of abstract ideas are: love, danger,
difficulties, state of being, and words. Imagine each noun as being its own separate box that people can step into, walk through, or get out of.

Here is a list of examples of how these prepositions and nouns can function in a sentence:

Jimmy and Kelly are in love.

Sarah is going through a difficult time right now.

I’m trying to get out of a bad situation at work.

If you can’t express yourself in words then how can I understand you?

I’m in an awful mood.

In this way, prepositions are used to show location in metaphorical circumstances. Moods and abstract situations are often thought of as something that a person is metaphorically inside of, thus the preposition “in” is used. Metaphorical prepositions are tricky and can take practice to master, but remembering to think of each scenario as being something that a person is “inside of” can help the process.
The Preposition “Of”

Contributors: UWC Staff

The preposition “of” is somewhat unique because it does not rely heavily on location, as other prepositions do. The preposition “of” is for a number of reasons:

As an integrative or relationship function.

*The roof of the green house was orange.*

The preposition “of” shows the relationship between the green house and the roof. The roof is part of the green house.

*Peter was in the army, but wasn’t of it.*

The preposition “of” shows that even though Peter was physically in the army, he did not have a special relationship/allegiance to the army.

Showing possession.

*James is the boyfriend of Veronica.*

The preposition “of” shows that, in a way, James belongs to Veronica.

*The remark of the judges was not good.*

The preposition “of” shows how the remark belongs to the judges.

Noun and descriptor integration.

*Robert was glad the beast of a man was his friend.*

Instead of using the phrase “the man that was like a beast,” by inserting the preposition “of” we can turn it into the “beast of a man,” with “beast” describing the kind of man that “he” was.

Note: this is a somewhat specialized use of the preposition “of” and cannot be used with every description word and noun.
The Preposition “For”

Contributors: UWC Staff

The preposition “for” is used for grammatical purposes when expressing purpose or belonging of something. It is generally used in two specific ways:

**To show purpose.**

*Sara went to the store for milk.*
Here, the preposition “for” is showing what Sara was going to the store to get.

*For goodness’ sake, Henry, stop being so strange!*
The preposition “for” in this sentence, shows that Henry should stop being strange for the reason of goodness.

**To show a length of time.**

*Marcus will be gone for at least one week.*
Here, the preposition “for” is showing an expanse of time that Marcus will be gone, which is one week.

*The cookies will be baking for about thirty minutes.*
The preposition “for” is a connecting word that shows the cookies will be baking for a certain span of time.
The Preposition “About”

Contributors: UWC Staff

The preposition “about” is used to show the relationship between a subject and a topic, a subject and a location, or a subject and time.

**Use as a topic**

Jennifer knows a lot **about** languages.
Here, the preposition “about” connects Jennifer’s knowledge to the topic, languages.

The story **about** the elephant had all of us laughing.
Again, here “about” is signaling the topic of the story, which was the elephant.

**Use for location**

The girl went **about** the city.
Here, the preposition “about” is showing a location concerning where the girl is. She is in the city, likely in motion walking around in it.

**Use for time**

The party will start **about** 8:00.
Here, the preposition “about” is used to show an approximate time that the party will start.

Sharon is going to leave for class at **about** 7:30.
“About” is used to show an approximate time that Sharon is going to leave for class.
Sometimes, a “that” will be placed in the middle of a sentence for seemingly no apparent reason, like in the examples below:

**To Conjoin Clauses**

*I know* that *some people don’t like chocolate, but I think it’s strange.*

*Kim said* that *Bobby and Jill dating now.*

The reason for the placement of “that” is because it is conjoining two clauses. “I know” is a clause because it contains the lexical verb “know” and a subject “1.” Similarly, “some people don’t like chocolate” is a clause because it contains the lexical verb “like” and the subject “people.”

It is good to note that often times, the word 11that” can be deleted and the sentence will still make sense:

*I know some people don’t like chocolate, but I think it’s strange.*

*Kim said Bobby and Jill are dating now.*

**To Specify**

However, there are some instances where the “that” is necessary:

*I wonder if that guy should go to the party.*

*I know that girl from school.*

The “that” is necessary in these sentences because it serves a different function than in the previous examples. In the last two examples, the word “that” is not conjoining two clauses. Instead, it is actually functioning like the articles “the” or “a/an.” It is specifying a particular person or object.
Why isn’t this plural? Mass Nouns.

Contributors: UWC Staff

Sometimes a noun looks like it should be plural when it isn’t.

**Why?**

Chances are that this noun is called a *mass noun*. Mass nouns are nouns that, by their very nature, are plural.

**Examples:**

*She went to get glasses of water for everyone.*

*Sara ate five bowls of rice.*

*Robert enjoys all different types of literature.*

The phrases “water,” “rice,” and “literature” at first seem like they should be plural. If we said “bowls of carrots” or “different types of books” the noun would be pluralized. However, because water, rice, and literature are mass nouns, we do not pluralize them.

**Other examples of mass nouns:**

Food, furniture, air, advice, blood, grass, research, trash, travel, knowledge, information, meat.

**Note:**

The word “water” is not always a mass noun. A person can say “he traveled across many waters” and pluralizing “water” is appropriate. You must observe the context when deciding whether or not to pluralize “water.”
Evidence: Paraphrasing & Quoting
Accurately Citing to Avoid Plagiarism

Contributors: UWC Staff

Just What is Plagiarism?
Plagiarism, put simply, is taking credit for someone else’s work. In academics specifically, plagiarizing is when you write what someone else said/wrote but don’t give them credit for it. Giving credit where credit is due is one of the fundamentals of college writing and not doing so will result in a myriad of unpleasant consequences such as: an automatic “F” either on the assignment or in the class, having to appear before the academic integrity board, undergoing disciplinary actions as assigned by the academic integrity board, and potentially being expelled from the university all together. Professors are constantly keeping a look out for plagiarism in papers, especially in lower level courses like Core Humanities, and do not hesitate in handing over plagiarizers to the academic integrity board. So what’s the best way to avoid the unpleasant consequences of plagiarizing? Simple: don’t do it.

Avoiding Plagiarism
Many students plagiarize without even knowing that he or she is doing it. However, intentional or not, the consequences are still severe. Often times, this occurs because the writer does not know under what circumstances one needs to provide citation. To help clear up some of that confusion, here are a few practical ways to avoid plagiarism in your papers:

Using a word directly from the source
If you use a word directly from the source then you must put it in quotations and cite it at the end of the sentence. Example:

Original Text:
The fantastic show “Mr. Roger’s Neighborhood” is a great learning tool for any individual, no matter his or her age. It is a very engaging show that is thoroughly enjoyable to watch.

Text in Essay (MLA format):
“Mr. Roger’s Neighborhood” is a “fantastic” show that is both educational and

Note:
The word “fantastic” in this example was taken directly from the text and therefore is put in quotation marks. The author of the source and the page that the word is found on is then cited at the end of the sentence. Also note that Mr. Roger’s Neighborhood is in quotations because it is the name of a show, not because it is in the source. Mr. Roger’s Neighborhood is a widely known show and is not specific just to this article.
Using a sentence from the source

The first principle applies the same when you insert an entire sentence or part of a sentence into your paper that comes directly from the source. Example:

**Original Text:**
In Walt Disney’s *The Little Mermaid* we watch as Ariel seeks out true love and tries to find her place in the world amidst two conflicting obligations: one to her family and one to her heart.

**Text in Essay (MLA format):**
Walt Disney’s adaption of *The Little Mermaid* chronicles a snapshot in the life of Ariel as she “seeks out true love and tries to find her place in the world” (Sneezy 13).

Paraphrasing

Lastly, if you paraphrase make sure you paraphrase completely. Doing so will avoid accidentally taking words directly from the source and forgetting to cite them. However, even if you paraphrase you must still cite your source at the end of the sentence and/or paragraph. Example:

**Original Text:**
In 1997 Disney began airing the cartoon “Recess.” The show focused on T.J. Detweiler, Ashley Spinelli, Gretchen Grundler, Mikey Blumberg, Vince Lasalle, and Gus Griswald. All six children are in their fourth year of grade school and remain so throughout the four year run of the program. Throughout the episodes, the children portray to their audience the significance of being an upstanding person. In their escapades they also show that sometimes going against the grain is the best thing to do and that few things are more cherished than a good friend.

**Text in Essay (MLA format):**
Disney’s cartoon series “Recess” follows T.J. Detweiler, Gretchen Grundler, Ashley Spinelli, Mikey Blumberg, Gus Griswald, and Vince Lasalle during their year of 4th grade. Each week in the show, these six friends manage to create mischief and mayhem while simultaneously teaching viewers about the importance of friendship, the value of good character, and that some social norms are made to be broken (Bashful 126).

So when it comes to plagiarism, if you are on the lookout for it, always remember to cite (even when you’re paraphrasing) and you’ll be just fine. Happy citing!
Integrating Sources

Contributor: Jessica Ross

When writing a college-level paper, you will often be required to reference sources in order to support the main point/purpose of a paper. In order for sources to effectively provide support, you will need to contextualize every textual reference you use and explain why they’re relevant to your paper’s overarching purpose. This might look different depending on whether you’re paraphrasing or directly quoting a source, but you will need to explain the purpose of every reference you make.

Paraphrasing

When paraphrasing a source, it can be helpful to write down what you want to say in drafts. Read your source material, then paraphrase that information. Then give yourself some time to think about this information and paraphrase your original paraphrase. This will help you put the information into your own words, and it will help you avoid patchwork plagiarism.

Questions to ask yourself to contextualize your textual reference:

1. What is your main concept/point for this paragraph?
2. How does this information support the purpose of your paper?
3. What information does your reader need in order to fully understand that purpose?

These questions are helpful when you’re blending information into your own words to avoid direct quotes, but these questions can also keep you on the right track when you decide to use a direct quote.

Quoting Sources

To make sure you’re integrating sources effectively, try using what some call a “quote sandwich” or “quote trilogy.” These have three parts:

1. Introduce the quote.
   a. Discuss the author’s credibility.
   b. Set up the context; transition into the idea expressed in the quote.
2. Add in the quote.
   a. Be sure to cite it!
3. Explain the quote.
   a. Why is this quote relevant?
      i. How does this quote support the point of this paragraph?
      ii. How does this quote relate to the main point of your paper?

Even if the reason you quote a source is clear to you, you should always explain the relevance of the information you add. You know what message you’re trying to get across, but it will not always be clear to your reader. Don’t assume your reader will be able to see the connections you’re trying to make.
Paraphrase Worksheet

Contributor: Aaron Smale

Whether working on a research paper or a personal narrative, presenting the ideas of a credible source using your own language is an effective way to integrate evidence into your academic writing. However, paraphrasing is more complex than directly quoting source material, and it is important to practice paraphrasing in order to succeed. Here are some steps you can take to construct a successful paraphrase.

**Step 1:**
In the space below, take notes on the most important aspects of the sentence(s) that you are attempting to paraphrase. Even though it’s tempting to use the “perfect” wording from your original source, try thinking of synonyms or related terms to get these ideas down in your words. If you must use a unique term or phrase from your original source, be sure to insert quotation marks around it.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

**Step 2:**
Now that you’ve taken notes on your chosen evidence, walk away and do something unrelated to this project for a few minutes: work on an assignment for a different class, listen to a song, or just take a short walk. Most importantly, walk away from your source material.

*When you return, flip this page over.*

**Step 3:**
In the space below, draft a paraphrase of the important concepts and ideas from your notes—without looking at the original material. Don’t worry if your draft doesn’t sound perfect yet; you can always come back and revise it later.
Step 4:
Now that you have drafted a paraphrase, compare it to your notes and source material to ensure that you have included the most important concepts in your paraphrase. Additionally, record the relevant citation information in the space below and integrate it with your paraphrase so that you are providing credit to your source’s author(s).
Quick Guide to Blending Quotes

Contributor: Derrian Goebel

When attempting to incorporate quotes into an essay, one of the biggest problems for students is blending the quote into their own words. A teacher asks students to provide source evidence, some students will copy/paste a quote directly into their essay, talk about it some, and then jump from quote to quote, trying to make the word count. The problem with this way of incorporating source quotes is that A) you drop the quote, with no introduction of source, and no indication as to how this quote supports the topic, and B) you are wasting your essay defending source info, not supporting your argument by using that source info.

An essay should have a main point (thesis), then context to help readers enter into a discussion on that topic, and sparingly use source info/quotes to support your argument. Below are some quick questions that, when answered, will have you on the way to a quality, content-filled essay. These questions will help you blend parts of the source quote with your words, resulting in a paragraph that is your conversation, having found some source info to support your claim, rather than you defending a bunch of sources quotes.

Questions to ask yourself:

1. What is your main concept/point for this paragraph? (this paragraph should be one of your claim’s reasons)
2. Have your own conversation on it (what you know about it)
3. Introduce the author/website as well as their ethos/credibility (what makes them the “expert”?)
4. What was the point of this article? (quick summary)
5. What was the most important thing that the author said?
6. Copy/paste the quote (then highlight the most important part(s) of it)
7. Re-write the above quote in your words, only keeping the important parts in their words (in “quotes”)
8. Explain the 5b rewritten sentence –what does the author mean by his/her “quoted” words?
9. Relate this source info back to your thesis (interpret)

Question 1 is about your subject section’s main point. You need to start the conversation by bringing up one of your reasons to your claim. When beginning to discuss this reason, you have a point, right? So start off your paragraph by telling readers your point (1).

Question 2 is about you starting your own discussion about this part of your claim. This can be a few sentences long, or even get into a second paragraph.

After you’ve made your point, and your conversation has begun, get into your source information (what your source says about this topic). Question 3 is about you introducing your source and their credibility—establish their ethos.

Question 4 is about you discussing the main idea of this source, which a good place for a quick article summary.
After the article summary, is the hard part: blending the quote with your own words. If you use question #5 on a separate piece of paper/document, you can create a sentence that has a blended quote used in support of your point. So, when you find your quote, copy/paste it (5a) to separate document and highlight the most important parts of the quote. Then (5b), you rewrite this sentence in using your own words, but keep those highlighted parts (in quotes).

**Example:**

John Smith said sparkly blue glue was a waste of time.

(rewritten) When discussing the use of sparkle glue, Smith indicated that it was a “waste of time” because no one can see it later (“Article Title”).

After you’ve completed a quote blend, then you can explain what the author/website meant by this statement (6). When you are done discussing all this information (feel free to repeat steps 5 and 6), then be sure to tell your reader how all this info supports your thesis. How does it relate to what you are claiming? Bring readers back to the point. Do not limit yourself to the typical 5 paragraph essay; this often results in incredibly long paragraphs, and/or awkward organization. This should help with over-all paragraph structure, and help fill your essay with non-fluffy stuff.
Evidence: Sources
Evaluating References Using the C.R.A.A.P. Test

Contributors: Nate George

There comes a time in every author’s life when he must decide whether a source is worthy enough to be included in his masterpiece of an essay. Luckily for us, the students at California’s Chico University took a break from partying and developed an effective way to evaluate a source’s credibility. Appropriately acronymed C.R.A.A.P., this five-step test assesses the reliability of potential sources, and makes it easy to decide whether or not to include a source.

⚠️ Currency
- If the source is a written text, when was it published? If it is an online resource, when was it originally posted online?
- Could current events during the time of publishing/posting affect the legitimacy of the source?
  - For example, an article written in 1941 could very well include nationalist bias intended to spur readers into supporting the United States’ WWII effort.
- Was this information published recently? If not, you must consider whether it is necessary for you to strictly utilize recent sources or if older sources will work.
  - For example, a scientific essay on a new cancer treatment would exclusively utilize recent information, while an essay on the impact of the Gettysburg Address would allow for a more lax application of sources.
- Has any of the information in the source been refuted or proved wrong by modern science?

⚠️ Relevance
- Will this source be used as an argument or counter-argument? If it is used as an argument, how strong is the link to your thesis? If it is a counter-argument, can you effectively counter it to make it work in favor of your thesis?
- Have you ensured that this source is the most appropriate vessel to carry this information?
  - For example, if the information is available both on Wikipedia and in a scholarly article, make sure that the appropriate source is cited as the owner of the content.
- If writing a research paper, are all of your sources scholarly? If not, it would be in your best interest to find a scholarly source for all of your provided information.

⚠️ Authority
- Who is the author of the source? If unavailable, who is the publisher? Be wary of sources with no author.
- What research has the author conducted to make him an appropriate source of information?
- If it is an online source, what is the suffix for the site?
  - .com = website has commercial intent
  - .edu = website was written by someone affiliated with a college or university
Understanding these acronyms can help you better understand the motive for writing the paper. For example, taking information regarding a shady U.S. policy from a .gov site may not be a wise idea, as the information may be biased to favor the writer (in this case, the U.S. government). This information would be better represented by an .edu site.

Accuracy
- What kind of source is this?
  - An experiment? A study? A primary source? A separate source?
- Have the findings been peer-reviewed?
  - Be careful using sources that are not primary or peer reviewed, as they could easily contain bias or incorrect information that can drastically affect the credibility of your paper.
- Is there an alternate source that agrees with the information provided in this source?
  - A “no” for this question does not necessarily disqualify the source from use, as information could be brand new and not yet verified. However, tread with caution regardless.
- Is there any reason to believe that the paper contains elements of bias?

Purpose
- Why was the paper written?
  - Was it to inform and teach? Or was it made for the much more treacherous purpose of persuasion?
- Does the paper appear to include any ulterior motives?
  - For example, does the source appear to try and sway the reader into a particular way of thinking?

With this test in your arsenal, your paper will be free of the unreliable sources that commonly bog down student’s papers. Ditch the crap, and go with the CRAAP.

Works Cited
Hunting Down Sources

Contributor: Derrian Goebel

The research essay can be scary when you are struggling to find resources. Many are frustrated by the search for “high quality” sources. Here are some places that you should consider looking into when researching for your essay.

**Google, Yahoo, and Wikipedia**

seem to be the go-to places where students first find information. Some teachers warn: “NO Wikipedia!” and for good reason–there are many contributors, so it isn't that reliable. However, there usually is a treasure chest of sources listed toward the bottom of articles or Wikipedia pages referencing previously written articles. This is a great place to track down some good sources.

**Encyclopedias and/or Dictionaries**

are also common places to start. You may think, “Define the issue,” which is a good way for you to better grasp the context of your topic, but readers need to hear your concept of the issue, not Webster’s definition. Encyclopedias often provide their sources (which you can mine) at the end of each section.

**Popular magazines**

are also places where students go first, mainly because they are a familiar source to find what’s going on in the world. Take care which ones you choose; for example, the local gossip magazine will be less reliable than a magazine that specializes in your field of study, such as The Economist.

**News**

can be helpful to your essay because current information is valuable; however, consider the differences between less reputable sources (such as those with alien articles) to more reliable news sources. Be cautious, even while using reputable news sources, as some news sources have political leanings, and may be biased and thereby unreliable.

**Databases**

are fantastic places to pursue sources for your topic. Databases offer various journals that specialize in your field of study. These journals offer what you are looking for –peer-reviewed journal articles, which are VERY good sources to use in research essays. The abstract to a journal article will give you a quick overview of the content, so you can choose quickly whether or not this source will be helpful.

**The school library**

offers students access to databases through their search engine, through which you can search by title, subject, author, etc., to find books that might help. Books can be found not only within the building, but can be quickly shipped to you through the interlibrary loan system and Link+.
Research librarians

are research experts whose training is specific to finding relevant and credible sources, showing you where to begin your search, as well as how to search.

The Library of Congress

has a helpful index that will aid you in finding reliable sources. For example, they provide access to archival information (papers, articles, & special collections), the law library (such as finding the actual legislation that you may be arguing about), as well as various manuscripts, maps, periodicals, historical narratives, and more.

Your Professor

(or TA) is one of the most underestimated sources for your topic; spend some office hour time with this person discussing potential sources. Never be afraid to ask for help.
With the Internet’s ever-expanding repository of information, appraising potential sources has become an increasingly important skill. Evaluating strengths and weaknesses can be a useful tactic to assess potential sources.

**What is the research question?**

**Strength:** The research question defines the population to be investigated, interventions or exposures, and outcomes.

**Weakness:** The population is too broad, too narrow, or specific characteristics are too vague such that possible findings will be inconclusive.

**Was the study design appropriate for the research question?**

**Strength:** The researchers chose to study the data over several years to ensure accuracy of the results for the selected population.

**Weakness:** The researchers collected observational data when experimental data could have produced stronger support for their hypothesis.

**Did the study address potential sources of bias?**

**Strength:** The study asserts that the members of the sample were chosen randomly, ensuring they are representative of the population.

**Weakness:** The study design contains a potential for the above selection bias, but the researchers didn’t address this potential in the study.

**Was the study performed according to the original design?**

**Strength:** The study followed the design and reported this how they followed the design.

**Weakness:** The researchers were unable to recruit the desired number of participants, reducing their ability to produce significant findings or answer the research question.

**Do the data justify the conclusions?**

**Strength:** The study accurately reports the statistical significance of the data without suggesting a cause and effect relationship between exposures and outcomes.

**Weakness:** The researchers misinterpret a statistically significant correlation between the exposures and outcomes as a cause and effect relationship.

**Are there any conflicts of interest?**

**Strength:** While a party that might want to see specific findings funded the study, the researchers disclose that the party had no input into the study.

**Weakness:** The researchers offer no disclosure on what input the funding party did or didn’t have into the study.
In the Class Resources
Note Taking
Contributors: UWC Staff

How Much Do You Know about Note Taking?
Take this online quiz: http://unilearning.uow.edu.au/notetake/

Note Taking while Reading

Key Ideas:
- Good note taking skills start before the class begins. It is important to read all the required assignments ahead of time. Lectures are designed to supplement to the reading assignments, not replace them.
- Bring questions and important ideas with you to class. When you participate in the class discussion and ask the professor questions, you are more likely to remember the material.

Note Taking while Reading Methods

1. Write Notes in the Margins
As you read through the text, write summative phrases or important characters in the margins of the text. If you are borrowing or renting a book, use sticky notes. You can use reflective questions to guide writing these phrases, such as “What was the main idea?”

2. Highlight Key Phrases in the Text
After you read a paragraph or a section, selectively highlight key terms and phrases. If you are borrowing or renting a book, use removable colored tape. Highlighting without clarifying the purpose of the highlight (such as writing notes in the margin) has proven to be dramatically less effective.

3. Write Notes on a Separate Paper
Use one of the lecture note taking methods listing in the next section of this resource. As you read through the text, take notes on the important characters, key events, and main ideas.

Note Taking during a Class Lecture

Key Ideas:
- Write down the main ideas in phrases that you will remember. Do not be concerned with writing down every word or sentence of the lecture.
- If the professor is using a PowerPoint during the lecture, ask if s/he would be willing to share a printed or electronic copy with the students in the class. Professors may also post PowerPoint presentations on WebCampus before class; if this is the case, print out the note taking version and bring it with you.
Note Taking Methods

1. Outlining System
Organize the main points of the lecture with supporting ideas indented under each generalized main idea. The major, most general topics are the farthest to the left while the supporting details are indented. Roman numerals, number, or dashes are not required but may be helpful depending on your own personal organization style.

Example:
http://www.las.uh.edu/Iss/handouts/Note%20Taking/Format%20Outline%20Method%20OF%20Note-taking.pdf

2. Cornell System
Draw a line down the left side of your paper, creating two columns. Paraphrase important points from the lecture in the larger column on the right ("note-taking column"). After the completion of the lecture, write key words in the left column ("cue column"). It may be helpful to think of the notes in question format, and the key words in the cue column are the answers. At the bottom of the paper, write a few sentences in the “summary area” that explain the main topics. This method is designed to help you use critical thinking skills to process your notes and increase your likelihood of remembering the material.

Example:
http://lsc.cornell.edu/LSC_Resources/cornellsystem.pdf

3. Charting System
Before the lecture begins, label several columns at the top of your paper; choose the appropriate labels based on the subject. During the lecture, write important information under each heading. This method can help you focus on and record the key facts of the lecture.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERIOD</th>
<th>IMPORTANT PEOPLE</th>
<th>EVENTS</th>
<th>SIGNIFICANCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1961-65</td>
<td>FDR</td>
<td>WWII</td>
<td>U.S.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>INVolvement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Mapping System
This system is designed for the visual student and uses a creative organization style. Write the main idea in the center of the paper and draw lines to supportive topics. You may add numbers or colors to link common ideas.
Reviewing Your Notes

Review your notes at least once per week throughout the semester. Students remember a significantly higher amount of information during a mid-term or final exam if they have regularly reviewed their notes compared with students who did not regularly review their notes.

Additional Resources & Reference List:
http://www.sas.calpoly.edu/asc/ssl/notetakingsystems.html
http://www.sl.psu.edu/Documents/Note_Taking_Strategies.pdf
http://ectutoring.com/resources/articles/keys-to-remembering-what-you-read/
http://www.montgomerycollege.edu/Departments/enreadtp/Cornell.html
FORMAT FOR THE OUTLINE METHOD OF NOTE-TAKING

Title or Topic

I. Main topics will be the main headings (to the left side of the paper near the margin)
   A. Major sub-topics (indented and subordinate to the preceding heading)
      1. Minor sub-topic (indented under A)
      2. Minor sub-topic (indented under A)
         a. Detail (under 2)
         b. Detail
   B. Major sub-topic (indented the same as major sub-topic A)
      1. Minor sub-topic
         a. Detail (under 1)
         b. Detail

II. Continue in the same way with main topic #2, #3, etc.
#2 Example of Cornell System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cue Column</th>
<th>Note Taking Column</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2&quot;</td>
<td>6&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Note Taking Column
1. Record: During the lecture use the note taking column to record lecture using telegraphic sequences.
2. Questions: As soon after class as possible, formulate questions based on the notes in the right-hand column. Writing questions helps to clarify meanings, reveal relationships, establish continuity, and strengthen memory. Also, the writing of questions sets up a perfect stage for exam-studying later.
3. Recite: Cover the note taking column with a sheet of paper. Then, looking at the questions or cue-words in the question and cue column only say aloud, in your own words, the answers to the questions, facts, or ideas indicated by the cue-words.
4. Reflect: Reflect on the material by asking yourself questions, for example: "What's the significance of these facts? What principle are they based on? How can I apply them? How do they fit in with what I already know? What's beyond them?"

## Summary

5. Review: Spend at least ten minutes every week reviewing all your previous notes. If you do, you'll retain a great deal for current use, as well as, for the exam.

After class, use this space at the bottom of each page to summarize the notes on that page.
Phylum arthropods is made up of subphylum chelicerata. Subphylum chelicerata is characterized by two parts called prosoma and opisthoma. The prosoma and cephalothorax are sensory, feeding, and locomotor tagma. The chelicerae is the first appendage and refers to the pincerlike.

The pedipalps are the 2nd pair of appendages, and they are used for sensory purposes: feeding, locomotion, and reproduction.
**Scientific Revolution: Chart of Scientists**

Directions: Take bullet notes from the paragraphs attached and PowerPoint presentation in the following columns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name/Years</th>
<th>Area of Science</th>
<th>Traditional Belief</th>
<th>Experiments</th>
<th>New Ideas</th>
<th>Reactions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Andreas Vesalius (1514-1564)</td>
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<td>Galileo Galilei (1564-1652)</td>
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<td>William Harvey (1578-1657)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Isaac Newton (1643-1727)</td>
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</table>
#4 Example of Mapping System

Peer Workshop Do’s & Don’ts

Contributor: Derrian Goebel

**DO:**

- Provide **useful** and **thoughtful** feedback for your peer
  - Ex: What does this piece say to you, the reader? How does it answer the “So what” question?
- Help each other understand the prompt
- Help each other stay on topic
- Provide evidence of what needs attention, point to something they’ve written that you can discuss together
- Provide new thoughts and potential ideas for others in the peer review workshop

**Do NOT:**

- Give empty opinions: “This is vague”
  - Instead, offer questions such as, “When you say X, are you really intending to mean...?”
- Make fun of others: “Again with the wrong apostrophe?”
  - As an alternative, when you find a silly error, just talk about it: “I am noticing a pattern of apostrophe issues, just an fyi...”
- Point at everything wrong, offering corrections
  - Instead, respond with questions or helpful comments; don’t just edit
- Simply say “cool” or “looks good” and that’s it
  - Offer the quality work shopping responses to help your peer, similar to the feedback you would like to receive
- Skim over the essay/text and just summarize
  - Use some of the lessons learned, rubric checks, and/or writing directions to guide your workshop response
- Give vague ideas: “Something’s wrong with your intro”
  - Be specific: “I see you are using body paragraph material in your intro. Where is this information in the essay?”
Personal Statements
Checklist: Writing a Personal Statement

Contributors: UWC Staff

I'm Just Starting
Things to do...

Research.
Read about each program and related faculty members online. Find personal statement guidelines for each school/program you’re applying to and print out any prompts for quick reference.

Outline.
Using the prompts that each school/program has given you, make an outline of the question(s) that each essay needs to answer. If your personal statement is open-ended (it has no guidelines) below are some common questions that personal statements should address:

- Why have you chosen this specific program/school over others?
- What kinds of scholarly work do you intend to do?
- Are there any members of faculty that you hope to work with? Why?
- What is grad school a necessary step in your career path?
- Why are you a good “fit” for the program?
- What should an admissions committee know about you that your resume, CV, or writing sample won’t tell them?

Brainstorm.
Answer the questions on the Personal Statements Brainstorming Worksheet. Use your answers to begin composing a draft. Remember, your statement doesn’t need to be perfect yet; a quick draft will help get the ball rolling.

Read examples.
Familiarize yourself with the “look and feel” of effective personal statements by taking a look at some examples of winning essays. Remember: examples should only be used to help you brainstorm. Don’t get caught up trying to make your essay sound like someone else’s.

Talk to a mentor.
Speak with a faculty member in your discipline that knows you well (such as a professor that will be writing you a letter of recommendation). Often, they can give you some insight on the strengths you should emphasize in your essay.
I've Started, but I Need Some Help

Things to do...

**Brainstorm.**
Answer the questions on the Personal Statements Brainstorming Worksheet. Try to incorporate your answers into your draft.

**Free write.**
Spend 15 minutes writing without editing yourself. Answer the questions that your program has asked quickly, honestly, and without worrying about grammar or style. If your personal statement is open-ended (it has no guidelines) below are some common questions that personal statements should address:

- Why have you chosen this specific program/school over others?
- What kinds of scholarly work do you intend to do?
- Are there any members of faculty that you hope to work with? Why?
- Why is grad school a necessary step in your career path?
- Why are you a good “fit” for the program?
- What should the admissions committee know about you that your resume, CV, or writing sample won’t tell them?

**Talk to a writing consultant.**
Just having a conversation about the program and your personal statement can sometimes reveal new ideas and directions for your writing.

**Write your thesis.**
Write down the most important reason that your application should be selected in one sentence. Use your best sentence as your thesis. Has everything you’ve written for your personal statement thus far support your thesis? What other evidence do you need to make your case? A writing consultant can help you with this exercise.
I Have a Draft That I’d Like to Revise

Things to do...

**Proofread.**

Check your draft for mechanical errors and typos that may have been missed by spell-check.

**Review.**

Read through your essay and use the questions below to think critically about your writing:

- Have I explained why I’ve chosen this particular program, as opposed to others?
- Have I demonstrated knowledge of my discipline?
- Have I supported each of the claims I make about myself with examples and evidence?
- Have I described why this program is necessary to achieve my career goals?
- Do I sound confident?

**Talk to a writing consultant.**

Consultants will not only help you with mechanics but can also provide a fresh perspective on your writing. Unlike professors or colleagues that already know you well, a consultant will likely be learning about your ambitions for the first time, just like an admissions committee.

**Share your draft.**

Schedule a time to read over your draft with a faculty mentor in your discipline. They may have a good idea of what admissions committees in your field will be looking for.

**Work on your hook.**

Have a few people read the first couple of sentences and ask them if, based only on what they’ve read, they’re interested in finding out more. A writing consultant can help you find ways to make your hook more engaging.

**Read examples.**

Check out some examples of winning personal statements to get some more ideas on interesting hooks and effective writing styles. Remember: examples should only be used to help you brainstorm. Don’t get caught up trying to make your essay sound like someone else’s. Be yourself, be honest, and be confident in your writing.
1. What is the best part about working in your field?

2. What made you realize that this career path was a perfect fit for you?

3. What was the most fascinating thing you learned about your field as an undergraduate?

4. What was the most difficult assignment or academic project you undertook as an undergraduate? How would this prepare you for grad school?

5. Have you ever worked or volunteered in your field outside of school? If so, what advantages did this experience offer that a classroom couldn’t?

6. What do you see yourself doing 10 years from now? Why do you need grad school to do it?

7. What factors did you consider when you chose the schools/programs that you are applying to? Why were they important?

8. Think of a professor in your field that you've had already and that you like and respect. If this person were reading your application essay, what would most impress him or her?
Finding Your Voice in Personal Statements

Adapted from the University of Colorado Denver Writing Center

Your personal statement is an opportunity for an admissions or review committee to get to know you, the “you” that cannot be captured in CV or resume. For that reason, it is important to be confident, be honest, and be yourself. Below are four common writing mistakes that “hide” your individual voice and undermine the effectiveness of your essay.

**Academic Voice**

Excessive academic language can make a personal statement seem overwrought and artificial. **Write as though you are speaking with a colleague**, rather than publishing in a journal.

*Instead of:*
- “Based on extensive personal experience and exemplary coursework, medicine is obviously a challenge that will last a lifetime.”

*Try:*
- “I have spent a lifetime preparing to join the field of medicine, because it challenges and excites me.”

*Instead of:*
- “The profundity of the didactic and stochastic exemplifications of my academic career naturally gravitate a candidate of my paramount abilities towards fulfilling the raison d’etre of my presence in your program.”

*Try:*
- “I am very well-rounded, and my broad knowledge makes me a great candidate for your program.”

**Passive Voice**

The use of passive voice can muddle the meaning of your sentences and can downplay the importance of your accomplishments.

In **active voice**, the subject performs the action of the verb. For example: “I wrote the personal statement.” In **passive voice**, the original subject moves to the position of the direct object so that the verb is no longer connected to the true subject of the sentence. For example: “The personal statement was written by me.”

Find **passive voice in your essay** by looking for “to be” forms of verbs such as “am, is, was, were, are, been” or “to have” forms such as “have, has, or had”. Passive sentences also often have “by” phrases, as seen in the example given above.

*Instead of:*
- “I got two academic internships, and was a member of the Honor Society…”

*Try:*
- “I have spent a lifetime preparing to join the field of medicine, because it challenges and excites me.”
“I excelled in two academic internships, and was inducted into the Honor Society.”

Instead of:
- “The scholarships were awarded to me because I have earned good grades and have worked as a Teaching Assistant.”

Try:
- “I won academic scholarships for my high GPA and undergraduate work as a Teaching Assistant.”

Hedging

“Hedging” refers to writing that uses qualifiers and vagueness to create a tone of modesty. Your personal statement is not a place to be modest. Some examples of common hedging words: “Seems, tends, may, might, suggests, often, usually, probable, assume, conceivable, sometimes, believe.”

Instead of:
- “Although I may seem an unlikely candidate for law school, my passion makes it likely that I will succeed.”

Try:
- “My passion for the law drives me to achieve at the highest levels.”

Instead of:
- “I believe that veterinary medicine may be the best path for me.”

Try:
- “Veterinary medicine is the best path for me, because...”

Addressing Negative Information

Using your personal statement to address negative aspects of your educational background is often unnecessary unless a negative experience can showcase positive qualities about yourself. If you do choose to address low grades or bad test scores, for example, place the emphasis on what you learned or how you changed as a result of these experiences.

Instead of:
- “My grades fell because I had to work two jobs to pay for rent and food.”

Try:
- “My strong sense of self-reliance really helped me keep my life together when financial issues started to impact my school work.”

Instead of:
- “My test scores were low, but I’m sure that my recommendations will make up for it.”

Try:
- “I have created associations with the foremost biological researchers, including Dr. John Smith and Dr. Jane Jones. These mentoring relationships have convinced me that bioethical research is both personally fascinating and essential to humanity.”

Cover Letter Guides
The Cover Letter Format

Contributor: UWC Staff

Your cover letter should accomplish the following:

1. Clearly route your cover letter and resume to the right person for the right job opening.
2. Show you can communicate professionally in writing.
3. Reinforce qualifications presented in your resume and show that you are a good fit for the company by using short narrative examples of how your experience and skills match the needs of the employer.
4. Reflect your positive attitude, personality, motivation and enthusiasm.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company Address</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dear (insert the correct contact person’s name here, or their title):

**Arouse Interest:** Identify the position you’re applying to and indicate how you heard about it. Be specific in defining your purpose.

**Introduce and Sell Your Relevant Skills and Experience:** Describe how you meet the job qualifications and the needs of the employer.

- Outline your strongest qualifications that match position requirements
- Give examples of your skills and experience that relate to the position
- Provide evidence of your related experiences and accomplishments

**Request Further Action:**

- Suggest a plan of action (request an interview, indicate you will call during a specific time)
- Always thank the employer at the close of your letter for the time and consideration given to your application

Sincerely,

*My name signed in pen here if hard copy--if e-mailed, just eliminate these extra spaces
My Name (typed)*
Sample job announcement and customized cover letter:
Boston Non-Profit Housing Association (BNHA) seeks a well-organized, self-motivated individual to help coordinate advocacy efforts as part of BNHA’s regional work. BNHA is a thirty-two-year-old membership association that focuses government policy on housing solutions for low-income people who suffer disproportionately from the housing crisis, while promoting the preservation, development, and quality management of affordable housing. The program assistant will help pass policies and programs on the local and regional level that will support the development of affordable housing.

**Job Duties and Responsibilities**

**Coordination/Advocacy**
- Help schedule meetings, draft agendas, take notes, and circulate information to the Housing Action Network.
- Participate in meetings and discussions with local advocacy groups to ensure connection between the regional and local work.

**Organizing/Training**
- Help coordinate regional trainings on Inclusionary Housing, Community Acceptance, Housing Elements, and other local or regional housing efforts
- Assist in organizing local support for regional efforts by attending meetings and doing some outreach around sign-on letters or hearings.

**Media / Communications**
- Provide regular updates for BNHA’s update, newsletter, and for the housing action network
- Assist in the release of reports by creating an updated press list and assisting in pitching stories.

**Qualifications**
Bachelor’s degree required.
Experience in either organizing or campaign work helpful.

*(See cover letter on the next page)*
123 Amherst Avenue  
Amherst, MA 01002

February 1, 2011

Ms. Mary James  
Program Director  
Boston Non-Profit Housing Association  
100 Massachusetts Avenue  
Boston, MA 02111

Dear Ms. James:

It is with enthusiasm that I apply for the Program Assistant position as seen on the University of Massachusetts Amherst Career Services website. I am passionate about and have a personal interest in advocating for affordable housing for all. I am a University of Massachusetts Amherst senior looking to relocate to Boston this spring.

Last summer I had the opportunity to intern for the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Boston, where I was exposed to a variety of advocacy efforts and campaign work. I used my strong organizational skills to schedule regional meetings, take notes and provide regular updates for the program directors. I aided in creating promotional publications, such as the monthly newsletter and circulated the information both via hard copy and internet in order to advertise our events and provide outreach to potential members. Additionally, I was the liaison for our local branch and coordinated Skype teleconferences for the five regional chapters to participate simultaneously.

I am someone with a lot of self-motivation. For the past four years I have worked during the school year at Amherst Pizza and was recently promoted to manager. This coupled with my strong desire to make a difference for others makes me an excellent candidate. I look forward to discussing the position with you in more detail. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Emma Good
Rhetorical Strategies
How to Use a Concept Matrix
Contributor: Aaron Smale

For research papers, literature reviews, or longer essays, a concept matrix can be an effective resource in organizing research. A concept matrix is an organizational tool that presents connections between available research articles and specific aspects of a chosen topic by having articles on one side and the specific parts of a topic on the other side. Each cell in the matrix is a visual representation of potential intersections between different parts of the larger topic.

For example, a concept matrix for a literature review on sustainability may look something like this:

**Concept Matrix for Sustainability Literature Review**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect of Topic</th>
<th>Natural Resource Levels</th>
<th>Biodiversity</th>
<th>Pollution</th>
<th>Economic Impacts</th>
<th>Urbanization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Article</td>
<td>Ochoa &amp; Mayer (1983)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Douglas (1997)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yamamoto et al. (2009)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chambers, Burton, &amp; Kennedy (2012)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Baker &amp; Jackson (2015)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**How Topics Come Together**

For the purposes of this literature review, this concept matrix demonstrates several options for an initial draft. If we wanted to discuss issues of our topic like biodiversity and pollution, for example, we would want to use the articles from Douglas, Yamamoto et al., and Baker and Jackson. However, if we wanted to extend the conversation to include urbanization, our matrix shows us that Douglas may not be an effective option because urbanization is not discussed in his article. A concept matrix also highlights gaps in your research, demonstrating where you may need additional support. Especially for literature reviews, a single source is not enough to substantiate a claim.

**How a Concept Matrix Strengthens Synthesis**

A concept matrix is helpful to identify opportunities for synthesis, which can be described as the “bigger picture” of your topic revealed by overlapping claims in individual sources. For example, four out of the five articles in the example concept matrix discuss natural resource levels, which indicate this is a critical aspect to discuss.
Even though each of these authors may be discussing natural resource levels, they may not be saying the same things about it. Ochoa and Mayer (1983) may comment that natural resource levels are solely impacted by urbanization, while the research conducted by Baker and Jackson (2015) may indicate that natural resource levels have a significant causal relationship to biodiversity. The overlap here builds a larger picture of how natural resource levels, urbanization, and biodiversity all relate, even though not all of the authors discuss all of these subjects.

Synthesis occurs between these two articles when we can see how they present a bigger picture. Since both of these articles discuss natural resource levels and urbanization, we can think of this as a “conversation starter” where we can ask questions such as:

- What do these authors agree on related to these aspects of sustainability?
- How do they disagree about these common aspects?
- How is it significant that some aspects are discussed in certain articles and not in others?
  - For example, how is it significant that Baker and Jackson (2015) discuss biodiversity and pollution while Ochoa and Mayer (1983) do not?
  - Are Baker and Jackson filling in gaps in the previous research conducted by Ochoa and Mayer?
- Between the publications of different articles, how has previous research been changed, added to, or disproven by recent literature?
  - Given that Baker and Jackson’s work is more current than Ochoa and Mayer’s research, how has the earlier discussion about natural resource levels or urbanization changed? What new questions have been raised in the last thirty years?
  - If the previous research by Ochoa and Mayer was important in the field at the time, do Baker and Jackson reference it or comment on it in their own work?

These are all effective types of questions to ask to work toward synthesis. A concept matrix helps you identify gaps in research and opportunities for synthesis.
How to Fill in a Concept Matrix

- In the row headers on the left side of the concept matrix, arrange each article by author (or title if the author is unavailable) from most recent in the top row to the least recent in the bottom row. This will be helpful to visualize where the most current research is situated in a collection of research articles.

- Next, arrange topic aspect labels along the column headers of the concept matrix (ex: in a research paper about sustainability, aspects of the topic might include natural resource levels, pollution, economic impacts, biodiversity, and urbanization). These labels don’t need to be arranged in any specific order, though they can be organized by level of importance, degree of impact, amount of research available, etc. from left to right, which may help to prioritize different aspects of the topic.

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<td>Article #1: (Most Recent)</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td>Article #2</td>
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<td>Article #3</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>Article #4</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Article #5 (Least Recent)</td>
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- Once the titles have been arranged in the concept matrix headers for rows and topic aspects have been added for columns, you can mark the cells where articles intersect. For example, Article #1 above discusses every aspect of the topic except for Aspect B. The concept matrix is marked to reflect this; the matrix also reveals that all of the other articles discuss this aspect.

- Lastly, new rows and columns can be added to (or removed from) a concept matrix your research and writing processes.

Flip this page over for a blank concept matrix →
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect of Topic</th>
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Responding Using the Rhetorical Situation

Contributor: Derrian Goebel

There are many points to consider when responding to writing. Whether you are responding to a book, article, film, other video, music, or even a peer review, you will want to respond in a thoughtful manner that points to the text’s effectiveness. Here is a quick guide to the rhetorical situation and some questions that might help steer your response effectively.

**Ethos (credibility)**
- What qualifies the writer to speak on the subject?
- How does the writer connect with the audience?
- How does the written product relate to the topic?
- What attitude or tone does the writer have?
- What language or vocabulary is being used to construct identity?
- Are there any biases evident in the writing (gender, race, age, class, etc)?

**Logos (logic)**
- What is the author suggesting as truth?
  - Can it be argued, how?
- What evidence does the author use to support their point?
  - Are they using quality sources, or are their sources weak?
- Is the writer’s argument complete?
  - Is there anything missing? Could it be improved by more information?
- Is the evidence relevant to the thesis?
  - Some evidence doesn’t directly support the author’s claim.
- Is the evidence current and accurate?
  - Old data may be outdated, inaccurate, and no longer useful.
- Does the evidence have authority and purpose?
  - Are they using reliable sources, such as peer-reviewed journal articles, that support the writer’s main claim?
- What reasons might someone argue the author’s claim?
  - Consider as many possible counter-arguments

**Pathos (emotion)**
- Is the writer targeting the audience appropriately?
- Who is the audience? How can you tell?
  - What is the writer assuming about the audience’s beliefs, values, and attitudes?
  - Are these assumptions implied or stated?
- Are the writer’s emotions apparent to readers, providing appropriate emotional appeal?
- Is there too much or too little emotion being used?
  - Who benefits from the writer’s appeal and who does not?
Textual Analysis Quick Guide

Contributors: Derrian Goebel

The purpose of textual analysis is to describe the content, structure, and functions of the messages contained in texts. Textual analysis may involve: consideration of audience; attention to the visual, written and verbal language; formatting and design elements; assessing the text for what it is attempting to do; and your response. Below is a quick guide for helping you analyze text based on content and functions of the messages contained in the text:

**Rhetorical Triangle**
(SeeResponding Using the Rhetorical Situation)

- **Ethos:** How does the author’s credibility affect what is being said?
- **Logos:** What evidence does the text provide?
- **Pathos:** How does the text appeal to emotional responses?
- Does the text have a balanced use of ethos, pathos, logos, or is one appeal emphasized? Why would that appeal be emphasized?

**Audience**
- **Who** is the author/publisher targeting?
  - Example: For a cereal advertisement, is the cereal company targeting the parents who buy the cereal or the children who consume it?

**Visual, Written, and Verbal Language**
- **How** is your source targeting a specific audience?
  - Visual Example: If the cereal ad is full of bright colors with cartoon characters, who is the target audience?–children
  - Written Example: Words on a cereal box that is targeting children will be simple and understandable.
- Ask yourself: How are those words presented? Who do those words speak to?
- Verbal Language Example: When listening to a music video, how is the artist using her/his voice? Is the delivery of the lyrics in contrast to the meaning of the lyrics?
Providing Textual Evidence

- This is where you provide evidence of your claim about the text; not discuss what evidence the text/author is providing.
  - Example: If your claim is that the cartooning on the cereal is targeting children, provide details from the ad that support this? What does the cartoon look like? How does that specific cartoon speak to children rather than adults?
  - Example: If the text brings in a famous quote that helps drive home a point, how is the quote poignant?
    - Don’t forget to use proper quotation marks, and always cite your source (even when paraphrasing).
- When considering verbal text, does the author’s word choice make the claim successful for the intended audience?

Speak to the Bigger Picture

- How does this fit into the bigger picture in terms of cultural framework?
- Example: If you are talking about cereal ads marketing to children, what does that say about American marketing (or any other bigger concept)?
Who is Your Audience?

Contributors: UWC Staff

Meeting the Audience
When making a demand, what is the first thing that you consider? The best logic to make the argument convincing? The right words to say? The appropriate tone to use? All of these factors can play an important role in the writing process, but they are all quite meaningless if the individual does not take into account one very important detail: the audience. The audience is, in reality, the factor that will make or break your argument. One way of arguing may be very effective for one audience, yet simultaneously disastrous for another (maybe that’s why politicians are always contradicting themselves...). In college writing, knowing your audience is essential to understanding how to write a paper.

Audience of One
In most undergraduate courses, the audience will consist of one person: the professor (or the T.A.). It is very important to keep your “audience of one” in mind. Students often will write a paper as if they are speaking to an audience that is unfamiliar with the subject matter, or write it as if they are merely talking to themselves. It is always important to keep in mind who you are really talking to.

The Knowledgeable Audience
One thing to keep in mind when your professor is the audience is that he or she already knows the topic, and likely has an opinion on it as well. Because of this, you don’t need to spend copious amounts of time explaining the material, for it is already understood. Your audience is looking for new information, thoughts, and ideas. However, providing a little background information for context is important. A brief synopsis is generally a good segue into more complex thoughts. You must be careful, however, not to include too much summary. Your audience wants to know your thoughts on the matter.

The Opinionated Audience
If you are writing an argumentative essay, it is wise to know your audience’s opinion on the issue. This is especially essential if you are arguing against your audience’s point of view, because your argument will need to be twice as strong and twice as tactful. Take into account all the arguments that your audience could bring to the table against you, and neatly fold those criticisms into your paper. In a written argument, the audience cannot ask questions. So, you must anticipate and answer them before they can be asked. Otherwise, the questions will likely still be asked, but in little red letters in the margin of your essay when it is handed back.

The Hypothetical Audience
Sometimes professors will give you a hypothetical audience to write for. In this case, evaluate your topic according to that audience: where are they coming from? What are their assumptions and opinions about your topic? What criticisms will they have? What are some commonalities between your opinion and theirs? Taking the time to ask the questions and do research will help you implement stronger content and write a more successful essay.
The Unknown Audience
There are also times when your audience will be unknown to you. In that case, argue the best you can. Bring the strongest evidence you have, present it as neatly as possible, and try to anticipate various points of view on your topic. At least one of these points is likely to coincide with your audience’s perspective.
Sentences: Construction
Clauses & Sentences Flowchart

Contributors: UWC Staff

Independent Clauses
An independent clause is basically a complete sentence; it can stand on its own. It consists of a subject (e.g. “The dog”) and a predicate (e.g. “barked”).

Ex: The dog barked.

Dependent Clauses
A dependent clause cannot stand alone, though they often contain both a subject and a verb. Where independent clauses express complete thoughts, dependent clauses do not, and left on their own, dependent clauses create fragments.

Ex: When the dog barked.
So she asked.

Simple Sentences
A simple sentence consists of an independent clause on its own.

Ex: The dog barked.
She asked him to leave.

Complex Sentences
Complex sentences combine independent (or main) and dependent (or subordinate) clauses.

Ex: When Katie’s dog barked, Robin yelped in surprise.

Compound Sentences
A compound sentence consists of two or more simple sentences or independent clauses.

Ex: Katie’s dog kept barking, so Sam asked her to take the dog outside.

Compound-Complex
Compound-complex sentences combine a compound with a complex sentence.

Ex: When Katie’s dog barked, Robin yelped, and Sam asked Katie to take the dog outside.
Sentence Variety

Contributors: UWC Staff

What is sentence variety and what can it do for your writing? The following quotes are great examples of how balancing long and short sentences can make your writing more engaging. Several short sentences in a row make writing seem choppy and boring. Several very long sentences make the writing drone on.

Variety is key.
How can you create a balance between short and long sentences, and how does that change the flow of ideas in your writing?

Example 1:
This sentence has five words. Here are five more words. Five-word sentences are fine. But several together become monotonous. Listen to what is happening. The writing is getting boring. The sound of it drones. It’s like a stuck record. The ear demands some variety. Now listen. I vary the sentence length, and I create music. The writing sings. It has a pleasant rhythm, a lilt, a harmony. I use short sentences. And I use sentences of medium length. And sometimes, when I am certain the reader is rested, I will engage him with a sentence of considerable length, a sentence that burns with energy and builds with all the impetus of a crescendo, the roll of the drums, the crash of the cymbals—sounds that say listen to this, it is important.
(Gary Provost, quoted in Roy Peter Clark, Writing Tools. Little, Brown, 2008.)

Example 2:
Anyone who looks with care into the good books shall find in them sentences of every length, on every imaginable subject, expressing the entire range of thoughts and feelings possible, in styles both as unified and various as the colors of the spectrum; and sentences that take such notice of the world that the world seems visible in their pages, palpable, too, so a reader might fear to touch those paragraphs concerned with conflagrations or disease or chicanery lest they be victimized, infected, or burned; yet such sentences as make the taste of sweet earth and fresh air—things that seem ordinarily without an odor or at all attractive to the tongue—as desirable as wine to sip or lip to kiss or bloom to smell; for instance this observation from a poem of Elizabeth Bishop’s: ‘Greenish-white dogwood infiltrated the wood, each petal burned, apparently, by a cigarette butt’--well, she’s right; go look--or this simile for style, composed by Marianne Moore: ‘It is as though the equidistant three tiny arcs of seeds in a banana had been conjoined by Palestrina’--peel the fruit, make the cut, scan the score, hear the harpsichord transform these seeds into music (you can eat the banana later); yet also, as you read these innumerable compositions, to find there lines that take such flight from the world that the sight of it is wholly lost, and, as Plato and Plotinus urge, that reach a height where only the features of the spirit, of mind and its dreams, the pure formations of an algebraic absolute, can be made out; for the o’s in the phrase ‘good books’ are like owl’s eyes, watchful and piercing and wise.
Types of Sentences

Contributors: UWC Staff

An independent clause is basically a complete sentence; it can stand on its own and make sense. An independent clause consists of a subject (e.g. “the dog”) and a verb (e.g. “barked”) creating a complete thought.

The dog barked.

A dependent clause cannot stand alone even if it contains a subject and a verb. Dependent clauses do not express complete thoughts so they are considered incomplete sentences or fragments. You can often identify a dependent clause by a “dependent marker word”†— a word or phrase which implies there is more to the sentence (e.g. “when”).

When the dog barked.

The example of an independent clause above, “The dog barked,” is a simple sentence. Simple sentences can also be longer than this; as long as a sentence consists of only an independent clause, it is a simple sentence. Simple sentences can also contain a compound subject or a compound verb. Because these sentences still contain only one independent clause (as opposed to two or more independent clauses and/or an independent clause and a dependent clause), they are still considered simple sentences.

The dog barked.
   The quick, red fox jumped over the lazy, brown dog.
   The dog and the fox jumped over the cat.
   The fox jumped over the dog and dashed across the field.

A compound sentence consists of two or more independent clauses (or simple sentences) combined into one sentence.

The fox jumped over the dog, and the dog ran under the fence.
   The dog loves treats; the fox loves flowers.
   The dog growled, the cat cried, and the fox dashed away.

Complex sentences combine independent (or “main”) and dependent (or “subordinate”) clauses: “When the dog barked, my sister cried.” In this example, “my sister cried” is the independent or main clause, and “when the dog barked” is dependent or subordinate. We know this because of the dependent word marker “when.” When one clause is subordinate to another, it means the subordinate clause holds less importance in the sentence than the main clause.

When the dog barked, my sister started crying. The fox, even though it was injured, jumped over the dog. Rather than running around the dog, the fox jumped over the dog.
   The fox jumped over the dog whereas the cat ran around him.
**Compound-complex sentences** combine a compound sentence and a complex sentence. These sentences contain two or more independent clauses and one or more dependent clauses.

*When a tree branch fell, the dog yelped, and the fox ran away.*

Sentences: Punctuation
Semicolon Cheat Sheet

Contributor: Aaron Smale

Semicolons are often used to join parts of a sentence together to establish variety and link related ideas. Unlike a colon, which separates an independent clause from descriptive information, a semicolon links independent clauses of equal standing. Below are some helpful tips on how to use semicolons effectively and appropriately to strengthen sentence structure and variety.

When to Use a Semicolon

- When joining two closely related independent clauses into one compound sentence:

  *Deadpool is a snarky assassin within the Marvel universe; he is affectionately known as the “Merc with a Mouth.”*

  - In this example, notice how a comma and a conjunction (e.g. *and*) or a period could take the place of the semicolon, but the semicolon implies a stronger connection between the two clauses.

  It is important to use a semicolon whenever the conjunction has been left out since inserting a comma alone will create a *comma splice* (two independent clauses joined together as if one is a dependent clause):

  *Deadpool is a snarky assassin within the Marvel universe, he is affectionately known as the “Merc with a Mouth.”*

  - Using a comma here disrupts the reader it implies a relationship between the two independent clauses that is not accurate.

- When using a transitional expression such as *therefore, for instance, furthermore, in addition, as a result*, etc. to link independent clauses:

  *Though he was first introduced as a super-villain in the Marvel universe, Deadpool has evolved into an antihero that often breaks the fourth wall; as a result, comic writers often give Deadpool humorous and playful dialogue.*

  *As a hardened mutant assassin, Deadpool can’t afford to fear death; therefore, he courts the personification of death, Lady Death, on several occasions.*

  - Though the transitional phrase/expression in the above examples directly follows the semicolon, note that the semicolon still goes *between the clauses* even if the expression appears in the middle or at the end of the second independent part:

    *Deadpool will often serenade Lady Death and try to sweep her off her feet; Lady Death, however, often leads him into comical traps and abandons him in awkward social situations.*

- To prevent confusion when listing items in a series with internal punctuation:
Deadpool has clashed with other heroes and villains in cities like San Francisco, California; New York, New York; and El Paso, Texas.

- Without the semicolons to separate the cities like this, the reader has to manage the pairings, creating a potential lack of clarity. With the semicolons at the major breaks between states, the writer helps the reader maintain distinctions.

**When Not to Use a Semicolon**

- When separating an independent clause from a dependent clause or introducing a series/list—**use a comma instead**:

  *Deadpool’s mutant power is his incredible healing factor, which allows him to withstand injuries beyond normal human capacity.*

  *Deadpool’s arsenal includes a variety of different weapons: katanas, assault rifles, knives, grenades, and banana cream pies.*

- When using a conjunction like *and, but, for, yet, so,* etc. to connect independent clauses. **A comma is required with the conjunction**:

  *Deadpool’s allegiances often change by the hour, but he always puts his motivations first.*

- Between an appositive that is directly followed by the word that the appositive refers to—**use a comma**:

  *Deadpool will often team up with Cable, a mutant freedom fighter from the future and the son of Scott Connors and Jean Grey.*
Comma Cheat Sheet

Contributors: UWC Staff

Before a coordinating conjunction (and, or/nor, but, so, for, yet) that joins independent clauses (a clause or phrase strong enough to be a sentence by itself).

Jawas are a great source for droids, but the droids might be stolen.

Sand People travel in single file to hide their numbers, and they ride banthas.

After an introductory word group.

The weapon of a Jedi, the lightsaber is an elegant weapon of a more civilized age. When Jawas come to town, it is a good idea to hide your droids.

As a double major in the Dark Side of the Force and Sith History, I have learned how to manage my time carefully.

Between items in a series.

The Sith believe in using strength, power, passion, and rage to overcome their enemies. Boba Fett uses a flamethrower, a carbine, and other devices to capture bounties.

Use commas to set off non-restrictive elements such as appositives, adjective clauses, or other defining and extra information.

Tauntauns, which smell worse on the inside, can be used as a sleeping bag in emergency situations. (Adjective clause)

An adjective clause is used to provide additional information and/or description within the sentence. They typically begin with which, that, whom, whose, or who.

Jabba the Hutt’s best-selling book, Changing Dancers into Rancor Toothpicks, was the result of many years of research. (Appositive)

Appositives are nouns or noun phrases that provide extra information or clarification, though they could have outright replaced the original noun. In this case, Changing Dancers into Rancor Toothpicks could have been used in the place of book.
Between coordinate adjectives not joined by and. However, don’t use a comma between cumulative adjectives.

**Coordinate Adjectives:** *The Force is a powerful, guiding tool that can be used for good or bad.*

A quick way to look for coordinate adjectives is to insert *and* between the adjectives. If the sentence still works and sounds right, then it is a coordinate adjective.

**Cumulative Adjectives:** *The Jawa was rolling around in his rusty scrapheap like George Lucas swims in money.*

Inserting *and* between *rusty* and *scrapheap* would disrupt the sentence.

**Use a comma to set off transitional and parenthetical expressions, absolute phrases, and contrasted elements.**

*Boba Fett did not understand why someone would kill a bounty if they were worth more alive; moreover, he didn’t understand why this was difficult for others to grasp.* *(Transitional expressions: moreover, in other words, as a matter of fact, for example, etc.)*

*The Force, so far as we know, can only be wielded by certain individuals.* *(Parenthetical expression)*

Parenthetical expressions are not really part of the main idea of the sentence, or they interrupt the main sentence. Some common parenthetical expressions are: By the way, as a matter of fact, after all, and well. When spoken, parenthetical expressions are indicated by a pause before and after the expression. In writing, these pauses are indicated with commas.

*Darth Vader and Grand Moff Tarkin made galactic history in 0 BBY, the Deathstar having destroyed billions of sentient beings simultaneously.* *(Absolute phrase: phrase that modifies the entire sentence)*

*A bounty hunter seeks monetary, not gratitude-based, compensation.* *(Contrast)*

**To emphasize nouns of direct address, the words yes and no, mild interjections, and interrogative tags.**

*No, it is you who are mistaken about a great many things.* –Emperor Palpatine

*Jawas are so adorable, aren’t they?*

*However, I used to bull’s-eye womp rats back home, and they aren’t much bigger than two meters.*

**To accentuate direct quotations.**

*“Tell me the location of the Rebel Base,” demanded Grand Moff Tarkin.*

On May 25, 1983, “Return of the Jedi” was released in theaters.

Anakin Skywalker became Darth Vader at the Senate Tower, Coruscant, when he killed Mace Windu.

If found, please return this light saber to Luke Skywalker, at 1138 Rebel Base Ave., Hidden Rebel Base, Yavin 4. Also, please return any hands found with the light saber.

Dr. Interrogation Probe, M.D., performed Princess Leia’s interrogation.

To prevent confusion.
Sometimes a comma acts as a replacement for words and acts as a signifier for the reader to provide the missing words mentally.

To err is human; to get revenge, the way of the Sith.
Words that repeat in succession may require a comma for ease of reading and clarity.

The Death Star we had thought wasn’t operational, operated.

The Rebel Alliance who we expected to win, won.

Commas can also be used to prevent your reader from grouping words together in ways that may be unintentional.

Sith Lords who can, shoot force lightning whenever they feel like it.
Try reading this sentence without the comma. It doesn’t make a lot of sense, but with it the meaning becomes clear that not every Sith Lord can shoot force lightning.
Sentences: Style
Guidelines for Clarity & Concision

Contributors: UWC Staff

Many people believe academic writing is confusing and dense, that it suffers from a lack of clarity and concision. Clear and concise writing does not always come easy; it takes practice and plenty of revision. The following guidelines can help you get started.

**Passive and Active Sentences**

Favoring active sentences over passive ones is probably the most repeated advice regarding clarity and concision. An active sentence is one where the subject is the source of the action. Conversely, a passive sentence has a subject that is the receiver of the action. In the following example sentences, the subject is underlined and the action is bolded.

1. **Sentence using active voice:**
   
   Captain America *defeated* the Red Skull

2. **Sentence using passive voice:**
   
   The Red Skull *was defeated* [by Captain America].

In both sentences Cap defeats his arch nemesis, but in sentence 2, the receiver of the action is the subject and Cap’s contribution can be eliminated. Delaying or removing the source of an action is what contributes to a sentence’s passiveness.

Passive sentences can contribute to unclear writing by delaying or avoiding direct reference to the agent of the action. Even if a sentence using passive voice is clear, it can still be wordy. Compare the six words used in sentence 1 with the eight in sentence 2. For more information and examples about how to reduce passive voice, see the UWC resource titled Passive Voice: What It is & How to Reduce Usage.

**Actions and Characters**

We can employ two general strategies to help produce clear sentences. First, we can make our main agents the subjects of our sentences. Second, we can use the actions of our agents for our verbs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Character</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now, let’s compare sentences to illustrate these strategies. Subjects are underlined and verbs are bolded.

1. *The zombies’ feast of the survivors occurred.*

2. *The zombies feasted on the survivors.*

Both sentences feature zombies as agents, but in sentence 1 the zombies are not the subject of the sentence. Instead, their feast is. The verb in sentence 1 is also less direct due to its position at the end of the sentence, but the verb is still weak in comparison to “feasted” in sentence 2.

Using subjects and verbs which do not relate to our agents and their actions can produce unclear and wordy academic writing.
Abstract Characters and Nominalizations

The previous guideline isn’t just useful when our characters are concrete, which is fortunate because in academic writing we often write about abstract subjects, including nominalizations. A nominalization is the noun form of a verb or adjective. These can end in -tion, -ence, -ment, etc. The word “nominalization” describes this concept.

verb — nominalize  
noun — nominalization

An abstract subject is anything that describes an idea or concept without a physical referent.

Resistance has been growing to the perceived vigilante actions of the Avengers.*

By making abstractions the subjects of our sentences, we can use the advice from the previous section. However, since our audience can often be unfamiliar with the abstract subjects we employ, avoid using too many. Paring down abstractions will also lead to more concise writing.

*Example adapted from Style: Ten Lessons on clarity and Grace (eighth edition) by Joseph M. Williams.

Further Guidelines for Concision

Adjectives and Adverbs:
A carefully chosen adjective or adverb can enhance your work, but adding too many extraneous and unnecessary ones can lead to wordy writing that isn’t really very concise (such as this clause).

Nonessential Elements:
These are words or phrases which do not contain information essential to the meaning of a sentence as a whole. For example: Fred Weasley, George’s twin brother, always manages his mischief. The phrase “George’s twin brother” is not necessary for the meaning of the sentence. See UWC reference: Nonessential Elements.

Precise Words:
Favor fewer precise words over numerous vague ones. Compare “The Avengers fought a small, unplanned battle with Hydra” with “The Avengers skirmished with Hydra.”

Meaningless Phrases:
Avoid phrases such as “in my opinion,” “it is important that,” “it is necessary,” etc. that add little to no meaning to a sentence.
Nonessential Elements

Contributors: UWC Staff

Nonessential words and phrases are elements of a sentence which do not contain information essential to the meaning of the sentence as a whole.

For example:

*Jan, the second of three children, always feels left out.*

Here, “Jan always feels left out” is the main clause and “the second of three children” is the nonessential phrase. We can move nonessential elements to different parts of a sentence, which can make these elements essential to the meaning.

For example:

*Jan always feels left out because she is the second of three children.*

One way to identify whether or not a word or phrase is nonessential is to determine whether or not the sentence works without it. In the following examples, the potentially nonessential element has been italicized and bolded.

1. The woman *who owns the local bookstore* claims to have seen a unicorn.
2. Anita, *who owns the local bookstore*, claims to have seen a unicorn.
3. Anita *owns the local bookstore*, and she claims to have seen a unicorn.
4. At the bookstore *which she owns*, Anita told me she has seen a unicorn.

In sentence 1, the phrase identifies which woman claims to have seen a unicorn; it clarifies the subject of the sentence, so it’s not a nonessential clause. In sentences 2, 3, and 4, however, the italicized phrase is nonessential because it has no relevance to the sentence.

While all of these sentences contain the same information, they are all structured differently. If we try to move the nonessential element to a different part of the sentence without rephrasing the sentence, the meaning changes.

For example: 2. Anita claims to have seen a unicorn *who owns the local bookstore*. *Who owns the local bookstore*, Anita claims to have seen a unicorn. Anita claims to have seen, *who owns the local bookstore*, a unicorn.

While these phrases are not essential to the meaning of the sentence, moving them around can change the meaning of the sentence.
Parenthetical Phrases
Contributor: Nathaniel George

Parenthetical phrases, also known simply as parenthetics, can be a great way to add flow and concision to an essay. In essence, a parenthetical is just a phrase that is not essential to the rest of the sentence. However, just because it isn’t essential does not mean that it isn’t important. When used correctly, a parenthetical can add crucial new information to a sentence without disrupting the flow. Below are a few examples of sentences with parenthetical phrases. When you think you’ve got it down, try and identify the parenthetical phrases in the paragraph above.

**Free Modifiers**

*The man’s face, red with rage, twisted into a contorted snarl.*

This is an example of a parenthetical phrase called a free modifier. It adds information to a sentence without disrupting the flow and helps the reader better visualize what is happening in the text. Also, observe how the phrase can be omitted without harming the framing of the sentence.

Free modifiers can also add information crucial to the development of a story, but still plays no part in the framing of a sentence.

*Mathy father, upon looking at my report card, banned me from communicating with my friends.*

While the phrase *upon looking at my report card* is essential to the storyline of the sentence, it’s placement as a parenthetical phrase means that it can be removed without damaging the structure of the sentence.

**Introductory Phrase**

A parenthetical can also be used in the form of an introductory phrase

*However, the boy was deemed too short to ride the roller coaster.*

*To no avail, the boys attempted to cheat on their final exam.*

*Unfortunately, the robbers had stolen belongings from the safety deposit boxes as well.*

In the form of introductory phrases, parenthetics can promote flow from one sentence to the next within an essay. Again, the parenthetical can be omitted while still leaving the sentence intact.

Parenthetical phrases should be an integral component of every writer’s arsenal.
Passive Voice: What It Is & How to Reduce Usage

Contributor: UWC Staff

What is passive voice?
Passive voice involves the construction of verbs in a sentence. Passive voice isn’t necessarily grammatically incorrect, and it is often used in writing for the sciences. Excessive usage, however, can contribute to unclear sentence meaning or convoluted sentence structure. It is better to utilize the counterpart of passive voice—active voice—whenever possible. Revising a sentence from passive voice to active voice will always involve the modification of a verb.

Recognizing when it is being utilized: Examples

Sentence using passive voice:

The student has been exhausted by her exams.
This sentence is passive because the subject (the student) is being acted upon. In active voice, the agent responsible for the action of the verb will perform that given action.

Sentence using active voice:

The exams exhausted the student.
This sentence is active because the exams are responsible for exhausting the student, not vice versa.

Sentence using passive voice:

Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone was written by J.K. Rowling.

Sentence using active voice:

J.K. Rowling wrote Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone.
The latter sentence is active because J.K. Rowling is responsible for writing the book (the book isn’t responsible for writing her!)
Passive Voice vs. Past Tense
Many people confuse passive voice usage with writing in the past tense. However, a sentence written in past tense can still be “active.”

Examples:
Sentence using passive voice:

It was suggested by the results that our hypothesis was correct.

Sentence using active voice:

Our results suggested a correct hypothesis.

Tips for Recognizing Passive Voice Usage:
If words like was, were, has been, is being, will be, or have been are coupled with a word that ends in “-ed” or “-ing” there is a good chance that you are using the passive voice (ex. was discovered, is being written, will be noticed, had been reading)
Passive voice sentences often include the phrases “by” or “by the.” Ex. The car was being driven by the woman (as opposed to the active voice sentence “The woman drove the car.”)

Work Cited & Additional Resource:
Types of Writing Assignments
Creating a Successful Discussion Board Thread

Contributor: Derrian Goebel

As part of many classes, teachers assign discussion board posts that require students to answer a prompt and respond to readings, film, music, events, etc. Typically, these assignments ask students to provide a thoughtful answer to the prompt, with in-depth responding that extends the class discussion. Below is a quick checklist that will help you to double check that you are offering a discussion board that makes connections and moves the conversation forward.

Checklist:

Are you answering all parts of the discussion prompt?
- Often, a prompt will contain at least a few questions and/or ideas to consider when responding. What key concepts do you need to know to answer this prompt?

Are you offering a comprehensive response to the discussion prompt?
- Comprehensive discussion posts will not be vague concepts, but provide concrete detail. Did you use part of your readings/class discussions to guide you?

Did you read through your class readings carefully before responding to the discussion?
- Unfortunately, many students skim the readings, and then struggle with their responses to the prompt. If you highlight and take notes as you read, you can use this textual evidence in your discussion posts.

Are you simply answering the prompt, or are you making connections with the course learning objectives?
- If you are responding to class readings or previous class discussions, successful responses use concrete details, quotes, or paraphrasing from the readings. Your responses should analyze the readings/discussions in relation to the prompt.
- Can you find a connection between other readings/class discussions and the prompt? How might you approach these connections in a way that answers the prompt?

Are you moving the conversation forward or simply repeating what others are saying?
- Sometimes, you are permitted to see what others are posting. If so, what are they saying? How can you bring up a new point, see it from a new angle, or extend what is being discussed?
- When you are not allowed to see others’ discussion posts, think about what you’ve read and bring up parts of the reading that need to be clarified. You can also bring up a side of the conversation that the author didn’t, or you can try to expand on a theory presented by the readings.
Examples of problematic discussion answers and suggestions for improvement

- “I agree with the author.”—But how and why do you agree?
- “When the author brings up Odysseus, and the sirens, it makes me think of my Aunt Susan’s Caribbean cruise last summer...”—How is this related to the reading?
- “The author makes a good point because this situation is a real problem in America right now.”—What “good point” did the author make? What is “this situation”? Also, using textual evidence (such as quotes/paraphrasing) will help support your claim.
- When everyone is saying, “Dr. Jones is suggesting X,” you should bring up something new: “Even though Dr. Jones is suggesting X, I feel that we also need to look at Y.”—A new perspective expands the conversation.

Examples of a prompt with a successful discussion and peer response

- **Prompt:** In your discussion thread, give a brief description of a literacy experience from your youth and explain how it can be connected to one of our readings. To what societal issues can you relate this connection?
- **Discussion Thread:** One summer, I fell off my roof and broke my leg. In a cast all summer, all I wanted to do was watch TV or read some mystery books. We couldn’t afford cable that year and our school didn’t have a library. My mom pointed at the encyclopedia set she’d gotten from the thrift store. That summer, I learned a lot about the 1970s. During school the next year, that encyclopedia information came in handy for political science class. I knew just where to look in the encyclopedia set at home and because of that, I did well in class. I was reminded of this literacy experience when reading about Malcolm X’s prison literacy narrative. While in prison, he read and copied the entire dictionary to improve his own education, learning about racial struggles. Malcolm X’s prison education was the foundation for his many political movements on the social struggles of African Americans, which ultimately changed history. I learned about racial tension and the severe discrimination problems plaguing Malcolm X’s era. I was then able to re-read his narrative with a better understanding about what it was like to be a black man during those times, having to deal with institutional oppression and discrimination. Being that I was raised in a poor country town, I often experienced people discriminating against my lower-class family. As for institutional oppression, I have noticed how my school has fewer books, almost no PE equipment, and packed classes with only one teacher.
- **Peer Response:** I like how you related your literacy experience to the reading (Malcolm X’s prison literacy narrative), and then in the end, to a bigger social problem as well as social problems that you face. I wanted to hear more about something in particular that you learned about from the encyclopedias that affected your education and/or view on the world. Also, was there something from the Malcolm X reading that stood out to you that you could bring into this response, like a quote?

The discussion thread created above offers a clear recollection of his/her literacy experience and the effects. The student also related that information to the reading assigned that week. The peer response
replied to the discussion thread and offered valuable feedback for the thread writer to think about. Namely, the responder asked questions about concrete detail, such as textual evidence, as evidence of the reading and literacy experience connection. When you can show, in your discussion thread, that you’ve carefully read the assignment and posted, according to the instructor’s prompt wherein you’ve made connections back to the readings and offered new concepts or extended the conversation in some way, you are improving your chances to create a successful discussion thread.
Drafting an Argument Essay
Contributor: UWC Staff

An argument paper is one in which the author takes a specific stance on a topic and attempts to sway the reader. Argument papers are not always assigned as such and may include certain types of research assignments or topic specific prompts.

Introduction
The introduction should do several things for the reader:

1. Set context – this is where the author can begin to give general background information and set up a “map” of what the paper will discuss
2. State importance – the introduction should also explain why the topic is important, it should compel the audience to read further and create interest in the topic
3. State the thesis – the thesis is the author’s argument or stance and, in general, it doesn’t matter where in the introduction the thesis is placed as long as it is clear

Thesis
What it is not:
• The thesis is not the title; the thesis should have much more depth.
• The thesis is not a declaration of subject, i.e. “I’m going to talk about…”
• The thesis is not a factual statement; it must be debatable.
• The thesis is not always one sentence; it is often difficult to put more complex arguments into such a simple format and multiple sentence theses are fine.

What it is:
• The thesis should be unified and concise. Even if the thesis is expressed in multiple sentences, it should be clear and focused.
• The thesis should be as specific as possible. It is very difficult to argue a broad topic, a specific thesis provides a more stable base for the paper.
Body
There is no given format for an argument paper and it is acceptable to organize the paper in the way that it makes the most sense to you. If you are having difficulty organizing your paper in a unified format, however, here is a common outline for an argument called the Toulmin Method:

- Claim, or thesis
- Data, or supporting evidence
- Warrant or bridge, connecting and explaining the data and claim
- Backing or foundation, more information and reasoning to support warrants
- Counterclaim, the opposition to the claim
- Rebuttal, disputes or negates the counterclaim

In cases where there are multiple data and warrants:

- Claim
- Data 1
- Warrant 1
- Data 2
- Warrant 2
- Counterclaim
- Rebuttal

Conclusion
The conclusion is very similar to the introduction in that it gives a general overview of what has been discussed. This section also ties up any loose ends not confronted in the body of the paper. Many times, the thesis is restated in the conclusion for reinforcement.
Drafting an Exploratory Essay

Contributor: UWC Staff

Exploratory papers are NOT argument papers. An exploratory assignment is usually given so that students find ways to branch out in a specific topic without taking a stance. Exploratory papers can range from a full research paper to a short essay.

**Introduction**

The introduction should do several things for the reader:

1. **Set context** – this is where the author can begin to give general background information and set up a “map” of what the paper will discuss.

2. **State importance** – the introduction should also explain why the topic is important, it should compel the audience to read further and create interest in the topic.

3. **State the question or topic of exploration** – this can be one or several sentences or questions that states what the author is interested in finding out, why, and how they intend to do it.

**Body**

An acceptable general structure for exploratory papers is given below:

- Each paragraph or section should explain what source was used, say why it was chosen, include information found using the source, explain why the information is important, and reflect on the source and its information.

- This format is meant as a basic outline and does not need to be repeated exactly the same way for every source.

**Conclusion**

The conclusion is very similar to the introduction in that it gives a general overview of what has been discussed. This section also ties up any loose ends not confronted in the body of the paper. Many times, the question is restated in the conclusion for reinforcement.
Guide to Writing Research Papers

Contributor: Derrian Goebel

A research paper IS/DOES:
✓ Require many reliable sources to back up your thesis/claim.
✓ Take up a position and support it with evidence.
✓ Usually about events (historical or current), textual arguments, or personal interests.
✓ Contain an introduction with a thesis, and a body with an argument and counterargument, and a conclusion, with a works cited in the very end.

A research paper is NOT:
✓ A regular essay—some essays are exploratory, some are textual analysis, but they do not usually require you to do severe research.
✓ A book report—you will not be reviewing a book, telling readers about plot, characters, etc., reading and focusing on just one book.
✓ A journalism/communications piece—many journalists argue with emotional appeal to win an audience over without much evidence.

Advice for attempting a research paper:

Plan well
  o Read the prompt/directions for this paper; ask the instructor about anything unclear in the directions.
  o Brainstorm a few different issues/concepts that you are interested in; take notes on any ideas that you feel may have potential.

Research
  o Start searching databases, journals, and libraries for your research material.
  o Interviews and other primary research is important evidentiary support.
  o After reading through many articles, relevant websites, and/or books, think about what you’ve read and develop research questions.
  o You should be able to see the many smaller, focused topics within your larger research area; choose one of those focused topics to work with.
  o Create a working hypothesis from this focused research information—you will revise this some as you progress, so don’t feel that you have to make it concrete just yet.
  o Close reading: Reread over your source information highlighting and/or taking notes (annotating)—if you just highlight, you may not remember later why you highlighted that line.

Begin Writing
  o After closely reading your beginning groups of source information, write a rough outline that covers the main pieces of evidence and counter-arguments that you’ve found thus far.
  o You should then be able to clarify your hypothesis to a solid thesis statement with a claim + reasons/evidence.
Revise your outline to include where within your argument each piece of information would best fit. This way, you can see where you may still need some research, and/or where you have too much of their info and not enough of yours.

WRITE. Often, students find that fleshing out that outline into body paragraphs and then working on the introduction and conclusion paragraphs is helpful, because they can review their rough draft of the paper body and write accordingly. Sometimes the introduction paragraph can cause writer’s block, but your approach to writing is yours; just start writing.

Revision

You will first want to revise for higher order concerns (HOCs), such as focus/purpose and/or development/evidence. These are big-ticket items that may make you do some re-writing, and thusly change things that lower order concerns (LOCs) encompass.

- **Focus/Purpose**: You will want to stay focused on your thesis, maintaining the purpose of the assignment. Review the list you just made for organization; it should look similar to or at least follow your thesis statement. If there was a prompt, review that and your list to see if you are responding well. Also, consider the purpose of responding to audience—who are you targeting, and are you reaching out to them?
- **Development/Evidence**: The evidence you bring into a research essay needs to be relevant to your cause, as recent as possible, written by credible authors, and clearly support the paragraph claim.

After HOC revision work, you will want to edit for LOCs, such as spelling, sentence variety, and more.

- **Spelling**: Review commonly misspelled words such as they’re, their, and there to be sure you are using the correct one.
- **Sentence Variety**: Sometimes sentences can all start sounding the same, so you may want to play with punctuation, order information, and subordination/coordination to gain sentence variety. If you have three short sentences in a row, consider a way to connect a couple of them to offer the reader a variety of pace when reading.
- **Tone/style**: be sure that you are approaching the assignment with the proper attitude—is it serious or relaxed? Also, having uneven tone or switching up style might get confusing for your audience. Look for style shifts such as using professional language and slang in the same paper.
- **Tense**: if you are writing with a certain tense, maintain that tense throughout. Look for your verb use: are they all in the same tense? Most papers are written using active voice for concision.
Mapping a Synthesis Essay
Contributor: Derrian Goebel

When asked to write a synthesis essay, many students question the word “synthesis.” What does it mean to synthesize? Well, the dictionary tells us that synthesis is the combination of ideas to form a theory; the thesaurus provides synonyms such as fusion, blend, and creation. So ultimately, you are creating a combination of what your sources are conversing about (subject X) and how you have rearranged what is being said to create a new direction for that subject. This quick outline should get you well on your way to synthesizing.

Read your sources carefully and annotate as you go.
- Read through once for a general understanding of the source.
- Use a highlighter to call your attention to specific passages that you feel are key to this issue.
- Make summary notes as you go, so you remember why you highlighted those passages.

Analyze the data you are getting.
- Ask yourself what the author’s claim is—make note of it.
- When the author brings in evidence, what is it? How does this evidence support the claim?
- Note any common beliefs or assumptions embedded in the author’s use of evidence and claims.

What are sources “saying” to each other?
- When you can summarize what each source is saying, then you can take a step back and ask yourself: Is there a pattern; how are these sources communicating/responding to each other?
- What new way can you arrange these conversation pieces to address this subject in an original manner?
  - Example: If The New York Times is speaking on gun control, they may say “X.” Later, Fox News may also be talking about gun control, but they are saying “Y.” Both are discussing gun control as the “conversation,” just in different ways and at different times.
- How can you arrange these conversations to see what needs to be discussed (the gap in the conversation)?
  - Example: So, when you arrange the above example’s conversation, you can see that these sources are talking about “X” and “Y,” in terms of gun control, but no one seems to be specifying about “Z”. “Z” will be the gap in the conversation (you can suggest it as a new research area, new point to consider, etc.).

Figure out what your particular stand is on this issue.
- After seeing where others stand, where do you stand?
- If you agree or disagree, why?
- If you agree, but not quite, what could be done differently? How could you make a position that might be a bit different than what other authors are saying?

Take a moment to consider how others in the conversation might respond to your position.
- Why would article X’s author argue with you?
• How would this author argue with you?
• If the author would agree with you, same thing – how and why?

After this imaginary conversation with your sources, you should be getting an idea about your thesis and where it fits into the “conversation” that your sources are having.

• Research about topic A is currently indicating...
• Maybe a lot of people are saying X about topic A, but you have found research that is actually indicating Y as the real problem of topic A, so you say that new research needs to be done...

Work on incorporating those “conversations” you just had into your essay.

• Although many researchers are indicating “X,” in discussions involving topic A, many of those research methods are faulty in that...
• When researchers in the field of topic A argue with researchers studying topic B, I am seeing that these two fields are actually linked in that...
• Aside from topic A, some researchers are finding a trend that (topic B) is actually more...
• In consideration of both topics A & B, I am led to believe that there is a vital resource that hasn’t been considered...

When incorporating conversations as you write, argue your thesis claim.

• Many who deal with topic A take a position similar to mine in that...; however, I would argue that new research needs to be done in the field of topic B.
• Although some who argue about topic A would oppose my position on developing new research in this field, here is why I still uphold its legitimacy...
• Only few researchers offer a slightly different perspective from topic A, and one perspective that I would call attention to is...
• When sources A and B were doing the specific types of studies on subject X, there were two different research methods: method 1 and method 2. Of these methods, there are the following common themes... (and) the usual points of disagreements are... which justifies the need for new research in...

The successful synthesis essay will show readers how you have reasoned about the topic at hand by taking into account the sources critically and creating a work that draws conversations with the sources into your own thinking.
Narrowing Your Research Topic

Contributors: Derrian Goebel

Narrowing a research topic is moving from a general topic, like global warming, to a tighter research focus, such as helping the environment by improving travel modes (example below). However, you can’t just forget about the big picture—how your argument/claim fits into the bigger discussion including connections to other viewpoints on your topic.

To ensure a connection with other viewpoints and the bigger picture, ask yourself some questions when revising your paper:

- Are you showing readers how your narrowed topic effects, or relates to, the bigger picture?
- When going through each topic point, do you acknowledge opposing viewpoints?
- When you are ready to relate your narrowed topic to the bigger picture, do you mention other topics included in the larger discussion?

Example:


Bigger picture: “Solving Global Warming –Do Something” is the larger discussion about climate change and the environment. “Use Less,” “Plant Trees,” and “Be a Catalyst” are some branches stemming from the larger discussion. The “best travel” topic (in yellow box) is only one part of the global warming bigger picture (outside the little yellow box).

Articulate the multiple standpoints within the Bigger picture:
- So, for example in the previous picture, you will need to be able to locate your narrowed topic (best travel) in relation to the other parts of the main issue.
- Show your readers how your focused subject is connected to these other conversations.

**Narrowed research topic:** how people can buy hybrid/electric cars, car pool with co-workers, walk, bike, or use public transportation (above). Opposing viewpoints are ones that argue within your focused area (the yellow square).

Explore the multiple arguments, perspectives, and alternative positions within your narrowed research topic:
- Take the time and give fair consideration to these other perspectives, which will benefit your argument by offering readers a fair report.
  - For example, not everyone will live close enough to their work to walk or ride a bike. These, too, are parts of the argument—they are the alternative point(s) of view.
  - If you can argue, then do so: “People may not be able to walk or ride a bike, but what about the bus?” Otherwise, it is best to simply acknowledge and move on: “…which is a good point.” This is an example of fair reporting.

So overall, when your teacher asks you to focus your research, don’t forget that connection to the bigger discussion in which you were initially interested. Also, don’t forget other opinions for a fair and balanced essay.
Psychic Distance in Creative Writing

Contributor: Aaron Smale

In creative writing, how involved the reader feels with a story can strengthen the clarity, pacing, suspense, and drama of a story or alternatively draw a reader out of a scene that is critical to understanding a narrative. Often, stories depend on the perspectives of particular characters to lend meaning and detail throughout the story’s structure, plot, and other ambitions.

In his work, *The Art of Fiction*, John Gardner describes “psychic distance” as the “distance that the reader feels between himself and the events of the story” (Gardner 111). In terms of point of view, larger psychic distance can present broad contexts or greater arcs that do not need to be as detailed, while closer psychic distance is useful to bring the reader closer to scenes where specific details are important to engage with the story.

Psychic distance can be thought of as occurring at different levels of distance, with the largest distance between the reader and the events of the story being represented as the beginning “level” at level 1. As the psychic distance between the reader and the story narrows, psychic distance progresses through levels 2-5, with level 5 representing the closest distance between the reader and the events of the story. This progression of psychic distance is demonstrated in the following example:

**Level 1:**

*It was summer in Los Angeles, 1979. A slender woman rode up to the café on a bicycle.*

The example sentence at this level presents broad details and setting, with the reader at a greater distance from the events of the story. Even though the woman in this sentence rides up to a café on a bicycle, there aren’t many details to engage the reader. The audience is presented with where and when this scene is taking place, but we don’t know about the deeper narrative at play here. In order to engage with the story, the reader must be brought in closer to the events of the story.

**Level 2:**

*Jane Richards preferred riding her bike around town.*

At level 2, the psychic distance draws closer in and shows the audience more about the character, providing a name (Jane Richards) and a view into the character’s preferences (riding her bike around town). Even though we understand more about this character now and the reader is closer to the events in the story, we can still be brought closer.

**Level 3:**

*Jane despised the LA traffic.*

At level 3, the key verb of “despised” gives us a greater sense of how Jane reacts emotionally to traffic. Additionally, we get a sense of why Jane rides her bike and how that may relate to her inner character...
and motivations. As readers, we begin to ask questions: why does Jane despise LA traffic?

**Level 4:**

*Goodness, how she despised this horrendous LA traffic.*

At level 4, Jane’s emotional motivations are emphasized and the reader is brought closer to the events of the story itself. At this point, the reader is also given a stronger sense of Jane’s “voice” through the use of words like “Goodness” and “horrendous.”

**Level 5:**

*Traffic. Horns blaring from everywhere for no reason, the stuttering procession ultimately going nowhere, exhaust strangling your nostrils and slipping down into your heart…*

Finally, at level 5, the audience is given reasons and details as to why Jane feels this way about LA traffic. The audience has an opportunity to relate to this character’s feelings and they can get an idea of specific details to flesh out the scene. At this point, the reader is brought so closely into the character’s state of mind and point of view that they feel as if they are involved in the events of the story. Unlike the first sentence at level 1 that simply established the broad characteristics of the story’s setting, this sentence at level 5 provides unique details that are dependent on how the character presents themselves to the audience.

Psychic distance can be an effective tool in guiding the reader through different points of view, but shifts in psychic distance need to be carefully managed. Jumping into close detail from a broad psychic distance may be a jarring experience for your reader, and it can ruin the effect that you are attempting to accomplish in your narrative. As rule of thumb, it is often helpful to transition between levels one at a time, so the process of closing the distance between the reader and the events of the story is smooth and gradual.

**Works Cited**

PowerPoint Presentation Checklist

Contributor: Derrian Goebel

When preparing or revising your PowerPoint presentation, it’s a good idea to check if you are presenting effectively. Are you offering your audience an informative and balanced presentation? Following are a few tips.

**Rhetorical triangle of presenting**

- **Know who you are as a speaker**—present yourself as the speaker you wish to be. For example, if you are addressing members of a business community, you will want to dress and speak in a formal and practiced manner because you would then be exuding professionalism for that audience.
- **Use words that are representative of your purpose.** If you are giving a presentation on professionalism, for example, don’t use slang in your presentation.
- **Know what relationship you have with your audience and use it while presenting.** To illustrate, when addressing your fellow students, you might adopt a less formal manner of speech.

**Presenting with speech and visuals**

- **Speaking**
  - Have more to say than you quote from others
  - Don’t read your slides—use them as cues for what you want to talk about
  - Change up your tone (monotonous is boring)
  - Engage your audience: make eye contact, smile, and relax

- **Visuals**
  - Slides: Consider how your audience will react to your images and words
    - Too much text=too much reading for audience
    - Complicated vocabulary may disinterest or distract an audience
    - Too many pictures looks messy (one or two images with a few main points)
    - Imagery, words, and colors should not block each other
    - Slides should be different than handouts or what you say in your presentation
    - Transitions that are swirly or otherwise visually weird can be distracting
    - Irrelevant images indicate unprofessionalism and create confusion

- **Handouts:** Consider what you want your audience to take away from this presentation
  - Have a balance between visuals and words
  - Keep it short and simple (images with short blurbs—not mass paragraphs)

- **All visual presentations should carry similar style**
  - **Headings**
  - **Language Style**
  - **Fonts**
  - **Colors**
  - **Terminology**
General presentation advice

- Practice ahead of time to set your pace and length
- Engage your audience: ask questions, give brief explanations
- Keep your audience in mind—what are their needs/interests?
- Have a core set of points that you transition through
- Don’t repeat things (watch for vocabulary repetition)
- Take only the time you need; if done early, have a back-up of info to talk about
- Leave your audience time to respond (prepare questions for your audience)
Quick Guide to an Evaluation Essay
Contributor: UWC Staff

Ever read a restaurant review or movie review? These types of reviews are evaluations of the business, products, and/or services. When evaluating, writers should consider the following components:

What are the criteria for these products/services/businesses?

- Without knowing what the criteria are, readers will not have any idea how you (the evaluator) are attempting to formulate your evaluation.
- Example: If I were to judge a restaurant, what are the main criteria for such a business?
  - Service—attention must be given to the customer.
  - Wait time—if it takes two hours to seat me, dinner time has already passed, and now I am starving.
  - Timeliness of food arrival/service—food must be served immediately after having been cooked, with all parties receiving their food at the same time (nothing more awkward than being the only one eating).
  - Quality—The food itself must also be fresh and of a high quality—if I can’t stand it, I can’t eat it.
  - Cleanliness of the restaurant—if my shoes stick to the floor as I walk to my table, I am thoroughly grossed out.
  - Value—Last but not least, what is the value of the food that I am getting? What did this meal cost me, because if I can get the same quality of food at a fast-food place, why am I paying these high prices for low-quality food? One would expect high quality everything for a high-priced restaurant.
- Now, I have just established the criteria by which I will judge restaurant X (and set up my future essay organization).

Considering this essay is an evaluation, writers need to make a clear decision:

- Did restaurant X live up to expectations/standards?
- Did it go above and beyond, being worthy of praise, or was it subpar and worthy of criticism?
- Namely, what was the point in reviewing this business/service/product? Have you answered the “So what?” question?

Prove it. Anyone can say, “That place was terrible!” but can you prove it? How do you prove it? Evidence.

- If your judgment of the restaurant (for example) is coming down on the negative side, your evidence should mostly be about all the negative things that brought you to that decision.
• That said, a concession to the alternative point of view will prove that you are not biased, but that you are open to what might have been positive about restaurant X (just not to the point of sounding wishy-washy and undecided).
• You should be providing your own experience with the business/product/service (for example your experience in the restaurant)—firsthand experience is great for this type of evaluation.
• What do other connoisseurs say? Secondary evidence, which is quoting/paraphrasing what other reviewers/researchers have said about restaurant X, is also important; they may have had a different experience than yours or may provide information about the business/product/service that had previously gone unrecognized.
• What do consumers say about restaurant X? Plenty of places exist to find customer reviews, such as Yelp, to gain the support of actual customers. You could also stand outside restaurant X and do interviews (time consuming, but worthy).

If an Evaluation Essay does not have criteria by which you are judging something, an actual judgment on whatever it is you are evaluating, and plenty of evidence to support your judgment, then readers of your evaluation will ask, “So what? What was the point of me reading this?” This is not the goal. The above listing of criteria will benefit you by setting up your outline, and providing you with direction and organization, which is a higher order concern when writing.
Understanding Writing Prompts
Contributor: Aaron Smale

For many college papers, a prompt will ask questions related to readings and class discussion, asking you to demonstrate analysis and discussion of the topic. Decoding what a prompt is asking can sometimes be overwhelming. The sooner you understand a prompt, the sooner you can start writing. Here are some useful tips to understand writing prompts:

- **As soon as you receive the prompt, read through it twice:** Though many prompts are complex to encourage well-reasoned responses, they can be confusing/inaccessible if read only once before drafting. Reading the prompt as soon as possible may help you identify how long a paper should be, how much information you should gather, and can reveal concepts you need to understand before approaching the assignment.

- **Once you have read the prompt, try to share out what you think the prompt means to a friend, family member, or another student:** This helps to “check” if your understanding of the prompt matches that of other people outside of the class and may help to identify what you still need to know.

- **Key words can identify the type of assignment that the prompt is calling for:** Most prompts signal if the paper is expected to be a compare-and-contrast paper, rhetorical analysis, synthesis paper, etc. Keywords may include terms such as compare, synthesize, develop, explore, etc.

- **Come back to the prompt and highlight key characteristics, terms, and phrases relevant to the topic/assignment and compare it to course notes/assignments:** When reviewing the prompt, highlight terms or phrases that have come up frequently in discussion or are significant in the course. You may also choose to highlight terms in the prompt that you need to study more. Sometimes a prompt asks you to recall resources or texts from an earlier point in the course, so a review of key sources, topics, course notes, or related assignments can help you to write an effective paper. Additionally, this reveals key scenes or text sections identified within the prompt.

- **Look for language in the prompt that indicates who the target audience is:** Even though your audience will often include your professor and peers, some prompts for research papers and essays will ask you to address other target audiences. For example, a paper that discusses a new method of patient support may cite a hospital board of directors as a potential audience. By identifying your target audience, you can establish context necessary for your audience to engage with your paper.

- **Prepare questions for discussion to ask your TA or professor regarding parts of the prompt that are unclear:** Once you have gone through the prompt itself, make a list of questions to discuss with your professor or TA so you can get more clarity on the assignment.
Writing an Annotated Bibliography

Contributors: UWC Staff

What is an Annotated Bibliography?
An annotated bibliography, in its purest form, is simply a list of sources and a description of each source. Aside from being an often required homework assignment in beginning college English courses, the annotated bibliography has a practical use as well. The idea of an annotated bibliography is that it gives you a springboard to write your essay. With this nasty (but helpful!) little tool, you compile all of your sources in their proper citation format and then you describe, briefly, what the content of the source is and its significance to your essay. This way, by the time you are done with your annotated bibliography, you can see what you have to work with, and what you still need more of.

Annotated Bibliography vs. Works Cited/Reference Page
An annotated bibliography is sometimes confused with a works cited/reference page. Although they do not differ too much, the difference is important. A works cited page (in MLA) or a reference page (in APA) is simply the first part of an annotated bibliography. It is the part where the source is fully cited in the proper format (MLA, APA, Chicago, etc.). Your annotated bibliography, however, enhances this. To turn a works cited/reference page into an annotated bibliography, you must add the description of the source and its content. Here’s a comparison of a works cited vs. an annotated bibliography:

Reference List (in APA format):

Annotated Bibliography (in APA format):
This study took 300 participants who were unfamiliar with yoga and tested the effects of this ancient method on reducing the participants’ State Anxiety. Participants were assigned to either the yoga practice group or the yoga theory group. Before and after a 2 hour session, participants’ State Anxiety scores were tested via the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory. Both groups showed significant decrease in anxiety symptoms after the session. The anxiety scores of the yoga practice group decreased by 14.5% and the yoga theory group’s scores declined by 3.4%.

Note: It is important that everything except the first line of the citation is indented one half inch—this is called a hanging indentation. In both an annotated bibliography and a good old-fashioned works cited page, everything related to that particular source is indented except for the first line with the author’s name at the beginning. This is true for both APA and MLA formatting.

What Should Be in an Annotated Bibliography?
As previously stated, first you’ll want to put the source into the proper citation format (whichever one is assigned to you by your professor). Then comes the “annotated” aspect of the annotated bibliography. This part is simply a description of your source, but be sure to put what is relevant about it. Random details may be interesting, but you will probably have a rather short amount of space to sum up an
entire work, so your annotation should “cut to the chase,” so to speak. If you are writing an annotated bibliography for a research article, then write what is pertinent to your paper (or what you think will be pertinent to it). If you are writing an annotated bibliography for an argumentative paper, then include the parts of the text that will be important for backing your argument. Even if this is an assignment, make it count. Take advantage of your annotated bibliography to help you organize your material and form a better essay.

**Make it Make Sense**

The last thing to remember when you are writing your annotated bibliography is to make it make sense. By this, I mean making it fluid. In the annotated bibliography example above, the annotation begins by introducing the study and the participants. Then it progresses into what the study entailed and what the participants did. At the end, it sums up the study by showing the results. The annotation has a consistent rhythm and can easily be followed by the reader. As with an essay, have a plan as to how you want the annotation to pan out. Start with one subject matter or idea then neatly segue into another. This will make your ideas and the text’s content much easier to follow.
Writing Processes: Argument & Thesis
Creating a Thesis Statement: A Few Simple Tips

Contributors: UWC Staff

What is a thesis and what should it accomplish?

A thesis must *always* demonstrate an argument. If you are not trying to prove something and persuade your audience to accept your point of view, you are not writing an academic paper. Your thesis is the most concise way of indicating to your audience the intention of your paper. For most undergraduate writing, it is sufficient to have a one sentence thesis statement. Your introductory paragraph should build up to your thesis statement and provide your reader with the necessary context.

Creating a thesis statement

Suppose this is the prompt of a paper that you are assigned to write:

Describe the nature of womanhood in Disney’s *Beauty and the Beast* and *The Little Mermaid*. How do the roles of the female protagonists differ? How are they similar?

So how should you approach this question?

1) You must first identify the concepts that this prompt is asking you to identify. Often, you will be asked to analyze particular characters, texts, or themes. This prompt is asking you to make conclusions about the female protagonists in these films. Before you begin writing, you might want to make a list of attributes specific to each character (or text/ theme.) This will help you identify commonalities or disparities that may be useful in helping you determine your thesis.

   - Belle (from *Beauty and the Beast*)
     - lives with her father in a town in France
     - is not superficial (falls in love with a beast at the end of the film)
     - is beautiful but greatest passion is reading
     - brave and curious
   - Ariel (from *The Little Mermaid*)
     - sacrifices her voice for legs
     - rebellious, curious, and headstrong
     - lives with her father under the ocean
     - falls in love “at first sight” with a prince that she rescues at the beginning of the film

2) Now you can begin to analyze the significance of these attributes. Since this is a prompt based on comparison, it might be tempting to simply list off the similar/differing attributes. This is an academic essay, however, so your paper *must* have an argument. A sentence like “Belle is fond of reading, yet
Ariel is not” would not function as a thesis statement, because you are stating a fact, not making an argument.

3) In order to fully analyze this prompt, you must identify the concepts that warrant further explanation. For instance, both Belle and Ariel live with their father. Where, then, are their mothers? Since this prompt is about the nature of womanhood in these films, the absence of a mother figure might be worth mentioning. What about each character’s respective attitudes toward relationships? There is an obvious difference here: Belle falls in love with an ugly beast at the end of the film, yet Ariel is instantly—perhaps superficially—in love with a very handsome prince. By simply identifying these two attributes, it is possible to create a thesis statement:

*Although both Belle and Ariel project the consequences of an absent mother figure, Belle ultimately emerges as a more admirable model of femininity because she rejects superficiality and stereotypical romantic conventions.*

This thesis gives you the opportunity to discuss the impact that the lack of a mother might have on both characters (for instance their shared insatiable curiosity and tendency to take risks.) It also gives you the opportunity to form an argument on who you view as the more “admirable” model of womanhood, and the differences in how each character approaches their respective romantic relationships. There are many other theses that could be created from this particular example, but this is one that demonstrates a clear, coherent argument and fully addresses all aspects of the prompt.

**Additional tips for creating a thesis statement**

In the preliminary stages of drafting your thesis, it may be helpful for you to write the phrase “I intend to argue that ___________” and fill in the blank with your potential statement. This will help you understand when you are making an argument, as opposed to simply articulating a fact.

A simple thesis is often the best thesis. Remember: you do not need to include every aspect of your argument in your thesis. Be direct and concise.

It can often be helpful to begin your thesis statement with a “therefore” or “although.” This helps your reader identify that an important transition is taking place.
Different Types of Arguments
Contributor: William J Macauley Jr, PhD

Modern American Five Part Essay
As a teaching tool, these arguments are often about students learning to support claims with evidence.

- **Intro:** Hook and thesis
- **Point One:** First claim & support
- **Point Two:** Second claim & support
- **Point Three:** Third claim and support
- **Conclusion:** Implications or future & restate thesis

This type of argument is readily adaptable in terms of size, argument, and application, but it is not the only option available.

Classical Western Argument
Remember that these arguments were often directed toward two (not mutually exclusive) purposes: persuading an audience of the wisdom of an argument or revealing/understanding ‘capital-T truths.’

Five main parts:

- **Introduction,** which warms up the audience, establishes goodwill and rapport with the readers, and announces the general theme or thesis of the argument.
- The **narration,** which summarizes relevant background material, provides any information the audience needs to know about the environment and circumstances that produce the argument, and set up the stakes—what’s at risk in this question.
- The **confirmation,** which lays out in a logical order (usually strongest to weakest or most obvious to most subtle) the claims that support the thesis, providing evidence for each claim. (DEPENDS ON AUDIENCE)
- The **refutation and concession,** which looks at opposing viewpoints to the writer’s claims, anticipating objections from the audience, and allowing as much of the opposing viewpoints as possible without weakening the thesis.
- The **summation,** which provides a strong conclusion, amplifying the force of the argument, and showing the readers that this solution is the best at meeting the circumstances.
Toulmin Argument
Remember that the point of a Toulmin argument is often to assemble the strongest evidence in support of the claims being made. In short, the best argument wins.

- **Parts:** Data, Claim, Warrant, Qualifiers, Rebuttal, Backing
- **Structure (point by point in each section):**
  - Introduction of the problem or topic: hook, introduce problem/topic, introduce claim w/ qualifiers.
  - Data in support of claims
  - Explore warrants: connections between claims and data
  - Factual backing to show logic is real and theoretically sound
  - Discuss counter-arguments and provide rebuttal
  - Conclusion: implications, summation, evocative thought

Rogerian Argument
The Rogerian argument is designed to find the best possible solution based on the needs and interests of those involved, in short some version of consensus.

**Essay Structure for a Rogerian Argument:**
Works to build understanding between opposing viewpoint by acknowledging that a subject can be looked at from different standpoints.

- **Introduction:** Acknowledge and provide fair assessment of opposing argument.
- **Acknowledgment of the Opposition:** Builds trust through acknowledgment and identification of merit in opposing argument.
- **State Your Thesis:** Your thesis is the position you are taking regarding the essay’s subject.
- **Support Your Thesis:** Explain why your thesis is valid and shows deep inquiry.
- **Conclusion:** Benefits of your argument, even if it cannot solve the entire problem (say so, if this is the case), and recognize more work to be done.
Logical Fallacies
Contributor: Derrian Goebel

When considering your argument or the arguments of others, writers and readers need to be aware of logical fallacies. Logical fallacies are found in many places—ads, politics, movies. Logical fallacies make an argument weak by using mistaken beliefs/ideas, invalid arguments, illogical arguments, and/or deceptiveness. If you are arguing, avoid fallacies of thought because they create weaknesses in an argument. Here are some of the most common fallacies to be aware of.

**Ad hominem**
- Attacking one’s character rather than the issue; an insult is not addressing the concern.
- Does your reason for arguing stand on solid ground, or are you just insulting the opponent?
  - Address sandwich quality, not the boy who brought it up.

**Appeal to False Authority**
- Using a source quote from someone who is not an expert in the field.
- Who qualifies as an “expert”?
- Are there credentials for your “expert”?
- Do you/they have the authority?
- Is your/their source biased?
  - Oprah is not a medical doctor, therefore not the “expert” on digestion.

**Bandwagon Fallacy**
- When evidence merely says that the reasoning is because others do or like it, you are not providing solid evidence.
- Who is “everyone”?
- Are they really “all” thinking the same way?
  - Just because everyone has a cell phone, doesn’t mean that everyone needs a cell phone.
Begging the Question/Circular Reasoning

- Affirming the claim in a circular manner that essentially supports itself.
- Is your claim supported by something other than its own concept?
  - Game of Thrones TV show is the best ever because it is awesome!

Either/Or Fallacy

- Reducing complex arguments to simply right/wrong
- There are more than two sides to arguments.
- Ask yourself if someone can come up with an alternative?
  - Not everyone loves bacon.

Faulty Analogy

- Comparing things that are similar in some ways, but not where it matters most.
- Using a metaphor can support a claim, but are the parts of your metaphor connected? If not, your argument will fall apart.
  - Comparing apples to oranges is not useful to your argument on apple quality.

Faulty Causality

- Drawing the conclusion that when two events happen close together one has caused the other.
- Has event A caused event B, or did it just happen at the same time?
  - When I bring my lucky dolls, my team wins the game!

Hasty Generalization

- Making a claim based on one or two examples that may not be relevant to the claims or subject.
- Does every single American like it, really?
  - Using “all the time” and “all Americans like…”

Slippery Slope

- Arguments that proclaim that one incident will start a chain of events leading to devastating results.
- Are your claims over-reaching or exaggerated?
- Aren’t always completely off base, but usually inaccurate and blown out of proportion.
  - Potlucks do not lead to socialism.
Vagueness, Evasions, Misstatements

- Vagueness is simply lies in truth’s clothing.
- Misstatements often take a quote out of context to “prove” a point.
- Are you clearly interpreting the information/evidence?
- A misstatement would suggest that “billions” of people are happy with the product just because billions were served the product.

Writing Processes: Organization
Introductions & Conclusions
Contributor: Jessica Ross

Introductions
Most importantly, introductions should introduce your paper. Sounds simple, right? But often, students will use the introduction to summarize the topics they will expand in the body of their paper. Here are some things to do instead:

Set context:
- give some general background information
- set up a “map” of what the paper will discuss
- include any information a reader might need to know before reading your paper

State importance:
- explain why the topic is important
- create interest in the topic
- compel the audience to read further

State the thesis:
- state your argument/stance
- discuss your research questions

Your introduction should give your reader a clear idea of what to expect from your paper; however, you should not summarize the ideas that you will explain later. Instead, introduce these ideas—give your readers the context and background information they need in order to understand what you will say later.

Conclusions
The conclusion is very similar to the introduction in that it gives a general overview of what has been discussed. This does not mean, however, that you should summarize what was in the rest of the paper.

Your conclusion should:
- tie up any loose ends not confronted in the body of the paper
- provide the reader takeaway (the message you want to leave your readers with)
- provide a larger context for your paper (how does this paper fit into a larger conversation?)
- reinforce the thesis/main purpose of the paper

For a sample introduction: http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/resdoc5e/pdf/Hacker-Orlov-MLA.pdf
Drafting an Effective Introduction

Contributor: Aaron Smale

Generally, most introductions in academic writing aim to invite readers into a discussion by presenting the necessary context. Additionally, introductions serve to frame the larger conversation/topic of the paper for the reader and to present a “road map” of important points. The strength of an introduction can determine whether your target audience will want to continue reading or if they will set your paper aside in favor of more engaging material and analysis.

Tips for Drafting an Effective Introduction

Engage and orient your audience to welcome them to the paper: A key function of any introduction is to present your argument in such a way that your audience can enter the conversation and properly engage with your paper. Key questions to think about as you write your introduction with this in mind may include:

Why would people want to read my paper in particular?
How does my paper relate to my audience and what could it mean to them in their daily lives?

Provide key information and context to your audience: A key function of an introduction is to provide context, details, and facts that your audience will need to enter the argument or analysis. Providing key context and details within your introduction helps to limit the scope of your essay to the specific target of your analysis.

For example, a paper that discusses why standardized testing should be removed from secondary education could provide details explaining why standardized testing was implemented, describing the particular standardized test(s) is being discussed, and limiting the discussion to high school testing.

Use your introduction to focus your essay around a specific research goal or question: Within your introduction, it is appropriate to focus your research and analysis around a particular aspect of your topic or a research question. When drafting your introduction at an early point in your writing process, it may be helpful to have a tentative focus that you can come back to as you write the paper since your goals may change as write. For example, the essay dealing with standardized testing could go several different directions:

Is your paper focusing on how standardized testing can be made effective, or is it discussing how to remove standardized testing completely? Is your goal to propose an alternative to standardized testing?

What Not to Do When Drafting an Introduction
Given that introductions are such a crucial part of any academic paper, it is important to consider things to avoid when drafting an introduction. Common things to think about include ineffective opening strategies, questions of focus, and incorporating “fluff” or empty hooks in your introduction.

**Avoid the long-distance opening:** A common mistake that writers may make in academic writing is beginning with the broadest context possible relative to their paper. For the example paper dealing with standardized testing, an ineffective opening may begin with the historical beginnings of the educational system as a whole. Though this aspect may be related, it is too far removed from the topic being discussed/analyzed to provide constructive context within the paper.

**Be cautious with the funnel opening:** Though many effective introductions utilize the “funnel” opening where the introduction establishes a larger (global) context and moves to the specific thesis or research question. A broader topic allows for explanation and exploration, however remember to keep your focus on the specifics of your thesis/research question within the topic. Instead of starting with a discussion of school testing in general, presenting the broader context of standardized testing first and moving to standardized testing in high schools and why it should be removed or changed may be more effective.

**Avoid the “book-report” opening:** Though a key function of an introduction is to provide the necessary context for your audience to engage with your paper, avoid providing only context within your introduction without indicating where your analysis is going or where it will end up. Your audience will be less likely to engage with your paper if they feel that it is only providing information and background without taking a definitive stance on the issue. With the example paper about standardized testing, a book report opening would simply discuss facts about standardized testing such as when it was introduced in education, who introduced it and why the test was created.

**Avoid the “dictionary” or “accepted knowledge” hooks:** A common mistake that many student writers make when drafting an introduction is providing a dictionary definition as a means to engage their reader. This strategy often misfires because the dictionary definition or a statement of fact is not very nuanced and does not lend itself to discussion or analysis as readily as a structured and research opinion or research question. If you need to define a key term in your paper for your audience to understand your topic, it helps to paraphrase the term in your own words instead of simply repeating the dictionary definition of that term. Unlike the dictionary definition, a paraphrase can help provide nuance that engages your audience. For instance, “decision error” in rating standardized tests may be crucial to discussing your topic, so defining it relative to your thesis/research question can strengthen your introduction. Since many readers will not know every detail of the subject being analyzed, introductions help to engage the reader and provide them with an entry point into the research and analysis of a paper. An effective introduction goes beyond the facts while engaging your audience and promoting interest in your topic.
When drafting an effective research paper, how the paper ends is often just as important as how the paper opens. Since an introduction serves to set the stage for a paper and provide readers with a “roadmap” of what to expect in the paper and the overall thesis or research question, an effective conclusion provides resolution to your paper. Though there is no one definitive way to approach a conclusion, several tips are presented below may help you effectively close your paper.

**What a Conclusion Should Accomplish**

Effective conclusions should accomplish most, if not all, of the following key purposes:

- Conclusions should revisit the main points and thesis of the overall paper in a substantial way that goes beyond summary.

- For example, now that your points have been analyzed and presented in the body of your paper, what new insight can the audience take away from this paper that connects to the broader aspects of your topic?

- Answering the “So What?” of your paper: How is your argument relevant to your readers?

- What information in your paper will your audience be able to use beyond your paper? Alternatively, what are the consequences if your audience doesn’t grasp the larger point of your argument?

- Presenting closure and resolution: An effective conclusion should give your audience a sense of closure and resolution related to your topic, connecting all your ideas into a larger “take-away”. Your conclusion should weave your points together to demonstrate that they were not random and disconnected from one another.

- Lastly, a conclusion should place your paper/argument/research in a broader context and signal new things for your audience to think about beyond your paper.

**Tips for Effective Conclusions**

When drafting a conclusion, there are many different places to begin but some helpful questions to consider include:

- What has my research shown over the course of my paper? What is the larger idea that the audience can take away from my main points?

- What are the implications of how this research was approached? How does my paper compare to other approaches to this topic?
• What are the limitations of my topic and how do they relate to the broader conversation or state of knowledge related to this topic? For example, where does this paper on car pollution fit into the bigger picture of climate change?

• What are the impacts, implications, or possible consequences of my research/argument? What are potential concerns for this topic?

• Is there room for more research or discussion regarding this topic? What are some possible next steps that researchers can take? What should be done next?

• What larger point can my audience take away from this paper that can help them understand their own lives, concerns, or the world around them?

• What larger point discussed in my introduction would be helpful to revisit here? How can I bring the conversation full-circle?

**Things Not to Do in a Conclusion**

• **Do not introduce new claims or abruptly insert new supporting information:** At this point in a conclusion, it is helpful to tie the points together that you have already introduced. Introducing new information in your conclusion can distract your audience from the larger point you are trying to make.

• **Do not forget to clearly synthesize the main points of your paper and bring them together:** Depending on the length of your paper, your audience may need to be reminded of your points in a clear fashion in order to fully conceptualize the larger take-away of your paper.

• **Do not apologize for negative results or gaps/limitations of research:** If your topic concerns a relatively newer topic (like quantum tunneling applications), it is helpful in a conclusion to discuss how this may impact the research question of the paper and the main take-away of your paper. However, it is important to discuss this objectively in how it may limit your main point instead of impede your own research process.
Paragraphs

Contributors: UWC Staff

What is a paragraph?

A paragraph is a distinct unit which connects to a larger idea. A paragraph should have only one idea or topic (in the example below, Alexie’s family members are each distinct units connected to the larger idea of his family; his house is one distinct unit connected to the larger idea of his reservation, etc.).

I can remember picking up my father’s books before I could read. The words themselves were mostly foreign, but I still remember the exact moment when I first understood, with a sudden clarity, the purpose of a paragraph. I didn’t have the vocabulary to say ‘paragraph,’ but I realized that a paragraph was a fence that held words. The words inside a paragraph worked together for a common purpose. They had some specific reason for being inside the same fence. This knowledge delighted me. I began to think of everything in terms of paragraphs. Our reservation was a small paragraph within the United States. My family’s house was a paragraph, distinct from the other paragraphs of the LeBrets to the north, the Fords to our South, and the Tribal School to the west. Inside our house, each family member existed as a separate paragraph but still had genetics and common experiences to link us. Now, using this logic, I can see my changed family as an essay of seven paragraphs: mother, father, older brother, the deceased sister, my younger twin sisters, and our adopted little brother.

How can you tell when to start a new paragraph?

Paragraphs help keep ideas clear and organized in writing; if one paragraph covers several unrelated topics, the ideas in that paragraph will become unclear and lose meaning. One way to know whether or not you should start a new paragraph is by determining whether or not you are starting on a new main idea. Some paragraphs may contain several different ideas which are all actually being used to support the main idea of that paragraph. If you have several topics in one paragraph, make sure they support that paragraph’s main point; if they don’t, give those topics their own paragraphs.
How are paragraphs formatted?
There are several ways to format a paragraph. One common way is to use the PIE method:

- **Point** or main idea
- **Information** that supports the point of that paragraph
- **Explanation** of why this information is relevant

This is only one of many ways to format a paragraph, and you don’t necessarily want all of your paragraphs to follow this exact format. You also wouldn’t necessarily keep all of your PIE paragraphs in the PIE order (for instance, you might lead into your main point with your information and explanation).
Paragraph Transitions

One of the larger impacts on our writing as students is how we go about reading the texts we’re assigned in classes. It is simple to suggest that actually doing our assigned reading is critical; however, effective, careful reading is a bit more involved than that, and it is this reading that is crucial to our writing process. For instance, I have a problem reading while lying down because I risk dozing off when I do. My solution has been to avoid this behavior, but in recognizing and remedying that problem, I have only taken one step in the long process of developing useful reading strategies.

Successful reading strategies can help us understand complicated or confusing writing. They can improve our memory for what we have read. They can even help us with synthesis, or drawing connections across many texts. These strategies can involve how we read, and how we make annotations, and what questions we ask ourselves as we read.

The writer concludes this paragraph with a discussion of the problem with thesis statements and suggests there is an easy comparison to make to solve this issue.

First, the writer introduces the idea of reading strategies while concluding this paragraph. The writer then provides a sentence to introduce the reader to this paragraph on reading strategies. These two sentences work together to create a clear and smooth transition from one paragraph to the next.

More often than I’d like to admit, I see theses that look something like this: “In society today, a lot has changed.” The student then turns to me and asks if their thesis is okay, and I have to look them in the eye and tell them I honestly didn’t know they had a thesis. This is a tough conversation to have—after all, a thesis is an extremely important part of any scholarly essay, but it is an easy issue to solve, and I find myself drawing upon a specific comparison to describe a thesis in essay writing. Your thesis is like a roadmap. It needs proper signposts and markings to let people know how to get to their destination, and in the event that it is unable to provide these signposts, people can get lost. Your thesis is exactly the same way. If your thesis can’t guide me through your argument, the nuance and logic of your essay can be lost, just like a person who doesn’t have a roadmap or directions. We need these signposts, as readers, to get through the paper without a hitch.

Transitions
Contributor: UWC Staff

Think of transitions as tour guides for your paper. They guide your audience from one point to the next, keeping them on track and ensuring that the reader doesn't get lost along the way. Poor transitions will confuse your audience, and instead of focusing on your analysis, your readers will be trying to figure out where they are and how they got there.

Sentence Transitions
Sentence transitions are words or phrases used to move smoothly between sentences in a way that feels natural to the reader.

These transitions guide your reader from one sentence to the next, but they are not strong enough to propel your reader from one paragraph to the next because they are made to be smaller and more localized. You wouldn't hang your fifteen-pound backpack on a thumbtack; similarly, you wouldn't want to depend on a one-word transition to guide a reader to your next main idea.

Paragraph Transitions
Paragraph transitions require more than just a word or phrase. Often, paragraph transitions are made up of one or more sentences.

If you're putting a hook on the wall to hang your heavy backpack, you first put a nail in the wall for support, and then put the hook on the nail. The nail is usually the last sentence of one paragraph, and the hook is the first sentence of the next one.
Writing Processes: Prewriting
Prewriting Strategies

Contributor: Sierra Becze

Prewriting can be a useful way to organize thoughts, ideas, and questions to prepare for a writing task. Often used as the first step of the writing process, the prewriting stage allows the writer to jot down ideas about a topic rather than committing too much time to one topic and finding out three pages in that the topic isn’t a good fit. Because prewriting encourages creativity, there are many different strategies to choose from.

**Bubble/Brainstorm**

Brainstorming can be used to process what you already know about a topic. Start with the topic of your paper. What are some main questions, terms, and statements that relate back to the main topic? What are some supporting details, facts, and/or ideas that also help the overall argument of your paper? Whatever ideas come to your mind, write them down in a bubble. You can jot it down as messily or cleanly as you’d like; do whatever will help make your ideas more structured. This can be useful to see which ideas to keep and which to toss out.
Outline
An outline is great for writers who value a set structure and organization more than a doodled cluster. By using a combination of numbers, letters, and indentations, an outline allows you to write down main ideas and supporting details. Some writers may find it helpful to create a second outline to identify ideas to toss out ideas, to fill in gaps for providing supporting evidence, and to work on cohesion.

Freewrite
A freewrite, much like a brainstorm, is a way to write whatever comes to your mind. However, with a freewrite you can write paragraphs and allow your creativity to flow. By using a freewrite, you can explore the topic including identifying information you already know and generating questions. Allotting a certain amount of time to write, such as 10 minutes, helps manage time and sets a concrete goal.

Expansion
While these strategies can help in the beginning stages of the writing process, writers are encouraged to expand prewrite activities to narrow down topics and to focus writing on depth and not breadth. For example, if you choose to do the bubble prewrite, you can choose the information from a supporting detail bubble and make that your main topic, using the bubble or brainstorm process to generate more specific ideas and supporting evidence.

When using the freewrite strategy, writing one draft is beneficial; however, creating more than one helps with idea organization and with the expansion of ideas. A good way to expand on a freewrite is to choose one sentence and then write from that sentence. If you find you are stumped about what else to write about, continue to write about anything that could relate back to the topic.

Just as Emma Coats, Disney Pixar’s story artist, once said, “Discount the first thing that comes to mind. And the second, third, fourth, fifth—get the obvious out of the way. Surprise yourself.”
Reading Strategies
Contributor: UWC Staff

Reading Process
Reading, like writing, is a process with three major phases: previewing, reading, and reviewing. Participating in all three stages of the reading process can help you engage with and retain the information you read.

Previewing
Before you start reading, preview your text.
- Consider what you already know about the topic.
- Look for
  I. Headers
  II. Bolded words
  III. Boxes or pull-outs
  IV. Quotes
- Write out questions

Reading
While you’re reading, actively engage with the text (don’t just let your eyes watch the words go by).
- Take notes in the margins or on sticky notes
- Read for responses to your preview questions

Reviewing
After you read a text, you should review what you’ve just read to engage with what you’ve learned. Consider...
- What you liked
- Where you disagreed or wanted to challenge the text
- What was confusing and why
- Which of your questions were answered and which still remain
What to Read For
While these aren’t the only things you can or should focus on while reading, many of the following questions can help you engage with and think critically about what you’re reading.

**Purpose**
- Determine what information you expect to learn by reading your text
- What do you think the author wanted you to take from this? Why?
- How does this text reinforce or illustrate a theme or goal from the class?

**Audience**
- How did you react to the text? Why?
- Who was this text written for? How do you know?

**Context**
- Why was this text written?
- What is this text responding to?

**Evidence**
- How convincing was the argument?
- What kind of evidence did the author use?

**Style**
- How was language used to present the argument?

**Annotation Strategies**
Annotation is recording your interactions with the text or image as you read. Annotation will help you avoid having to reread sections of the text.

You can use a variety of methods to accomplish this, but key to effectively using this strategy is explaining why a particular part of the text engaged you.

- Circle parts of the text you don’t understand or have questions about
- Highlight examples or data
- Explain where you disagree or
- Agree
Writing Processes: Revision
Editing & Proofreading Techniques
Contributor: UWC Staff

Editing – begins while you are still working on your first draft. It has to do more with revising the logistics of the paper than grammar and surface-level errors.

Proofreading – takes place when editing is finished. Focuses on surface-level errors like misspelling and grammar errors.

Editing Techniques:

Content
- Are all parts of the question answered?
- Is there an argument?
- Do all of the paragraphs support the thesis?

Overall Structure
- Is there a clear introduction and conclusion?
- Is the paragraph order logical?
- Are there clear transitions between paragraphs?

Structure within Paragraphs
- Does each paragraph have a clear topic sentence?
- Does the paragraph follow the thesis?
- Are there any extra or missing supporting paragraphs in each paragraph?

Clarity
- Are all terms easily defined for the reader?
- Is the meaning of the sentence clear?
- Have you chosen the best words to express your ideas?

Style
- Is the tone appropriate for the audience?
- Have you varied sentence length throughout the paper?
- Are there any unnecessary phrases, such as “due to the fact that”?

Citations
- Are your citations in the correct format?
- Have you appropriately cited all paraphrasing and quotations?

(The Writing Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1998-2007).
Proofreading Techniques:

- Read your paper aloud. Sometimes writing sounds different in your head than it sounds on paper.
- Make a list of errors that you commonly make and keep an eye out for them.
- Read the text backwards. Sometimes the brain automatically corrects written mistakes.
- Proofread for only one type of error at a time.
- Double check everything:
  - Proper names
  - Citations
  - Punctuation
  - Page numbers
  - Header/footer material
  - Fonts
  - Read slowly and carefully.

Other Helpful Tips:

- Concentrate. Get rid of noise and other distractions. You will catch more errors if you are focused.
- Don’t edit your paper in the same sitting you wrote it. Leave it for a while, even a few days, and then come back to it. This will give you fresh eyes and allow you to catch more errors.
- When you have gone over it as much as you can, get someone else to read it. A second pair of eyes can see twice as much.
- Don’t only rely on spell check or grammar check. Sometimes they miss things too.
- Know if it’s easier for you to edit on the computer or on a printed page.
- Have your resources close to you so you can easily look up anything that you are unsure of. Helpful resources include:
  - Dictionary
  - Thesaurus
  - Handbooks
  - Handouts

Examples of Twenty of the Most Common Surface Errors:

1. missing comma after introductory phrases
2. vague pronoun references
3. missing comma in a compound sentences
4. wrong words
5. missing comma(s) with a nonessential elements
6. wrong or missing verb endings
7. wrong or missing prepositions
8. comma splices
9. missing or misplaced possessive apostrophes
10. unnecessary shifts in tense
11. unnecessary shifts in pronouns
12. sentence fragments
13. wrong tense or verb forms
14. lack of agreement between subject and verb
15. missing commas in a series
16. lack of agreement between pronouns and antecedents
17. unnecessary comma(s) with a restrictive or essential elements
18. fused sentences
19. dangling or misplaced modifiers
20. its/it’s confusion (its is the possessive case of the pronoun it; it’s is a contraction of it is or it has)

   It’s a wise dog who knows its limits.

   (Lunsford, 2011)

Reference List
Reverse Outlines
Contributor: Aaron Smale

During the revision process, it is often necessary to check for understanding within your paper to ensure that your ideas are strongly developed and well-organized. However, it can sometimes be hard to read through your draft and reorganize blocks of text and efficiently manage your revisions. When revising, it is helpful to locate your ideas within paragraphs and distill the main topics that link your claims, reasons, and analysis together. One helpful strategy to revise your draft at this stage of the writing process is the **Reverse Outline**: An outline that is constructed *after* you have a working draft of your paper. In a reverse outline, you summarize each main point of your paper in manageable sentences. Once you have these convenient summaries, you can identify points in your paper that deal with too many ideas at once or points that don’t explore ideas enough.

**A Reverse Outline Is Helpful . . .**

- During the revision process when you have a working draft
- Checking for understanding
- Clarifying main points/topics and strengthening focus
- Identifying where too many ideas exist in a paragraph or when one idea is not explored enough.
- Strengthening concision where one idea may be overdeveloped and can be trimmed down within the context of a paragraph.
- Organizing your ideas in a more logical and effective pattern, since the order in which most writers draft is not the most effective order once written.
- Identifying key opportunities to build connections and transitions between your main points

**When NOT to Use a Reverse Outline**

- In order to address later-order concerns such as grammar, punctuation, usage, and sentence level concerns.
- When working with a near-complete draft or when constructing an initial draft.

Even though constructing a **Reverse Outline** may seem daunting at first, there are several key ways to approach this strategy to help ease the process so your paper can be managed efficiently and effectively.
How to Use a Reverse Outline

1. Using your draft, try to summarize the main topic of each paragraph on a separate sheet of paper in about 12-15 words.
   - If you find yourself struggling to think of even five words, your main idea is probably not developed enough.
   - If you are struggling to summarize a paragraph’s main point in less than 25-30 words, you probably have too many ideas competing for the reader’s attention.

2. Once you have summarized your points on another sheet of paper, you now have convenient summaries that can be easily moved around. In addition to being a dependable indicator of what your topic sentences are, these summaries can quickly show opportunities for revising your organization.

3. Now that you have all of your main points laid out in your reverse outline, you now have a map of where your paper may need more logical progression or supporting details.

4. At this point, you can now feel free to develop your main ideas and move them around as necessary to strengthen your argument and fulfill the requirements of the assignment.

5. An effective alternative method for using a reverse outline by yourself is to share your document with another person and have them construct a reverse outline as well. When both people have a reverse outline, you can compare the main points to see if they match up.
   - If the outlines are fairly different, this can highlight points where important information is missing or the material lacks focus.
   - Lastly, having another person construct a reverse outline of your paper helps to gauge how well you are conveying your points to your audience.
HOC & LOC Topic Descriptions

Contributors: UWC Staff

Higher Order Concerns
Higher Order Concerns (HOC) should be the priority during revision because they have the greatest impact on successful communication. Following is a list of HOCs and brief descriptions to help you choose online feedback.

**Overall Argument**
Feedback focuses on strength of evidence and how evidence relates back to the overall claim/thesis.

**Thesis**
Feedback focuses on how significant, arguable, and focused the thesis of your paper is. Additionally, how relevant your thesis is to the needs of the assignment/prompt will be reviewed.

**Consistency of Argument**
Feedback focuses on relevance and logic of each paragraph to the argument.

**Supporting Points**
Feedback focuses on how the supporting points address the main topic.

**Assignment Organization**
Feedback focuses on the movement between ideas, specifically looking for logical progression and transitions between ideas.

**Paragraph Organization**
Feedback focuses on how ideas are developed within paragraphs, specifically introducing and concluding ideas, strength of analysis/synthesis, and depth of explanations.

**Introduction**
Feedback focuses on how well the introduction creates interest, identifies the main point, provides necessary context/background info, and previews the essay.

**Conclusion**
Feedback focuses on the strength of the conclusion, specifically looking at connections to the thesis/research question and discussions of future implications.

**Tone**
Feedback focuses on consistency of disciplinary language and purpose of assignment/genre.

**Genre Expectations**
Feedback focuses on how well the writing fits with expectations of the genre and discipline (e.g. rhetorical analysis in English, biology lab report, educational research proposal).

**Audience Awareness**
Feedback focuses on how effectively the argument/discussion/analysis addresses expectations of target audience, as well as how the information will engage the audience.
Analysis
Feedback focuses examination of topic, relevant research, and interpretations, specifically looking for multiple perspectives including counterarguments (if applicable).

Synthesis
Feedback focuses on use of different sources, research, or datasets in combination with each other to build a larger argument, point, or state of knowledge.

Examples & Explanation
Feedback focuses on introduction and explanation of examples as well as range of examples and significance and relevancy of explanations.

Credibility of Sources
Feedback focuses on currency of sources, relevance of sources to the claim/thesis (e.g. not just to the topic), authority of authors, publishers, and organizations related to the sources, and methodology (if possible) of relevant data used.

Integration of Sources
Feedback focuses on reviewing sources relative to how well they are integrated within the text, including relevance to claim/thesis, introduction, and explanation.

Unity
Feedback focuses on how well the supporting points follow the claim/thesis and the movement between ideas.

Assignment Purpose
Feedback focuses on how well the paper addresses the overall questions or goals of the assignment, making comparisons to the prompt/rubric if it is available.

Readability
Feedback focuses on examining how understandable and clear the content of the paper is.

Outline
Feedback focuses on examining outlines for opportunities for expansion and development of ideas and how they are arranged.

Brainstorming
Feedback focuses on the potential for starting points and ideas, pointing out opportunities for development and integration of research and evidence.
Lower Order Concerns
Later Order Concerns (LOC) are focused on sentence and word level concerns. Following is a list of LOCs and brief descriptions to help you choose online feedback.

In-Text Citations
Feedback focuses on reviewing in-text citations for accuracy and formatting based on the publication/citation style being used (e.g., AMA, APA, MLA).

References
Feedback focuses on examining formatting and arrangement of reference citation entries.

Assignment Parameters
Feedback focuses on comparing the document with the assignment rubric (provided by the student), looking for adherence to assignment guidelines, such as source requirements, page length, section arrangement.

Commas
Feedback focuses on examining if commas are being used correctly and appropriately.

Noun-Verb Agreement
Feedback focuses on agreement between nouns and their associated verbs, such as plural versus singular.

Sentence Variety
Feedback focuses on reviewing readability based on variations in sentence patterns in terms of length, construction, and word choice.

Concision
Feedback focuses on using the most efficient and effective language choices, including pointing out unnecessary words, ineffective repetition words/patterns, and passive constructions (if genre appropriate).

Clarity
Feedback focuses on examining word choice and patterns to determine where ideas are confusing or ambiguous.

Article Usage
Feedback focuses on appropriate articles: a, an, and the.

Prepositions
Feedback focuses on effective use of prepositions and prepositional phrases within the context of individual sentences.

Specialty Punctuation
Feedback focuses on examining usage and opportunities related to punctuation such as semicolons, parentheses, em dashes, etc.
Paragraph Transitions
Feedback focuses on movement between paragraphs, specifically how effectively logical order and transitions/transitional devices are used.

Sentence Transitions
Feedback focuses on examining sentences for how well they follow a logical organization, providing options for integrating transitions/transitional devices.

Sentence Structure
Feedback focuses on examining sentence structures to ensure they follow clear organizational patterns and that component parts of speech (e.g. nouns, verbs) are effectively used.
Revising with Higher Order Concerns
Contributor: Derrian Goebel

Revision implies a “reseeing” of your text, not just a quick clean up. To effectively revise, or resee, writers should focus on rhetorical concerns that have significant impact on the text. For example, focusing on purpose and organization will have more impact than smaller concerns such as commas. Additionally, editing is best saved for the end of your process because any changes you make to higher order concerns will create a need to edit later.

Following are a few of the higher order concerns you can focus on for revision.

**Purpose** and focus have a few implications for writing, including a clear claim and depth of discussion (rather than breadth). You want your purpose/focus to be clear to yourself—you should be able to easily explain your focus to a younger or less experienced person.

**Tips for checking purpose:**
- Write your focus/purpose in one sentence without looking at your paper.
- Highlight the thesis statement and ask yourself if your evidence supports the statement.
  - Be willing to adjust your thesis to match your evidence.

**Organization** is a key focus for revision because the order in which ideas make it from our minds to the page is not always the most effective. With increased use of technology, many writers skip prewriting or planning and jump into drafting, which requires attention to organization during revision.

**Tips for checking organization:**
- Identify your main points throughout the paper. If you have more than one main point per paragraph, split the ideas into separate paragraphs and review development for each main point.
- Check if you have positioned your strongest points at the beginning of the text or at the end.
  - The first paragraph after the introduction is a good place for points that will be engaging to your audience (to hold their attention further into the paper).
  - The last paragraph before the conclusion is a good place for points that have high persuasive appeals for the audience (because it is the last point your audience will remember).

**Audience** is often a forgotten concern during revision; however, targeting a specific audience with all of your document’s elements is crucial to a successful text.
**Tips for checking audience concerns:**
Outline the specific audience you are addressing by describing demographics (e.g. age, gender, culture, religious/political affiliation, socio-economic status, etc.) of your audience.
Check if evidence would be interesting and persuasive to your target audience.

**Development** is crucial to a successful text because you want to have enough evidence, explanation, and synthesis to substantiate the claim(s) you are making.

**Tips for checking development:**
- Analyze the sources/evidence you have included to make sure they are credible, relevant, and the most current.
- Check to see if you have introduced, explained, and connected to your purpose all evidence/sources.
UWC Consultant Resources
Disability Guide for UWC Consultants
Contributor: Elizabeth Preston

Introduction
Oftentimes, disabled students are grouped under the large umbrella of “disabled,” but there is no one definition that can truly describe these students. Rather, each student is on a continuum regarding the severity of his disability and the challenges that the disability presents. This guidebook discusses four general types of disabilities that student writers may have—hearing impairment, visual impairment, mobility impairment, and learning disability—and ways a tutor can tailor a session to those students.

General Tips
1. When working with a disabled student, see the student as a unique individual rather than someone who is a product of his/her disability. Disabilities should be viewed as "differences" as opposed to "handicaps."  
2. View the student with compassion rather than with pity.  
3. If you ever feel uncomfortable tutoring a student, excuse yourself from the session and immediately speak with a Writing Center administrator.  
4. Emphasize that writing takes time.  
5. If the student does not mention his/her disability, neither should you.  
6. If you (the tutor) believe that the student has a disability but the student has not said that s/he has one, you can offer the Disability Resource Center’s (DRC) services. Please say "DRC" as opposed to "Disability Resource Center." Additionally, do not tell the student that you believe that s/he has a "disability." Rather, frame your suggestion in a more subtle way, such as by saying, "You seem to be having some trouble with this. I think that the DRC has some tools that could help you and make things a little easier." Feel free to offer to walk with the student to the DRC during the appointment. If you feel uncomfortable speaking with the student about a possibility that he has a disability, please voice your concern to one of the administrative staff members at the Writing Center.  
7. Legally, you can NEVER ask a student if s/he has a disability.  
8. If the student tells you his/her disability, ask if any accommodations are needed. If not and you are unsure of how to begin, ask what will best help the writer in terms of tasks and in terms of an approach.  
9. If the student has a companion or interpreter, talk directly to the client rather than to the accompanying person.  
10. If the student has a guide dog, do not interact with the dog without getting permission from the student. Petting can distract the dog when he is working (which is pretty much all of the time). You can ask to pet the dog, but be understanding and respectful if the student says "no."
Hearing-Impaired

What You Need to Know Before the Session Starts
1. Face the student when talking so that he/she can read your lips if necessary.
2. If there is an interpreter present, continue to look at the student, even when the interpreter signs to the student.
3. Speak normally unless the student requests that you speak louder.
4. If the person is completely deaf, then he/she is most likely accustomed to American Sign Language (ASL). Understand that ASL has its own syntax and grammar, which is not the same as written English. In essence, the ASL students an English language learner (ELL) individual, and the student will likely translate his/her thoughts through ASL syntax and into written English.
5. A deaf student will often exhibit grammatical and syntactical issues in the paper, such as having missing words and problems with tense and word endings.

At the Beginning of the Session
1. Encourage the student to focus on meaning instead of spelling.
2. Know that while reading out loud may feel comfortable to you as a tutor, the hearing-impaired student will likely not hear word omissions, wrong-word endings, and incorrect tenses as incorrect. Consider reading silently and highlighting problematic areas.

During the Session
1. If the student is completely deaf and/or cannot read lips, or if the student seems to be having trouble following what you are saying, you can ask the client if he/she would like to communicate on the computer or via writing on paper. Let the computer be your translator, if necessary.
2. Ask open-ended questions, which will likely get the student to write. Yes/no questions will oftentimes result in a headshake or a nod.
3. If you have difficulty explaining why a word (such as an article) needs to be inserted into the paper, use the ESL binder that the Writing Center provides tutors. Make copies of the applicable handouts for the student and discuss the handouts with the client.
4. As with most clients in the Writing Center, a non-directive approach is preferred.
2. However, this may not always work with deaf students. Sometimes, if the non-directive approach is failing, then you need to be directive. For example, if you have tried to suggest that the student is missing a word in a sentence, and the student does not know what that word is after three attempts, you may need to tell the client the missing word.

At the End of the Session
Make sure that any notes that you may have written on the computer can be accessed by the student (via e-mail, the report, or a printed copy). This will allow the client to refer back to them later.
Visually-Impaired

What You Need to Know Before the Session Starts
1. Speak any visual content. For instance, if you want to use OWL Purdue, read out loud what that particular section of the website says.
2. When you read out loud, make sure that you do not mumble, but do not shout at the student. The student can hear you—the student just cannot fully see you.

At the Beginning of the Session
1. If you are helping the student navigate the Writing Center, you can ask the student if he/she would like you to act as a guide.
2. When guiding the student around the Writing Center, be descriptive. Instead of saying, "The computer is right here," say "The computer is about a foot to your left."
3. Offer to record the session for the student (the Writing Center has recorders available, and phones can record as well). This will enable the client to listen to the session later if needed.
4. Ask the client about his/her writing process. This should help you choose the best techniques to help the student.

During the Session
1. Your annotations on the student's paper and any other notes should primarily be recorded on the computer. This is particularly important for blind students as the computer notes can be mailed to the student and translated into Braille later on at the student's convenience.
2. Read sections of the draft out loud so that the student knows where you are in the paper. Saying, "A comma should be here" will be useless if the student does not know where you are in the paper.
3. If the student can see to some degree and wants to write 'during the session, use the computer and type in large font (18-22, bold) as opposed to working off of handwritten notes.

At the End of the Session
1. Make sure that you attach any notes that you have written on the computer during the session to the report that you write up for that student. Remind the client that he/she can access these notes through the report.
2. If the student is uncomfortable having the notes be attached to the report, offer him/her the option of emailing the notes to himself/herself at the end of session.

Mobility Impairments

What You Need to Know Before the Session Starts
1. If the person is using a wheelchair, try to sit at the same height as the student. In light of the seating options the Writing Center may have, this may not always be possible.
2. Make spatial accommodations for items such as crutches, walkers, etc. Do not expect the student to figure out where to put them—it is you who are familiar with your work station.
At the Beginning of the Session
If the student is in a wheelchair, the small tutoring rooms may not be the most comfortable (and easily navigated) environments. Ask if the student would like to work in a larger space, such as the common room.

During the Session
Depending upon the student's mobility challenge(s), it may be advantageous to work primarily on the computer.

At the End of the Session
When the student gets ready to leave, you can ask if he/she needs help with carrying any belongings. Never grab the items without asking.

Learning Disabled
What You Need to Know Before the Session Starts
1. Learning-disabled students are typically born with their disabilities or acquire them through brain injuries. These students are not necessarily “dumb" or "lazy." Rather, they have their own, unique challenges.
2. Learning-disabled students may have difficulties with reading, spelling, writing, using proper grammar, grasping numerical concepts, understanding spatial relations, recalling common words, organizing, managing their time, and concentrating. Dyslexic students will have trouble reading, and students with dysgraphia will have difficulty writing.
3. Conduct the session in a quiet environment that is free of visual distractions.
4. Don't rush. The learning-disabled client may need long periods of time to read text and to think of how to respond to questions. Remember, there is value in silence.
5. Maintain a structured and organized session in order to minimize distractions and to help the student stay focused on writing and the writing process. Writing down a clear agenda for the session and working off of the assignment’s prompt can provide some of the necessary structure.
6. Encourage the student and discuss what he/she has done correctly.
7. Overall, you want to start with big, overarching concepts and work down to the details. However, this is subject to the student's desires and goals for the session.

At the Beginning of the Session
1. Ask if the student would like to record the session. Sometimes, a learning-disabled student may not be able to see the errors on the page, but may be able to hear the errors. Consider suggesting this technique to your student for when he/she goes home and works on the paper.
2. If this is one of your "regulars," provide a brief review of the previous tutoring session.
3. Make sure that the student understands the assignment’s requirements and objectives.
4. Read the paper or problematic sections out loud unless the student is uncomfortable with this.

During the Session
1. Break down the writing process and all other tasks in small, manageable steps for the student.
2. Emphasize that writing is a process, not just a product.
3. Try to connect concepts to the student's everyday life.
4. Give concrete examples and restate information in a variety of ways.
5. Restate information in a variety of ways.
6. Try presenting information in different forms, such as graphs, charts, text, and drawings. You may even want to ask the student if he/she knows what manner of learning works best for him/her. If the student does not know, try a variety of learning techniques that include auditory, visual, and tactile methods.
7. Use the computer as much as possible when composing. This will help the student to concentrate more on content rather than on spelling.
8. Keep the student engaged during the session by highlighting text and/or circling important words. You may also ask the student to do the highlighting and circling, which will help him/her to stay focused during the session.
9. Ask the student to write down two subject-centered questions about his/her topic: 1) What do I know already, and 2) What do I need to find out?
10. When pre-writing, keep in mind that asking seemingly obvious questions may help the student unlock his/her mind and start generating ideas.
11. Help the student create a timeline for each stage of the writing process for the paper. Emphasize the value of pre-writing stages - brainstorming, outlining, mapping, and webbing, creating a flow chart, and writing down notes.
12. Try being the secretary while the student brainstorms so that the client can concentrate on ideas and not worry about spelling or grammar. For the learning-disabled student, ideas and clarity should come first, organization should come second, and grammar and spelling should come later in the writing process.
13. When drafting the paper, encourage the student to use a different page for each supporting topic. This will help the student to organize his/her thoughts. These topics and their evidence can be put together in a cohesive and organized fashion later.

At the End of the Session
Reiterate (with the client) the next few steps of the plan for the paper and make sure that you have set up a homework/writing plan for the student to follow.

Sources for Further Exploration


Tutoring ELL Students: UWC Consultant Resource

Contributors: UWC Staff

Introduction
Many of our consultants have questions and concerns about tutoring ELL students. This resource is meant to provide support and address some of those concerns. Consultants received a survey asking them to explain their questions and concerns and to provide any advice they had for tutoring ELL students. The feedback from that survey was compiled into this packet. This packet also includes an annotated bibliography of works consulted for this resource and suggestions for further reading about tutoring ELL students.

Why tutors feel uncomfortable in ELL sessions
The language barrier: “Generally because of miscommunications, such as when it is difficult to understand the student, or difficult for them to understand me.”
“I sometimes feel uncomfortable when I don’t know what the student is looking for out of the session because we don’t understand each other.”
Silence: “When the student doesn’t speak or respond to what I’m telling them. I figure this is usually because they themselves are uncomfortable or because I’m not explaining myself fully and they’re too embarrassed to say that they don’t understand.”

Specific questions about approaching ELL sessions

How can I tell if a student can understand me?
Probably the best way to make sure a student understands you is to ask. You can ask several times throughout the session, as needed. It can be things like “does this make sense?” or “we talked about X strategy; do you think that will be helpful for what you’re working on?” and so on. Try to avoid asking yes or no questions because your student might just nod and try to keep going; focus on asking questions that require the student to sum up or say back what you explained to make sure they understand what you’re saying.

How do I encourage a student to speak up if they don’t understand something?
Rapport is really important for this one. The more comfortable a student feels working with you, the more comfortable they’ll feel speaking up. If the student was resistant to rapport (or if the rapport went well but he or she is still hesitant to speak up), try asking questions (see previous question). That way, you won’t be waiting for the student to ask questions, and you can check in to make sure he or she understands.

How can I encourage a student to participate in the session?
Keep in mind ELL students they are just the same as any other student, but they sometimes experience difficulty with communication because of a language barrier. Encourage ELL students to participate the
same way you would encourage other students to. Try to read the student’s body language and facial expressions to see if they seem comfortable with everything you’re discussing during the appointment. Make sure the student knows at the beginning of the session that they can interject at any time and ask you to clarify anything—remind them of this throughout the session as well. Rapport also helps encourage students to participate. If a student is comfortable with you and the session, he or she is more likely to speak up. You can also ask students open-ended questions to get them thinking or give them specific tasks to keep them working.

**How can I teach an ELL student to become an independent self-editor?**

First, don’t expect this to happen quickly. Learning a new language takes time, and you might not see the student making any “improvements” in their writing over the course of a semester. With that in mind, the best way to help ELL students is to answer their questions and help them focus their efforts on the aspects of language they most struggle with. To that end, it would not be helpful to focus your session on something the student feels they are proficient with. Make sure you’re discussing what students have the most questions about to help them identify what they struggle with.

**What can I do to help ELL students become self-editors other than handing them our resource on article usage?**

Giving students access to our resources is a great second step. The first step is to help students identify what mistakes they make most often. Once they gain a level of proficiency with the language that allows them to identify their mistakes, then giving students resources will be helpful. That way, students can see a variety of ways to edit their own writing and practice these strategies in sessions before implementing them on their own. It’s also helpful to go through these resources with students to make sure they understand the information and strategies provided.

**Is it really beneficial for their future success at writing tasks to read ELL students’ papers aloud?**

Not always. Reading a paper aloud requires a certain level of proficiency with language that not all ELL students have. This is something to work on during the agenda-setting stage. What does the student want to work on? What are the different ways you can work on that? If you choose read-aloud, what are the benefits to you reading aloud vs. your student reading aloud? Are you going to discuss issues as they come up or just correct them and move on? Many times, students already know what technique they want to use, so check summary report forms or ask them what has worked in the past. Reading a paper aloud is beneficial to the student’s future only if you explain the rules behind the things you’re explaining (e.g. verb tense, articles, etc.).

**What to do in ELL sessions**

**Speak up**

“Talking aloud a lot because often, ELL students will speak in the right tense, verb form, etc. but will write it incorrectly. This way, they can hear the way they speak as opposed to the way they write and notice the difference.”

“Whenever an ELL student has a problem with understanding the language, I explain several different synonymous ways of saying the same thing. When they use language improperly, I like to explain what
they said, and then ask them what they meant. Usually I get long roundabout answers to this, but we take that long roundabout answer and work on ways of making it shorter through some vocabulary improvement or differing sentence structure.”

**Know what you’re talking about**

“I understand what I am trying to explain to them to help them, and if I don’t have confidence in myself, then they probably will not have confidence in me.”

“When they have a hard time with the mechanics of language, I like to draw out diagrams, or sometimes I’ll draw a scene that they can easily understand, and then write sentences below it that describe the scene and demonstrate different sentence structures, or word uses.”

**Focus on the positives**

“One little compliment goes a long way. I try to tell my ELL students that they’re doing ‘just fine’ and to not apologize for anything. That seems to really calm them down. Also, if you find something that is neat, stop during the session and tell that student. For instance, I had a REALLY shy South Korean [student] come in. I tried doing rapport (it went nowhere), I set the agenda with the student, and I read the paper out loud. For a while, she didn’t seem to be receptive and just continually apologized for things. Well, I found one sentence that I thought had a terrific concept in it (mixing alternative medicine with western medicine). I told her that I thought that was a really cool idea and asked her to tell me how she wanted to integrate that into her future medical career. She got super excited and told me everything that she wanted to do and why she wanted to do it. Turns out that what she told me was what she actually needed to write down. So, we took our conversation and she tried to write some approximation of it.”

“Just realize that it is a very tough thing for some of these students to deal with studying in a different language, especially for very intelligent ELL students whose grades suffer due to not expressing themselves clearly. Some of these students are very proud, and the most important thing you can do is make them feel comfortable asking for help. If you go through a session just focusing on what they did wrong, they’re not going to feel good about their work and might not come back again. Let them know when they’re doing something well. Acknowledge their bravery and dedication in studying away from home.”

**Advice from your fellow consultants**

“When you see that you’re working with an ELL student, don’t get worried or flustered, they’ll see this right away and will most likely interpret it as you being annoyed about having to work with them. No one wants to feel like an annoyance. Be happy to see them and excited to work with them.”

“I’ve learned (through many sessions with ELL students) that you just have to be really adaptable in an ELL session. If something doesn’t work, okay. Try something else. Also, you can push students a little out of their comfort zones, but you’ve got to feel out the situation. If you push the student too hard, then the student pulls back and can get frustrated, and you’re left feeling frustrated.”

“Don’t have the student read the paper out loud. It typically doesn’t work. If you’re choosing the read out loud strategy (which is usually pretty good if the student consents to it--I’ve had a few who didn’t want their papers to be read out loud), then the tutor should read the paper out loud. You can
exaggerate Gust a tad) the problems in the paper as you read out loud. For instance, trip over the language a little more than you would normally if the clarity of the sentence is really tough. This will help the client to recognize the troublesome parts."

“I feel like an actor sometimes when I’m in these sessions. I feel like I can judge pretty well what kind of personality or style of instruction they are most comfortable dealing with and emulate that personality or style of instruction very effectively. For some of my clients I’m quiet and direct to the point, for some I’m talkative. I can be goofy or respectable, laid back or engaging, nerdy, confident, you name it. I think that this is the best way to help ELL students, because most of the barriers in ELL sessions I find are due to a lack of confidence on their part, and making yourself easy for them to relate with and engage is the best way to get better results.”

“I’ve tutored quite a few ELL students, so I guess experience helped me get over any jitters I originally had. Also, though, I changed my attitude. If I have an ELL student, I view it as a learning opportunity, not as a challenge. If you go in with the mindset, ‘Oh dear goodness, this is going to be a difficult and hard session. Can it just be over now,’ that’s going to put you in a bad place where you’re looking for things to be hard. Expect it to be fun--it probably will be.”

Suggestions for further reading:


Barron and Grimm address the differences felt by students who do not have a “mainstream” culture, language, or dialect. Institutions claim to encourage the multiculturalism of students and faculty, but mainstream culture guides institutional practices, leading these diverse populations to feel they are required to adhere to the ideals and academic values of mainstream culture. The authors discuss how to address cultural differences in the writing center to encourage students to see the value of their differences. Barron and Grimm list and explain four major lessons they learned about working with multicultural students and how they were able to discuss race and diversity within the writing center.


Linda A. Fernsten argues that in order for ESL students to stop viewing themselves as poor writers and help boost their self-confidence regarding writing, instructors need to incorporate expressivism into their composition courses. Fernsten defines expressivism as a discourse that “encourages students to believe in their voices and to believe that their writing should portray some sense of themselves” (46). Fernsten maintains that expressivism also helps students understand that “the ability to write comes not from the memorization of rules but from the true expression of [one’s] innermost thoughts” (46). Fernsten also discusses methods for including expressivism in a writing course. Her suggestions include discussing how dialect can affect writing, emphasizing that writing is a process that requires revision, focusing on the clarity of ideas in student’s first drafts and not looking into grammar until the last draft, and conversing with students about the differences in their native languages when compared to English (51). Fernsten implies that if the teacher concentrates on the expression of clear ideas in students’ papers, then the formation of “good writers” should follow. Fernsten maintains that
focusing on sentence-level errors should be saved for the last draft and that any more emphasis given to this area of writing could be detrimental to ESL students’ confidences in their writings.


This essay explores the expectations and assumptions of ESL students regarding a writing center tutor’s role and the tutoring session itself. Harris provides techniques for relaxing an ESL student (in particular, one from an Asian country), getting the student to open up during the tutoring session, and helping the student to view the tutor as a confidant and collaborator rather than as an infallible authority figure. Harris uses the answers she collected from ESL students in a survey to generate techniques and advice for writing center tutors. Harris includes tutor techniques and findings on what ESL students had to say about writing center tutors and sessions.


Muriel Harris and Tony Silva suggest that ESL instructors should collaborate with writing centers and writing center tutors in order to provide the one-on-one attention that ESL students often require. Throughout their article, Harris and Silva provide techniques for helping ESL students in one-on-one sessions that can apply to both writing center tutors and ESL instructors. Some of these methods include: prioritizing student errors so that global errors (those that obscure clarity in the paper) are dealt with before local errors (such as grammar), understanding different rhetorical patterns in order to understand why and where an ESL student may be having difficulty with English’s rhetorical structure, and determining where a student’s abilities fall regarding natural writing abilities and language proficiency.


Matsuda and Cox discuss ways to read papers written by ESL students. They argue that the best ways to read such texts are via an “accomodationist” stance that views differences between native English speakers’ texts and ESL writing as differences rather than deficiencies. Still, the goal must be helping “the writer learn new discourse patterns without completely losing the old” (Matsuda and Cox 7). This explanation of the accomodationist perspective will be useful in my research because it supports my position that ESL composition instruction can teach students the rhetorical patterns, grammar, and intricacies of English writing without viewing differences as deficiencies. Perhaps one reason that Matsuda and Cox concentrate on the importance of reading when teaching writing is because they are addressing writing center tutors. Writing center tutors can be integral to the writing development of ESL students, and the tutors often respond to students’ papers as readers, rather than as grammarians.

This essay argues that when tutoring an ESL student in the writing center, it is not an unethical practice for the tutor to engage in sentence-level revision with the student. Rather, she maintains that working on grammatical errors and English syntax can help the ESL student gain more insights into the English language (an integral step in the development of the student’s reading and writing abilities). This reading calls for tutors to teach the structures of the English language to ESL students, rather than focusing solely on clarity and organization of ideas instead of grammar. Myers also discusses how nontraditional students, such as ESL students, may require nontraditional teaching methods that may make a tutor somewhat uncomfortable, such as using a more directive as opposed to nondirective approach in tutoring sessions, because it goes against most of what she has been taught to do during a session.


This reading discusses what you can expect from a session with an ESL student. It explains some general cultural differences and how to be considerate of those differences when explaining writing. The authors also provide a list of suggestions for working with ESL students, which includes advice about how to deal with a potential language barrier and how to build rapport. The rest of this book (The Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors) is also a very helpful source which provides writing center tutors with techniques and explanations regarding tutoring sessions, types of students, and how to best serve students during tutoring sessions. It provides very concrete and practical advice. As opposed to theoretical ponderings, it explores the various roles of the writing center tutors, it discusses tutor adaptation to new resources and changing ways in the writing center, it helps tutors learn how to deal with different kinds of texts they may encounter in the writing center, it addresses more than one type of student, and it is specifically geared toward writing center tutors who are also college students.