

English 102: Journey Into Open



ENGLISH 102: JOURNEY INTO OPEN



A Rhetoric Writing Journey

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Glendale



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Environmental Rhetoric

CHRISTINE JONES

Welcome to English 102 Open

This textbook is an English 102 text that includes a focus on contextualized topics while using rhetoric and approaches to research.

There are hundreds of wonderful, free writing resources available online, yet most college writing classes still use expensive textbooks. Students have been frustrated by textbook prices for longer than most instructors have noticed. Your instructor, like many others at the campus, has been actively working to lower that barrier to instruction and learning.

This course uses OER Materials.

2 Christine Jones



“My desk, while writing a paper” by Guðmundur D. Haraldsson is licensed under CC BY 2.0

OER stands for Open Educational Resources. OER materials are free or low-cost. This book focuses on freely available works under a Creative Commons license. All works here are adaptable; all works here are printable and downloadable for free. This book CAN be printed if you feel the need for a physical textbook. Speak to your instructor about how to make that possible or reach out to any “print on demand” company.

Materials have been organized into “Chapters” which connect to the Modules of the course. They are NOT in the same order that the modules are. However, there are no extra chapters. You should completely read the textbook by the end of the semester. The materials include text, videos, and interactive activities that were developed under Creative Commons licensing.

You are expected to read the texts, watch the videos, and participate in interactive activities. You should

complete the reading before coming to class, as I will be teaching with the expectation that you have completed the reading. It is best if you complete your Cornell Notes before the classes so you will be familiar with the information and be able to use them in class. Many of the in-class assignments are directly related to the information you will find in the book. Some of the in-book activities will be requested in class!

You may work ahead at any time.

H5P Activities

The videos and activities that are in the book are graded automatically. If you are reading the textbook for information, you can do that in any format you like, even printed. If you want the credit for completing the activities, you need to access the textbook using the “reading” page in Canvas. This is only required for completing the graded activities. Here is an example of a graded activity that should show up in Canvas.



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=4#h5p-84>

Be sure to click “Submit” if there is a submit button. If there is a print button available, be sure to save a copy to your Google Drive. I recommend having a folder for the textbook activities in case of technical issues. Mac, Ipad, and Phone access of the textbook does not always record the grades. Keep that in mind as you plan your study time.

Why, What, When, Where, How, Who?

by Sybil Priebe

Why Do I Have to Take This Class? Why Do I Have to Improve My Writing?

Students ask me why they have to take my class. They ask me this a lot. A LOT.

Now, I could be a typical teacher and roll my eyes, but I usually try to connect these questions with the REAL WORLD. College instructors are supposed to prepare students for that big scary REAL WORLD, right? So, often, I'll explain it like this:

"Do the people around you communicate well? Everyone always knows what the other one is saying, thinking, feeling at any given moment? Or, perhaps this is a better question: The people around you never fight or argue?"

Rarely can anyone say they haven't seen people fight. Here's a key to why English is important at all levels – communication is super tricky. We create slang on a daily basis, we text people with acronyms, and we still have people not understanding other people even when we don't use slang or a text message! And don't forget that if we can't speak well, we probably aren't writing well – what does that mean in our future jobs? For our future customers? What does that mean for us as people in relationships, friendships, etc.?

WHAT is Writing All About?

What is Composition? What is Rhetoric?

What is Literature? What is Linguistics?

These are terms you might only get quizzed on during Jeopardy, but if we start from the smallest level and work our way to the largest, it goes like this: Linguistics is the study of words, Composition is the study of arranging those words into sentences and paragraphs and essays, and then Literature is the study of fully composed pieces of work that may or may not be true (Nonfiction vs. Fiction). That weird word Rhetoric? Yeah, that's the study of Argument.

At the heart of rhetoric is argument. At the heart of argument is persuasion. Truly understanding rhetoric presents the understanding that it is dependent on the individual judging the argument and finding themselves persuaded. It is a process of internal deliberation that utilizes the rational, emotional, and deliberative faculties.

Understanding rhetoric also helps refine the mental pathways to recognize and renounce manipulation. It teaches us ethical ways of communicating and a process to improve judgment. Rhetoric is directly tied to critical thinking, a necessary skill in ALL majors.

WHEN Should We Write? WHERE Should
We Write?

All the time and everywhere.

HOW Can You Get Started with Writing?

With this amazing book!

WHO Am I Writing This For?

Okay, so typically, you might only be composing an assignment for your teacher's eyes only, but if you participate in Peer Review, or will be showing the final product to the public, your audience is more than one person.

Some Comparisons

High School	College
Reading assignments are moderately long. Teachers may set aside some class time for reading and reviewing the material in depth.	Some reading assignments may be very long. You will be expected to come to class with a basic understanding of the material.
Teachers often provide study guides and other aids to help you prepare for exams.	Reviewing for exams is primarily your responsibility.
Your grade is determined by your performance on a wide variety of assessments, including minor and major assignments. Not all assessments are writing-based.	Your grade may depend on just a few major assessments. Most assessments are writing-based.
Writing assignments include personal writing and creative writing in addition to expository writing.	Outside of creative writing courses, most writing assignments are expository.
The structure and format of writing assignments are generally stable over a four-year period.	Depending on the course, you may be asked to master new forms of writing and follow standards within a particular professional field.
Teachers often go out of their way to identify and try to help students who are performing poorly on exams, missing classes, not turning in assignments, or just struggling with the course. Often teachers will give students many “second chances.”	Although teachers want their students to succeed, they may not always realize when students are struggling. They also expect you to be proactive and take steps to help yourself. “Second chances” are less common.

The Keys to Success



"Project 366 #296: 221012 I Hold
The Key" by comedy_nose is marked
with CC PDM 1.0

Planning Strategies

Time Management

- Setting aside enough time
- Breaking Assignments into manageable chunks

Setting a purpose for reading

- How did my instructor frame the assignment?
- How deeply do I need to understand the reading?
- How does this assignment relate to other course readings or to concepts discussed in class?

- How might I use this text again in the future?

Comprehension Strategies

Reading for Information

- Reading that aligns with our skill level and interests
 - Magazines, newspapers, the latest book in our favorite series, a book about our favorite subject
 - Reading is not challenging and can be done passively

Reading for Understanding

- Reading that is outside of our skill level and interest
 - College textbooks and assignments
 - Reading is more challenging and requires more effort/deliberate action

Active Reading

- Reading for understanding cannot be done passively
- How much understanding you gain from a text depends on how much activity you put into it
- Active readers engage with a text: ask questions and demand answers
- Active readers can organize the reading and record answers to any questions

- Connect what you read to what you already know. Look for ways the reading supports, extends, or challenges concepts you have learned elsewhere.
- Relate the reading to your own life. What statements, people, or situations relate to your personal experiences?
- Visualize. For both fiction and nonfiction texts, try to picture what is described.
- Pay attention to graphics as well as text. Photographs, diagrams, flow charts, tables, and other graphics can help make abstract ideas more concrete and understandable.
- Understand the text in context. Understanding context means thinking about who wrote the text, when and where it was written, the author's purpose for writing it, and what assumptions or agendas influenced the author's ideas
- Plan to talk or write about what you read. Jot down a few questions or comments in your notebook so you can bring them up in class.

Annotate a Text

Develop a system and stick to it!

- I generally underline the Thesis and Topic Sentences
- I use vertical lines in the right margin of a paragraph for important supporting details—note the word, important; I do not highlight small details because annotations should be used for the main ideas and should point you toward what

you need to read further.

- I circle unfamiliar words and write their definition above the word or next to it.
- I write notes in the margin if I want to connect the information to something else I have read or an essay I am writing.
- I use an asterisk or exclamation point for startling facts/ statistics or surprising information.

Continuously Monitor Your Comprehension

Summarize the main points

- Thesis
- Topic Sentences

Ask questions and then answer them

Prepare questions for class discussion

Use the SQ3R Strategy

1. Survey the text in advance.
2. Form questions before you start reading.
3. Read the text.
4. Recite and/or record important points during and after reading.
5. Review and reflect on the text after you read it.

Key Takeaways

- College-level reading and writing assignments

differ from high school assignments not only in quantity but also in quality.

- Managing college reading assignments successfully requires you to plan and manage your time, set a purpose for reading, practice effective comprehension strategies, and use active reading strategies to deepen your understanding of the text.
- College writing assignments place greater emphasis on learning to think critically about a particular discipline and less emphasis on personal and creative writing

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- My desk, while writing a paper © Guðmundur D. Haraldsson

PART I

PART 1: THE WRITING PROCESS

Getting started with writing can take many forms. Some writers start with a question they want to answer; others take a prompt or an assignment and build an outline. Many of us have experience with free-writing or journal writing as a way to get words on the page.

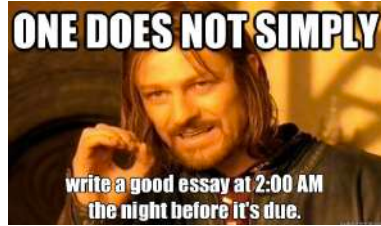
This section addresses both the nuts-and-bolts planning aspects of getting started with writing and the higher-level demands of figuring out how to structure an essay so that it meets with college writing expectations. It begins a longer discussion, as well, on how to find good information on which to base your arguments and explorations, a discussion we'll continue in the research section.

Writing Process Overview

Have you ever received a writing assignment, thought “this won’t take long” and then stayed up all night writing the night before your assignment was due because it ended up taking a lot longer than you thought it would? If you have, you’re not alone. Many

beginning writers struggle to plan well when it comes to a writing assignment, and this results in writing that is just not as good as it could be. When you wait until the last minute and fail to engage in a good writing process, you’re not doing your best work—even if you did “get all A’s in high school” as a procrastinator.

Research on writing tells us that the best thing writers can do to improve their writing is to improve their writing process! With that in mind, this chapter is going to take you through the steps of a thorough writing process—one that involves many stages that will help you become a better writer.



(Jackson, P.). (2001). Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Rings [Motion picture]. New Zealand: New Line Cinema.

1

Writing Process



Writing is a Process

This chapter is a review of much of what you learned in English 101. You are welcome to skim areas that you feel confident about. Be sure to complete the video and interactive activities to test your knowledge.

Do you know what a Slinky® is?

It's a toy that can serve as a metaphor for the writing process.

A Slinky is one piece of material that's coiled in many loops. Writing is a large process that's made up of smaller ones—processes that connect and loop around each other.

A Slinky, after the first nudge, travels downstairs on its own, step by step. An experienced writer, after the first nudge of an idea or observation, moves through the writing process step by step, with the option to loop back up the stairs as well as down.

Okay, that's as far as the metaphor stretches (and yes, that's a bad pun). But you get the idea through the visual example. Writing is a process.

Writing is a tangible result of thinking. And learning how to think—how to develop your own ideas and concepts—is the purpose of a college education. Even though the end result of writing is a product, writing itself is a process through which you ask questions; create, develop, hone, and organize ideas; argue a point; search for evidence to support your ideas...and so on. The point here is that writing really involves creative and critical thinking processes. Like any creative process, it often starts in a jumble as you develop, sort, and sift through ideas. But it doesn't need to stay in disarray. Your writing will gain direction as you start examining those ideas. It just doesn't happen all at once. Writing is a process that happens over



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time. And like any process, there are certain steps or stages.

These are some of the major stages in a strong writing process:

1. Thinking about your assignment
2. Developing ideas (often called prewriting)
3. Narrowing a topic
4. Gathering information
5. Ordering and drafting
6. Revising and editing

Thinking About Your Assignment

When you receive your writing assignment from your professor, it's important to stop and think about your assignment. What are the requirements? What is the purpose of this assignment? What is your professor asking you to write? Who are you writing for?

Before you begin to write any part of an essay you have been assigned, it's important to first carefully consider your assignment. You must think about the requirements and how you plan to meet those requirements. All too often, students make the mistake of jumping into an assignment without stopping to think about it rhetorically.

What does it mean to think about an assignment rhetorically?

It means that you're being considerate of the purpose of the assignment, the audience for the assignment, the voice you might want to use when you write, and how you will approach the assignment effectively overall.

Each time you are presented with a writing assignment in college, you're being presented with a particular

situation for writing. Learning about rhetoric can help you learn to make good decisions about your writing. Rhetoric can be simply defined as figuring out what you need to do to be effective, no matter the writing situation.

Thinking rhetorically is an important part of any writing process because every writing assignment has different expectations. There is no such thing as right when it comes to writing; instead, try to think about good writing as being writing that is effective in that particular situation.

The following video presentation will help you as you begin to think about your assignments rhetorically. It's so important to stop and think about what you are being asked to write about and why before you begin an assignment.



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=5#h5p-4>

Developing Ideas

Writers need to have something to write about. In college, you'll be expected to provide your own observations and ideas. Even in a research paper on an assigned topic, you'll be expected to offer your own thinking about what your sources say. The purpose of writing in college is to show your own analysis and thought processes on the concepts that you're learning about.

Writers develop ideas in many ways, including the following:

- Journaling

- Freewriting
- Brainstorming
- Mapping or diagramming
- Listing
- Asking defining questions
- Noting Pros & Cons
- Responding to a text

Narrowing a Topic

Once you have decided what you want to write about, you need to stop and consider if you have chosen a feasible topic that meets the assignment's purpose.

If you have chosen a very large topic for a research paper assignment, you need to create a feasible focus that's researchable. For example, you might write about something like the Vietnam War, specifically the economic impact of the war on the U.S. economy.

If you have chosen a topic for a non-research assignment, you still need to narrow the focus of the paper to something manageable that allows you to go in-depth in the writing. For instance, you might have a goal of writing about the nursing profession but with a specific focus on what the daily routine is like for a nurse at your local pediatric hospital.

The important thing is to think about your assignment requirements, including length requirements, and make sure you have found a topic that is specific enough to be engaging and interesting and will fit within the assignment requirements.

Gathering Information

It's easier to gather information once you have a relatively narrow topic. A good analogy is when you conduct a search in an online database. You'll get thousands (if not more) entries if you use the keywords **Vietnam War** as opposed to fewer and more focused entries if you use terms related to the economic impact of the war on the U.S.

Or, if you're analyzing *The Great Gatsby*, you'll be able to gather more specific information from the novel if you focus on a character, a theme, etc. instead of all elements of the novel at once.

It may help to use the image of a hand fan in order to understand gathering information. Think of your narrow topic as the end of the fan, the point at which all of the slats are linked together. As you gather information about your narrow topic, the fan spreads out, but the information is still all connected to the narrow topic.

NOTE: Sometimes, gathering information occurs before you narrow a topic, especially if you don't have much knowledge of that subject.

You might use a general reference source, such as an encyclopedia, a textbook, a magazine, or a website to get a broad view of the issues related to a topic. This, in turn, helps you think of ways to narrow the topic in order to create a focused piece of writing.

However, it's important to remember that sources like

encyclopedias should be starting points only and should not be the kinds of sources you use in most college-level essays.

Ordering & Drafting

Before you begin to draft, it can be helpful to create an outline to help you organize your thoughts. You can refer to the prewriting if you have organized thoughts already using a prewriting strategy, such as mapping. The important thing is to list out your main ideas, including your thesis, to help you visualize where you are going with your essay. An outline will also help you see before you begin drafting if your ideas will support your thesis.

The actual writing occurs after you have a focus and enough information to support that focus. Drafting involves making choices about how much information to offer and what information to put where. Your outline will be a guide, but you may find that you need to revise the order once you begin drafting.

Consider the following points as you draft:

- Is there enough information to provide evidence for your assertions? If not, circle back to gathering information.
- Is there a basic idea that needs to be offered first so that readers understand subsequent ideas?
- Are there related ideas that logically should be grouped together?
- Are there some ideas that are more important than others and, if so, what is the best place in the writing to emphasize those ideas?
- Are there logical linkages between ideas, so readers don't get lost moving from one idea to the

next?

Drafting consists of building the paragraphs of your writing and linking them together. And, remember, your draft you create at this point is not your final draft. There are additional steps of the writing process to consider before you are ready to submit your work.

Revising & Editing Basics

Revising



Many students often try to lump revising and editing into one, but they are really two separate activities. **Revising** is about your content while **editing** is about sentence-level issues and typos. It's important to remember to allow yourself time to complete both parts of this process carefully.

Revision is about seeing your writing again. Revising is an important step in the writing process because it enables you to look at your writing more objectively, from a reader's view. Set your writing aside for a time. Then go back to it and work from big to small as you ask and answer revising questions.

Basic Big Revision Questions—Ask These First:

- Are there places that are not **clear**?
- Are there places that need **more information**?
- Are there places that need **less information**, because the information seems to diverge too much from your main point?
- Does some of the information need to be **re-ordered** in order to make sense to a reader who may not have much background on this topic?

As you see, these basic revision questions concern themselves with the amount, clarity, and order of information. That's what the revision process is all about—making sure that your concepts and supporting information are presented in the clearest, most logical way for most readers to understand.

Once you deal with the big things (amount and order of information), then you can move to the small things—the language, grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

Editing

Once you have your content the way you want it and have completed your revisions, it's time to think about editing your paper. When you edit, you are looking for issues with sentence structure, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, etc. And, when you edit, it's important to realize that it's difficult to catch all of these errors in one editing pass. A thorough editing process is one that involves several

editing passes. Research on student writing indicates that most of the errors in college essays are related to careless editing. With that in mind, it's important to take steps to ensure you are engaging in a good editing process.

Questions to Consider When You Edit

- Is the **language** clear and easy to read and understand? Are difficult terms defined?
- Is the **sentence structure** clear and easy to understand?
- Are the sentences **grammatically correct**?
- Have I **proofread** and checked for typos and misspellings?
- What **errors** might my spell checker and grammar checker have missed?

Writing Process Activity



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<https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=5#h5p-23>

See It in Practice

In this first section, you'll see the student's assignment

sheet and hear a discussion of the key things she must consider for her assignment.

Then, consider the different steps of The Writing Process—**Prewriting Strategies, Audience Awareness, Voice, Introductions & Conclusions, Parts of a Thesis Sentence, Paragraphing, Essay Writing, and Revising & Editing**, and notice how the student approaches these steps given her specific assignment. As you watch each step, you'll want to think about how you might apply each step to your own assignment, as you'll be given a chance to engage in each step with your own writing assignment.



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<https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=5#h5p-24>

Think About Writing

Now that you have seen how the student in the video approached her assignment, it's your turn to examine your own writing assignment. As you do, it's a good idea to do a little writing in a writing journal in some notes. In your writing, you should to the following questions about your assignment:

- What is the **purpose** of my assignment, or what is my professor asking me to do with this assignment?
- Who is my **audience** for this assignment? Did my

professor specify an audience? If not, who can I assume is my intended audience?

- What **ideas** do I have for a topic that might work for this assignment? Do I have freedom with my topic, or do I have to choose from a specific list?
- How can I apply a **strong writing process** to my approach for this assignment? What is my plan here?

Before you begin to gather ideas during the prewriting process, it's important to make sure you understand what you are being asked to do by your professor's assignment. You should share your responses to these questions with your classmates to see if they have the same or similar responses. What questions might you have for your professor?

Prewriting Strategies

Did you ever work on a creative project—paint a picture, make a quilt, build a wooden picnic table or deck? If you did, you know that you go through a development stage that's kind of messy, a stage in which you try different configurations and put the pieces together in different ways before you say “aha” and a pattern emerges.

Writing is a creative project, and writers go through the same messy stage. For writers, the development stage involves playing with words and ideas—playing with writing. Prewriting is the start of the writing process, the messy, “play” stage in which writers jot down, develop, and try out different ideas, the stage in which it's fine to

be free-ranging in thought and language. Prewriting is intended to be free-flowing, to be a time in which you let your ideas and words flow without caring about organization, grammar, and the formalities of writing.

There are many ways to develop ideas for writing, including:

- Journaling
- Freewriting
- Brainstorming
- Mapping or diagramming
- Listing
- Outlining
- Asking defining questions
- Noting Pros & Cons

See It in Practice

Now it's time to see how our sample student applies some of these strategies to her essay assignment. In this screencast, you'll see the student share freewriting and mapping.



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=5#h5p-25>

Introductions & Conclusions

The introduction and conclusion of an essay serve an important purpose: They provide a kind of framing for the body of an essay. That framing helps your audience better understand your writing. The introduction prepares your reader for the ideas that are to come in the body of your essay. The conclusion provides important reminders about key points from the body of your essay and provides you with an important opportunity to leave a lasting impression on your audience.



You'll want to write effective introductions and conclusions. After all, they are the first and last impressions your audience will have of your essay.

Introductions

There is no doubt about it: the introduction is important for any kind of writing. Not only does a good introduction capture your reader's attention and make him or her



want to read on, but it's also how you put the topic of your paper into context for the reader.

But just because the introduction comes at the beginning, it doesn't have to be written first. Many writers compose their introductions last, once they are sure of the main points of their essay and have had time to construct a thought-provoking beginning, and a clear, cogent thesis statement.

Introductions Purpose

The introduction has work to do, besides grabbing the reader's attention. Below are some things to consider about the purposes or the tasks for your introduction and some examples of how you might approach those tasks.

The introduction needs to alert the reader to what the central issue of the paper is.

Example

Few people realize how much the overuse of antibiotics for livestock is responsible for the growth of antimicrobial—resistant bacteria, which are now found in great abundance in our waterways.

The introduction is where you provide any important background information the reader should have before getting to the thesis.

Example

One hundred years ago there were only 8000 cars in the United States and only 144 miles of paved roads. In 2005, the Department of Transportation recorded 247,421,120 registered passenger vehicles in the United States, and over 5.7 million miles of paved highway. The automobile has changed our way of life dramatically in the last century.

The introduction tells why you have written the paper and what the reader should understand about your topic and your perspective.

Example

Although history books have not presented it accurately, in fact, the Underground Railroad was a bi-racial movement whereby black and white abolitionists coordinated secret escape routes for those who were enslaved.

The introduction tells the reader what to expect and what to look for in your essay.

Example

In 246 BCE, Ctesibius of Alexandria invented a musical instrument that would develop into what we know as the

organ. Called a hydraulis, it functioned via wind pressure regulated by means of water pressure. The hydraulis became the instrument played at circuses, banquets, and games throughout Mediterranean countries.

The thesis statement (typically at the end of the introduction) should clearly state the claim, question, or point of view the writer is putting forth in the paper.

Example

While IQ tests have been used for decades to measure various aspects of intelligence, these tests are not a predictor for success, as many highly intelligent people have a low emotional intelligence, the important human mental ability to reason about emotions and to use emotions to enhance thought.



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Introductions Strategies

Although there is no one “right” way to write your introduction, there are some common introductory

strategies that work well. The strategies below are ones you should consider, especially when you are feeling stuck and having a hard time getting started.

Consider opening with an anecdote, a pithy quotation, an image, question, or startling fact to provoke your reader's interest. Just make sure that the opening helps put your topic in some useful context for the reader.

Example



Anecdote:

One day, while riding in the car, my five-year old son asked me why my name was different from his daddy's. I welcomed the opportunity to explain some of my feminist ideas, especially my strong belief that women did not need to take their husband's name upon marriage. I carefully explained my reasons for keeping my own surname. My son listened intently and was silent for a moment after I finished. Then he nodded and said, "I think it's good you kept your own name Mom!" "You do?" I asked, pleased that he understood my reasons. "Yep, because you

don't look like a Bob." **Question:**

The study of anthropology and history reveal that cultures vary in their ideas of moral behavior. Are there any absolutes when it comes to right and wrong?

Overall, your focus in an introduction should be on orienting your reader. Keep in mind journalism's five Ws: who, what, when, where, why, and add in how. If you answer these questions about your topic in the introduction, then your reader is going to be with you.

Of course, these are just some examples of how you might get your introduction *started*, but there should be more to your introduction. Once you have your readers' attention, you want to provide context for your topic and begin to transition to your **thesis**, and don't forget to include that thesis (usually at or near the end of your introduction).

Conclusions

A satisfying conclusion allows your reader to finish your paper with a clear understanding of the points you made and possibly even a new perspective on the topic.

Any single paper might have a number of



conclusions, but as the writer, you must consider who the reader is and the conclusion you want them to reach. For example, is your reader relatively new to your topic? If so, you may want to **restate your main points for emphasis** as a way of starting the conclusion. (Don't literally use the same sentence(s) as in your introduction but come up with a comparable way of restating your thesis.) You'll want to smoothly conclude by showing the judgment you have reached is, in fact, reasonable.

Just restating your thesis isn't enough. Ideally, you have just taken your reader through a strong, clear argument in which you have provided evidence for your perspective. You want to conclude by **pointing out the importance or worthiness of your topic** and argument. You could describe how the world would be different, or people's lives changed if they ascribed to your perspective, plan, or idea.

You might also **point out the limitations** of the present understanding of your topic, suggest or **recommend future action**, study or research that needs to be done.

TIP

Be careful not to introduce any new ideas in your conclusion; your job is to wrap up in some satisfying way, so the reader walks away with a clear understanding of what you have had to say.

If you have written a persuasive paper, hopefully, your readers will be convinced by what you have had to say!





One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online

here: <https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=5#oembed-2>

See It in Practice

In this videocast, we check in with our student writer after she has written a rough draft of her introduction to her essay. In the video, she discusses her strategies and explains why she feels she has a good start on her essay.



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<https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=5#h5p-36>

Thesis Statements

A strong thesis statement crystallizes your paper's argument and, most importantly, it's *arguable*.

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

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

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

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

Parts of a Thesis Sentence

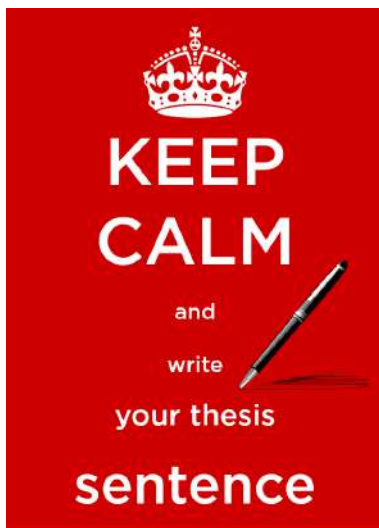
The thesis sentence is the key to most academic writing. This is important and worth repeating:

The thesis sentence is the key to most academic writing.

The purpose of academic writing is to offer your own insights, analyses, and ideas—to show not only that you understand the concepts you’re studying, but also that you have thought about those concepts in your own way, agreed or disagreed, or developed your own unique ideas as a result of your analysis. The thesis sentence is the one sentence that encapsulates the result of your thinking, as it offers your main insight or argument in condensed form.

A basic thesis sentence has two main parts:

1. **Topic:** What you’re writing about
2. **Angle:** What your main idea is about that topic



Example

Sample Thesis #1

Thesis: A regular exercise regime leads to multiple benefits, both physical and emotional.**Topic:** Regular exercise regime

Angle: Leads to multiple benefits

Example

Sample Thesis #2

Thesis: Adult college students have different experiences than typical, younger college students.**Topic:** Adult college students

Angle: Have different experiences

Example

Sample Thesis #3

Thesis: The economics of television have made the viewing experience challenging for many viewers because shows are not offered regularly, similar programming occurs at the same time, and commercials are rampant.**Topic:** Television viewing

Angle: Challenging because shows shifted, similar programming, and commercials

Thesis Angles

Most writers can easily create a topic: television viewing, the Patriot Act, Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. The more difficult part is creating an angle. But the angle is necessary as a means of creating interest and as a means of indicating the type and organization of the information to follow.

Click on each of the thesis angles in the box below that you want to learn more about.



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<https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=5#h5p-38>

So what about this thesis sentence?

Adult college students have different experiences than traditionally-aged college students.

As a reader, you understand intuitively that the information to come will deal with the different types of experiences that adult college students have. But you don't quite know if the information will deal only with adults, or if it will compare adults' experiences with those of typical college students. And you don't quite know what type of information will come first, second, third, etc.

Realize that a thesis sentence offers a range of possibilities for specificity and organization. As a writer, you may opt to pique reader interest by being very specific

or not fully specific in your thesis sentence. The point here is that there's no one standard way to write a thesis sentence.

Sometimes a writer is more or less specific depending on the reading audience and the effect the writer wants to create. Sometimes a writer puts the angle first and the topic last in the sentence, or sometimes the angle is even implied. You need to gauge your reading audience and you need to understand your own style as a writer. The only basic requirements are that the thesis sentence needs a topic and an angle. The rest is up to you.

Common Problems



Although you have creative control over your thesis sentence, you still should try to avoid the following problems, not for stylistic reasons, but because they indicate a problem in the thinking that underlies the thesis sentence.

Thesis Sentence too Broad

Hospice workers need support. The sentence above actually is a thesis sentence; it has a topic (hospice workers) and an angle (need support). But the angle is very broad. When the angle in a thesis sentence is too broad, the writer may not have carefully thought through the specific support for the rest of the writing. A thesis angle that's too broad makes it easy to fall into the trap of offering information that deviates from that angle.

Thesis Sentence too Narrow

Hospice workers have a 55% turnover rate compared to the general health care population's 25% turnover rate. The above sentence really isn't a thesis sentence at all, because there's no angle idea to support. A narrow statistic, or a narrow statement of fact, doesn't offer the writer's own ideas or analysis about a topic. A clearer example of a thesis statement with an angle of development would be the following:

***The high turnover rate in hospice workers (55 percent) compared to the general health care population (25 percent) indicates a need to develop support systems to reverse this trend.**

Where to Place a Thesis?

In the U.S., it's customary for most academic writers to put the thesis sentence somewhere toward the start of the essay or research paper. The focus here is on offering the main results of your own thinking in your thesis angle and then providing evidence in the writing to support your thinking.

A legal comparison might help to understand thesis placement. If you have seen television shows or movies with courtroom scenes, the lawyer usually starts out by saying, "My client is innocent!" to set the scene, and then provides different types of evidence to support that argument. Academic writing in the U.S. is similar; your thesis sentence provides your main assertion to set the scene of the writing, and then the details and evidence in the rest of the writing support the assertion in the thesis sentence.

NOTE: Although the usual pattern is "thesis sentence toward the start," there may be reasons to place the thesis elsewhere in the writing. You may decide to place the thesis sentence at the end of the writing if your purpose is to gradually induce a reading audience to understand and accept your assertion. You may decide to place the thesis sentence in the middle of the writing if you think you need to provide relatively complicated background

information to your readers before they can understand the assertion in your thesis.

As a writer, you have the option of placing the thesis anywhere in the writing. But, as a writer, you also have the obligation to make the thesis sentence idea clear to your readers. Beginning writers usually stick with “thesis sentence toward the start,” as it makes the thesis prominent in the writing and also reminds them that they need to stick with providing evidence directly related to that thesis sentence’s angle.

Thesis Creation

At what point do you write a thesis sentence? Of course, this varies from writer to writer and from writing assignment to writing assignment. You'll usually do some preliminary idea development first before a thesis idea emerges. And you'll usually have a working thesis before you do the bulk of your research, or before you fully create the supporting details for your writing.



Think of the thesis as the mid-point of an hourglass.

You develop ideas for writing and prewriting, using various strategies until a main idea or assertion emerges. This main idea or assertion becomes your point to prove—your working thesis sentence.

Once you have a working thesis sentence with your main idea, you can then develop more support for that idea, but in a more focused way that deepens your thinking about the thesis angle.

Realize that a thesis is really a working thesis until you finalize the writing. As you do more focused research or develop more focused support, your thesis may change a bit. Just make sure that you retain the basic thesis characteristics of the topic and angle.

Thesis Checklist

When you draft a working thesis, it can be helpful to review the guidelines for a strong thesis. The following checklist is a helpful tool you can use to check your thesis once you have it drafted.



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<https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=5#h5p-37>

See It in Practice

In the videocast below, our student writer takes a closer look at her thesis from her rough draft introduction and makes some revisions based on the things she has learned about a good thesis in The Writing Process.



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<https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=5#h5p-39>

Thesis Statement Activity



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<https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=5#h5p-48>

After completing this activity, you may download or print a completion report that summarizes your results.

Argumentative Thesis Activity



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<https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=5#h5p-40>

After completing this activity, you may download or print a completion report that summarizes your results.



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<https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=5#h5p-77>

Analyze This

Before you try to develop a thesis of your own, it can be helpful to see how another author presents an argumentative thesis.

In this **Analyze This** video, watch as one student shares a short analysis of an online article ([Live and Learn](#)) with a specific focus on locating and evaluating the thesis. The student will share a summary of the article and then explore the author's thesis in the article.



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this



version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=5#h5p-41>

See It in Practice

Now that you have learned about the importance of developing a strong argumentative thesis for your argumentative essay, it's time to visit our student who is engaging in her own argumentative writing process.

In this video, watch as she shares her drafts of thesis statements and her process of arriving at a good working thesis, which will guide her throughout the rest of her writing process.



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<https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=5#h5p-42>

Paragraphing

The paragraph is the building block of essay writing. The word itself, according to the [Oxford Dictionary](#)

[Online](#) (2015), is defined as “a distinct section of a piece of writing, usually dealing with a single theme and indicated by a new line, indentation, or numbering.”



Paragraphs can be shown through breaks between lines or through indentations of the first line of the paragraph. Paragraphs are important for ease of reading; they help to offer ideas in “chunks” that the eye and brain can more easily comprehend (as opposed to offering information in one large block of text, which is hard to read).

Paragraphs are necessary in academic writing to show changes in ideas or further development of ideas. In academic writing, paragraphs present mini ideas that often develop out of the thesis sentence’s main idea.

Example:

Thesis Sentence

- A regular exercise regimen creates multiple benefits, both physical and emotional.

Beginnings of Paragraphs

- One physical benefit of having a regular exercise regimen is longevity. Recent studies have shown that . . .
- Exercise reduces heart and cholesterol rates when done at least three times per week . . .
- Another physical benefit of regular exercise is that it results in stronger heart and lungs . . .
- People who exercise regularly have less trouble with sleep disorders . . .
- A benefit that spans the physical and emotional results of regular exercise is the release of endorphins, or substances produced by glands as a byproduct of exercise . . .
- In multiple studies, regular exercise has been shown to reduce stress . . .
- Because regular exercise often helps to slow the effects of aging and maintain a good body weight, people who exercise regularly experience the emotional benefits of good self-image and self-confidence in their looks . . .

Although all of these paragraph beginnings are related to the main idea of the **benefits of exercise**, they all show a slight shift in content, as the writer moves from one benefit to another.

Topic Sentences



In academic writing, many paragraphs or groups of paragraphs start with topic sentences, which are like mini-thesis statements. Topic sentences are idea indicators, or “signs” that help guide a reader along from idea to idea.

Topic sentences have a topic and an angle, just like thesis sentences. But the angle of topic sentences usually is smaller in range than that of the thesis sentence. Very often the topic remains the same from thesis to the topic sentence, while the angle shifts as the writer brings in various types of ideas and research to support the angle in the thesis.

Look at this sample again; these are topic sentences created from the thesis sentence. The topic remains the same in all (regular exercise) and the overall angle remains the same (benefits). But the angle narrows and shifts slightly from topic sentence to topic sentence as the writer brings in different supporting ideas and research.

Thesis Sentence

A regular exercise regime creates multiple benefits, both physical and emotional.

Topic Sentence

One physical benefit of having a regular exercise regime is longevity. Recent studies ha

Exercise reduces heart and cholesterol rates when done at least three times per week...

Another physical benefit of regular exercise is that it results in a stronger heart and lun

People who exercise regularly have less trouble with sleep disorders...

A benefit that spans the physical and emotional results of regular exercise is the release
byproduct of exercise...

In multiple studies, regular exercise has been shown to reduce stress...

Because regular exercise often helps to slow the effects of aging and maintain a good bo
emotional benefits of good self-image and self-confidence in their looks...

Realize that all paragraphs do not need topic sentences. Sometimes, you may need multiple paragraphs to help explain one topic sentence, because you have a lot of supporting information.

REMEMBER: You need a topic sentence for each group of paragraphs in a piece of academic writing.

Paragraphing & Transitioning

Transition Words			
Time	Place	Idea	Summarizing
Before long	On the patio	Another reason	Finally
Later that day	In the kitchen	Also	In conclusion
Late last night	At the cottage	In addition	To conclude
The next day	In the backyard	For example	To summarize
After a while	When we went to the store	To illustrate	In summary
Meanwhile	Nearby	For instance	To sum up
Sometimes	Adjacent to	Likewise	In short
Following	Wherever	However	As you can see
Subsequently	Opposite to	In contrast	For all of those reasons

When to Paragraph

How do you know when “enough is enough”—when you have enough information in one paragraph and have to start a new one? A very rough guide is that you need more than one or two paragraphs per page of type. Paragraphing conventions online require even shorter paragraphs, with multiple short paragraphs on one screen.

It's best to deal with paragraphs as part of the revision step in the writing process. Find places where the information shifts in focus, and put paragraph breaks in

those places. You can do your best to paragraph as you draft but know you'll address paragraphing more during the revision process.

Linking Paragraphs: Transitions

Transitions are words or phrases that indicate linkages in ideas. When writing, you need to lead your readers from one idea to the next, showing how those ideas are logically linked. Transition words and phrases help you keep your paragraphs and groups of paragraphs logically connected for a reader. Writers often check their transitions during the revising stage of the writing process.

Here are some examples of transition words to help as you transition both within paragraphs and from one paragraph to the next.

Transition Word / Phrase:	Shows:
and, also, again	More of the same type of information
but, or, however, in contrast	Different information is coming
as a result, consequently, therefore	Information that is coming as a result
for example, to illustrate	The information coming will be an example
particularly important, note that	The information coming is particularly important
in conclusion	The writing is ending.

See It in Practice

In this videocast, our student writer takes a look at one of her paragraphs she has drafted for her essay. She discusses the transitions and transitional words she uses in her

paragraph to help connect her ideas within the paragraph and to make a transition to the next paragraph in her essay.



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=5#h5p-43>

Essay Writing

A college essay goes by many names: paper, research paper, essay, theme. Most of these names refer to a piece of writing in which you offer your own idea about a topic. This concept is really important. The purpose of most college essay writing assignments is not for you to find and directly report the information you find. Instead, it's to think about the information you find, come up with your own idea or assertion about your topic, and then provide the support that shows why you think that way.

Another thing to remember about a college essay is that, in most cases, a writing process is emphasized. Following a thorough writing process, like the one described for you here, will lead you to a better product. Although you may have some timed writings in college, most of your college essays will involve a writing process. When you use a strong writing process, you're working to create your very best work!

The video below shows real students from a college writing class talking about writing for college and what they learned from taking a college writing class.



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=5#h5p-44>

Traditional Essay Structure

Although college essays can offer ideas in many ways, one standard structure for expository essays is to offer the main idea or assertion early in the essay, and then offer categories of support.

Thinking again about how a lawyer makes a case, one way to think about this standard structure is to compare it to a courtroom argument in a television drama. The lawyer asserts, “My client is not guilty.” Then the lawyer provides different reasons for lack of guilt: no physical evidence placing the client at the crime scene, the client had no motive for the crime and more.

In writing terms, the assertion is the **thesis sentence**, and the different reasons are the **topic sentences**.

Example:

Thesis Sentence (assertion):

The 21st-century workforce requires a unique set of skills.

Topic Sentence (reason) #1:

Workers need to learn how to deal with change.

Topic Sentence (reason) #2:

Because of dealing with such a rapidly changing work environment, 21st-century workers need to learn how to learn.

Topic Sentence (reason) #3:

Most of all, in order to negotiate rapid change and learning, workers in the 21st century need good communication skills.

As you can see, the supporting ideas in an essay develop out of the main assertion or argument in the thesis sentence.

Traditional Structure Activity

An essay is based on a series of ideas and assertions in the thesis and topic sentences (which are like mini thesis sentences). But an essay is more than a series of ideas. An essay expands on its thesis and topic sentence ideas with examples, explanations, and information. An essay also leads the reader into the thesis sentence idea, supports that idea and convinces the reader of its validity, and then re-emphasizes the main idea. In other words, an essay has an introduction, body, and a conclusion.

The first interaction below will review your knowledge; the second will test your knowledge.



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<https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=5#h5p-45>



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version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=5#h5p-46>

Rough Drafts

In this section, you have been learning about traditional structures for expository essays (essays that are thesis-based and offer a point-by-point body), but no matter what type of essay you're writing, the rough draft is going to be an important part of your writing process. It's important to remember that your rough draft is a long way from your final draft, and you will engage in revision and editing before you have a draft that is ready to submit.

Sometimes, keeping this in mind can help you as you draft. When you draft, you don't want to feel like "this has to be perfect." If you put that much pressure on yourself, it can be really difficult to get your ideas down.

The sample rough draft on the right shows you an example of just how much more work a rough draft can need, even a really solid first draft. Take a look at this example with notes a student wrote on her rough draft. Once you complete your own rough draft, you will want to engage in a revision and editing process that involves feedback, time, and diligence on your part. The steps that follow in this section of the Excelsior OWL will help!

Rough Draft Example

The cost of clothing is a concern for most American families. In an article for *Newsweek's* parenting column, Springer (2008) offered this advice to parents tackling back-to-school shopping: "Steer your kids towards affordable stores like Old Navy and H&M, but don't force them to buy knockoffs. These days even preschoolers can spot a pair of fake Ugg boots . . . and may taunt classmates about them." This advice appears sound and sincere. However, such common wisdom hides the uncomfortable reality that most westerners are more concerned with getting a bargain than with the darker side of mass-consumer fashion. Attachment to cheap, disposable clothing, commonly known as fast fashion, is supporting a corrupt labor system, unsustainable production practices, and a culture of mindless consumerism. ~~In order to stop western~~ ~~this is bad for people and bad for the environment~~ ~~American consumers need to shop more responsibly~~. While the issue is complex, western consumers can contribute to a culture of change by revisiting some of their preconceived notions about frugality.

With frequent stories in the news about factory accidents, the average consumer is at least somewhat aware of the conditions most clothes are made under. According to Dishman of *Forbes*, "Fashionistas often have a love/hate relationship with [mass-market] retailers like H&M because they equate the inexpensive price tag to the company's ability to manufacture its merchandise in sweatshops filled with underpaid workers" (para. 8). Yet this ambivalence does not translate into action because shoppers are used to getting what they want fast and cheap. In his essay "The Branding of Ethical Fashion and the Consumer," author and industry expert Nathaniel Beard (2008) described the "polarization" between the growing sense of moral obligation in fashion and the

Need a Title
something about fast fashion
can I provide some context here?
need to check on spacing requirements after the period
can I make this claim? I think so!
I like this part!
need more context here!
need to add a sentence or two here!
better!

See It in Practice

Using the information from this section on developing a clear structure for a college essay, our student has now

established a plan for her essay and has created a visual to help illustrate what her final essay will look like. In the video, she discusses her introduction, body paragraphs, and conclusion.



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=5#h5p-47>

Revising & Editing Process

Revision and editing are both important parts of the writing process, yet many students skip revision and don't spend enough time editing. It's important to remember that these



steps are separate and that each step takes time. The following pages will help you develop strong revision and editing strategies for your writing process.

Revision

The revision process is an essential aspect of writing and one that you should build in time for before submitting your written work. Just when you think the production of your document is done, the revision process begins.

Runners often refer to “the wall,” where the limits of physical exertion are met and exhaustion is imminent. The writing process requires effort, from overcoming writer’s block to the intense concentration composing a document often involves. It is only natural to have a sense of relief when your document is drafted from beginning to end. This relief is false confidence, though. Your document is not complete, and in its current state it could, in fact, do more harm than good. Errors, omissions, and unclear phrases may lurk within your document, waiting to reflect poorly on you when it reaches your audience. Now is not time to let your guard down, prematurely celebrate, or to mentally move on to the next assignment. Think of the revision process as one that hardens and strengthens your document, even though it may require the sacrifice of some hard-earned writing.

Revision means to “re-see” the piece of writing.

It isn’t just proofreading your paper or correcting grammar, punctuation, or spelling errors. Revision is stepping back and looking at your paper as a whole and seeing if you are effectively saying what you intend to say. It is giving your paper a thorough look to see how you can make it stronger. Your goal should always be to write clearly, concisely, and in an engaging way.

One way to go about re-seeing your writing is to do it in three stages. Many people skip the first stage, but looking at the big picture is crucial in making sure you have a well-developed essay that expresses your ideas.

Revising Stage 1: Seeing the Big Picture

When you first begin your revision process, you should focus on the big picture or issues at the essay level that might need to be addressed. The following questions will guide you:



- Do you have a **clear thesis**? Do you know what idea or perspective you want your reader to understand upon reading your essay?
- Is your essay **well organized**?
- **Is each paragraph a building block** in your essay: does each explain or support your thesis?
- Does it need a different shape? **Do parts need to be moved**?
- Do you fully explain and illustrate the main ideas of your paper?
- Does your introduction **grab the reader's interest**?
- Does your conclusion leave the reader understanding your point of view?
- Are you saying in your essay what you want to say?
- What is the strength of your paper? What is its weakness?

Revising Stage 2: Mid-View

The second stage of the revision process requires that you look at your content closely and at the paragraph level. It's now time to



examine each paragraph, on its own, to see where you might need to revise. The following questions will guide you through the mid-view revision stage:

- Does each paragraph contain **solid, specific information, vivid description, or examples** that illustrate the point you are making in the paragraph?
- Are there are other **facts, quotations, examples, or descriptions** to add that can more clearly illustrate or provide evidence for the points you are making?
- Are there sentences, words, descriptions or **information that you can delete** because they don't add to the points you are making or may confuse the reader?
- Are the paragraphs in the **right order**?
- **Are your paragraphs overly long?** Does each paragraph explore **one main idea**?
- Do you use **clear transitions** so the reader can follow your thinking?
- Are any paragraphs or parts of paragraphs **redundant** and need to be

deleted?

Revising Stage 3: Editing Up Close

Once you have completed your revision and feel confident in your content, it's time to begin the editing stage of your revision and editing process. The following questions will guide you through your editing:



- Are there any **grammar errors**, i.e. have you been consistent in your use of tense, do your pronouns agree?
- Have you accurately and effectively used **punctuation**?
- Do you rely on **strong verbs and nouns** and maintain a good balance with **adjectives and adverbs**, using them to enhance descriptions but ensuring clear sentences?
- Are your words as **accurate** as possible?
- Do you **define any technical or unusual terms** you use?
- Are there **extra words or clichés** in your sentences that **you can delete**?
- Do you **vary your sentence structure**?
- Have you **accurately presented facts**; have you copied quotations precisely?

- If you're writing an academic essay, have you tried to be **objective** in your evidence and tone?
- If writing a personal essay, is the **narrative voice** **lively and interesting**?
- Have you **spellchecked** your paper?
- If you used sources, have you **consistently documented all of the sources' ideas and information** using a standard documentation style?

Specific Points to Consider

When revising your document, it can be helpful to focus on specific points. When you consider each point in turn, you will be able to break down the revision process into manageable steps. When you have examined each point, you can be confident that you have avoided many possible areas for errors. Specific revision requires attention to the following:

- Format
- Facts
- Names
- Spelling
- Punctuation
- Grammar

Format

Format is an important part of the revision process. Format involves the design expectations of author and audience. If a letter format normally designates a date at the top, or the sender's address on the left side of the

page before the salutation, the information should be in the correct location. Formatting that is messy or fails to conform to the company style will reflect poorly on you before the reader even starts to read it. By presenting a document that is properly formatted according to the expectations of your organization and your readers, you will start off making a good impression.

Facts

Another key part of the revision process is checking your facts. Did you know that news organizations and magazines employ professional fact-checkers? These workers are responsible for examining every article before it gets published and consulting original sources to make sure the information in the article is accurate. This can involve making phone calls to the people who were interviewed for the article—for example, “Mr. Diaz, our report states that you are thirty-nine years old. Our article will be published on the fifteenth. Will that be your correct age on that date?” Fact checking also involves looking facts up in encyclopedias, directories, atlases, and other standard reference works; and, increasingly, in online sources.

While you can't be expected to have the skills of a professional fact-checker, you do need to reread your writing with a critical eye to the information in it. Inaccurate content can expose you and your organization to liability, and will create far more work than a simple revision of a document. So, when you revise a document, ask yourself the following:

- Does my writing contain any statistics or

references that need to be verified?

- Where can I get reliable information to verify it?

It is often useful to do independent verification—that is, look up the fact in a different source from the one where you first got it. For example, perhaps a colleague gave you a list of closing averages for the Dow Jones Industrial on certain dates. You still have the list, so you can make sure your document agrees with the numbers your colleague provided. But what if your colleague made a mistake? The Web sites of the *Wall Street Journal* and other major newspapers list closings for “the Dow,” so it is reasonably easy for you to look up the numbers and verify them independently.

Names

There is no more embarrassing error in business writing than to misspell someone’s name. To the writer, and to some readers, spelling a name “Michelle” instead of “Michele” may seem like a minor matter, but to Michele herself it will make a big difference. Attribution is one way we often involve a person’s name, and giving credit where credit is due is essential. There are many other reasons for including someone’s name, but regardless of your reasons for choosing to focus on them, you need to make sure the spelling is correct. Incorrect spelling of names is a quick way to undermine your credibility; it can also have a negative impact on your organization’s reputation, and in some cases it may even have legal ramifications.

Spelling

Correct spelling is another element essential for your credibility, and errors will be glaringly obvious to many readers. The negative impact on your reputation as a writer, and its perception that you lack attention to detail or do not value your work, will be hard to overcome. In addition to the negative personal consequences, spelling errors can become factual errors and destroy the value of content. This may lead you to click the “spell check” button in your word processing program, but computer spell-checking is not enough. Spell checkers have improved in the years since they were first invented, but they are not infallible. They can and do make mistakes.

Typically, your incorrect word may in fact be a word, and therefore, according to the program, correct. For example, suppose you wrote, “The major will attend the meeting” when you meant to write “The mayor will attend the meeting.” The program would miss this error because “major” is a word, but your meaning would be twisted beyond recognition.

Punctuation

Punctuation marks are the traffic signals, signs, and indications that allow us to navigate the written word. They serve to warn us in advance when a transition is coming or the complete thought has come to an end. A period indicates the thought is complete, while a comma signals that additional elements or modifiers are coming. Correct signals will help your reader follow the thoughts through sentences and paragraphs, and enable you to

communicate with maximum efficiency while reducing the probability of error (Strunk & White, 1979).

Grammar

Learning to use good, correct standard English grammar is more of a practice than an event or even a process. Grammar involves the written construction of meaning from words and involves customs that evolve and adapt to usage over time. Because grammar is always evolving, none of us can sit back and rest assured that we “know” how to write with proper grammar. Instead, it is important to write and revise with close attention to grammar, keeping in mind that grammatical errors can undermine your credibility, reflect poorly on your employer, and cause misunderstandings.

KEY TAKEAWAY

By revising for format, facts, names, spelling, punctuation, and grammar, you can increase your chances of correcting many common errors in your writing.

Revising & Editing Tips

Revision Tips

One great way to help you with revision is to try something called the post-draft outline. Here's how it works: Outline your paper, jotting down your thesis statement and the topic sentences in each of your paragraphs. See if this skeleton of your paper reveals a clear, logical flow of ideas and organization. If not, you know you need to make some changes. Having this visual representation of what you have actually written in your essay is a great help when you are trying to revise effectively.



Editing Tips

It's important to remember that a good editing process takes time. You can't edit well in one big editing pass. You should be prepared to spend the time it will take to edit in several passes and use strategies that will you slow yourself down and edit thoroughly.

Read your paper aloud.

Reading aloud gives you the opportunity to both see and hear what you have written—and it slows your eyes down

so you're more likely to catch errors and see what you have actually written, not what you think you wrote. It's also helpful to have someone else read your paper aloud so you can listen to how well it flows.

Read your paper backward

Start with the last sentence. Read it first. Then, read the second-to-the-last sentence. Continue this process for your whole essay. This strategy really slows you down and helps you see each sentence on its own, which is key to effective editing.

Review the Grammar

Review the Grammar for known struggles you have with grammar, punctuation, and other errors. Then, with that information fresh in your mind, edit your paper just looking for those known issues. For example, if you know you have struggled with commas, review the information on commas in Paperrater.com, and, then, immediately edit your essay with special attention to commas. With the rules fresh in your mind, you're more likely to catch any errors.

A Tip for Both Revising and Editing

Finally, a good tip for both revision and editing is to use the resources available to you for feedback and help. If you're on a campus with a writing center, take advantage of it. If your online college offers an online writing tutorial service, submit your essay to that service for feedback. And, take advantage of in-class peer reviews. Your peers

understand the writing assignment you're working on and can provide helpful reader feedback.

Seek help when you need it, and ask questions of your professor. A good revision and editing process involves using all of the resources available to you.

TIP

How do you get the best out of your revisions and editing? Here are some strategies that writers have developed to look at their first drafts from a fresh perspective. Try them throughout this course; then keep using the ones that bring results.

- Take a break. You are proud of what you wrote, but you might be too close to it to make changes. Set aside your writing for a few hours or even a day until you can look at it objectively.
 - Ask someone you trust for feedback and constructive criticism.
 - Pretend you are one of your readers. Are you satisfied or dissatisfied? Why?
 - Use the resources that your college provides. Find out where your school's writing lab is located and ask about the assistance they provide online and in person.
-

General Revision

General revision requires attention to content, organization, style, and readability. These four main categories should give you a template from which to begin to explore details in depth. A cursory review of these elements in and of itself is insufficient for even the briefest review. You may need to take some time away from your document to approach it again with a fresh perspective. Writers often juggle multiple projects that are at different stages of development. This allows the writer to leave one document and return to another without losing valuable production time. Overall, your goal is similar to what it was during your writing preparation and production: a clear mind.

Evaluate Content

Content is only one aspect of your document. Let's say you were assigned a report on the sales trends for a specific product in a relatively new market. You could produce a one-page chart comparing last year's results to current figures and call it a day, but would it clearly and concisely deliver content that is useful and correct? Are you supposed to highlight trends? Are you supposed to spotlight factors that contributed to the increase or decrease? Are you supposed to include projections for next year? Our list of questions could continue, but for now, let's focus on content and its relationship to the directions. Have you included the content that corresponds to the given assignment, left any information out that may be necessary to fulfill the expectations, or have you gone beyond the assignment directions? Content

will address the central questions of who, what, where, when, why, and how within the range and parameters of the assignment.

Evaluate Organization

The organization is another key aspect of any document. Standard formats that include an introduction, body, and conclusion may be part of your document, but did you decide on a direct or indirect approach? Can you tell? A direct approach will announce the main point or purpose at the beginning, while an indirect approach will present an introduction before the main point. Your document may use any of a wide variety of organizing principles, such as chronological, spatial, compare/contrast. Is your organizing principle clear to the reader?



Beyond the overall organization, pay special attention to transitions. Readers often have difficulty following a document if the writer makes the common error of failing to make one point relevant to the next or to illustrate the relationships between the points. Finally, your conclusion should mirror your introduction and not introduce new material

Evaluate Style

Style is created through content and organization, but also involves word choice and grammatical structures. Is your document written in an informal or formal tone, or does it present a blend, a mix, or an awkward mismatch? Does it provide a coherent and unifying voice with a professional tone? If you are collaborating on the project with other writers or contributors, pay special attention to unifying the document across the different authors' styles of writing. Even if they were all to write in a professional, formal style, the document may lack a consistent voice. Read it out loud—can you tell who is writing what? If so, that is a clear clue that you need to do more revising in terms of style.

Evaluate Readability

Readability refers to the reader's ability to read and comprehend the document. A variety of tools are available to make an estimate of a document's reading level, often correlated to a school grade level. If this chapter has a reading level of 11.8, it would be appropriate for most readers in the eleventh grade. But just because you are in grade thirteen, eighteen, or twenty-one doesn't mean that your audience, in their everyday use of language, reads at a postsecondary level. As a business writer, your goal is to make your writing clear and concise, not complex and challenging.

You can often use the "Tools" menu of your word processing program to determine the approximate reading level of your document. The program will evaluate the

number of characters per word, add in the number of words per sentence, and come up with a rating. It may also note the percentage of passive sentences and other information that will allow you to evaluate readability. Like any computer-generated rating, it should serve you as one point of evaluation, but not the only point. Your concerted effort to choose words you perceive as appropriate for the audience will serve you better than any computer evaluation of your writing.

The Writing Process in Review

The writing process has several important stages, and you may find yourself having to engage in some of the stages more than once. You may also have to go back and repeat certain stages. This means the process is **recursive**. The writing process is not necessarily linear, as good writers often have to go back and repeat several stages of their process. For example, once you revise, you may realize you don't have enough information on a topic and need to go back to do a little brainstorming or freewriting to help you get more ideas. Think back to the Slinky® metaphor. The parts of the writing process connect and loop around each other.

Remember, a thorough writing process will make your writing better! You may continue to have struggles when you write. We all have areas in which we need to improve, but a good writing process will make your writing stronger than it would be otherwise. When you take advantage of

each stage of the writing process, you're helping yourself do your best work!

Listen as these college students talk about what they learned about writing and what they continue to struggle with as they continue with their journeys.



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<https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=5#h5p-26>

ATTRIBUTIONS

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2

Formatting in APA Style



Citation and Documentation

Here you'll find extensive support for APA documentation style. This section features instructional videos that show you how to set up your papers in APA format, interactive checklists, and visual support for

both in-text documenting and referencing at the end of your paper. If you're new to APA or just need a refresher, this chapter can help.



Research papers at the college level will require some kind of documentation style. Documentation styles provide students, teachers, and researchers standards and specifications to follow for paper set up, in-text documentation, and references. They also will have recommendations for writing style, word choice, and in some cases, organization.

The most common documentation styles are **APA** (from the American Psychological Association) and **MLA** (from the Modern Language Association), and some fields require **Chicago Style** (from the University of Chicago Press). This chapter (and English 102) will focus solely on using APA style.

While it may feel tedious learning the different aspects of a documentation style, it's important to remember following style guidelines helps add credibility to your writing by providing you with a structured method for sharing your research with your audience. You are demonstrating Ethos by knowing the correct style to use.

Where can I find the information?

part of writing within a particular documentation style, such as **APA**, is building a References list with full publication information. But what happens when you're looking at your sources and just are not sure where to find all the necessary information like publication dates, volume numbers for journal articles, edition numbers, and the like?

The following images link to PDF files that include helpful information about locating publication

information you'll need to build your References or Works Cited lists.

Print Book (Title/Author/Publisher)

<i>What Is "College-Level" Writing?</i>		Title
<i>Volume 2: Assignments, Readings, and Student Writing Samples</i>		
Edited by		Authors or Editors
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HOWARD TINBERG <i>Bristol Community College</i>		
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Every effort has been made to provide current URLs and email addresses, but because of the rapidly changing nature of the Web, some sites and addresses may no longer be accessible.

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Journal Article from a Database

Mobilizing Science to Revitalize Early Childhood Policy. — Article Title

Authors: Shonkoff, Jack P. — Author
 jackshonkoff@harvard.edu — Email

Source: Issues in Science & Technology — Journal Title
 Fall 2009, Vol. 26 — Year of Publication
 Issue 1, pp. 79-85/7p — Volume Number, Page Numbers, Issue Number

Document Type: Article

Subject Terms: *EDUCATIONAL mobility
 *EARLY childhood education
 *CHILD development
 *SCIENTIFIC knowledge
 *EDUCATION programs
 *CHILDREN – Health
 *CHILD care
 *STRESS (Psychology)
 *ADAPTABILITY (Psychology)

Geographic Terms: UNITED States

Abstract: The article focuses on the science mobilization for early childhood policy revitalization in the U.S. It defines the core concepts that are essential for early childhood and early brain development and the fundamental directives for early childhood policy. It indicates the importance of young children's positive stress to a healthy development in the context of supportive and stable relationships in which adaptation is facilitated positively. The creative mobilization of scientific knowledge is stated to offer an opportunity to close childhood policy gap for high-quality early care and education programs.

Author Affiliations: Julius B. Richmond FAMRI Professor of Child Health and Development and founding director of the Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University

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Composition Forum — Journal Title

Current Special Issues | Editor | Editorial Board | Editorial Policy | Submission

Composition Forum — Volume Number
 Fall 2013 — Year of Publication

Mapping the Questions: The State of Writing-Related Transfer Research — Article Title

Journal — Email — Author
 Jessam Moore

Abstract: The following article maps the questions, methods, contexts, and theories presented in published scholarship on writing-related transfer. While not exhaustive, this review attempts to capture representative samples with a focus on recent publications. The article then highlights a multi-institutional research initiative that aims to flesh out the field's "map" and suggests additional areas for exploration.

Early maps of the American West were notoriously incomplete; while charting the rivers and pathways that had been explored, cartographers could only make (often incorrect) inferences about the (often vast) spaces in-between. Rivers that appeared to branch in one spot and rejoin each other in another might actually be completely different bodies of water; similarly, mountain cuts that seemed from a distance like viable paths through mountain ranges might reveal other barriers from different perspectives. As more people explored and claimed new uses for the land, maps gained more detail: territorial boundaries, tributaries to previously mapped rivers, viable routes through mountain ranges, section boundaries, railroad lines, and other markers of the three-dimensional details the maps attempted to represent. With new land survey methods, these maps became more comprehensive and better predictors of what subsequent explorers would find.

Like early maps of the American West, mapping the research on writing transfer reveals both pockets of detail and gaps in disciplinary knowledge. Even the pockets of detail often come with the limitations inherent in research; they inevitably present one movement in one

Website

The screenshot shows a web browser displaying a nursing website. The address bar shows the URL: nursing.advanceweb.com/News/National-News/False-Promises-Portend-High-Nurse-Attrition-Rates-Research-Shows.aspx. The website has a navigation bar with links: RESOURCES, REGIONS, JOBS, EDUCATION, EVENTS, HEALTHCARE SHOP, COMMUNITY, BLOGS, and CUSTOM PROMOTIONS. Below the navigation bar is a header with the word "Nurses" in a large, stylized font. The main content area features the article title "False Promises Portend High Nurse Attrition Rates, Research Shows" in a blue box, with "Article Title" written below it. The article is dated June 14, 2011, and includes a "Date" label. The article text discusses a survey of 494 RNs, with 73 new RNs, 243 experienced RNs, and 278 tenured RNs. It defines three tenure points: New RNs (licensed within the past 5 years), Experienced RNs (licensed more than 5 years ago and hired by their current employer within the past 5 years), and Tenured RNs (licensed more than 5 years ago and working for their current employer for more than 5 years). The study was conducted jointly by recruitment strategies firm Bernard Hodes Group and Fabon Direct, a database marketing company. A quote from Judith Russell, RN, RN, vice president, Bernard Hodes Group, states: "One of the more surprising results found in this study is the fact that a majority of those RNs considering employment elsewhere had communicated work-related concerns to someone in authority. However, for many, no action was taken." Another quote from a healthcare employee says: "Healthcare employees need to focus on listening to their employees, and understanding what drives their employment satisfaction and ultimately their engagement with the organization," she adds. The article concludes with a note that many of the RNs surveyed also believe they did not receive an accurate description of the work environment prior to being hired.

You will often use sources for academic writing, and it's important to know how to responsibly cite and integrate those sources into your own writing. APA format provides guidelines and structures for citing those sources in a way that helps you avoid plagiarism and give proper credit to your sources.

APA stands for the American Psychological Association. Most papers that use APA formatting and citation style are those written in the Social Sciences: Psychology, History, Political Science, Economics, Geography, Nursing, and Sociology.

In addition to the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 7th edition, the APA maintains its own website with multiple examples of how to format your paper and cite your sources. If you're unable to find the answer to your question here, check the APA Manual 7th edition or the [APA website](http://www.apa.org).

Here are some [sample papers](#) for the 7th edition APA Style.

ORDER OF PAGES



APA requires the following set order of pages with each listed page on the list starting on a new page. If your paper does not require one or more of the pages, skip over those pages, but maintain the order of the pages you do use.

- Title page
- Abstract
- Outline
- Body
- References
- Footnotes (If used, these may be placed at bottom of individual pages or placed on a separate page following the citations.)
- Tables too large to place within the text body can be included in this position
- Figures too large to place within the text body can be included in this position
- Appendices

In most cases, each of these elements will begin on a separate page, and it is important to note that not all academic papers will include all of these elements.

For specific types of reports, your subsections may need to be named with headings that reflect the type of report you are writing. For example, in reports on experiments or studies, you'll usually need to follow the IMRAD structure with Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion sections. Be sure to check with your instructor to determine what the expectations are for your paper.



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<https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=97#h5p-8>

TITLE PAGE



A double-spaced title page should include the required information centered on the top half of the page. The title page information can vary based on your instructor's requests, but standard APA guidelines include either the title, your name, and your college name, course name, the instructor's name, and the due date. Your instructor may require a word count or running head. Always ask.

- For student papers, the page header consists of

the page number only.

- For professional papers, the page header consists of the page number and running head. Mrs. Jones requires a running head.

The title should be centered about four (4) double-spaced lines down from the top of the page.

Here is an example:

<p style="text-align: center;">FOOD INSECURITY</p> <p style="text-align: right;">1</p> <p style="text-align: center;">An Innovative Approach to Eliminating Food Insecurity Jane Doe Glendale Community College ENG 102 Mrs. Christine Jones February 26, 2020 Word Count: 1852</p>

APA also provides students with a Title Page Guide.

PAGE NUMBERS AND PAPER IDENTIFICATION

N



Benefits of Oral Histories

1

Page numbers should be placed at the top, right margin one-half inch down from the top of the page. In professional papers, a running head is required. APA does not require a running head for student papers, but some professors might ask you to include one as practice. Across

from the page number, flush left, include the title of the paper in a running head. If the title of the paper is lengthy, use an abbreviated version in the running head.

Follow these guidelines to include a running head in an APA Style paper:

- Type the running head in all capital letters.
- Ensure the running head is no more than 50 characters, including spaces and punctuation.
- Avoid using abbreviations in the running head; however, the ampersand symbol (&) may be used rather than “and” if desired.
- The running head appears in the same format on every page, including the first page.
- Do not use the label “Running head:” before the running head.
- Align the running head to the left margin of the page header, across from the right-aligned page number.

MARGINS



Make margins one inch on both sides and top and bottom.

HEADINGS AND SUBHEADINGS



Even experienced APA users will sometimes feel confused about APA headings. Headings in your paper are separate from your paragraphs. They work to let readers know what

content is coming and to help organize your information in a hierarchical structure. If you have written a paper in APA, you know how important those headings are to establishing focus, flow, and cohesion in your paper, but many are unsure about how to use those headings, especially the different levels.

For beginning writers, most of the time, APA first-level headings are all we need, and in some cases, we have to take it to the second level. But, if you have to create a larger project in APA, chances are you really are going to need to know how to use third and fourth-level headings.

The following provides summaries and examples of all of the headings in APA, from your title, which is a first-level heading, to fifth-level headings.

- Your title should be presented as a first-level heading. It is centered, in **bold** font, and all major words should be capitalized. When all major words are capitalized, this is called Title Case. It is important to note that you should not use the heading “**Introduction.**” Your paper title acts as your first-level heading, and the first paragraphs of a paper after the title are understood as introductory paragraphs.

Your Title Is a First-Level Heading

- First-level headings can appear throughout your paper as well. They should be centered, in **bold** font, and in Title Case. A first-level heading should look like this on your page:

First Level of Headings

- Second-level headings are for sections within first-level headings, so you would use second-

level headings to break up a bigger section that you have established with a first-level heading. Second-level headings are placed flush against the left margin, in **bold font**, and in Title Case. A second-level heading looks like this on your page:

Second Level of Headings

- Third-level headings are necessary when you need to break down your second-level headings into smaller sections. A third-level heading exists inside a second-level heading section. Third-level headings are flush against the left margin, in **bold** and *italic* font, and in Title Case for capitalization. A third-level heading looks like this on your page:

Third Level of Headings

- Fourth-level headings are sections inside third-level headings. Fourth-level headings are indented or tabbed once from the left margin, in **bold** font, in Title Case for capitalization, and end with a period. Your text should also appear on the same line as a fourth-level heading. On your page, fourth-level headings will look like this:

Fourth Level of Headings. Your paragraph begins right here on the same line.

- The final level of headings APA describes is the fifth-level heading. This fifth level would be necessary if you need to break up your fourth-level section into additional sections. Fifth-level headings are tabbed once from the left margin, in **bold** and *italic* font, in Title Case for

capitalization, and end with a period. Just like fourth-level headings, your text begins after the period. On your page, fifth-level headings will look like this:

Fifth Level of Headings. Your paragraph begins right here on the same line.

TLDR Example

First level heading: Centered, Bold Title

Text begins in a new paragraph.

Second level heading: Flush Left, Bold

Text begins in a new paragraph.

Third level heading: Flush Left Bold Italic

Text begins in a new paragraph.

Fourth level heading: Indented, Bold, Ends with a Period. Text continues on after the heading.

Fifth level heading: Indented, Bold Italic. Ends with a Period. Text continues on after the heading.

FONTS



A variety of fonts can be used in APA style papers.

Sans serif options: 11-point Calibri, 11-point Arial, or 10-point Lucida Sans Unicode.

Serif options: 12-point Times New Roman, 11-point Georgia, or normal (10-point) Computer Modern.

Check with your instructor if they have a preference. Due to reading ease involving the Canvas program, Mrs. Jones requires Times New Roman size 12.

PARAGRAPH INDENTATIONS



Indent the first word of each paragraph by using the tab key.

LINE SPACING



Double-space all text, including titles, subheadings, tables, captions, and citation lists.

SPACING AFTER PUNCTUATION



Space once after punctuation within a sentence, such as commas, colon, and semicolons, and end punctuation.

For additional help formatting your paper in APA Style, please click [HERE](#).

In-Text Citations

APA citations follow specific conventions that distinguish them from other styles.

In most cases, APA citations in your text will follow the guidelines illustrated on the following pages.

This video will show you what in-text citations should look like and explain why you must use them.



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<https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=97#h5p-9>

Summaries or Paraphrases

Even if you put information in your own words by summarizing or paraphrasing, you must cite the original author or researcher and the date of publication. You are also encouraged to provide a page or paragraph number; check with your instructor to see if page numbers are required.

How to Cite in the Text

ONE AUTHOR

When listing the source of information you are using in your paper, list the last name of the author (without their initials), followed by a comma, and then the year of publication. When referring to the author(s) directly in the text (also called a narrative citation), then list only the year (and page number, if needed for a direct quote).

Examples:

One scholar argued that it is impossible to measure social class (Calvert, 1982). Calvert (1982) argued that it is impossible to measure social class.

TWO AUTHORS

Authors should be presented in the order that they appear in the published article. If they are cited within closed brackets, use the ampersand (&) between them. If they are not enclosed in brackets, then use the spelled out “and.”

Examples: A well-known study argued that social class is rapidly becoming obsolete (Calvert & Liu, 1987). Calvert

and Liu (1987) argued that social class is rapidly becoming obsolete.

THREE AUTHORS OR MORE

Starting with the first author mentioned in the text, the correct format is (Author et al., year). This includes even the first citation. All authors, up to 20, should be listed in the corresponding reference.

Examples:

Calvert et al. (1987) argued that the concept of social class is rapidly becoming obsolete. The concept of social class is rapidly becoming obsolete (Calvert et al., 1987).

GROUP AUTHOR

WITH ABBREVIATIONS

For group authors with abbreviations, use the full name and the abbreviation in the first citation. Then, use only the abbreviation in subsequent citations.

Examples: According to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH, 2019), women between the ages of 40 and 59 have the highest rates of depression in the United States.

Women between the ages of 40 and 50 have the highest rates of depression in the United States (National Institute of Mental Health [NIMH], 2019).

WITHOUT ABBREVIATIONS

For group authors without abbreviations, simply list the group author with the usual citation format.

Examples: According to Stanford University (2018), first-

generation college students face many obstacles as they work to complete their degrees.

First-generation college students face many obstacles as they work to complete their degrees (Stanford University, 2018).

UNKNOWN OR ANONYMOUS AUTHOR

When the author of a work is not known, the title of the work will be used in place of the author. There are some important details to be aware of, however.

- If the title is long, it should be shortened for the in-text citation.
- Titles should be in title case even though they will be in sentence case on the References page.
- If the title is italicized in the reference, then it should also be italicized within the in-text citation.

Examples:Children who are neglected suffer from trauma that can last a lifetime (*Foundations of Social Literacy*, 2018.)

According to *Foundations of Social Literacy*, children who are neglected suffer from trauma that can last a lifetime (2018).

- If the title of the work is not italicized within the reference, use quotation marks around the title.

Examples:Vitamin D deficiency affects approximately one billion people worldwide (“Medical Science Today,” 2019).

“Medical Science Today” professes that vitamin D deficiency affects approximately one billion people worldwide (2019).

- If the work is attributed to “Anonymous,” use “Anonymous” in place of the author. There is no need to italicize or use quotes.

Example: The field of psychology is filled with people who want to understand their own lives (Anonymous, 2020).

DIRECT QUOTES

While academic writing encourages paraphrasing over quoting, there are instances when it is necessary to cite a direct quotation. When doing so, follow the corresponding rules for the in-text citation type and add a page number to the end of the citation.

When using the author or authors’ names within the text (also called a narrative citation), the year citation comes after the author’s name, and the page number citation should be placed after the direct quotation. Be sure to put quoted material inside quotation marks. Place the period after the citation for all quotes shorter than 40 words.

Examples: According to Smith (2018), “the number of birds in North America has declined by 2.9 billion since 1970” (p. 31).

“The number of birds in North America has declined by 2.9 billion since 1970” (Smith, 2018. p. 31).

NOTE: For multiple pages, use pp. instead of the single p.

NO PAGE NUMBERS

To cite quotations of material without page numbers, the American Psychological Publication Manual recommends providing section names, heading names, or paragraph

numbers—essentially providing readers with the necessary information to locate the quotation.

Example:According to Williams (2019), “gravity is actually the bending of space” (para. 5).

References

Every cited source from your essay, with the exception of personal communications, should appear on your References page, which comes at the end of the essay.

The References page must conform to the following rules:

- Start the Reference list on a new page and include the word “References” in uppercase and lowercase centered, using the same format as your essay (i.e., one-inch margins and page number).
- Center the word References at the top of the page.
- The References list should be double-spaced, even within individual references.
- In titles and subtitles of articles, chapters, and books, capitalize only the first letter of the first word and any proper nouns, except in parenthetical (in text) citations
- Entries in your list of references should be alphabetized by the authors’ last names. Arrange References entries in one alphabetical sequence by the surname of the first author or by title or first word if there is no author. Ignore the words A, An, and The when alphabetizing by title.
- If the author’s name is unavailable, use

the first few words of the title of the article, book, or Web source, including the appropriate capitalization and italics formatting. E.g. (Scientists Say, 2000).

- Use ONLY the initial(s) of the author's given name, NOT the full name
- If the References list includes 2 or more entries by the same author(s), list them in chronological order with the earliest first.
- Italicize book titles, journal titles, and volume numbers. Do NOT italicize issue numbers.
- Each entry should be formatted with a hanging indent, using a hanging indent of 0.5 inches for each reference. This means the first line of each entry will be flush against the left margin, and subsequent lines are indented 0.5 inches.
- References cited in-text must appear in the References list and vice versa. The only exceptions to this rule are personal communications and classical works; they are cited in-text only and are not included in the References list.
- Do NOT include retrieval dates unless the source of the material may change over time such as a blog entry or wikis.
- If a Digital Object Identifier (DOI) is listed on either a print or an electronic source it is included in the reference. A DOI is a unique alphanumeric string

that is used to identify a certain source (typically journal articles). It is often found on the first page of an article.

Example: doi:10.1080/
14622200410001676305

- When the References entry includes a URL that must be divided between two lines, break it BEFORE a slash or dash or at another logical division point. Do NOT insert a hyphen if you need to break a URL or a period at the end of the URL.

In this video on APA format, you'll see a sample references list with some tips on creating a references list of your own.



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<https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=97#h5p-10>

Once you review the different aspects of APA formatting, you may find that it takes you a while to remember everything you need to do. Referring back to helpful resources here can help, but a guide of the key components of APA can provide important reminders and support.

When you have your paper in order, it's a good idea to review this handy guide:



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<https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=97#h5p-11>

Excelsior OWL has an interactive [PDF Checklist](#) you can use to review your final paper.

Check Your Understanding



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<https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=97#h5p-12>

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3

Intellectual Property: That's Stealing!



Plagiarism is the theft of intellectual property!

You have probably heard the word **plagiarism** and would like to understand it better. You have come to the right place. In this chapter, you'll learn:

- What plagiarism is
- How to recognize seven different kinds of plagiarism
- The correct way to use 'open access' materials
- The consequences of plagiarism

- How to avoid



plagiarism by doing the following:

- Citing sources correctly
- Recognizing 'common knowledge'
- Writing good paraphrases
- Writing good summaries
- Taking careful notes

More important than you think!

In 2007, Senator John Walsh of Montana plagiarized a paper required for his master's degree from the United States Army War College. The New York Times provides an interactive anatomy of plagiarism worth exploring:

[How Senator John Walsh Plagiarized a Final Paper](#)

How to Avoid Plagiarism in the Research Process

Plagiarism is the unauthorized or uncredited use of the writings or ideas of another in your writing. While it might not be as tangible as auto theft or burglary, plagiarism is still a form of theft.

In the academic world, plagiarism is a serious matter because ideas in the forms of research, creative work, and original thought are highly valued. Chances are, your school has strict rules about what happens when someone is caught plagiarizing. The penalty for plagiarism is severe, everything from a failing grade for the plagiarized work, a failing grade for the class, or expulsion from the institution.

You might not be aware that plagiarism can take several different forms. The most well known, **purposeful plagiarism**, is handing in an essay written by someone else and representing it as your own, copying your essay word for word from a magazine or journal, or downloading an essay from the Internet.

A much more common and less understood phenomenon is what I call **accidental plagiarism**. Accidental plagiarism is the result of improperly paraphrasing, summarizing, quoting, or citing your evidence in your academic writing.

Generally, writers accidentally plagiarize because they simply don't know or they fail to follow the rules for giving credit to the ideas of others in their writing.

Both purposeful and accidental plagiarism are wrong, against the rules, and can result in harsh punishments.

Ignoring or not knowing the rules of how to not plagiarize and properly cite evidence might be an *explanation*, but it is not an excuse.

To exemplify what I'm getting at, consider the examples below that use quotations and paraphrases from this brief passage:

Those who denounce cyberculture today strangely resemble those who criticized rock music during the fifties and sixties. Rock started out as an Anglo-American phenomenon and has become an industry. Nonetheless, it was able to capture the hopes of young people around the world and provided enjoyment to those of us who listened to or played rock. Sixties pop was the conscience of one or two generations that helped bring the war in Vietnam to a close. Obviously, neither rock nor pop has solved global poverty or hunger. But is this a reason to be "against" them? (ix).

And just to make it clear that *I'm* not plagiarizing this passage, here is the citation in MLA style:

Lévy, Pierre. *Cyberculture*. Trans. Robert Bononno. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2001.

Here's an obvious example of plagiarism:

Those who denounce cyberculture today strangely resemble those who criticized rock music during the fifties and sixties.

In this case, the writer has literally taken one of Lévy's sentences and represented it as her own. That's clearly against the rules.

Here's another example of plagiarism, perhaps less obvious:

The same kind of people who criticize cyberculture are the same kind of people who criticized rock and roll music back in the fifties and sixties. But both cyberculture and rock music inspire and entertain young people.

While these aren't Lévy's exact words, they are certainly close enough to constitute a form of plagiarism. And again, even though you might think that this is a "lesser" form of plagiarism, it's still plagiarism.

Both of these passages can easily be corrected to make them acceptable quotations or paraphrases.

In the introduction of his book *Cyberculture*, Pierre Lévy observes that "Those who denounce cyberculture today strangely resemble those who criticized rock music during the fifties and sixties" (ix).

Pierre Lévy suggests that the same kind of people who criticize cyberculture are the same kind of people who criticized rock and roll music back in the fifties and sixties. But both cyberculture and rock music inspire and entertain young people (ix).

Note that changing these passages from examples of plagiarism to acceptable examples of a quotation and a paraphrase is extremely easy: properly cite your sources.

This leads to the "golden rule" of avoiding plagiarism:

Always cite your sources. If you are unsure as to whether you should or should not cite a particular claim or reference, you should probably cite your source.

Often, students are unclear as to whether or not they need to cite a piece of evidence because they believe it to be “common knowledge” or because they are not sure about the source of information. When in doubt about whether or not to cite evidence in order to give credit to a source (“common knowledge” or not), you should cite the evidence.

The Dangers of Plagiarism



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Feary, P. (2008, September 11). *The dangers of plagiarism*. [Video]. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/Ttrjodvhy1s>

How Much Do You Know About Plagiarism?



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<https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=119#h5p-13>

After completing this activity, you may download or print a completion report that summarizes your results.

What Is Plagiarism?

Definition of Plagiarism: Plagiarism means to take the words, ideas, or analysis that some other person has written and represent them as your own words, ideas, or analysis.

Plagiarism and the Internet

Sometimes, I think the ease of finding and retrieving information on the World Wide Web makes readers think that this information does not need to be cited.

After all, it isn't a traditional source like a book or a journal; it is available for "free." All a research writer needs to do with a web site is "cut and paste" whatever he needs into his essay, right? Wrong!

You need to cite the evidence you find from the Internet or the World Wide Web the same way you cite evidence from other sources. To not do this is plagiarism, or, more bluntly, cheating. Just because the information is "freely" available on the Internet does not mean you can use this information in your academic writing without properly citing it, much in the same way that the information from

library journals and books “freely” available to you needs to be cited in order to give credit where credit is due. It is also not acceptable to simply download graphics from the World Wide Web. Images found on the Internet are protected by copyright laws. Quite literally, taking images from the Web (particularly from commercial sources) is an offense that could lead to legal action. There are places where you can find graphics and clip art that Web publishers have made publicly available for anyone to use, but be sure that the Web site where you find the graphics makes this explicit before you take graphics as your own. In short, you can use evidence from the Web as long as you don’t plagiarize and as long as you properly cite it; don’t take graphics from the Web unless you know the images are in the public domain.

Open Access

But a lot of text on the Internet is “open access.” Can’t I use it?

No! A lot of text on the internet is freely available.

It may be labeled as “open access,” “Creative Commons License,” or “public domain.”

These terms mean that you can have access to the text, but it does not mean that you can use it as if it were your own writing!

Now, let’s watch a video about a student who is confused about plagiarism.



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<https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=119#h5p-17>

Types of Plagiarism

Most students understand that it's wrong to plagiarize but are confused about what plagiarism really is. The following presentation will provide you with a detailed explanation of seven basic types of plagiarism. Some types of plagiarism may be referred to as "academic misconduct." Understanding what plagiarism really is can help you avoid it.

Types of Plagiarism

- Submitting another person's writing
 - It is plagiarism to submit another person's writing as if it were your own writing.
- Submitting a paper you have already written
 - It is plagiarism if you submit a paper that you previously wrote for a different class, or even the same class if you are taking the class again.
- Paying another person to write your paper
 - It is plagiarism if you pay another person or company to write a paper that you submit as your own.
- Patch Writing or copying phrases from various sources
 - It is plagiarism if you use patchwriting,

which means copying phrases from various sources and using them in your work.

- Not using quotation marks around quoted material
 - It is plagiarism if you do not use quotation marks around the text that you quote directly.
- Failing to cite sources
 - It is plagiarism if you fail to cite your sources. When you use someone's ideas, even when you have changed the words, you must still cite the source. If you do not include the source, you may be accused of plagiarism.
- Copying a picture or other media file
 - It is plagiarism if you copy a picture or other media, such as videos or sound files, without crediting your source.

Plagiarism is Serious!

In the United States, any form of plagiarism is considered to be a dishonest and serious offense. The author of any writing is considered to “own” those words.

So to use another person's words, ideas, or analysis may be seen as a form of stealing.

But in my country . . .

If you are not from the United States, American attitudes about plagiarism may be new to you.

In some cultures, to use the words of others is a sign of honor and respect. In your country, the ownership of words may not be as important as it is in the U.S., where high value is given to using your own words. As a result, some actions that are considered “plagiarism” in the U.S. may be acceptable in your country.

Even though your instructors here may understand and respect your culture, they will judge your work by American standards. They will not tolerate plagiarism. Serious actions may be taken if you plagiarize.

Don't American students plagiarize?

Yes, sometimes they do! In fact, plagiarism is a serious problem in American colleges and universities. When plagiarism is discovered, they get into serious trouble.

Why do students plagiarize?

- Sometimes, they are just dishonest.
- Sometimes, they don't plan for enough time to do their own writing.
- Sometimes, they don't know how to cite their sources correctly.
- Sometimes, they don't know how to paraphrase or summarize.

The Consequences of Plagiarism

If you plagiarize, several things could happen. The presentation below will take you through some of the consequences of plagiarism.



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<https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=119#h5p-14>

Glendale Community College has some specific consequences, as does your teacher. You can check your syllabus for the exact consequences of plagiarism in your class, and you can look at the [Student Handbook](#) for the college level consequences.

How to Cite Sources

Direct Quotations

When you use the exact words of someone else in your paper, this is known as a verbatim quote. The words must be put inside quotation marks, and the source must be cited.

Examples

Example: "Experience is the name everyone gives to their

mistakes.” (Wilde, 1892).

NOTE: Direct quotations should be used sparingly. No more than 10% of your paper should be made up of direct quotations. When you want to use the idea but not the exact words, then use a paraphrase or summary.

Method of Citation

The citation may be made as an in-text citation, a footnote, or an endnote.

Examples

Example of in-text citation:

According to Levy (1997), the tutor-tool framework is useful.

Example of footnote or endnote:

According to Levy, the tutor-tool framework is useful.¹ **Bottom of page or chapter:**

¹Michael Levy, *Computer-Assisted Language Learning: Context and Conceptualization* (New York: Oxford), 178.

NOTE: In all cases, the source must also be included in the list of references at the end of your paper.

Style of Citation

The basic style guides are

- Modern Language Association (MLA)
- American Psychological Association (APA)
- Chicago Manual of Style

IMPORTANT: Ask your teacher which style to follow for their course. In English 102, we use APA. Please check out the chapter on APA for more information.

Try it Out



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<https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=119#h5p-16>

After completing this activity, you may download or print a completion report that summarizes your results.

Common Knowledge & Plagiarism

If information is very well known to most people, it may be considered “common knowledge,” and it does not need to be cited.

Examples of common knowledge:

- January is the first month of the year.
- Tokyo is the capital of Japan.
- The earth revolves around the sun.
- Soccer, or futbol, is a popular sport worldwide.
- Water freezes at 0 degrees Celsius.
- The Eiffel Tower is located in Paris.

- Facebook is a social media network.
- An equilateral triangle is a triangle with three equal sides.
- The sun sets in the west.
- The Titanic was a ship that sank on its first voyage.

It is not always clear what “common knowledge” is. If the information is found in general references and if most people know it, it may be considered common knowledge.

However, what is commonly known in one field may not be known by the general public.

NOTE: If you aren’t sure if something can be considered common knowledge, it is always safer to cite it.

Try It Out



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After completing this activity, you may download or print a completion report that summarizes your results.

Paraphrasing & Plagiarism

When you paraphrase, you say something in different

words. The length of your paraphrased text will be approximately the same as the original.

Original Example:

“Hand gestures, like other forms of nonverbal communication, can change the meaning of our words as well as carry meanings totally by themselves. Unless we understand the meanings attached to certain hand gestures in the different cultures, we are likely to send and receive unintended messages when dealing with people from other cultures. When two ordinary citizens from two different cultures miscommunicate through hand gestures, the result can be embarrassment or hard feelings” (Ferraro, 2001).

Paraphrased Example:

Both body language and words are used to convey meaning. Movements such as hand gestures can alter the meaning of spoken words, or be used alone to convey meaning. If we don't understand the meaning a person from another culture intends to convey through his hand gestures, and if that person doesn't understand the meaning of ours, there's a good chance we'll misunderstand each other and feel ill at ease or possibly offended (Ferraro, 2001).

Ferraro, Gary. (2001). *Cultural anthropology: An applied perspective* (4th ed.). Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.

IMPORTANT: When you paraphrase, you still must cite the source of the information or idea. If you do not, you may be guilty of plagiarism.

Try It Out



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<https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=119#h5p-19>

After completing this activity, you may download or print a completion report that summarizes your results.

Summarizing & Plagiarism

When you summarize, you use different words and state the main idea of a passage. In the presentation below, you'll see some sample summaries to help you gain a better understanding of how to write an effective summary of a passage.



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Note-Taking & Plagiarism

Watch the presentation below to learn more about note-taking and how to avoid plagiarism!



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<https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=119#h5p-21>

Check Your Understanding of Plagiarism



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<https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=119#h5p-22>

After completing this activity, you may download or print a completion report that summarizes your results.

Plagiarism: Additional Resources

For more information about plagiarism and what you can do to avoid it, check out some of these helpful resources.

The first resource is an interactive site providing definitions related to plagiarism and tips on how you can avoid it.

[Plagiarism.org](https://www.plagiarism.org)

The following videos provide helpful information related to plagiarism from unique angles.

What Is Plagiarism and How to Avoid It



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here: <https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=119#oembed-2>

BrockLibrary. (2014, September 2). *What is plagiarism and how to avoid it*. [Video]. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/Pmab92ghGoM>

Stop, Thief! Avoiding Plagiarism by Paraphrasing



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online

here: <https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=119#oembed-3>

Nimsakont, E. (2008, February 18). *Stop, thief! Avoiding plagiarism by paraphrasing*. [Video]. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/9z3EHloagHI>

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4

Revision and Editing



REVISING & EDITING PROCESS

Revision means what it looks like *RE-vision*, to *see again*.

So *great*, you're thinking. *That sounds easy*.

Well... it's not. (Surprise!) Revision

requires us to look at our own work again with fresh eyes.

Revision and editing are both important parts of the writing process, yet many students skip revision and don't spend enough time editing. It's important to remember that these steps are separate and that each step takes time.



The following pages will help you develop strong revision and editing strategies for your writing process.

Revision

The revision process is an essential aspect of writing and one that you should build in time for before submitting your written work. Just when you think the production of your document is done, the revision process begins. Runners often refer to “the wall,” where the limits of physical exertion are met and exhaustion is imminent. The writing process requires effort, from overcoming writer’s block to the intense concentration composing a document often involves. It is only natural to have a sense of relief when your document is drafted from beginning to end. This relief is false confidence, though. Your document is not complete, and in its current state, it could, in fact, do more harm than good. Errors, omissions, and unclear phrases may lurk within your document, waiting to reflect poorly on you when it reaches your audience. Now is not time to let your guard down, prematurely celebrate, or mentally move on to the next assignment. Think of the revision process as one that hardens and strengthens your document, even though it may require the sacrifice of some hard-earned writing.

Revision means to “re-see” the piece of writing.

It isn’t just proofreading your paper or correcting grammar, punctuation, or spelling errors. Revision is stepping back and looking at your paper as a whole and seeing if you are effectively saying what you intend to say. It is giving your paper a thorough look to see how you

can make it stronger. Your goal should always be to write clearly, concisely, and in an engaging way.

One way to go about re-seeing your writing is to do it in three stages. Many people skip the first stage, but looking at the big picture is crucial in making sure you have a well-developed essay that expresses your ideas.

REVISING STAGE 1: SEEING THE BIG PICTURE

When you first begin your revision process, you should focus on the big picture or issues at the essay level that might need to be addressed. The following questions will guide you:



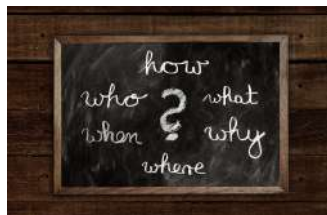
- Do you have a **clear thesis**? Do you know what idea or perspective you want your reader to understand upon reading your essay?
- Is your essay **well organized**?
- Is each paragraph a **building block** in your essay: does each explain or support your thesis?
- Does it need a different shape? Do **parts** need to be moved?
- Do you fully **explain and illustrate** the main ideas of your paper?
- Does your **introduction** grab the reader's interest?
- Does your **conclusion** leave the reader

understanding your point of view?

- Are you saying in your essay what you want to say?
- What is the strength of your paper? What is its weakness?

REVISING STAGE 2: MID-VIEW

The second stage of the revision process requires that you look at your content closely and at the paragraph level. It's now time to



examine each paragraph, on its own, to see where you might need to revise. The following questions will guide you through the mid-view revision stage:

- Does each paragraph contain **solid, specific information, vivid description, or examples** that illustrate the point you are making in the paragraph?
- Are there are other **facts, quotations, examples, or descriptions** to add that can more clearly illustrate or provide evidence for the points you are making?
- Are there sentences, words, descriptions, or **information that you can delete** because they don't add to the points you are making or may confuse the reader?
- Are the paragraphs in the **right order**?

- **Are your paragraphs overly long?** Does each paragraph explore **one main idea**?
- Do you use **clear transitions** so the reader can follow your thinking?
- Are any paragraphs or parts of paragraphs **redundant** and need to be deleted?

REVISING STAGE 3: EDITING UP CLOSE

Once you have completed your revision and feel confident in your content, it's time to begin the editing stage of your revision and editing process. The following questions will guide you through your editing:



- Are there any **grammar errors**, i.e. have you been consistent in your use of tense, do your pronouns agree?
- Have you accurately and effectively used **punctuation**?
- Do you rely on **strong verbs and nouns** and maintain a good balance with **adjectives and adverbs**, using them to enhance descriptions but ensuring clear sentences?
- Are your words as **accurate** as possible?

- Do you **define any technical or unusual terms** you use?
- Are there **extra words or clichés** in your sentences that you can delete?
- Do you **vary your sentence structure**?
- Have you **accurately presented facts**; have you copied quotations precisely?
- If you're writing an academic essay, have you tried to be **objective** in your evidence and tone?
- If writing a personal essay, is the **narrative voice** lively and interesting?
- Have you **spellchecked** your paper?
- If you used sources, have you **consistently documented all of the sources' ideas and information** using a standard documentation style?

SPECIFIC POINTS TO CONSIDER

When revising your document, it can be helpful to focus on specific points. When you consider each point in turn, you will be able to break down the revision process into manageable steps. When you have examined each point, you can be confident that you have avoided many possible areas for errors. Specific revision requires attention to the following:

- Format
- Facts
- Names
- Spelling
- Punctuation
- Grammar

Format

The format is an important part of the revision process. The format involves the design expectations of the author and audience. If a letter format normally designates a date at the top or the sender's address on the left side of the page before the salutation, the information should be in the correct location. Formatting that is messy or fails to conform to the company style will reflect poorly on you before the reader even starts to read it. By presenting a document that is properly formatted according to the expectations of your organization and your readers, you will start off making a good impression.

Facts

Another key part of the revision process is checking your facts. Did you know that news organizations and magazines employ professional fact-checkers? These workers are responsible for examining every article before it gets published and consulting original sources to make sure the information in the article is accurate. This can involve making phone calls to the people who were interviewed for the article—for example, “Mr. Diaz, our report states that you are thirty-nine years old. Our article will be published on the fifteenth. Will that be your correct age on that date?” Fact-checking also involves looking facts up in encyclopedias, directories, atlases, and other standard reference works; and, increasingly, in online sources.

While you can't be expected to have the skills of a professional fact-checker, you do need to reread your

writing with a critical eye to the information in it. Inaccurate content can expose you and your organization to liability and will create far more work than a simple revision of a document. So, when you revise a document, ask yourself the following:

- Does my writing contain any statistics or references that need to be verified?
- Where can I get reliable information to verify it?

It is often useful to do independent verification—that is, look up the fact in a different source from the one where you first got it. For example, perhaps a colleague gave you a list of closing averages for the Dow Jones Industrial on certain dates. You still have the list, so you can make sure your document agrees with the numbers your colleague provided. But what if your colleague made a mistake? The Web sites of the *Wall Street Journal* and other major newspapers list closings for “the Dow,” so it is reasonably easy for you to look up the numbers and verify them independently.

Names

There is no more embarrassing error in business writing than to misspell someone’s name. To the writer, and some readers, spelling the name “Michelle” instead of “Michele” may seem like a minor matter, but to Michele herself, it will make a big difference. Attribution is one way we often involve a person’s name, and giving credit where credit is due is essential. There are many other reasons for including someone’s name, but regardless of your reasons for choosing to focus on them, you need to make sure the spelling is correct. Incorrect spelling of names is a quick

way to undermine your credibility; it can also harm your organization's reputation, and in some cases, it may even have legal ramifications.

Spelling

Correct spelling is another element essential for your credibility, and errors will be glaringly obvious to many readers. The negative impact on your reputation as a writer, and its perception that you lack attention to detail or do not value your work, will be hard to overcome. In addition to the negative personal consequences, spelling errors can become factual errors and destroy the value of content. This may lead you to click the "spell check" button in your word processing program, but computer spell-checking is not enough. Spell checkers have improved in the years since they were first invented, but they are not infallible. They can and do make mistakes.

Typically, your incorrect word may in fact be a word, and therefore, according to the program, correct. For example, suppose you wrote, "The major will attend the meeting" when you meant to write "The mayor will attend the meeting." The program would miss this error because "major" is a word, but your meaning would be twisted beyond recognition.

Punctuation

Punctuation marks are the traffic signals, signs, and indications that allow us to navigate the written word. They serve to warn us in advance when a transition is coming or the complete thought has come to an end. A period indicates the thought is complete, while a comma

signals that additional elements or modifiers are coming. Correct signals will help your reader follow the thoughts through sentences and paragraphs, and enable you to communicate with maximum efficiency while reducing the probability of error (Strunk & White, 1979).

Grammar

Learning to use good, correct standard English grammar is more of a practice than an event or even a process. Grammar involves the written construction of meaning from words and involves customs that evolve and adapt to usage over time. Because grammar is always evolving, none of us can sit back and rest assured that we “know” how to write with proper grammar. Instead, it is important to write and revise with close attention to grammar, keeping in mind that grammatical errors can undermine your credibility, reflect poorly on your employer, and cause misunderstandings.

KEY TAKEAWAY

By revising for format, facts, names, spelling, punctuation, and grammar, you can increase your chances of correcting many common errors in your writing.

ENGLISH COMPOSITION 137

TRANSITIONS AND ORGANIZATION

by Jenn Kepka

As we've discussed, the major purpose of writing is to communicate with an audience. Keeping that in mind means everything we do when writing a paper must be done for the benefit of whoever is reading. That's hard; it means that sometimes, things that look perfectly fine to us or sound OK out loud will need to be changed because other people bring different ideas and demands to our writing.

It also means that we need to go out of our way to be helpful to anyone who's sitting down to read our work. Every step of the writing process is built to help the reader, from the title — which tells him what he's getting into — to the conclusion, which reminds him what he's read. Along the way, we use other organizational signs to let the reader know what's going on.

Whenever we pause to signal the reader about what's about to happen, we use a transitional word or phrase. Transitions are simply brief, common signals that are put in place for the reader. They are often one of the final things that a writer will edit and add to a paper.

The most common place to find transitions is at the beginning or end of a paragraph. In an essay, transitions signal that one piece of a paper is coming to a close or that a new section is about to start. Common transition lines include:

- First, we have to consider...
- A second point in favor of this proposal is...
- The next day, I started...
- Finally, I want to make clear...

Transitions often help provide a logical order to a piece.

Logical order means that the writer has made decisions about how to organize the essay that they're writing. If, for instance, I decided to write a paper about the ways to be a good student, I could likely think of dozens, maybe even hundreds, of pieces of advice. However, to write an essay, I would need to narrow that down, and then I'd probably want to list my top 3 (or 5, or 10) reasons in an order that would make sense to my reader. That's what it means to put a paper in logical order. Every time you see a Top Ten list online, that writer has used logical order to organize her paper.

Transitions signal that logical order by reminding the reader where we are on the list. First, Second, Third, Fifth, Last, etc. all tell my reader what kind of progress she's making. These words are small but important.

We also use transitions to show changes in time or location. For instance, in a narrative essay, you might want to let the reader know that you're going to jump ahead from your first swimming lesson as a four-year-old to your gold-medal-winning competition at the 2025 Olympics. When you write, "Fifteen years later, I put on my Speedos and started to climb the pool ladder," that date at the beginning of your sentence is a clear transition. Without it, the reader will be lost (and wondering what a four-year-old is doing in a Speedo swimsuit).

When a piece is written in time order, we say it uses chronological order to organize itself. Transitions are vital to chronological order; without them, your hopeless reader won't know whether an hour or a day has passed.

Transitions also can signal to the reader that we're about to encounter a different kind of information. For example, if I'm in the middle of providing facts about why everyone should wear a seatbelt, and I decide that a story is

necessary to keep the reader's attention, I might say, "Let's consider an example." This tells my reader that I'm moving from the lecture to the story.

Signals like this are important because readers tackle different parts of our writing with different levels of attention. They also help a reader figure out where the main idea, a supporting idea, or a minor detail might be happening in a piece. If you've ever had to read and analyze a text, looking for the main idea, you know that words like "First," and "Finally" often signal that a major point is being made, while a tag like "For example" means that something smaller, an illustration or a detail, is about to be shared.

Use these signposts in your own writing to keep readers interested and focused.

Special Cases

Some kinds of writing require special transitions. For example, as we've already discussed, narrative writing will require the use of time transitions in nearly every case. You've got to name a time and give hints about the duration of an event when telling a story.

Example Writing also requires the use of transitions. Because Example (also called Exemplification or Illustration) writing uses logical organization, you'll find that ordinal numbers are key to providing clear transitions. (Ordinal Numbers are numbers that demonstrate an order or a position: First, Second, Third, Fourth, and etc.).

Comparison or Contrast writing requires a writer to provide transitions not just at the start of paragraphs but also within the text. In fact, in Comparisons, transitions

carry the meaning of the paper. They are more than just organization: they actually tell your reader what you mean. For example, if I'm comparing Tuesday and Wednesday, then I'll need to use comparison transition words when talking about them. I might write:

Tuesday is the second day of the week, and Wednesday is the third day.

Without a comparison word, that's a boring sentence that tells my reader almost nothing. So, instead, I could add a transition phrase:

Tuesday is the second day of the week, unlike Wednesday, which is the third day.

Yeah, still boring, but that's because my topic is bad. At least now my reader knows that I'm saying this is a big difference between Tuesday and Wednesday.

Transitions are critical to good comparison writing.

Transition Word Resources:

You can find great lists of comparison words in nearly every substantial grammar book and resource. I've listed a few below.

- Michigan State University, credited to Professors Gregory M. Campbell, Michael Buckoff, and John A. Dowell: <https://www.msu.edu/~jdowell/135/transw.html>

- This is an excellent resource with dozens of common transition words listed. The words are divided into different types/uses of transitional words and phrases.
- Purdue Online Writing Lab
(OWL): <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/574/02/>
 - This is a brief listing of the most common college-level transition words. There is also a short explanation reading about using transitions available at: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/574/01/>

REVISING & EDITING TIPS

Revision Tips

One great way to help you with revision is to try something called the post-draft outline. Here's how it works: Outline your paper, jotting down your thesis statement and the topic sentences in each of your paragraphs. See if



this skeleton of your paper reveals a clear, logical flow of ideas and organization. If not, you know you need to make some changes. Having this visual representation of what you have actually written in your essay is a great help when you are trying to revise effectively.

Editing Tips

It's important to remember that a good editing process takes time. You can't edit well in one big editing pass. You should be prepared to spend the time it will take to edit in several passes and use strategies that will slow yourself down and edit thoroughly.

Read your paper aloud.

Reading aloud gives you the opportunity to both see and hear what you have written—and it slows your eyes down so you're more likely to catch errors and see what you have actually written, not what you think you wrote. It's also helpful to have someone else read your paper aloud so you can listen to how well it flows.

Read your paper backward

Start with the last sentence. Read it first. Then, read the second-to-the-last sentence. Continue this process for your whole essay. This strategy really slows you down and helps you see each sentence on its own, which is key to effective editing.

Review the Grammar

Review the Grammar for known struggles you have with grammar, punctuation, and other errors. Then, with that information fresh in your mind, edit your paper just looking for those known issues. For example, if you know you have struggled with commas, review the information on commas in Paperrater.com, and, then, immediately edit your essay with special attention to commas. With the rules fresh in your mind, you're more likely to catch any errors.

A Tip for Both Revising and Editing

Finally, a good tip for both revision and editing is to use the resources available to you for feedback and help. If you're on a campus with a writing center, take advantage of it. If your online college offers an online writing tutorial service, submit your essay to that service for feedback. And, take advantage of in-class peer reviews. Your peers understand the writing assignment you're working on and can provide helpful reader feedback.

Seek help when you need it, and ask questions of your professor. A good revision and editing process involves using all of the resources available to you.

TIP

How do you get the best out of your revisions and editing?
Here are some strategies that writers have developed to look at

their first drafts from a fresh perspective. Try them throughout this course; then keep using the ones that bring results.

- Take a break. You are proud of what you wrote, but you might be too close to it to make changes. Set aside your writing for a few hours or even a day until you can look at it objectively.
- Ask someone you trust for feedback and constructive criticism.
- Pretend you are one of your readers. Are you satisfied or dissatisfied? Why?
- Use the resources that your college provides. Find out where your school's writing lab is located and ask about the assistance they provide online and in person.

General Revision

General revision requires attention to content, organization, style, and readability. These four main categories should give you a template from which to begin to explore details in depth. A cursory review of these elements in and of itself is insufficient for even the briefest review. You may need to take some time away from your document to approach it again with a fresh perspective. Writers often juggle multiple projects that are at different stages of development. This allows the writer to leave one document and return to another without losing valuable production time. Overall, your goal is similar to what it

was during your writing preparation and production: a clear mind.

Evaluate Content

Content is only one aspect of your document. Let's say you were assigned a report on the sales trends for a specific product in a relatively new market. You could produce a one-page chart comparing last year's results to current figures and call it a day, but would it clearly and concisely deliver content that is useful and correct? Are you supposed to highlight trends? Are you supposed to spotlight factors that contributed to the increase or decrease? Are you supposed to include projections for next year? Our list of questions could continue, but for now, let's focus on content and its relationship to the directions. Have you included the content that corresponds to the given assignment, left any information out that may be necessary to fulfill the expectations, or have you gone beyond the assignment directions? Content will address the central questions of who, what, where, when, why, and how within the range and parameters of the assignment.

Evaluate Organization

The organization is another key aspect of any document. Standard formats that include an introduction, body, and conclusion may be part of your document, but did you decide on a direct or indirect approach? Can you tell? A direct approach will announce the main point or purpose at the beginning, while an indirect approach will present

an introduction before the main point. Your document may use any of a wide variety of organizing principles, such as chronological, spatial, compare/contrast. Is your organizing principle clear to the reader?



Beyond the overall organization, pay special attention to transitions. Readers often have difficulty following a document if the writer makes the common error of failing to make one point relevant to the next or to illustrate the relationships between the points. Finally, your conclusion should mirror your introduction and not introduce new material

Evaluate Style

Style is created through content and organization, but also involves word choice and grammatical structures. Is your document written in an informal or formal tone, or does it present a blend, a mix, or an awkward mismatch? Does it provide a coherent and unifying voice with a professional tone? If you are collaborating on the project with other writers or contributors, pay special attention to unifying the document across the different authors' styles of writing. Even if they were all to write in a professional, formal style, the document may lack a consistent voice. Read it out loud—can you tell who is writing what? If so,

that is a clear clue that you need to do more revising in terms of style.

Evaluate Readability

Readability refers to the reader's ability to read and comprehend the document. A variety of tools are available to make an estimate of a document's reading level, often correlated to a school grade level. If this chapter has a reading level of 11.8, it would be appropriate for most readers in the eleventh grade. But just because you are in grade thirteen, eighteen, or twenty-one doesn't mean that your audience, in their everyday use of language, reads at a postsecondary level. As a business writer, your goal is to make your writing clear and concise, not complex and challenging.

You can often use the "Tools" menu of your word processing program to determine the approximate reading level of your document. The program will evaluate the number of characters per word, add in the number of words per sentence, and come up with a rating. It may also note the percentage of passive sentences and other information that will allow you to evaluate readability. Like any computer-generated rating, it should serve you as one point of evaluation, but not the only point. Your concerted effort to choose words you perceive as appropriate for the audience will serve you better than any computer evaluation of your writing.

Try It Out

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THE WRITING PROCESS IN REVIEW

The writing process has several important stages, and you may find yourself having to engage in some of the stages more than once. You may also have to go back and repeat certain stages. This means the process is **recursive**. The writing process is not necessarily linear, as good writers often have to go back and repeat several stages of their process. For example, once you revise, you may realize you don't have enough information on a topic and need to go back to do a little brainstorming or freewriting to help you get more ideas. Think back to the Slinky® metaphor. The parts of the writing process connect and loop around each other.

Remember, a thorough writing process will make your writing better! You may continue to have struggles when you write. We all have areas in which we need to improve, but a good writing process will make your writing stronger

than it would be otherwise. When you take advantage of each stage of the writing process, you're helping yourself do your best work!

Listen as these college students talk about what they learned about writing and what they continue to struggle with as they continue with their journeys.



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5

Peer Review



PEER REVIEW

Jim Beatty

Peer review is a daunting prospect for many students. It can be nerve-wracking to let other people see a draft that is far from perfect. It can also be uncomfortable to critique drafts written by people you hardly know. Peer review is essential for effective public writing, however. Professors often publish in “peer-reviewed” journals, which means their drafts are sent to several experts around the world. The professor/author must then address these people’s concerns before the journal will publish the article. This process is done because, overall, the best ideas come out of

conversations with other people about your writing. You should always be supportive of your peers, but you should also not pull any punches regarding things you think could really hurt their grade or the efficacy of their paper.

HOW TO GIVE FEEDBACK

The least helpful thing you can do when peer-reviewing is correct grammar and typos. While these issues are important, they are commonly the least important thing English professors consider when grading. Poor grammar usually only greatly impacts your grade if it gets in the way of clarity (if the professor cannot decode what you are trying to say) or your authority (it would affect how much readers would trust you as a writer). And, with a careful editing process, a writer can catch these errors on their own. If they are convinced they have a good thesis statement and they don't, however, then you can help them by identifying that.

Your professor may give you specific things to evaluate during peer review. If so, those criteria are your clue to what your professor values in the paper. If your professor doesn't give you things to evaluate, make sure to have the assignment sheet in front of you when peer-reviewing. If your professor provides a rubric or grading criteria, focus on those issues when giving advice to your peers. Again, don't just look for things to "fix." Pose questions to your classmate; let them know where they need to give you more to clarify and convince you.

HOW TO RECEIVE FEEDBACK

Resist the powerful urge to get defensive over your writing. Try your best not to respond until your reviewer is finished giving and explaining their feedback. Keep in mind that your peers do not have all the information about your paper that you do. If they misunderstand something, take it as an opportunity to be clearer in your writing rather than simply blaming them for not getting it. Once you give a paper to another person, you cannot provide additional commentary or explanations. They can only evaluate what's on the page.

Perhaps the biggest challenge in peer review is deciding what advice to use and what to ignore. When in doubt, always ask your professor. They know how they will grade, so they can give you a more definitive answer than anyone else. This holds true for the advice you get from a writing tutor too.

MAKE PEER REVIEW A PART OF YOUR LIFE

Don't think of peer review as an isolated activity you do because it is required in class. Make friends in the class that can help you outside of it. Call on people outside the class whom you trust to give you feedback, including writing tutors. Integrate peer review into every step of your writing process, not just when you have a complete draft. Classmates, writing tutors, and your friends can be an invaluable resource as you brainstorm your ideas. Conversations with them can give you a safe, informal opportunity to work things out before you stare at a blank

screen wondering what to write. A writing tutor can help you talk out your ideas and maybe produce an outline by the end of your appointment. A friend can offer another perspective or additional information of which you are initially unaware. Again, you can get the most direct advice by visiting your professor during office hours to go over ideas and drafts. Take advantage of all the formal and informal resources surrounding you at SLCC to help you succeed.

CONCLUSION

Far from being scary or annoying, peer review is one of the most powerful tools at your disposal in the life-long process of becoming a more effective public writer. No good writing exists in isolation. The best writing comes out of a communal effort.

Providing Good Feedback

by Jenn Kepka



Customer Comments chalkboard by Flickr user Lisa @Sierra Tierra CC-BY

Think about the most helpful feedback you've ever received from a teacher, a coach, a parent, or a friend. What did they tell you? How did they phrase it? Why did you believe what they were saying?

In general, we accept feedback best from people we trust because we believe they have our best interests at heart. In a college class where the faces around you change frequently, it's hard to develop that level of trust. So in peer review, we have to create credibility — that's trustworthiness — through a process of Restating, Praising, and Criticizing.

RESTATING

The first step in providing good peer feedback is to prove to your peer that you've actually read and tried to

understand her writing. If you've ever been through peer review before, you know that receiving feedback where the reader has completely missed your point is discouraging; it's also hard when someone else doesn't seem to have paid much attention to what you're saying.

To show a writer that we're on her side, we can restate her main idea (also known as her *thesis* or *topic sentence*). This will show that we've read the piece and tried our best to understand what the writer wanted to say — not what we wanted to hear, but what she was trying to say.

To provide a good restatement of the piece, follow these steps:

1. Read the piece at least twice.
 - On your first read, don't pause to highlight or make notes or mark mistakes — just read to see what's going on.
 - On the second read, start to mark places where you have questions, places that you particularly like, or places where you're sure some fix is needed.
2. After you've read the piece, get a separate piece of paper and, without looking, write down a sentence or two that sums up what you think is the author's main point.
 - Try to complete this sentence: I thought your major point was _____.
 - Sometimes, in an early draft, it can be hard

to nail down a precise main point. In this case, try to put yourself in the writer's shoes, and think, "What do I think they *most* want to say in this whole thing?" Then fill in this sentence: The point I think you want to make here is _____, though you also spend time saying _____ and/or _____.

You may need to complete this process more than once just to feel secure that you understand what the piece is saying. That's great! That means you really are working with the paper, and your peer will appreciate your efforts.

If you provide peer feedback in person, this is also a valuable place to start. Think how much nicer it would be to have someone say, "What I thought you were writing about was ____" rather than just having him jump in with criticism.

GIVING POSITIVE FEEDBACK (PRAISE, OR WHAT'S WORKING)

We tend to focus on what's going wrong in a paper because, as writers and students, we want to know what to fix as we go through the revision process. However, most good feedback will include a section on what's actually working in a paper, too. Positive feedback encourages a writer in a couple of ways:

- It shows him/her that the reviewer isn't just "out to get me."
- It can demonstrate some patterns or habits that

are worth repeating. For example, if someone says, “I thought your transitions were well done,” you can be prepared to add more and use them more confidently in the next paper.

- It builds credibility for the reviewer by providing feedback a reader is more likely to agree with before providing critical comments.

However, positive feedback is only useful if it’s specific. Think how nice it is to see “Good job!” written on top of a paper — and then think about how useless that comment is if you really want to fix the paper. What do I do when I get a “good work!” comment? I probably just turn the paper in without any more revision.

Good, positive feedback should give the writer somewhere to go. It should encourage by making clear points about what’s working, where, and why. So instead of saying, “I thought this was funny!”, a good comment might say, “The way you turn the words around in the second paragraph so it’s almost like a tongue-twister was funny, and the dialogue in the third paragraph made me laugh out loud.” The writer can look at these and go, a-ha! I’m funny. I should add more like those two.

To provide useful, positive feedback:

1. Number the paragraphs (in a longer work) or sentences (in a one-paragraph or one-page work) in the piece you’re reading so you can refer to them easily.
2. Provide two or three one-sentence comments that point out things the writer has done that were interesting, clever, funny, surprising, smart, or lovely.

- Don't just look for funny jokes or big words (although complimenting the vocabulary of a section is a good piece of feedback!). Also consider how the writer uses detail, whether the story is believable (and why or how), if the title is informative, if the overall question being answered is creative, if the answer the student gives to the question of the assignment is unexpected, if the organization is clear, and if the introduction and/or conclusion are particularly strong.
3. Always keep your focus on the idea of *helpful* feedback. Letting someone know they've chosen a nice font isn't helpful, but letting her know that you like the places she's chosen to break up her paragraphs will be!

GIVING NEGATIVE FEEDBACK (CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM)

Some writers struggle with giving negative feedback at all; others want to dive right in and provide only criticism. A balance of these two instincts is necessary in order to give useful feedback.

Think, again, about helpful feedback you've received in the past; now, think of a time when you received criticism that wasn't helpful. Generally, writers respond to bad, negative feedback in one of two ways: 1). "How DARE you

insult my beloved work? I'm not listening to ANYTHING you have to say!" or 2). "You're sooooo right, it's terrible, it's all trash, I'm throwing the whole thing away and starting over, or maybe I'll just give up!"

The results are the same: no revision is completed. Since the entire point of getting peer feedback is to get good ideas to help you revise, bad feedback is bad for the process.

To give the best critical feedback, then, reviewers must remember that the writer should be able to act on whatever you say. That means no bland, vague statements. If someone writes, "I just didn't like it," on a paper, there's not much I (the writer) can do with that, other than cry or plot revenge. If, instead, someone writes, "I didn't like paragraph 2 because it felt like the voice changed completely from the rest of the story," then I can act on that. I can look at paragraph 2 and make changes.

Here are a few tips for providing good, critical feedback:

1. Be specific. State where problems are found by line number or paragraph number. Quote or re-write sentences that need to be edited and show the problems clearly.
2. Ask questions. There's a huge difference between saying "I got lost in paragraph 2" and "What did you mean by ____ in paragraph 2?" The second one gives the writer something to do — she can answer that question and fix the paragraph.
3. Limit yourself to a reasonable number of critical comments. Aim for an equal ratio of negative to positive feedback.

- This isn't just an ego-saver! If a paper is in such an early draft that you can only find 2 positive things to say, the author probably doesn't need a pile of criticism yet.
- 4. Be aware of the goals the writer had for the piece. Make sure you aren't trying to get him/her to say something you like instead of letting him/her say what s/he likes.
- 5. Don't critique spelling, grammar, or punctuation unless you are an expert.
 - Colleges provide resources to help with mechanical errors, so don't pretend to be an expert in commas if you aren't one. It's easier to get someone else more confused than it is to be really helpful.
 - Also, remember the writer may still need to rewrite and to do a final edit, so picking out every single spelling mistake might not be the best use of your time (unless the writer asks you to).

Finally, as a general rule of thumb, don't write anything you wouldn't say to the writer face-to-face. Always sign your name to anything you write on, as well, so that the writer can follow up if she has questions.

UNDERSTANDING PEER REVIEW

Celia Brinkerhoff

Your assignment may require that you include information from “peer-reviewed” articles. These articles are published in scholarly or academic journals after they’ve gone through a lengthy editorial process which usually involves the author making many revisions before final acceptance is made. The reviewers themselves are experts in the same field, and judge the strength of the article on the originality of the research, the methods used, and the validity of findings. The highest standard of peer review is “double-blind,” meaning that both the identity of the authors as well as the reviewers are kept anonymous in order to ensure that bias and subjectivity do not influence the process.

But be careful: Not all of the content in an academic journal is subject to peer review. There may be other content such as letters, opinion pieces, and book reviews that have been edited but not necessarily gone through a formal peer-review process.

ACTIVITY: Watch, listen, and learn

The following video describes the process of peer review.

ACTIVITY: Summarize the peer review process



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<https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=306#h5p-45>

But how can you, the researcher, recognize a peer-reviewed article?

Fortunately, the library's Summon search and most of our databases have a filter or limit which will help you find the right type of information. Various databases will use different terms: look for "academic" or "scholarly" or "peer-reviewed."

There are other clues you can look for.

Tip: Clues to help you decide if it's peer-reviewed

Examples

Author's credentials and affiliations	Look for the author's degrees, as well as the university or research institution they are affiliated with.
References	Any peer-reviewed article will have a lengthy list of sources used by the author.
Submission guidelines	Somewhere on the journal's homepage will be a link for submitting an article for review. You may have to dig around a little!
Journal publisher	Is the journal published by a scholarly society? a university press?

Activity: Summing up Module 2

Pick the correct statement.



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<https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=306#h5p-46>



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PART II

PART 2:
SITUATION AND
ANALYSIS

The process of preparing to write is as important as the drafting process itself; in many cases, it's more important. Yet this is the process that most of us will skip when in a rush, preferring to dive directly into the writing part of any given writing assignment.

Here, through a few excellent readings, we'll look at the value of starting early; of considering a college writing assignment thoroughly to avoid the misunderstandings that lead to costly rewrites and failing grades; and of considering your audience and final purpose before pen (or keyboard) connects to paper.

6

Rhetoric



What is Rhetoric?

Rhetoric is the study of effective speaking and writing. And the art of persuasion. And many other things.

The modes of persuasion you are about to learn about on the following pages go back thousands of years to [Aristotle](#), a Greek rhetorician. In his teachings, we learn about three basic modes of persuasion—or ways to persuade people. These modes appeal to human nature and continue to be used today in writing of all kinds, politics, and advertisements.

These modes are particularly important to argumentative writing because you'll be constantly looking for the right angle to take in order to be persuasive with your audience. These modes work together to create

a well-rounded, well-developed argument that your audience will find credible.

By thinking about the basic ways in which human beings can be persuaded and practicing your skills, you can learn to build strong arguments and develop flexible argumentative strategies. Developing flexibility as a writer is very important and a critical part of making good arguments. Every argument should be *different* because every audience is *different* and every situation is *different*. As you write, you'll want to make decisions about how you appeal to your particular audience using the modes of persuasion.

The video below provides you with an excellent example of how these modes work together, and the pages that follow will explain each mode in detail, focusing on strategies you can use as a student writer to develop each one. If you need the transcript, just click on the CC button at the bottom right of the video.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online

here: <https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=47#oembed-1>

TED-Ed. (2013, January 14). *Conner Neill: What Aristotle and Joshua Bell can teach us about persuasion* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O2dEuMFR8kw>

Content/Form

Rhetoric requires understanding a fundamental division

between *what* is communicated through language and *how* this is communicated.

Aristotle phrased this as the difference between *logos* (the logical content of a speech) and *lexis* (the style and delivery of a speech).

Five Essential Elements of Greek Rhetoric

Invention-planning a discourse by deciding which arguments should be used and how supporting evidence should be deployed.

Arrangement-deciding on the most effective way to organize the arguments and supporting evidence.

Style -choosing effective language that fit the speaker's character, the content of the speech and the occasion.

Memory-preparing for the speech through study and practice

Delivery-using the voice and body gestures in presenting the speech.

In written discourse, only the first three steps are involved.

Persuasive Appeals

Modes of Persuasion

Persuasion, according to Aristotle and the many authorities that would echo him, is brought about through three kinds of proof or persuasive appeal:

logos: The appeal to reason. Using a coherent, consistent in manner. Compelling and convincing. Using the effective rules of logic. Inductive and deductive reasoning. Evidence.

pathos: The appeal to emotion. Appeals that relate to human emotions, especially the feelings and fractions of the audience. Appeal to the heart.

ethos: The persuasive appeal of one's character. Personality, trustworthiness.

Although they can be analyzed separately, these three appeals work together in combination toward persuasive ends.

Logos

Logos is about appealing to your audience's logical side. You have to think about what makes sense to your audience and use that as you build your



argument. As writers, we appeal to logos by presenting a line of reasoning in our arguments that is logical and clear. We use evidence, such as statistics and factual information, when we appeal to logos.

In order to develop strong appeals to logos, we have to avoid faulty logic. Faulty logic can be anything from assuming one event caused another to making blanket statements based on little evidence. Logical fallacies should always be avoided. We will explore **logical fallacies** in another section.

Appeals to logos are an important part of academic writing, but you will see them in commercials as well. Although they more commonly use pathos and ethos, advertisers will sometimes use logos to sell products. For example, commercials based on saving consumers money,

such as car commercials that focus on miles-per-gallon, are appealing to the consumers' sense of logos.

As you work to build logos in your arguments, here are some strategies to keep in mind.

- **Both experience and source material can provide you with evidence to appeal to logos.** While outside sources will provide you with excellent evidence in an argumentative essay, in some situations, you can share personal experiences and observations. Just make sure they are appropriate to the situation and you present them in a clear and logical manner.
- **Remember to think about your audience** as you appeal to logos. Just because something makes sense in your mind, doesn't mean it will make the same kind of sense to your audience. You need to try to see things from your audience's perspective. Having others read your writing, especially those who might disagree with your position, is helpful.
- **Be sure to maintain clear lines of reasoning throughout your argument.** One error in logic can negatively impact your entire position. When you present faulty logic, you lose credibility.
- **When presenting an argument based on logos, it is important to avoid emotional overtones and maintain an even tone of voice.** Remember, it's not just a matter of the type of evidence you are presenting; how you present this evidence is important as well.

Pathos

Appealing to **pathos** is about appealing to your audience's emotions. Because people can be easily moved by their emotions, pathos is a powerful mode of persuasion. When you



think about appealing to pathos, you should consider all of the potential emotions people experience. While we often see or hear arguments that appeal to sympathy or anger, appealing to pathos is not limited to these specific emotions. You can also use emotions such as humor, joy, or even frustration, to note a few, in order to convince your audience.

It's important, however, to be careful when appealing to pathos, as arguments with an overly-strong focus on emotion are not considered as credible in an academic setting. This means you could, and should, use pathos, but you have to do so carefully. An overly-emotional argument can cause you to lose your credibility as a writer.

You have probably seen many arguments based on an appeal to pathos. In fact, a large number of the commercials you see on television or the internet actually focus primarily on pathos. For example, many car commercials tap into our desire to feel special or important. They suggest that, if you drive a nice car, you will automatically be respected.

With the power of pathos in mind, here are some strategies you can use to carefully build pathos in your arguments.

- **Think about the emotions most related to your topic** in order to use those emotions effectively. For example, if you're calling for a change in animal abuse laws, you would want to appeal to your audience's sense of sympathy, possibly by providing examples of animal cruelty. If your argument is focused on environmental issues related to water conservation, you might provide examples of how water shortages affect metropolitan areas in order to appeal to your audience's fear of a similar occurrence.
- In an effort to appeal to pathos, **use examples** to illustrate your position. Just be sure the examples you share are credible and can be verified.
- In academic arguments, be sure to **balance appeals to pathos with appeals to [logos](#)** (which will be explored on the next page) in order to maintain your ethos or credibility as a writer.
- When presenting evidence based on emotion, **maintain an even tone of voice**. If you sound too emotional, you might lose your audience's respect.

Ethos

Appealing to **ethos** is all about using credibility, either your own as a writer or of your sources, in order to be persuasive. Essentially, ethos is about believability. Will your



audience find you believable? What can you do to ensure that they do?

You can establish ethos—or credibility—in two basic ways: you can use or build your own credibility on a topic, or you can use credible sources, which, in turn, builds your credibility as a writer.

Credibility is extremely important in building an argument, so, even if you don't have a lot of built-in credibility or experience with a topic, it's important for you to work on your credibility by integrating the credibility of others into your argument.

Aristotle argued that ethos was the most powerful of the modes of persuasion, and while you may disagree, you can't discount its power. After all, think about the way advertisers use ethos to get us to purchase products. Taylor Swift sells us perfume, and Peyton Manning sells us pizza. But, it's really their fame and name they are selling.

With the power of ethos in mind, here are some strategies you can use to help build your ethos in your arguments.

- If you have specific experience or education related to your issues, mention it in some way.

NOTE: Not all professors will be in favor of this, as it will depend upon the level of formality of the assignment, but, in general, this is an effective strategy.

-
- If you don't have specific experience or education

related to your issue, make sure you **find sources from authors who do**. When you integrate that source information, it's best if you can address the credibility of your sources. When you have credible sources, you want to let your audience know about them.

- **Use a tone of voice** that is appropriate to your writing situation and will make you sound reasonable and credible as a writer. Controversial issues can often bring out some extreme emotions in us when we write, but we have to be careful to avoid sounding extreme in our writing, especially in academic arguments. You may not convince everyone to agree with you, but you at least need your audience to listen to what you have to say.
- **Provide a good balance** when it comes to pathos and logos, which will be explored in the following pages.
- **Avoid flaws in logic—or logical fallacies—which** are explored in another chapter of the book.

Modes of Persuasion Activity



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<https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=47#h5p-27>

After completing this activity, you may download or print a completion report that summarizes your results.

See It in Practice

Now that you have learned about the different modes of persuasion and their uses and seen some ethos, pathos, and logos analysis in action, it's time to see how our student is doing with her argumentative essay process. Let's look at how she plans to appeal to ethos, pathos, and logos in her essay.

Watch as our student explores her choices and what strategies she thinks will be most convincing.



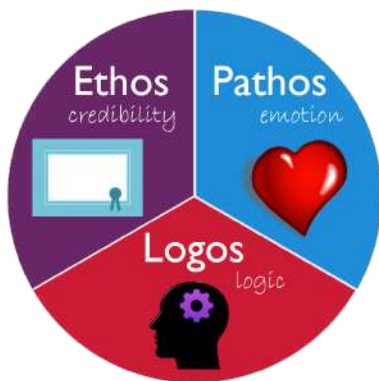
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<https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=47#h5p-28>

Time to Write

It's time to think about how you will appeal to ethos, pathos, and logos and, depending upon where you are in your process, maybe even draft a few rough paragraphs using your source material as support.

Wherever you are in your process, it's a good time to start thinking of the appeals and asking yourself questions about your own credibility, the credibility of your sources, how much



emotion you want to convey, and what you can do to appeal to the logical thinking of your audience.

Write down your plans in a journal or in notes and share them with your professor and/or classmate for some additional feedback.

The key is to get started with your writing in each step and think, at least for right now, how you can appeal to ethos, pathos, and logos to make the most convincing argument possible?

Assignment Analysis

Analyzing Your Assignment and Thinking Rhetorically

Rhetoric can be defined as the ability to determine how to best communicate in a given situation. Although a thorough understanding of effective oral, written, and visual communication can take years of study, the foundation of effective communication begins with rhetoric. With this foundation, even if you are just starting out, you can become a more powerful, more flexible writer. Rhetoric is key to being able to write effectively in a variety of situations.

Every time you write or speak, you're faced with a different rhetorical situation. Each rhetorical situation requires some thoughtful consideration on your part if you want to be as effective as possible.

Many times, when students are given a writing assignment, they have an urge to skim the assignment

instructions and then just start writing as soon as the ideas pop into their minds. But writing rhetorically and with intention requires that you thoroughly investigate your writing assignment (or rhetorical situation) before you begin to write the actual paper.

Thinking about concepts like **purpose**, **audience**, and **voice** will help you make good decisions as you begin your research and writing process. These concepts will be explained in more detail below.

Purpose

Rhetorically speaking, the purpose is about making decisions as a writer about why you're writing and what you want your audience to take from your work.



There are three objectives you may have when writing a research paper.

- **To inform** – When you write a research paper to inform, you're not making an argument, but you do want to stress the importance of your topic. You might think about your purpose as educating your audience on a particular topic.
- **To persuade** – When you write a research paper to persuade, your purpose should be to take a stance on your topic. You'll want to develop a thesis statement that makes a clear assertion about some aspect of your topic.
- **To analyze** – Although all research papers require some analysis, some research papers make

analysis a primary purpose. So, your focus wouldn't be to inform or persuade, but to analyze your topic. You'll want to synthesize your research and, ideally, reach new, thoughtful conclusions based on your research.

TIPS! Here are a few tips when it comes to thinking about purpose.

You must be able to move beyond the idea that you're writing your research paper only because your professor is making you. While that may be true on some level, you must decide on a purpose based on what topic you're researching and what you want to say about that topic.

You must decide for yourself, within the requirements of your assignment, why you're engaging in the research process and writing a paper. Only when you do this will your writing be engaging for your audience.

Your assignment or project instructions affect purpose. If your professor gives you a formal writing assignment sheet for your research paper, it's especially important to read very carefully through your professor's expectations. If your professor doesn't provide a formal assignment sheet, be prepared to ask questions about the purpose of the assignment.

Audience Awareness

Who are you writing for? You want to ask yourself that question every time you begin a writing project. And you want to keep your



audience in mind as you go through the writing process because it will help you make decisions while you write. Such decisions should include what voice you use, what words you choose, and the kind of syntax you use. Thinking of who your audience is and what their expectations are will also help you decide what kind of introduction and conclusion to write.

Your instructor, of course, is your audience, but you must be careful not to assume that he or she knows more than you on the subject of your paper. While your instructor may be well-informed on the topic, your purpose is to demonstrate your knowledge and fully explain what you're writing about, so the reader can see that you have a good grasp on the topic yourself. Think of your instructor as intelligent but not fully informed about your topic. Think of your instructor as representing people from a particular field (historians, chemists, psychologists).

Another approach is to think of your audience as the people who make up the class for which you are writing the assignment. This is a diverse group, so it can be tough to imagine the needs of so many people. However, if you try to think about your writing the way others from a diverse group might think about your writing, it can help make your writing stronger.

Writing for Your Audience

Sometimes, it's difficult to decide how much to explain or how much detail to go into in a paper when considering your audience. Remember that you need to explain the major concepts in your paper and provide clear, accurate information. Your reader should be able to make the necessary connections from one thought or sentence to the next. When you don't, the reader can become confused or frustrated. Make sure you connect the dots and explain how information you present is relevant and how it connects with other ideas you have put forth in your paper.

As you write your essay, try to imagine what information your audience will need on your topic. You should also think about how your writing will sound to your audience, but that will be discussed more in the next section on Voice.

When it's time to revise, read your drafts as a reader would, looking for what is not well explained, clearly written, or linked to other ideas. It might be useful to read your paper to someone who has no background in the topic you're writing about to see if your listener can follow your argument. As always, your job as the writer is to communicate your thinking in a clear, thoughtful, and complete way.

Analyzing Your Audience

Because keeping your audience in mind as you engage in the writing process is important, it may be helpful to have a list of questions in mind as you think about your audience. The interactive worksheet below can be saved

and printed if you want to keep it near your computer as you write.



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=47#h5p-30>

See It in Practice

Now that you have read more about the importance of writing with your audience in mind, take a look at how this student considers her audience for the sample assignment she is working on.



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=47#h5p-31>

Time to Write

In addition to completing the Analyzing Your Audience activity, it's a good idea to write about your audience and share your thinking with your peers and your professor. Because you're not writing just for your professor and have to anticipate the needs and knowledge of a fairly broad audience, it's important to spend some time really thinking about how you will write appropriately for your academic audience.

Share your results from your Analyzing Your Audience

activity as well as your notes or writing journal with your classmates. What similarities do you see between your own analysis and your classmates'? If you notice big differences, it would be wise to check with your professor.

Audience

Before you begin to write your research paper, you should think about your audience. Your audience should have an impact on your writing. You should think about the audience because, if you



want to be effective, you must consider the audience's needs and expectations. It's important to remember the audience affects both what and how you write.

Most research paper assignments will be written with an academic audience in mind. Writing for an academic audience (your professors and peers) is one of the most difficult writing tasks because college students and faculty make up a very diverse group. It can be difficult for student writers to see outside their own experiences and to think about how other people might react to their messages.

But this kind of rhetorical thinking is necessary for effective writing. Good writers try to see their writing through the eyes of their audience. This, of course, requires a lot of flexibility as a writer, but the rewards for such thinking are great when you have a diverse group of readers interested in and, perhaps, persuaded by your writing.

Intended Audience

Classmates and professors

For an academic audience of classmates and teachers, you have the task of considering a diverse group. You'll want to think about how much background information your audience will need on your topic, as well as what terms will need to be defined. You'll want to be sure to use a formal tone, as research papers for an academic audience generally require a tone that is quite formal.

Colleagues or potential colleagues

For an audience within your field, you'll want to consider how much background information you'll need to provide and what terms you need to define. You may not need to provide as much background information as you would for a diverse academic or general audience, and you wouldn't want to define terms that would be considered common knowledge in your field. Your tone should be formal, as colleagues or potential colleagues in your field of study will expect a formal voice.

The general public

Although many research papers in college-level classes are intended for an academic audience, you may encounter assignments where instructors ask you to write for a general public type of audience. When you write for the general public, you may need to provide helpful

background information, define important terms, and use a tone that is semi-formal.

Targetted Audience

Sometimes, an instructor will ask you to write for a specific public audience. When you write for a specific targetted audience, you are thinking about a specific group of readers the essay is intended to reach. When it comes to determining the most appropriate audience for the essay, it is necessary to think back to the purpose. The easiest way to do that is to put into your mind the action you would like to see taken after your essay has been read. Then, you can consider who would be able to take that action.

Example

Susan is writing an essay to promote the banning of single-use plastic straws in restaurants. She has decided to focus on encouraging the use of metal straws. There are three possible audiences that Susan is thinking of writing towards as she writes her essay

- First: Restaurant Owners
- Second: Restaurant Customers
- Third: City Lawmakers

Each audience would give Susan a different approach and different arguments to target. If she chooses restaurant owners, she can focus on the cost savings of the use of reusable metal straws. If she chooses customers, she thinks she would focus

more on the ways customers could do their part and about some of the convenience of personal metal straws. Finally, Susan believes that focusing on lawmakers would mean she would need to talk about cities that have already banned straws and the arguments for the laws that have already been passed.

Each audience has different pros and cons. Susan carefully considers the type of paper she wants to write and the research she has done so far. In the end, Susan decides that customers are going to be the easiest for her to talk to in her essay.

Changing Audiences

Most people have a fairly strong sense of audience awareness. You were a natural rhetorician from the time you were a child when you worked to convince your parents



to get you a certain toy. You probably honed your rhetorical skills with your parents during your teenage years. Most of us do.

But audience awareness can get a little more complicated when you have to write for a diverse audience or an audience you don't know very well. Still, we can use what we do know about being effective for an audience and apply that to academic situations.

The important thing is to do your best to think about

what might appeal to a particular group of people. In the samples below, you'll see paragraphs written on the same topic to three different audiences. Which one would be most appropriate for a formal research paper required in an academic setting? Which one would be most effective within a group of friends or family, perhaps something you might see as a Facebook post for a class? Which one might work well as a journal entry, intended for just you and your teacher, for an education class? As you read through each paragraph, think about who the intended audience might be and how both content and style change in different situations, even though the topics are the same. Notice how the tone becomes more formal as you progress.

Samples

- Do you remember those awful standardized tests from high school? I mean, what good were they? I remember sitting in class while our English teacher told us for like the hundredth time that these tests were important, and then, she would show us the formula we were supposed to use to pass the written portion of the test. I got really good at that formula and passed the standardized test to graduate high school with flying colors. Then, I went to college and was lost. I got bad grades on my essays and didn't know why.
- When I was in high school, states were just beginning to pass laws about standardized testing. I

went to public school in a state that was one of the first states to have standardized testing requirements before a student could graduate. I know firsthand some of the problems associated with placing too much emphasis on standardized testing. My high school English teacher spent a lot of time teaching us the “formula” for the standardized test we had to take, but the only essays I wrote were for that exam. Then, when I went to college, I found I was quite unprepared. I was an “A” student in high school, but I was earning “Cs” on my essays in college. I remember the shame I felt about getting “bad” grades. Fortunately, I was able to get extra help from the university writing center, and I was able to turn things around for myself. But we should not have students entering college with so little and such limited writing experience. I have read so much research indicating that my experiences are not unique. Too many students are coming to college without very much experience in writing, and standardized tests are a part of the problem.

- Today, standardized tests are a part of everyday life at most public high schools in the United States. Thanks to legislation from the No Child Left Behind Act, students must now pass standardized tests before they can graduate from high school. While the legislation behind the No Child Left Behind Act may have been well-intentioned, there have been serious negative consequences to this act, one being a heavy focus on “teaching to the test” in many classrooms

across the country. This focus on testing can lead to a loss in instructional time for things like critical thinking and writing. Research now indicates that, indeed, writing instruction has suffered due to an emphasis on standardized testing. Researchers Applebee and Langer studied writing assignments and writing instruction time in middle and high school classrooms throughout the United States. Applebee and Langer (2011) found “[T]he actual writing that goes on in typical classrooms across the United States remains dominated by tasks in which the teacher does all the composing...replicating highly formulaic essay structures keyed to the high-stakes tests they will be taking.” (p. 26). This emphasis on teaching writing “to the test” can have serious consequences for students entering college and the workforce. Because writing is such an important part of college classes and most professions, the U.S. needs to examine the consequences of high-stakes standardized testing, like those connected to the No Child Left Behind Act, on writing instruction in the public schools.

Offending an Audience

You have learned now that your writing isn’t just for you and that part of your role as a writer is to keep the audience in mind when you write. Some students struggle with this because it may feel like they just can’t say what they want to say when they have to write with their audience in mind. You may feel the same and feel like you want to

share your ideas the way you want to share your ideas, no matter what an audience thinks.

However, you have to remember that, unless you're keeping a personal journal, your writing is always for someone else as well. In fact, most of the time, you're going to need to be highly aware of your audience's needs when you are writing for college—and for work. Moreover, when you're writing argumentative essays on controversial topics, if you want to be persuasive, you have to think about what is going to work well to be persuasive for your given audience. Will your audience listen to you if you offend them? Probably not.

With that in mind, you'll want to make good rhetorical decisions when you write. This means you have to consider what language will work for your audience, what kind of evidence will be persuasive, and how you can present that evidence in the most convincing manner possible.

If you offend your audience, your audience members won't listen to what you have to say. While you may not be able to always convince your audience to see your side of an issue, you should at least be able to get them to listen to you and consider your points.

In the video below, you'll see what happens when audience members are offended and what their reactions are, and why. Seeing what happens for yourself may help you remember that, when you're writing an argument, you are writing for someone else.



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<https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=47#h5p-66>

Voice



Once you have considered your audience and established your purpose, it's time to think about voice. Your voice in your writing is essentially how you sound to your audience. Voice is an important part of writing a research paper, but many students never stop to think about voice in their writing. It's important to remember voice is relative to **audience** and **purpose**. The voice you decide to use will have a great impact on your audience.

- **Formal** – When using a formal, academic or professional voice, you'll want to be sure to avoid slang and clichés, like “the apple doesn't fall far from the tree.” You'll want to avoid conversational tone and even contractions. So, instead of “can't,” you would want to use “cannot.” You'll want to think about your academic or professional audience and think about what kind of impression you want your

voice to make on that audience.

- **Semi-formal** – A semi-formal tone is not quite as formal as a formal, academic, or professional tone. Although you would certainly want to avoid slang and clichés, you might use contractions, and you might consider a tone that is a little more conversational.

Students sometimes make errors in voice, which can have a negative impact on an essay. For example, when writing researched essays for the first time, many students lose their voices entirely to research, and the essay reads more like a list of what other people have said on a particular topic than a real essay. In a research essay, you want to balance your voice with the voices from your sources.

It's also easy to use a voice that is too informal for college writing, especially when you are just becoming familiar with academia and college expectations.

Ultimately, thinking about your writing rhetorically will help you establish a strong, appropriate voice for your writing.

See It in Practice

In the video cast below, you'll see our student writer discuss the rhetorical analysis she has written for her research paper assignment.



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=47#h5p-32>

Time to Write

Now that you have had a chance to see how you can analyze your assignment rhetorically, it's time to try it out. Using your own research essay assignment as your guide, take some time to write about your purpose, audience, and voice. Keeping a writing journal is a great way to give yourself an opportunity to keep track of your notes that you can refer back to later.

Does your assignment specify anything in particular? In your journal or in some notes, make a short list and, in a few sentences, describe what you think your purpose for writing might be, who might be in your target audience, and what voice or tone you plan to take in order to make a good impression on your audience. Then, share your notes or journal with your professor and classmates for feedback.

This is a good opportunity to think about your requirements and ask questions of your professor to make sure you're understanding requirements related to your purpose, target audience, and what voice or tone would be appropriate.

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7

Opposing Viewpoints



Handling Opposing Viewpoints

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

Try to address opposing arguments earlier rather than later in your essay. Rhetorically speaking, ordering your positive arguments last allows you to better address ideas

that conflict with your own, so you can spend the rest of the essay countering those arguments. This way, you leave your reader thinking about your argument rather than someone else's. You have the last word.

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

It is also helpful to establish the limits of your argument and what you are trying to accomplish. In effect, you are conceding early on that your argument is not the ultimate authority on a given topic. Such humility can go a long way toward earning credibility and trust with an audience. Audience members will know from the beginning that you are a reasonable writer, and audience members will trust your argument as a result. For example, in the following concessionary statement, the writer advocates for stricter gun control laws, but she admits it will not solve all of our problems with crimes:

Although tougher gun control laws are a powerful first step in decreasing violence in our streets, such legislation alone cannot end these problems since guns are not the only problem we face.

Such a concession will be welcome by those who might disagree with this writer's argument in the first place. To effectively persuade their readers, writers need to be modest in their goals and humble in their approach to get readers to listen to the ideas. Certain transitional words and phrases aid in keeping the reader oriented in the

sequencing of a story. Some of these phrases are listed here:

Phrases of Concession

although	granted that	of course	still
though	yet		

Start by acknowledging and explaining points of view that may conflict with your own to build credibility and trust with your audience. Also, state the limits of your argument. This too helps you sound more reasonable and honest to those who may naturally be inclined to disagree with your view. By respectfully acknowledging opposing arguments and conceding limitations to your own view, you set a measured and responsible tone for the essay.

Opposing Argument Examples

As you read, look for the following:

- What is the author's thesis?
- What key points does the author use to argue the thesis?
- How does the author use reasoning, research and/or examples to affirm his viewpoint?
- How does the author attempt to refute opposing arguments?

"The Case Against Torture," by Alisa Soloman

In “*The Case Against Torture*,” author and professor Alisa Soloman enumerate the reasons torture should never be practiced or justified in a civil society.

Click on the link to view the essay: [“The Case Against Torture” by Alisa Soloman](#)

“The Case for Torture” by Michael Levin

In “*The Case for Torture*,” philosophy professor Michael Levin argues the circumstances under which torture may be justified in a civil society.

Click on the link to view the essay: [“The Case for Torture” by Michael Levin](#)

Bias in Writing

Everyone has various biases on any number of topics. For example, you might have a bias toward wearing black instead of brightly colored clothes or wearing jeans rather than formal wear. You might have a bias toward working at night rather than in the morning, or working by deadlines rather than getting tasks done in advance. These examples identify minor biases, of course, but they still indicate preferences and opinions.

Handling bias in writing and in daily life can be a useful skill. It will allow you to articulate your own points of view while also defending yourself against unreasonable points of view. The ideal in persuasive writing is to let your reader know your bias, but do not let that bias blind you to the primary components of good argumentation: sound, thoughtful evidence and a respectful and reasonable address of opposing sides.

The strength of a personal bias is that it can motivate you to construct a strong argument. If you are invested in the topic, you are more likely to care about the piece of writing. Similarly, the more you care, the more time and effort you are apt to put forth and the better the final product will be.

The weakness of bias is when the bias begins to take

over the essay—when, for example, you neglect opposing ideas, exaggerate your points, or repeatedly insert yourself ahead of the subject by using I too often. Being aware of all three of these pitfalls will help you avoid them.

Key Takeaway

- You should let your reader know your bias, but do not let that bias blind you to the primary components of good argumentation: sound, thoughtful evidence and respectfully and reasonably addressing opposing ideas.

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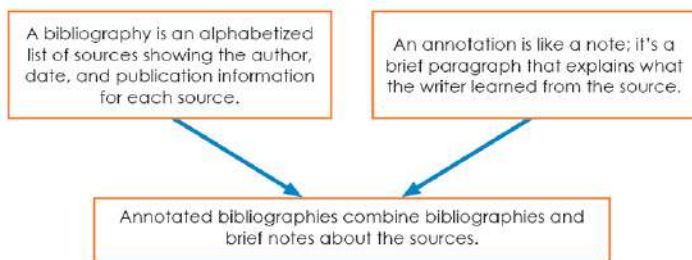
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8

Annotated Bibliography



Annotated Bibliographies



Writers often create annotated bibliographies as a part of a research project, as a means of recording their

thoughts and deciding which sources to actually use to support the purpose of their research. Some writers include annotated bibliographies at the end of a research paper as a way of offering their insights about the source's usability to their readers.

Instructors in college often assign annotated bibliographies as a means of helping students think through their source's quality and appropriateness to their research question or topic.

Although it may take a while to complete the annotated bibliography, the annotations themselves are relatively brief.

Annotations may include three things:

1. A brief summary of the information in that source.
2. A brief evaluation of the quality of the source's information.
3. A brief evaluation of whether the source is useful for the purpose of the research.

NOTE: Although there is a basic structure to annotated bibliographies that most professors will follow, your professor may require something a little different. Be sure to follow your assignment instructions, as each professor may have expectations that are slightly different.

Tips on Writing an Annotated

Bibliography

You need a **relatively narrow focus** (a relatively narrow research question or a working thesis sentence with a clear angle) in order to gain value from doing an annotated bibliography.



As you research, **select the sources that seem most related** to your narrow focus. **Skim the sources first**; then more carefully read those that seem useful to your research focus.

In your annotation for each entry in your annotated bibliography, **summarize the source**. Reproduce the author's main ideas in your own words. Be careful to change the wording and the structure as you put the information from the source into your own words.

After you summarize, **analyze the source**. Ask yourself questions such as the following: Is there enough relevant information to address my narrow focus? Does the author delve deeply into the subject as opposed to offering a general overview? What type of evidence does the author use? Does the author use statistical information accurately, to the best of my knowledge?

Some professors will ask you to do a mini-rhetorical analysis in the annotated bibliography. This is just a deeper version of the source analysis described above.

Finally, **evaluate the source's usefulness** to the narrow focus of your research. Make connections between the source and your focus for your project.

Be sure to **use the assigned bibliographic style** (usually standard MLA or APA style) to create the bibliography entry that starts off each annotated source on your list.

In most annotated bibliographies, your summary, analysis, and evaluation for each source become the body of your annotation for that source. Some annotated bibliographies may not require all three of these elements, but most will. Be sure to consult your professor and ask questions if you're unsure about the required elements within each entry of your annotated bibliography.

A quick tour of the what, why, and how of an annotated bibliography. Created to support information literacy instruction at Lincoln Memorial University.



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9

Outlines



Outlining

A strong outline is like a road map for your research paper. Outlining can help you maintain a clear focus in your research essay because an outline helps you see your whole paper in a condensed



form, which can help you create a good plan for how you'll organize your research and develop your ideas.

Just as there are different types of essays, there are different outline structures appropriate to different fields and different types of essay assignments. You'll want to consult with your instructor about any specific

organizational requirements, but the following will provide you with some basic examples of outline structures for research papers in several different fields. Pre-draft and Post Draft outlines.

Pre-Draft Outlines

Traditional Outlining

In many of your courses, you'll be asked to write a traditional, thesis-based research essay. In this structure, you provide a thesis, usually at the end of your introduction, body paragraphs that support your thesis with research, and a conclusion to emphasize the key points of your research paper. You'll likely encounter this type of assignment in classes in the humanities, but you may also be asked to write a traditional research paper in business classes and some introductory courses in the sciences and social sciences.

In the sample on this page, you'll see a basic structure that can be modified to fit the length of your assignment. It's important to note, in shorter research essays, each point of your outline might correspond to a single paragraph, but in longer research papers, you might develop each supporting point over several paragraphs.

Example

Traditional Outline

- I. Introduction
 - I. background, context for topic
 - II. transition to thesis
 - III. thesis statement
- II. Supporting Point 1
 - I. supporting detail
 - I. example 1
 - II. example 2
 - II. supporting detail
 - I. example 1
 - II. example 2
 - III. supporting detail
 - I. example 1
 - II. example 2
- III. Supporting Point 2
- IV. Supporting Point 3
- V. Supporting Point 4
- VI. Conclusion
 - I. review central ideas presented in the body and make connections to the thesis
 - II. transition to closing thoughts
 - III. closing thoughts

Traditional Outline Example

- I. Introduction
 - Thesis statement: Everyone wants the newest and the best digital technology, but the choices are many, and the specifications are often confusing.
- II. E-book readers and the way that people read
 - A. Books easy to access and carry around
 - 1. Electronic downloads
 - 2. Storage in memory for hundreds of books
 - B. An expanding market
 - 1. E-book readers from booksellers
 - 2. E-book readers from electronics and computer companies
 - C. Limitations of current e-book readers
 - 1. Incompatible features from one brand to the next
 - 2. Borrowing and sharing e-books
- III. Film cameras replaced by digital cameras
 - A. Three types of digital cameras
 - 1. Compact digital cameras
 - 2. Single lens reflex cameras, or SLRs
 - 3. Cameras that combine the best features of both
 - B. The confusing "megapixel wars"
 - C. The zoom lens battle
- IV. The confusing choice among televisions
 - A. 1080p vs. 768p
 - B. Plasma screens vs. LCDs
 - C. Home media centers
- V. Conclusion
 - How to be a wise consumer

IMRAD Outlining

In many of your courses in the sciences and social sciences, such as sociology, psychology, and biology, you may be required to write a research paper using the IMRAD format. IMRAD stands for Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion. In this format, you

present your research and discuss your methods for gathering research. Each section of the IMRAD structure can take several paragraphs to develop.

This structure is also sometimes referred to as the APA format, but be sure not to confuse this with the APA format for documentation of your research.

Examples

IMRAD Outline

- I. Introduction
 - I. provide research question
 - II. explain the significance
 - III. review of background or known information on your topic
- II. Methods
 - I. describe your methods for gathering information
 - II. explain your sources of information, both primary and secondary
- III. Results
 - I. describe what you found out from your research.
 - II. develop each point thoroughly, as this is the main section of your research paper
- IV. Discussion

- I. explain the significance of your findings
- II. describe how they support your thesis
- III. discuss the limitations of your research

NOTE: APA does not recommend or require any particular outline for your papers. If you've seen sample papers following APA format, you may have seen the IMRAD format used, but this is not an official APA requirement. Your *assignment* should always dictate outline structure, not a formatting style.

So you might have an assignment that requires APA format for the documentation but a very different organizational pattern. In fact, you may use the traditional outline for some projects written in APA format.

See It in Practice

In this videocast, you'll see how our student writer has organized all of her research into a traditional outline.



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<https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=299#h5p-49>

Checklist

Writing an Effective Outline

This checklist can help you write an effective outline for your assignment. It will also help you discover where you may need to do additional reading or prewriting.

- Do I have a controlling idea that guides the development of the entire piece of writing?
- Do I have three or more main points that I want to make in this piece of writing? Does each main point connect to my controlling idea?
- Is my outline in the best order—chronological order, spatial order, or order of importance—for me to present my main points? Will this order help me get my main point across?
- Do I have supporting details that will help me inform, explain, or prove my main points?
- Do I need to add more support? If so, where?
- Do I need to make any adjustments to my working thesis statement before I consider it the final version?

Key Takeaways

- Writers must put their ideas in order so the assignment makes sense. The most common orders are chronological order, spatial order, and order of importance.
- After gathering and evaluating the information you found for your essay, the next step is to write a

working, or preliminary, thesis statement.

- The working thesis statement expresses the main idea that you want to develop in the entire piece of writing. It can be modified as you continue the writing process.
- Effective writers prepare a formal outline to organize their main ideas and supporting details in the order they will be presented.
- A topic outline uses words and phrases to express ideas.
- A sentence outline uses complete sentences to express ideas.
- The writer's thesis statement begins the outline and the outline ends with suggestions for the concluding paragraph.

Outline Time?

When it is time for you to write your outline, if you are unsure about the structural requirements for your assignment, be sure to ask your professor.

In your outline, you should aim for a level of detail at least similar to what you see in the models, though more detail may be necessary, depending upon the length of your paper. A clear outline gives you a good plan for your paper and will help you determine whether you have a strong research focus before you begin drafting the paper.

It's always a good idea to get feedback on your outline before heading into the drafting and integrating stage of your writing process. Share either a formal or informal

Post Draft Outline

A big huzzah—the rough drafts are done, which is a major hurdle. I know there's still a lot to do, but I think the hardest part's out of the way.

Now, it's time to turn away from the raw content creation of writing a draft and towards the fine-tuning, that transforms into polishing and shaping an effective essay.

Like a pre-draft outline, a post-draft outline is a useful tool for assessing the organization of your paper. After you're done with a rough draft, creating a post-draft outline can help you see how your paper flows from beginning to end.



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PART III

PART 3: RESEARCH

Research motivates most of our writing, whether formally or informally. It is not, however, a natural skill. Though many of us may navigate the Internet with ease, the type of research necessary for college writing requires skilled practice and obeys certain rules. Here, we'll see an overview of these rules and procedures and review the correct way to incorporate others' thoughts in our own work.

Within your own campus community, and with each new class, you may find different standards and expectations for research will apply. This book cannot cover every example; however, it should give you a basis from which to build. As you encounter more demanding research requirements, never hesitate to reach out to the real research experts on your campus: your college librarians

10

Identifying Sources



Research Strategies

As you search for sources on your topic, it's important to make a plan for that research process. You should develop a research strategy that fits within your assignment expectations and considers your source requirements. Your research strategy should be based on the research requirements your professor provides. Some formal research essays should include peer-reviewed journal articles only; however, there are some research papers that may allow you to use a wider variety of sources, including sources from the World Wide Web.

If your professor has not established research requirements for your assignment, it's a good idea to ask. Although general **internet searching** is great for

generating ideas, you may not be able to use internet sources for all research projects.



Database Searching

Databases can help you to identify and secure information across a range of subjects. Such information might include a chapter in a book, an article in a journal, a report, or a government document. Databases are a researcher's best friend, but it can take a little time to get used to searching for sources in your library's databases. Be prepared to spend some time getting comfortable with the databases you're working in, and be prepared to ask questions of your professor and librarians if you feel stuck.



Becoming adept at searching online databases will give you the confidence and skills you need to gather the best sources for your project.

Your online college library can help you learn how to select search terms and understand which database would be the most appropriate for your project. College libraries

will require login information from students in order to access database resources.

Internet Searching

Web research can be an important part of your research process. However, be careful that you use only the highest quality sources that are returned on your general web search. Your paper is only as good as the sources you use within it, so if you use sources that are not written by experts in their field, you may be including misinformed or incorrect information in your paper.

As a general rule, one site to avoid is Wikipedia, which is not considered a quality source for academic writing. While this site is fine for looking up information in a casual way and gaining a better understanding of a subject, it is not recommended for academic writing since information can sometimes be incorrect since the content is user-generated, rather than peer-reviewed and written by experts; peer-reviewed and works written by experts can be found in academic journals, news articles, magazines, or published books. It is also considered more of a “general knowledge” source, and academic writing favors sources with more specific information.

Still, when you are researching on the web, search engines are effective tools for locating web pages relevant to your research, and they can save you time and frustration. However, for searches to yield the best results, you need a strategy and some basic knowledge of how search engines work. Without a clear search strategy, using a search engine is like wandering aimlessly in a field of corn looking for the perfect ear.

Strategies



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See It in Practice

In the videocast below, you'll see our student writer discuss her research strategy and share some of the results of her work researching her question.



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<https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=51#h5p-52>

Evaluating Sources

As you gather sources for your research, you'll need to know how to assess the validity and reliability of the materials you find.

Keep in mind that the sources you find have all been put out there by groups, organizations, corporations, or individuals who have some motivation for getting this information to you. To be a good researcher, you need to learn how to assess the materials you find and determine



their reliability—before deciding if you want to use them and, if so, how you want to use them.

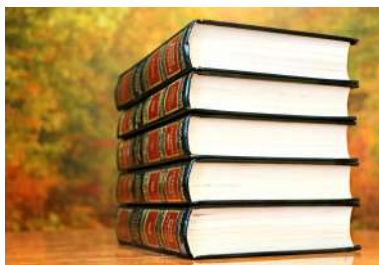
Whether you are examining the material in books, journals, magazines, newspapers, or websites, you want to consider several issues before deciding if and how to use the material you have found.

- Suitability
- Authorship and Authority
- Documentation
- Timeliness

Source Suitability

Does the source fit your needs and purpose?

Before you start amassing large amounts of research materials, think about the types of materials you will need to meet the specific requirements of your project.



Overview Materials

Encyclopedias, general interest magazines (*Time*, *Newsweek* online), or online general news sites (CNN, MSNBC) are good places to begin your research to get an overview of your topic and the big questions associated with your particular project. But once you get to the paper itself, you may not want to use these for your main sources.

Focused Lay Materials

For a college-level research paper, you need to look for books, journal articles, and websites that are put out by organizations that do in-depth work for the general public on issues related to your topic. For example, an article on the melting of the polar icecaps in *Time* magazine offers you an overview of the issue. But such articles are generally written by non-scientists for a non-scientific audience that wants a general—not an in-depth—understanding of the issue. Although you'll want to start with overview materials to give yourself a broad-stroke understanding of your topic, you'll soon need to move to journals and websites in the field. For example, instead of looking at online stories on the icecaps from CNN, you should look at the materials at the website for the National Resources Defense Council (NRDC) or reports found at the website for the National Snow and Ice Data Center (NSIDC). You also should look at some of the recent reports on the polar icecaps in *Scientific American* or *The Ecologist*.

Specialists' Materials

If you already have a strong background in your topic area, you could venture into specialists' books, journals, and websites. For example, only someone with a strong background in the field would be able to read and understand the papers published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* or the *Journal of the Atmospheric Sciences*. Sources such as these are suitable for more advanced research paper assignments in upper-level

courses, but you may encounter source requirements like these in freshman writing courses.

Authorship & Authority

When you consider the quality of your sources, you should also consider the authorship and authority of your sources. Who wrote the material? Is that person or organization credible? The following information will provide you with more details on authorship and authority to help you make good decisions about your sources.

Publisher-Provided Biographical Information

Often, books and scholarly journals will have a short biography of the author, outlining her or his credentials: education, publications, and experience in the field.

Look the biography over. Does the material there seem to suggest this writer has in-depth knowledge on the topic? What educational credentials does the writer have? If the writer is a trained economist but is writing on scientific matters, you need to keep that in mind as you look at her or his arguments. If the writer is associated with a specific conservative or liberal think tank, be aware that the arguments presented will probably reflect the ideology of that organization.

An ideological agenda does not mean that you have to avoid material. You simply need to read it with an awareness that the writer is writing from a specific point of view.

Minimal qualifications or qualifications that seem

unrelated to the topic are a warning sign to you that you might want to reconsider using the material.

Outside Biographical Information

If no biography is attached to the work, an advanced search on Google or another search engine can be very helpful. You might also check hard copy or online sources such as Contemporary Authors, Book Review Index, or Biography index.

Many authors also have their own websites, listing information about their educational background, current and past research, and experience.

If you can find no or little information about a writer, be careful about using her or his material. You may want to consider replacing it altogether with a different source where the credentials of the writer are more readily available.

No Author Listed

While you want to be careful of sources without authors, that doesn't mean you can't use them. Often, websites won't list an author. In that case, you need to evaluate the sponsoring organization. Look for the following information:

- Does the home page offer information about the organization?
- Is there a mission statement?
- Does the site offer any indication that the material on the webpage has been reviewed or checked by experts, often called a "peer-review process"?

- Does the site provide a link with an address, phone, and email?

Yes — If you find only some of the points from the bulleted list, try filling in the blanks with an internet search on the organization. Often, an encyclopedia — online or hard copy — provides background information on an organization. Try to find out a little bit about who funds it, who its audience is, and what its objectives are.

Again, discovering that an organization has specific ideological ties does not mean that you need to discard the material you have found there. You simply need to use it carefully and balance it with material from other sources.

No — If the answer to all of the bulleted questions is “no,” be careful!

A site that provides no information about its sponsors is a site that you should avoid using for your paper.

If no one is willing to put her or his name on the site and accept responsibility for the information, do you think you should trust that information for your research? Definitely not.



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Evaluating Sources: Documentation

Where does the book/article/website get its information?

Look for a bibliography and/or footnotes. In a piece of writing that is making a

case using data, historical or scientific references, or appeals to outside sources of any kind, those sources should be thoroughly documented. The writer should give you enough information to go and find those sources yourself and double-check that the materials are used accurately and fairly by the author.

Popular news magazines, such as *Time* or *Newsweek* online, will generally not have formal bibliographies or footnotes with their articles. The writers of these articles will usually identify their sources within their texts, referring to studies, officials, or other texts. These types of articles, though not considered academic, may be acceptable for some undergraduate college-level research papers. Check with your instructor to make sure that these types of materials are allowed as sources in your paper.

Examine the sources used by the author. Is the author depending heavily on just one or two sources for his or her entire argument? That's a red flag for you. Is the author relying heavily on anonymous sources? There's another red flag. Are the sources outdated? Another red flag.



If references to outside materials are missing or scant, you should treat this piece of writing with skepticism. Consider finding an alternative source with better documentation.

Timely Sources



Is the material up-to-date?

The best research draws on the most current work in the field. That said, depending on the discipline, some work has a longer shelf life than others. For example, important articles in literature, art, and music often tend to be considered current for years, or even decades, after publication. Articles in the physical sciences, however, are usually considered outdated within a year or two (or even sooner) after publication.

In choosing your materials, you need to think about the argument you're making and the field (discipline) within which you're making it.

For example, if you're arguing that climate change is indeed anthropogenic (human-caused), do you want to use articles published more than four or five years ago? No. Because science has evolved very rapidly on that question,

you need to depend most heavily on research published within the last year or two.

However, suppose you're arguing that blues music evolved from the field songs of American slaves. In this case, you should not only look at recent writing on the topic (within the last five years), but also look at historical assessments of the relationship between blues and slavery from previous decades.

Timeliness and Websites

Scrutinize websites, in particular, for dates of posting or for the last time the site was updated. Some sites have been left up for months or years without the site's owner returning to update or monitor the site. If sites appear to have no regular oversight, you should look for alternative materials for your paper.



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Friebolin, C. (2012, July 24). *Can't lie on the internet* [Video]. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/bufTnaoWArc>

You may have seen the commercial above making a point about how you have to be careful of what you find on the internet. This is true in life and in your efforts to find quality sources for academic papers.

The internet is particularly challenging because anyone can really post anything they want on the internet. At the

same time, there are some really quality sources out there, such as online journals.

The important thing is to use skepticism, use the guidelines you have read about in this section of Research, and be sure to ask your professor if general web sources are even allowed. Sometimes, in an effort to have students steer clear of inaccurate information, professors will forbid general web sources for a paper, but this is not always the case. If you are allowed to go to the web to locate sources, just remember to check for **suitability**, **credibility**, and **timeliness** using the guidelines presented here.

Using an [Evaluation Checklist](#) will also give you some good guidelines to remember, no matter where you found your source.

See It in Practice

Now that you have an understanding of some effective ways to evaluate sources, it's time to check in with our student writer. In this videocast, you'll see our student writer evaluate one of her sources for relevance or suitability, credibility, and timeliness.



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Using Evidence

When writing an argumentative essay, you'll definitely want to locate quality sources to support your claims, and you have a lot of options for sources. You can look for support for your argument in

journal articles, magazine articles, documentaries, and more. You may even be allowed to use **personal experience** and observations, but this isn't always the case. No matter what, you'll want logical, clear, and reasonable evidence that helps you support your claims and convince your audience.

It's important to review the [logical fallacies](#) before you develop evidence for your claims. If you're using personal experience, you have to be careful that you don't make claims that are too broad-based on limited experiences.

The following pages provide you with information on the types of sources you may be able to include, how to decide if your sources are credible, and how to make good decisions about using your sources.



Experience

Chances are, if you have chosen an issue to write about for your argumentative essay, you have chosen a topic that means something to you. With this in mind, you may have had a personal experience



related to the issue that you would like to share with your audience.

This isn't always going to be allowed in an argumentative essay, as some professors will want you to focus more on outside sources. However, many times, you'll be allowed to present personal experience. Just be sure to check with your professor.

If you do have personal experiences to share, you have to make sure you use those experiences carefully. After all, you want your evidence to build your [ethos](#), not take away from it. If you have witnessed examples that are relevant, you can share those as long as you make sure you don't make claims that are too big based on those experiences.

❌ Here's an example of ineffective use of personal experience as evidence:

A student is writing an argumentative paper on welfare reform, arguing that there are too many abuses of the system. The student gives an example of a cousin who abuses the

system and makes a claim that this is evidence that abuse of the system is widespread.

Here's an example of how the student might use personal experience as evidence more effectively:

A student is writing an argumentative paper on welfare reform and has statistical evidence to support claims that the system is not working well. Instead of using the personal experience of a cousin who abuses the system as key evidence, the student shares data and then presents the personal experience as an example that some people may witness.

Primary Sources

When you use source material outside of your own experience, you're using either primary or secondary sources. **Primary sources** are sources that were created or written

during the time period in which they reference and can include things like diaries, letters, films, interviews, and even results from research studies. **Secondary sources** are sources that analyze primary sources in some way and



include things like magazine and journal articles that analyze study results, literature, interviews, etc.

Sometimes, you'll be conducting original research as you work to develop your argument, and your professor may encourage you to do things like conduct interviews or locate original documents. Personal interviews can be excellent sources that can help you build your [ethos, pathos, and logos](#) in your essay.

When conducting an interview for your research, it's important to be prepared in order to make the most of your time with the person you are interviewing.

TIPS!

The following tips will help you get the most out of your interview:

- Prepare questions you want to ask in advance.
- Be prepared with some follow-up questions, just in case the questions you have prepared don't get the interviewee talking as you had hoped.
- Have a recording device handy. It's a good idea to record your interview if your interviewee is okay with it.
- If you can't record the interview, come prepared to take good notes.
- Record the date of your interview, as you will need this for documentation.
- Obtain contact information for your interviewee in case you have follow-up questions later.
- Be polite and appreciative to your interviewee, as

you will want the experience to be a positive one all the way around.

Secondary Sources

When you're searching for secondary source material to support your claims, you want to keep some basic ideas in mind:

- Your source material should be **relevant** to your content.
- Your source material should be **credible**, as you want your sources to help you build your ethos.
- Your source material should be **current** enough to feel relevant to your audience.

Before you make your final decisions about the sources you'll use in your argumentative essay, it's important to review the following pages and take advantage of the helpful [source credibility checklist](#).



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Source Integration

Just as with any type of essay, when you write an argumentative essay, you want to integrate your sources effectively. This means you want to think about the different ways you integrate your sources (paraphrasing, summarizing, quoting) and how you can make sure your audience knows your source information is credible and relevant. this [helpful checklist on source integration](#) can help you remember some of the key best practices when it comes to getting the most out of your source material in your argumentative essay.

These key lessons on source integration in **Research** are relevant.

- Summarizing
- Paraphrasing
- Quoting
- Signal Phrases

Your authority as a scholar will be enhanced when you demonstrate your ability to use and integrate outside sources in a fair and attentive manner. By doing so, you help to demonstrate that you have carefully read and considered the material on your topic. Your reader sees not only your ideas alone but also your points contextualized by the conversations of others. In this way, you establish yourself as one of the members of the community of scholars engaged with the same idea.

Paragraphing: MEAL Plan

When it's time to draft your essay and bring your content

together for your audience, you will be working to build strong paragraphs. Your paragraphs in a research paper will focus on presenting the information you found in your source material and commenting on or analyzing that information. *It's not enough to simply present the information in your body paragraphs and move on. You want to give that information a purpose and connect it to your main idea or thesis statement.*

Your body paragraphs in a research paper will include summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting your source material, but you may be wondering if there is an effective way to organize this information.

Duke University coined a term called the “MEAL Plan” that provides an effective structure for paragraphs in an academic research paper. Select the pluses to learn what each letter stands for.



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Here is the same information with examples:



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Summarizing

One way to integrate your source information is through

the summary. Summaries are generally used to restate the main ideas of a text in your own words. They are usually substantially shorter than the original text because they don't include supporting material. Instead, they include overarching ideas of an article, a page, or a paragraph.

Some summaries, such as the ones that accompany annotated bibliographies, are very short, just a sentence or two. Others are much longer, though summaries are always much shorter than the text being summarized in the first place.

Summaries of different lengths are useful in research writing because you often need to provide your readers with an explanation of the text you are discussing. This is especially true when you are going to quote or paraphrase from a source.

Of course, the first step in writing a good summary is to do a thorough reading of the text you are going to summarize in the first place. Beyond that important start, there are a few basic guidelines you should follow when you write summary material:

- Stay “neutral” in your summarizing. Summaries provide “just the facts” and are not the place where you offer your opinions about the text you are summarizing. Save your opinions and evaluation of the evidence you are summarizing for other parts of your writing.
- Don't quote from what you are summarizing. Summaries will be more useful to you and your colleagues if you write them in your own words.
- Don't “cut and paste” from database abstracts. Many

of the periodical indexes that are available as part of your library's computer system include abstracts of articles. Do not "cut" this abstract material and then "paste" it into your own annotated bibliography. For one thing, this is plagiarism. Second, "cutting and pasting" from the abstract defeats one of the purposes of writing summaries and creating an annotated bibliography in the first place, which is to help you understand and explain your research.

For example, in the first chapter of his 1854 book, *Walden; or, Life in the Woods*, Henry David Thoreau wrote the following:

Most men, even in this comparatively free country, through mere ignorance and mistake, are so occupied with the factitious cares and superfluously coarse labors of life that its finer fruits cannot be plucked by them. Their fingers, from excessive toil, are too clumsy and tremble too much for that. Actually, the laboring man has not leisure for a true integrity day by day; he cannot afford to sustain the manliest relations to men; his labor would be depreciated in the market. He has no time to be anything but a machine. How can he remember well his ignorance—which his growth requires—who has so often to use his knowledge? We should feed and clothe him gratuitously sometimes, and recruit him with our cordials, before we judge of him. The finest qualities of our nature, like the bloom on fruits, can be preserved only by the most delicate handling. Yet we do not treat ourselves nor one another thus tenderly.

What is the main idea in the passage above? The following is one way the passage might be summarized.

In his 1854 text, *Walden; or, Life in the Woods*, Henry David Thoreau suggests that the human fixation on work and labor desensitizes man to the world around him, to the needs of his own intellectual growth, and to the complexity and frailty of his fellow humans.

NOTE: The summary accomplishes two goals:

1. It contextualizes the information (who said it, when, and where).
2. It lists the main ideas of the passage without using quotations or citing specific supporting points of the passage.



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You should use summaries of your source materials when you need to capture main ideas to support a point you are making.

How to Quote and Paraphrase: An Overview

Writers quote and paraphrase from research in order to support their points and to persuade their readers. A quote or a paraphrase from a piece of evidence in support of a point answers the reader's question, "says who?"

This is especially true in academic writing since scholarly readers are most persuaded by effective research and evidence. For example, readers of an article about a new cancer medication published in a medical journal will be most interested in the scholar's research and statistics that demonstrate the effectiveness of the treatment.

Conversely, they will not be as persuaded by emotional stories from individual patients about how a new cancer medication improved the quality of their lives. While this appeal to emotion can be effective and is common in popular sources, these individual anecdotes do not carry the same sort of "scholarly" or scientific value as well-reasoned research and evidence.

Of course, your instructor is not expecting you to be an expert on the topic of your research paper. While you might conduct some primary research, it's a good bet that you'll be relying on secondary sources such as books, articles, and Web sites to inform and persuade your readers. You'll present this research to your readers in the form of quotes and paraphrases.

A "quote" is a direct restatement of the exact words from the original source. The general rule of thumb is any time you use three or more words as they appeared in the original source, you should treat it as a quote. A "paraphrase" is a restatement of the information or point of the original source in your own words.

While quotes and paraphrases are different and should be

used in different ways in your research writing (as the examples in this section suggest), they do have a number of things in common. Both quotes and paraphrases should:

- be “introduced” to the reader, particularly the first time you mention a source;
- include an explanation of the evidence which explains to the reader why you think the evidence is important, especially if it is not apparent from the context of the quote or paraphrase; and
- include a proper citation of the source.

Paraphrasing

When you want to use specific materials from an argument to support a point you are making in your paper but want to avoid too many quotes, you should paraphrase.

What is a paraphrase?

Paraphrases are generally as long, and sometimes longer than the original text. In a paraphrase, you use your own words to explain the specific points another writer has made. If the original text refers to an idea or term discussed earlier in the text, your paraphrase may also need to explain or define that idea. You may also need to interpret specific terms made by the writer in the original text.

Be careful not to add information or commentary that

isn't part of the original passage in the midst of your paraphrase. You don't want to add to or take away from the meaning of the passage you are paraphrasing. Save your comments and analysis until after you have finished your paraphrased and cited it appropriately.

What does paraphrasing look like?

Paraphrases should begin by making it clear that the information to come is from your source. If you are using APA format, a year citation should follow your mention of the author.

For example, using the Thoreau passage as an example, you might begin a paraphrase like this:

Even though Thoreau (1854) praised the virtues of intellectual life, he did not consider....

Paraphrases may sometimes include brief quotations, but most of the paraphrase should be in your own words.

What might a paraphrase of this passage from Thoreau look like?

Passage

"Most men, even in this comparatively free country, through mere ignorance and mistake, are so occupied with the factitious cares and superfluously coarse labors of life that its finer fruits cannot be plucked by them. Their fingers, from excessive toil, are too clumsy and tremble too much for that. Actually, the

laboring man has not leisure for a true integrity day by day; he cannot afford to sustain the manliest relations to men; his labor would be depreciated in the market.”

Paraphrase

In his text, *Walden; or, Life in the Woods*, Henry David Thoreau (1854) points to the incongruity of free men becoming enslaved and limited by constant labor and worry. Using the metaphor of fruit to represent the pleasures of a thoughtful life, Thoreau suggests that men have become so traumatized by constant labor that their hands—as representative of their minds—have become unable to pick the fruits available to a less burdened life even when that fruit becomes available to them (p. 110).

Note that the passage above is almost exactly the same length as the original. It’s also important to note that the paraphrased passage has a different structure and significant changes in wording. The main ideas are the same, but the student has paraphrased effectively by putting the information into their own words.



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What are the benefits of paraphrasing?

The paraphrase accomplishes three goals:

1. Like the summary, it contextualizes the information (who said it, when, and where).
2. It restates all the supporting points used by Thoreau to develop the idea that man is hurt by focusing too much on labor.
3. The writer uses their own words for most of the paraphrase, allowing the writer to maintain a strong voice while sharing important information from the source.

Paraphrasing is likely the most common way you will integrate your source information. Quoting should be minimal in most research papers. Paraphrasing allows you to integrate sources without losing your voice as a writer to those sources. Paraphrasing can be tricky, however. You really have to make changes to the wording. Changing a few words here and there doesn't count as a paraphrase, and, if you don't quote those words, can get you into trouble with [plagiarism](#).

Paraphrasing Structure

As noted, when you paraphrase, you have to do more than change the words from the original passage. You have to also change the sentence structure. Sometimes, students will struggle with paraphrasing because they have an urge

to simply use the same basic sentence or sentences and replace the original words with synonyms. This is not a method that works for effective paraphrasing.

Let's see what that looks like. Here's an original quote from an article about a new video game based on Thoreau's famous work, *Walden*.

Original Quote

"The digital Walden Pond will showcase a first-person point-of-view where you can wander through the lush New England foliage, stop to examine a bush and pick some fruit, cast a fishing rod, return to a spartan cabin modeled after Thoreau's and just roam around the woods, grappling with life's unknowable questions."

Incorrect Paraphrasing

According to Hayden (2012), the Walden Pond game will offer a first-person view in which the play can meander within the New England trees and wilderness, pause to study foliage or grab some food, go fishing, return home to a small cabin based on Thoreau's cabin, and just venture around in the woods, pondering important questions of life (para. 3).

Explanation

Here, you can see that the "paraphrase" follows the exact same structure as the original passage. Even though

the wording has been changed, this would be considered a form of plagiarism by some because the sentence structure has been copied, taking this beyond just sharing the ideas of the passage. Let's take a look at a better paraphrase of the passage.

Correct Paraphrasing

According to Hayden (2012), the upcoming video game *Walden Pond* is a first-person game that simulates the life and experiences of Thoreau when he lived at Walden Pond. Based upon Thoreau's famous work, *Walden*, the game allows players to experience life in the New England woods, providing opportunities for players to fish, gather food, live in a cabin, and contemplate life, all within a digital world (para. 3).

Explanation

In this paraphrase, the student has captured the main idea of the passage but changed the sentence structure and the wording. The student has added some context, which is often helpful in a paraphrase, by providing some background for the game.

You will now have the chance to practice your ability to recognize an effective paraphrase in the Paraphrasing Activity.



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Using Quotations

Quotations are another way to integrate source information into your paragraphs, but you should use them sparingly.

How do you know when you should use quotations in your essay? Essentially, quotations should function to

support, comment on, or give an example of a point you are making in your own words. And, of course, you should keep in mind that quotes should be kept to a minimum. A good “rule” to remember is that you only want to use a quote when it’s absolutely necessary, when your source puts something in a way that just needs to be put that way



or when you need a quote from an expert to support a point you have already made.

You should also remember that you don't want to use quotations to make your point for you. Readers should be able to skip the quotations in your paper and still understand all your main points. This means, after each quote, you have to provide an analysis for that quote. This works well if you follow the MEAL Plan. The idea is to help your audience gather the meaning from the quote you want them to gather. It's your job as a writer to make the quote meaningful for your audience.

Integrating quotations smoothly and effectively is one sign of a truly polished writer. Well-chosen and well-integrated quotations add strength to an argument. But many new writers do not know how to do the choosing and integrating effectively. The following guidelines will help make your quotations operate not as stumbling blocks to a reader, but as smooth and easy stepping-stones through the pathways of your paper.

When to Use Quotes

Use quotations in the following situations:

- When the wording is so specific to the meaning that you cannot change the wording without changing the meaning.
- When the wording is poetic or unique, and you want to maintain that unique quality of wording as part of the point you are making. This guideline may

also apply when the wording is highly technically-specific.

- When you are doing a critical/literary analysis of a text.
- When you want to maintain the specific authority of the words of a well-known or highly-reputable author in order to add to the credibility of your own argument.
- In most other cases, you should use your own words, a summary, or a paraphrase of your source, to make your point.

Using Phrases & Words

Although you generally want to avoid using too many short quotes when you write, there are times when you need to quote a word or a phrase as a part of your own sentence. Short phrases and single words should work smoothly with the structure of your own sentence. Look, for example, at the way the brief passages from Thoreau's *Walden* flow into the surrounding sentence:

The demands of a market economy, in fact, would penalize a man who chose to give precedence to relationships and “true integrity” over labor: an over-emphasis on work leaves a man dehumanized and with “no time to be anything but a machine” (Thoreau 21).

Using Sentences

Usually, when you find it necessary to quote, you'll be using a full sentence or two from a text as a quotation. In addition to making sure the quote is necessary and meaningful, be sure to make the quote works with your own writing. Your quote must work well in terms of the flow of your writing and in terms of the content. You don't want to simply drop in a quote without connecting it to the surrounding text. Look, for example, at the following:

Thoreau argues that a market economy penalizes a man who chooses to give precedence to parts of his life other than work. "Actually, the laboring man has no leisure for a true integrity day by day; he cannot afford to sustain the manliest relations to men; his labor would be depreciated in the market" (21).

The quotation, "Actually, the laboring man..." isn't connected to the previous sentence, and there's no analysis following the quote to help readers understand its meaning and purpose.

Here are some good content guidelines to follow when using sentences as quotations:

- **Be sure to give your quote some set up and context.** You will learn more about doing this in the next lesson on signal phrases.
- **Don't forget to provide a proper citation for your quote.** Find out if you need to follow MLA, APA, or

another documentation style's guidelines.

- After your quote, you'll need **anywhere from a sentence to several sentences to provide commentary or analysis on the quote**. How much you write here will depend upon the situation and the quote, but you always need something following a quote, as you want to control how your reader understands the quote.

And, in addition to those content guidelines, here are some good guidelines when thinking about your sentence structure as you set up your quote:

- When the introductory text is a complete sentence, connect it to the quotation with a colon.
- When the introductory text is an introductory phrase (rather than a complete sentence), connect it to the quotation with a comma.
- When the introductory text works directly with the flow of the sentence that follows, use no punctuation at all.

Long Quotations

Long quotations should be kept to a minimum in your essay. Mrs. Jones recommends no more than one long quote per five (5) pages of essay. So, in a ten (10) page paper, you shouldn't have more than 2 long quotes. Additionally, you should only use those parts of the long quotation that you really need. If a passage has a middle section that doesn't relate to the point you are making, drop it out and

replace it with an ellipsis (...) to indicate that you have left out part of the original text.

Set up long quotations in blocks; these are generally called block quotations. Block quotations are most often used if the passage takes up more than four typed lines in your paper. Indentation and spacing guidelines vary depending on the formatting style you are using (APA, MLA, Chicago, or other). English 102 for Mrs. Jones requires APA style. In APA style, long quotes are called block quotations, so don't get confused.

Leave the quotation marks off of a block quotation. The indentation itself is the visual indicator to the reader that the text is a quote. Block quotations usually are introduced with a full sentence that summarizes the main point of the quotation. This introductory sentence should be followed by a colon, as in the example below.

Henry David Thoreau argued in *Walden* that men who are over-occupied with labor run the risk of becoming dehumanized. They must be granted the time to learn about, and address, their own shortcomings in order to fully mature as humans:

He has not time to be anything but a machine. How can he remember well his ignorance—which his growth requires—who has so often to use his knowledge? We should feed and clothe him gratuitously sometimes, and recruit him with our cordials, before we judge of him. The finest qualities of our nature, like the bloom on fruits, can be preserved only by the most delicate handling. (23)

It's important to remember that longer quotes should be set up and followed by commentary and analysis, just like shorter quotes. For long quotes, you should follow the same guidelines related to content that you follow for shorter quotes. It's important to always think rhetorically about your writing, even when you're quoting. So, if you use a long quote in your essay, be sure to provide some analysis after that quote to let your audience know why the quote is there and why it's important. Otherwise, long quotes can look and feel like "filler" to your audience.

APA Long Quote Guidelines

Block Quotations (40 Words or More)

Format quotations of 40 words or more as block quotations:

- Do not use quotation marks to enclose a block quotation.
- Start a block quotation on a new line and indent the whole block 0.5 in. from the left margin.
- Double-space the entire block quotation.
- Do not add extra space before or after it.
- If there are additional paragraphs within the quotation, indent the first line of each subsequent paragraph an additional 0.5 in.
- Either (a) cite the source in parentheses after the quotation's final punctuation or (b) cite the author and year in the narrative before the quotation and place only the page number in parentheses after the quotation's final punctuation.

- Do not add a period after the closing parenthesis in either case.

Block quotation with a parenthetical citation:

Researchers have studied how people talk to themselves:

Inner speech is a paradoxical phenomenon. It is an experience that is central to many people's everyday lives, and yet it presents considerable challenges to any effort to study it scientifically. Nevertheless, a wide range of methodologies and approaches have combined to shed light on the subjective experience of inner speech and its cognitive and neural underpinnings. (Alderson-Day & Fernyhough, 2015, p. 957)

Block quotation with a narrative citation:

Flores et al. (2018) described how they addressed potential researcher bias when working with an intersectional community of transgender people of color:

Everyone on the research team belonged to a stigmatized group but also held privileged identities. Throughout the research process, we attended to the ways in which our privileged and oppressed identities may have influenced the research process, findings, and presentation of results. (p. 311)

When to Quote, When to Paraphrase

The real “art” to research writing is using quotes and paraphrases from evidence effectively in order to support your point. There are certain “rules,” dictated by the rules of style you are following, such as the ones presented by the MLA or the ones presented by the APA.

There are certain “guidelines” and suggestions, like the ones I offer in the previous section and the ones you will learn from your teacher and colleagues.

But when all is said and done, the question of when to quote and when to paraphrase depends a great deal on the specific context of the writing and the effect you are trying to achieve. Learning the best times to quote and paraphrase takes practice and experience.

In general, it is best to use a quote when:

- The exact words of your source are important for the point you are trying to make. This is especially true if you are quoting technical language, terms, or very specific word choices.
- You want to highlight your agreement with the author’s words. If you agree with the point the author of the evidence makes and you like their exact words, use them as a quote.

- **You want to highlight your disagreement with the author's words.** In other words, you may sometimes want to use a direct quote to indicate exactly what it is you disagree about. This might be particularly true when you are considering the antithetical positions in your research writing projects.

In general, it is best to paraphrase when:

- **There is no good reason to use a quote to refer to your evidence.** If the author's exact words are not especially important to the point you are trying to make, you are usually better off paraphrasing the evidence.
- **You are trying to explain a particular piece of evidence in order to explain or interpret it in more detail.** This might be particularly true in writing projects like critiques.
- **You need to balance a direct quote in your writing.** You need to be careful about directly quoting your research too much because it can sometimes make for awkward and difficult to read prose. So, one of the reasons to use a paraphrase instead of a quote is to create balance within your writing.

Tips for Quoting and Paraphrasing

- **Introduce** your quotes and paraphrases to your reader, especially on the first reference.
- **Explain** the significance of the quote or paraphrase it to your reader.
- **Cite** your quote or paraphrase properly according to the rules of style you are following in your essay.
- **Quote when** the exact words are important when you want to highlight your agreement or your disagreement.
- **Paraphrase when** the exact words aren't important, when you want to explain the point of your evidence, or when you need to balance the direct quotes in your writing.

Signal Phrases Activity



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=51#h5p-56>

After completing this activity, you may download or print a completion report that summarizes your results.

See It in Practice

In this videocast, you'll see our student writer examine her rough draft and discuss how she integrated her source material into her paper.



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=51#h5p-57>

Annotating Sources

As a part of your argumentative research process, your professor may require an argumentative annotated bibliography. An **annotated bibliography** is a list of potential sources for your paper or project with summaries and evaluations. A traditional annotated bibliography can be found on the [Annotated Bibliographies](#) page, but your professor may ask you to take an argumentative angle with your annotated bibliography and focus more attention on evaluating the persuasive elements of the source.

A basic argumentative annotated bibliography will include the following for each entry:

- Reference information following a particular formatting style (APA, MLA, or another)
- A summary of the source's content
- A thorough evaluation of the argument that includes a focus on rhetorical concepts and terms
- A few sentences on how you will use this source in your paper or project

A sample argumentative annotated bibliography can be

found [here](#). In the sample, the different parts of each entry have been noted for you.

Using Evidence Activity



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=51#h5p-58>

After completing this activity, you may download or print a completion report that summarizes your results.

Using Sources Blending Source Material with Your Own Work

When working with sources, many students worry they are simply regurgitating ideas that others formulated. That is why it is important for you to develop your own assertions, organize your findings so that your own ideas are still the thrust of the paper, and take care not to rely too much on any one source, or your paper's content might be controlled too heavily by that source.

In practical terms, some ways to develop and back up your assertions include:

Blend sources with your assertions. Organize your sources before and as you write so that they blend, even within paragraphs. Your paper—both globally and at the paragraph level—should reveal relationships among your sources, and should also reveal the relationships between your own ideas and those of your sources.

Write an original introduction and conclusion. As much as is practical, make the paper's introduction and conclusion your own ideas or your own synthesis of the ideas inherent in your research. Use sources minimally in your introduction and conclusion.

Open and close paragraphs with originality. In general, use the openings and closing of your paragraphs to reveal your work—"enclose" your sources among your assertions. At a minimum, create your own topic sentences and wrap-up sentences for paragraphs.

Use transparent rhetorical strategies. When appropriate, outwardly practice such rhetorical strategies as analysis, synthesis, comparison, contrast, summary, description,

definition, hierarchical structure, evaluation, hypothesis, generalization, classification, and even narration. Prove to your reader that you are thinking as you write.

Also, you must clarify where your own ideas end and the cited information begins. Part of your job is to help your reader draw the line between these two things, often by the way you create a context for the cited information. A phrase such as “A 1979 study revealed that . . .” is an obvious announcement of citation to come. Another recommended technique is the insertion of the author’s name into the text to announce the beginning of your cited information. You may worry that you are not allowed to give the actual names of sources you have studied in the paper’s text, but just the opposite is true. In fact, the more respectable a source you cite, the more impressed your reader is likely to be with your material while reading. If you note that the source is the NASA Science website or an article by Stephen Jay Gould or a recent edition of *The Wall Street Journal* right in your text, you offer your readers immediate context without their having to guess or flip to the references page to look up the source.

What follows is an excerpt from a political science paper that clearly and admirably draws the line between writer and cited information:

The above political upheaval illuminates the reasons behind the growing Iranian hatred of foreign interference; as a result of this hatred, three enduring geopolitical patterns have evolved in Iran, as noted by John Limbert. First . . .

Note how the writer begins by redefining her previous

paragraph's topic (political upheaval), then connects this to Iran's hatred of foreign interference, then suggests a causal relationship and ties her ideas into John Limbert's analysis—thereby announcing that a synthesis of Limbert's work is coming. This writer's work also becomes more credible and meaningful because, right in the text, she announces the name of a person who is a recognized authority in the field. Even in this short excerpt, it is obvious that this writer is using proper citation and backing up her own assertions with confidence and style.

Analyze This

When you use sources to support your claims in your argument, you certainly have a lot of options to consider. Now that you have learned about those options and how you can use those sources to help build a strong argument, it's time to see source integration in action.

In the following video, a student analyzes another argumentative essay for its use of sources and evidence. Seeing how others use sources to support their arguments can help you when it's time to develop your own argumentative essay.

[I'm too \(Insert negative criticism of yourself here\). The media says so.](#) is the full essay used in the analysis.



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=51#h5p-59>

See It in Practice

Now that you have learned about the different ways you can use evidence in your argument, it's a good time to see how our student applies this information to her process.

In this video, our student explores some of the sources she has found, discusses her struggles with contradictions in her research, and explains her plans for using sources in her essay.



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=51#h5p-60>

Wrap Up

It's your turn now to wrap up your research process and start thinking about how you'll use sources and which sources you'll use. Remember, you want to ensure you have

quality sources, but those sources can come from your library's databases, the web, and even interviews if your professor allows for them.

It's time to start putting your argument together, and your sources are going to be a key part of that. Before you draft, make some notes about your sources and share them with your professor and classmates for feedback. Do these sources seem credible? Will these sources fit your purpose?



How will these sources help your appeals to [ethos, pathos, and logos](#)?

You have a lot to think about as you make decisions about your sources, but good planning about your sources will make drafting your essay so much easier.

ATTRIBUTIONS

- Content Adapted from Excelsior Online Writing Lab (OWL). (2020). Excelsior College. Retrieved from <https://owl.excelsior.edu/> licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-4.0 International License](#).
- Content “APA Long Quote Guidelines” taken from the American Psychological Association. (2019). Quotations. <http://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/citations/quotations>
- Chapter 5. Using Sources Blending Source Material with Your Own Work. Provided by: Saylor.org. Located at: <http://www.saylor.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/Blending-Source-Material.pdf>. License: [CC BY: Attribution](#)
- Quoting, Paraphrasing, and Avoiding Plagiarism. Authored by: Steven D. Krause. Located at: <http://www.stevendkrause.com/tpwr/chapter3.html>. Project: The Process of Research Writing. License: [CC BY-NC-SA: Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike](#)

11

Fake News



Fake News

Did you know that Fake News stories on various sides of the political spectrum were more widely shared than real news stories during the 2016 election? Did you know that there are people who intentionally spread misinformation in order to make money? The phrase “fake news” means different things to different people.

Below are insights that will help you understand the Fake News problem. All of these aspects of the problem feed into each other to create a toxic media environment. Fake News is often propagated in Echo Chambers by people who are fooled due to their Confirmation bias who in turn further the spread of Fake News.

If you have been doing the Crash Course activities, much of the information in this chapter will be review.

FOUR MOVES

What people need most when confronted with a claim that may not be 100% true is *things they can do to get closer to the truth*. They need something I have decided to call “moves.”

Moves accomplish intermediate goals in the fact-checking process. They are associated with specific tactics. Here are the four moves this guide will hinge on:

- **Check for previous work:** Look around to see if someone else has already fact-checked the claim or provided a synthesis of research.
- **Go upstream to the source:** Go “upstream” to the source of the claim. Most web content is not original. Get to the original source to understand the trustworthiness of the information.
- **Read laterally:** Read laterally.¹ Once you get to the source of a claim, read what other people say about the source (publication, author, etc.). The truth is in the network.
- **Circle back:** If you get lost, hit dead ends, or find yourself going down an increasingly confusing rabbit hole, back up and start over knowing what you know now. You’re likely to take a more informed path with different search terms and better decisions.

In general, you can try these moves in sequence. If you find success at any stage, your work might be done.

When you encounter a claim you want to check, your first move might be to see if sites like *PolitiFact*, or *Snopes*, or even *Wikipedia* have researched the claim (Check for previous work).

¹. ²
2. [1]

If you can't find previous work on the claim, start by trying to trace the claim to the source. If the claim is about research, try to find the journal it appeared in. If the claim is about an event, try to find the news publication in which it was originally reported (Go upstream).

Maybe you get lucky and the source is something known to be reputable, such as the journal *Science* or the newspaper the *New York Times*. Again, if so, you can stop there. If not, you're going to need to *read laterally*, finding out more about this source you've ended up at and asking whether it is trustworthy (Read laterally).

And if at any point you fail—if the source you find is not trustworthy, complex questions emerge, or the claim turns out to have multiple sub-claims—then you circle back, and start a new process. Rewrite the claim. Try a new search of fact-checking sites, or find an alternate source (Circle back).

BUILDING A FACT-CHECKING HABIT BY CHECKING YOUR EMOTIONS

In addition to the moves, I'll introduce one more word of advice: *Check your emotions*.

This isn't quite a strategy (like "go upstream") or a tactic (like using date filters to find the origin of a fact). For lack of a better word, I am calling this advice a habit.

The habit is simple. When you feel strong emotion—happiness, anger, pride, vindication—and that emotion pushes you to share a "fact" with others, STOP. Above all, these are the claims that you must fact-check.

Why? Because you're already likely to check things you know are important to get right, and you're predisposed to analyze things that put you in an intellectual frame of mind. But things that make you angry or overjoyed, well... our record as humans are not good with these things.

As an example, I'll cite this tweet that crossed my *Twitter* feed:



Ron Hogan
@RonHogan



The Nazis murdered Sen. Schumer's great-grandmother, and most of her children.

Trump's father was arrested at a Ku Klux Klan rally.



Bradd Jaffy @BraddJaffy

Trump: "I noticed Chuck Schumer yesterday with fake tears" over immigration ban/refugees; "I'm gonna ask him who is his acting coach"

RETWEETS
55,682

LIKES
61,985



You don't need to know much of the background of this tweet to see its emotionally charged nature. President

Trump had insulted Chuck Schumer, a Democratic Senator from New York, and characterized the tears that Schumer shed during a statement about refugees as “fake tears.” This tweet reminds us that that Senator Schumer’s great-grandmother died at the hands of the Nazis, which could explain Schumer’s emotional connection to the issue of refugees.

Or does it? Do we actually know that Schumer’s great-grandmother died at the hands of the Nazis? And if we are not sure this is true, should we really be retweeting it?

Our normal inclination is to ignore verification needs when we react strongly to content, and researchers have found that content that causes strong emotions (both positive and negative) spreads the fastest through our social networks.¹ Savvy activists and advocates take advantage of this flaw of ours, getting past our filters by posting material that goes straight to our hearts.

Use your emotions as a reminder. Strong emotions should become a trigger for your new fact-checking habit. Every time content you want to share makes you feel rage, laughter, ridicule, or even a heartwarming buzz, spend 30 seconds fact-checking. It will do you well.

-
1. See “[What Emotion Goes Viral the Fastest?](#)” by Matthew Shaer. ↴

HOW TO USE PREVIOUS WORK

1. ²
2. [1]

When fact-checking a particular claim, quote, or article, the simplest thing you can do is to see if someone has already done the work for you.

This doesn't mean you have to accept their finding. Maybe they assign a claim "four Pinocchios," but you would rate it three. Maybe they find the truth "mixed," but honestly it looks "mostly false" to you.

Regardless of the finding, a reputable fact-checking site or subject wiki will have done much of the leg work for you: tracing claims to their source, identifying the owners of various sites, and linking to reputable sources for counterclaims. And that legwork, no matter what the finding, is probably worth ten times your intuition. If the claims and the evidence they present ring true to you, or if you have built up a high degree of trust in the site, then you can treat the question as closed. But even if you aren't satisfied, you can start your work from where they left off.

CONSTRUCTING A QUERY TO FIND PREVIOUS FACT-CHECKING

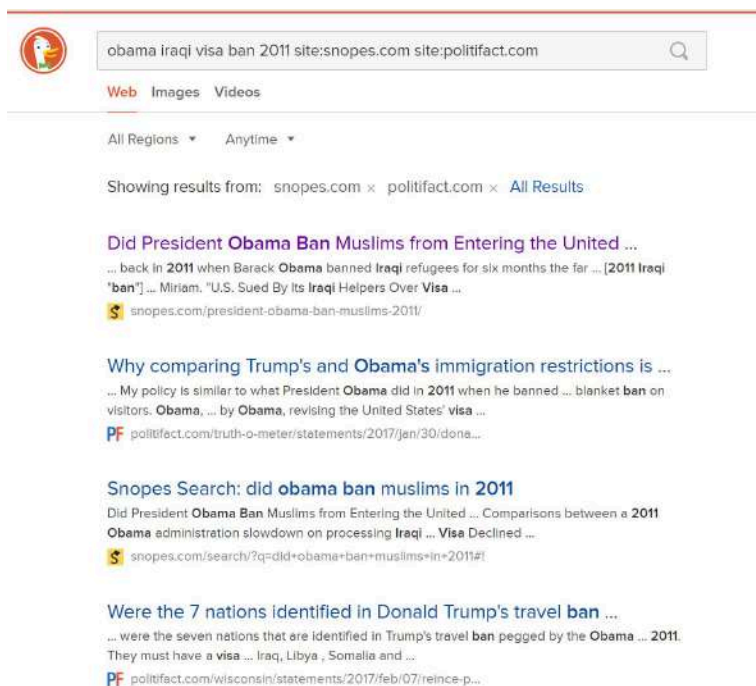
You can find previous fact-checking by using the "site" option in search engines such as *Google* and *DuckDuckGo* to search known and trusted fact-checking sites for a given phrase or keyword. For example, if you see this story,



then you might use this query, which checks a couple of known fact-checking sites for the keywords: Obama Iraqi refugee ban 2011. Let's use the *DuckDuckGo* search engine to look for the keywords:

obama iraqi visa ban 2011 site:snopes.com site:politifact.com

Here are the results of our search:



The screenshot shows a DuckDuckGo search interface. The search bar contains the text "obama iraqi visa ban 2011 site:snopes.com site:politifact.com". Below the search bar are tabs for "Web", "Images", and "Videos", with "Web" selected. There are filters for "All Regions" and "Anytime". The search results show "Showing results from: snopes.com x politifact.com x All Results". The first result is titled "Did President Obama Ban Muslims from Entering the United ..." and includes a snippet: "... back in 2011 when Barack Obama banned Iraqi refugees for six months the far ... [2011 Iraqi 'ban'] ... Miriam. 'U.S. Sued By Its Iraqi Helpers Over Visa ...'". The second result is titled "Why comparing Trump's and Obama's immigration restrictions is ..." and includes a snippet: "... My policy is similar to what President Obama did in 2011 when he banned ... blanket ban on visitors. Obama, ... by Obama, revising the United States' visa ...". The third result is titled "Snopes Search: did obama ban muslims in 2011" and includes a snippet: "Did President Obama Ban Muslims from Entering the United ... Comparisons between a 2011 Obama administration slowdown on processing Iraqi ... Visa Declined ...". The fourth result is titled "Were the 7 nations identified in Donald Trump's travel ban ..." and includes a snippet: "... were the seven nations that are identified in Trump's travel ban pegged by the Obama ... 2011. They must have a visa ... Iraq, Libya, Somalia and ...".

You can see the search [here](#). The results show that work has already been done in this area. In fact, the first result from *Snopes* answers our question almost fully. Remember to follow the best search engine practice: scan the results and focus on the URLs and the blurbs to find the best result to click in the returned result set.

There are similar syntaxes you can use in *Google*, but for various reasons, this particular search is easier in *DuckDuckGo*.

Let's look at another claim, this time from the President. This claim is that police officer deaths increased 56 percent from 2015 to 2016. Here it is in context:

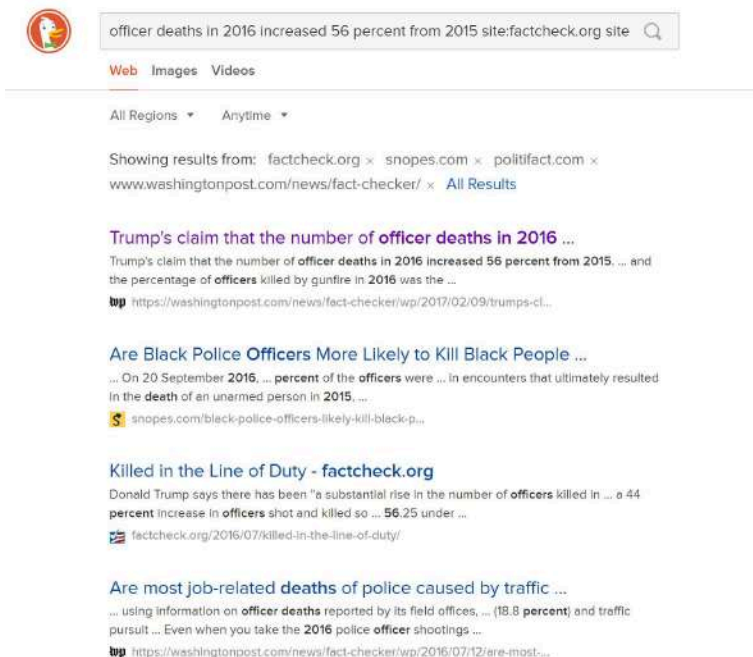
can to help you meet those demands. That includes a zero tolerance policy for acts of violence against law enforcement. We all see what happens. We all see what happens and what's been happening to you. It's not fair.

We must protect those who protect us. The number of officers shot and killed in the line of duty last year increased by 56 percent from the year before. Last year, in Dallas, police officers were targeted for execution -- think of this. Who ever heard of this? They were targeted for execution.

Let's ramp it up with a query that checks four different fact-checking sites:

officer deaths 2016 increased 56 percent from 2015
 site:factcheck.org site:snopes.com site:politifact.com
 site:www.washingtonpost.com/news/fact-checker/

This gives us back a helpful array of results. The first, from the *Washington Post*, actually answer our question directly, but some of the others provide some helpful context as well.



officer deaths in 2016 increased 56 percent from 2015 site:factcheck.org site

Web Images Videos

All Regions ▾ Anytime ▾

Showing results from: factcheck.org × snopes.com × politifact.com ×
www.washingtonpost.com/news/fact-checker/ × [All Results](#)

Trump's claim that the number of officer deaths in 2016 ...
Trump's claim that the number of **officer deaths** in 2016 increased 56 percent from 2015 ... and the percentage of **officers** killed by gunfire in 2016 was the ...
WP <https://washingtonpost.com/news/fact-checker/wp/2017/02/09/trumps-cl...>

Are Black Police Officers More Likely to Kill Black People ...
... On 20 September 2016, ... percent of the **officers** were ... in encounters that ultimately resulted in the **death** of an unarmed person in 2015, ...
S snopes.com/black-police-officers-likely-kill-black-p...

Killed in the Line of Duty - factcheck.org
Donald Trump says there has been "a substantial rise in the number of **officers** killed in ... a 44 percent increase in **officers** shot and killed so ... 56.25 under ...
FC factcheck.org/2016/07/killed-in-the-line-of-duty/

Are most job-related deaths of police caused by traffic ...
... using information on **officer deaths** reported by its field offices, ... (18.8 percent) and traffic pursuit ... Even when you take the 2016 police **officer** shootings ...
WP [https://washingtonpost.com/news/fact-checker/wp/2016/07/12/are-most...](https://washingtonpost.com/news/fact-checker/wp/2016/07/12/are-most-...)

Going to the *Washington Post* lets us know that this claim is, for all intents and purposes, true. We don't need to go further unless we want to.

SOME REPUTABLE FACT-CHECKING ORGANIZATIONS

The following organizations are generally regarded as reputable fact-checking organizations focused on U.S. national news:

- [Politifact](#)
- [Factcheck.org](#)
- [Washington Post Fact Checker](#)
- [Snopes](#)

- [*Truth be Told*](#)
- [*NPR Fact-Check*](#)
- [*Lie Detector*](#) (Univision, Spanish language)
- [*Hoax Slayer*](#)

Respected specialty sites cover niche areas such as climate or celebrities. Here are a few examples:

- [*Climate Feedback*](#)
- [*SciCheck*](#)
- [*Quote Investigator*](#)

There are many fact-checking sites outside the U.S. Here is a small sample:

- [*FactsCan*](#)(Canada)
- [*TrudeauMetre*](#)(Canada)
- [*El Polígrafo*](#) (Mexico)
- [*The Hound*](#) (Mexico)
- [*Guardian Reality Check*](#) (UK)
- [*BBC Reality Check*](#) (UK)
- [*Channel 4 Fact Check*](#) (UK)
- [*Full Fact*](#)(UK)

WIKIPEDIA

Wikipedia is broadly misunderstood by faculty and students alike. While *Wikipedia* must be approached with caution, especially with articles that are covering contentious subjects or evolving events, it is often the best source to get a consensus viewpoint on a subject. Because the *Wikipedia* community has strict rules about sourcing facts to reliable sources, and because authors must adopt a neutral point of view, its articles are often the best available introduction to a subject on the web.

The focus on sourcing all claims has another beneficial effect. If you can find a claim expressed in a *Wikipedia* article, you can almost always follow the footnote on the claim to a reliable source. Scholars, reporters, and students can all benefit from using *Wikipedia* to quickly find authoritative sources for claims.

As an example, consider a situation where you need to source a claim that the Dallas 2016 police shooter was motivated by hatred of police officers. *Wikipedia* will summarize what is known about his motives and, more importantly, will source each claim, as follows:

Chief Brown said that Johnson, who was [black](#), was upset about recent police shootings and the Black Lives Matter movement, and “stated he wanted to kill white people, especially white officers.”^{[4][5]} A friend and former coworker of Johnson’s described him as “always [being] distrustful of the police.”^[6] Another former coworker said he seemed “very affected” by recent police shootings of black men.^[64] A friend said that Johnson had [anger management](#) problems and would repeatedly watch video of the 1991 beating of [Rodney King](#) by police officers.^[85]

Investigators found no ties between Johnson and international terrorist or domestic extremist groups.^[66]

Each footnote leads to a source that the community has deemed reliable. The article as a whole contains over 160 footnotes. If you are researching a complex question, starting with the resources and summaries provided by *Wikipedia* can give you a substantial running start on an issue.

GO UPSTREAM TO FIND THE SOURCE

Our second move, after finding previous fact-checking work, is to “go upstream.” We use this move if previous fact-checking work was insufficient for our needs.

What do we mean by “go upstream”?

Consider this claim on the conservative site the *Blaze*:

Report: US Government Ethics director approved controversial Trump tweets

Kaitlyn Schallhorn · December 30, 2016 4:02 pm



Getty Images/Drew Angerer

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Follow

f SHARE

t TWEET



Controversial tweets from the U.S. Office of Government Ethics that praised President-elect Donald Trump were approved by Director Walter M. Shaub personally, the Daily

Is this claim true?

Of course, we can check the credibility of this article by considering the author, the site, and when it was last revised. We'll do some of that, eventually. But it would be ridiculous to do it on this page. Why? Because like most news pages on the web, this one provides no original information. It's just a rewrite of an upstream page. We see the indication of that here:

Controversial tweets from the U.S. Office of Government Ethics that praised President-elect Donald Trump were approved by Director Walter M. Shaub personally, the *Daily Dot* reported Friday.

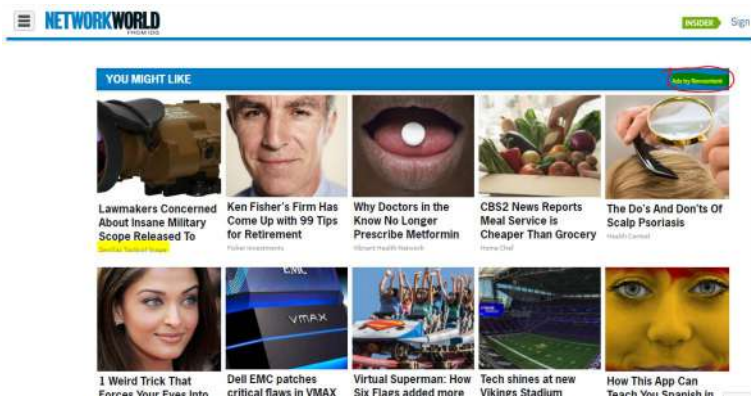
Through a Freedom of Information Act, the *Daily Dot* reported that Shaub sent an email ordering an OGE official to post the tweets. The series of tweets posted Nov. 30 applauded Trump for his supposed efforts to alleviate conflicts of interest with his businesses.

All the information here has been collected, fact-checked (we hope!), and written up by the *Daily Dot*. It's what we call "reporting on reporting." There's no point in evaluating the *Blaze's* page.

So what do we do? Our first step is to go upstream. Go to the original story and evaluate it. When you get to the *Daily Dot*, then you can start asking questions about the site or the source. And it may be that for some of the information in the *Daily Dot* article you'd want to go a step further back and check their primary sources. But you have to start there, not here.


IDENTIFYING SPONSORED CONTENT

Our warning to “go upstream” before evaluating claims is particularly important with sponsored content. For instance, a lot of time on a site you’ll see “headlines” like these, which I pulled from a highly regarded technology magazine:



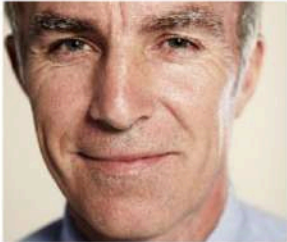
Look at the headline in the upper left corner. Are lawmakers really concerned about this insane military scope? Maybe. But note that *Network World* is not making this claim. Instead, the ZeroTac Tactical Scope company is making the claim:

YOU MIGHT LIKE



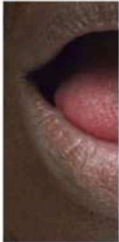
Lawmakers Concerned About Insane

ZeroTac Tactical Scope






Ken Fisher's Firm Has Come Up with 99 Tips

Fisher Investments



Why Do the Know Longer

Vibrant Health



It's an ad served from another site into this page in a way that makes it look like a story.

However, sponsored content isn't always purely an advertisement. Sometimes it provides helpful information. This piece below, for example, is an in-depth look at some current industry trends in information technology.

Home > Datacenters

InfoWorld
FROM AOL

BRICK

BrandPost: Sponsored by Hewlett Packard Enterprise | Learn More

TRANSFORM YOUR DATA CENTER TO A MODERN HYBRID INFRASTRUCTURE

About: Transform to a modern hybrid infrastructure with converged, hyperconverged, and composable infrastructure solutions from Hewlett Packard Enterprise.

SPONSORED

HPE Advances Among “Leaders” in Gartner’s Magic Quadrant for Integrated Systems

The New York Times | Real news deserves real journalism. | Get The Times. For less than \$1. | LEARN MORE

By **Paul Miller** | Follow
OCT 26, 2015

Twitter Facebook LinkedIn Google+ YouTube RSS

DEVIALET

The source of this article is not *InfoWorld*, but the technology company Hewlett Packard, and the piece is written by a Vice President of Hewlett Packard, with no *InfoWorld* oversight. (Keep an eye out on the web for articles that have a “sponsored” indicator above or below them—they are more numerous than you might think!)

You can see how this is not just an issue with political news but will be an issue in your professional life as well. If you go to work in a technology field and portray this article to your boss as “something I read on *InfoWorld*”, you’re doing a grave disservice to your company. Portraying a vendor-biased perspective as a neutral *InfoWorld* perspective is a mistake you might come to regret.

ACTIVITY: SPOT SPONSORED CONTENT

Rank the following news sources on how much sponsored-content you believe their pages will feature:
CNN, BuzzFeed, Washington Post, HuffPost, Breitbart, New York Times.

Individually, or in groups, visit the following pages and list all sponsored content you see, tallying up the total amount on each page. Then rank the sites from most sponsored content to least.

1. <http://www.cnn.com/2017/02/10/politics/russia-dossier-update/index.html>
2. <http://money.cnn.com/news/>
3. <http://www.vox.com/polyarchy/2017/2/10/14569306/congress-shut-off-phones>
4. <https://www.buzzfeed.com/tylerkingkade/laura-dunns-campus-rape-fight>
5. https://www.washingtonpost.com/powerpost/a-gift-and-a-challenge-for-democrats-a-restive-active-and-aggressive-base/2017/02/11/e265dd44-efef-11e6-b4ff-ac2cf509efe5_story.html
6. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/yale-calhoun-college-grace-hopper_us_589f792ce4b094a129eb8a10?ti=13di&
7. <http://www.breitbart.com/video/2017/02/11/japan-condemns-n-korea-missile-launch-trump-u-s-stands-behind-japan-100-percent/>
8. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/11/us/state-republican-leaders-move-swiftly.html?>

After you've ranked the websites, answer these questions:

1. Did the ranking surprise you at all?
2. What do you think the quantity of sponsored content indicates about a website?
3. How does this change your perspective on these websites' reliability?
4. Why would some websites have more sponsored

content than others?

UNDERSTANDING SYNDICATION

Syndication—the process by which material from one site is published automatically to another site—can create confusion for readers who don’t understand it. It’s a often case where something is coming from “upstream” but appears not to be.

Consider this *New York Times* web page:

The screenshot shows a typical New York Times web page layout. On the left, under the 'EUROPE' section, there are two articles: 'Germany's Latest Best Seller? A Critical Version of "Mein Kampf"' by Melissa Evers (dated 11:52 AM ET) and 'Italian Inmates Sip, Smell and Taste Their Way to Rehabilitation' by Nicola Pizzoni (dated 10:45 AM ET). In the center, under 'NEWS FROM A.P. AND REUTERS', there are three articles: 'UK Stock Market Hits Record as Manufacturers Win Business' (dated 7:30 AM ET), 'The Latest: Lebanon Bids Farewell to Istanbul Victims' (dated 10:57 AM ET), and 'Inmates Involved in Brazil Prison Massacre to Be Transferred' (dated 10:45 AM ET). On the right, there is a Twitter feed for @NYTIMESWORLD and a 'TIMESVIDEO' section featuring a video titled 'Several German Victims in Istanbul Shooting'. Below the video, a text snippet reads: 'German officials confirmed Monday that one German and one Turkish citizen residing in Germany were killed at the shooting at an Istanbul nightclub on New Year's Day, while another three German nationals were...'. At the bottom, there is a section titled '15 of the Best Journals by Our Reporters Around the World' compiled by Barbara Tolersey.

We see a set of stories on the left (“Germany’s Latest Best Seller”, “Isis Claims Responsibility”) written by *New York Times* staff, but also a thin column of stories in the middle of the page (“UK Stock Market Hits Record”) that are identified as being from the *Associated Press*.

You click through to a page that’s on the *New York Times* site, but not by the *New York Times*:

SECTIONS

THE NEW YORK TIMES

SUBSCRIBE LOG IN

Germany's Latest Best Seller? A Critical Version of 'Mein Kampf'

LECCO JOURNAL: Italian Inmates Sip, Smell and Taste Their Way to Rehabilitation

ISIS Claims Responsibility for Istanbul Nightclub Attack

PAID: Do You Mora

EUROPE

UK Stock Market Hits Record as Manufacturers Win Business

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS JAN. 3, 2017, 7:30 A.M. E.S.T.

LONDON — Britain's main stock index hit a record closing high Tuesday as a survey showed manufacturers gaining business from the slide in the value of the pound since the country's decision in June to leave the European Union.

The FTSE 100 index ended the day 0.5 percent higher at 7,177.89, slightly down on its earlier all-time high of 7,205.21.

If you are going to evaluate the source of this article, your evaluation will have little to do with the *New York Times*. You're going to focus on the reporting record of the *Associated Press*.

People get this wrong all the time. One thing that happens occasionally is that an article critical of a certain politician or policy suddenly disappears from the *New York Times* site, and people claim it's a plot to rewrite the past. "Conspiracy!" they say. "They're burying information!" they say. A ZOMG-level freakout follows.

It predominately turns out that the article that disappeared is a syndicated article. *Associated Press* articles, for example, are displayed on the site for a few weeks, then "roll-off" and disappear from the site. Why? Because the *New York Times* only pays the *Associated Press* to show them on the site for a few weeks.

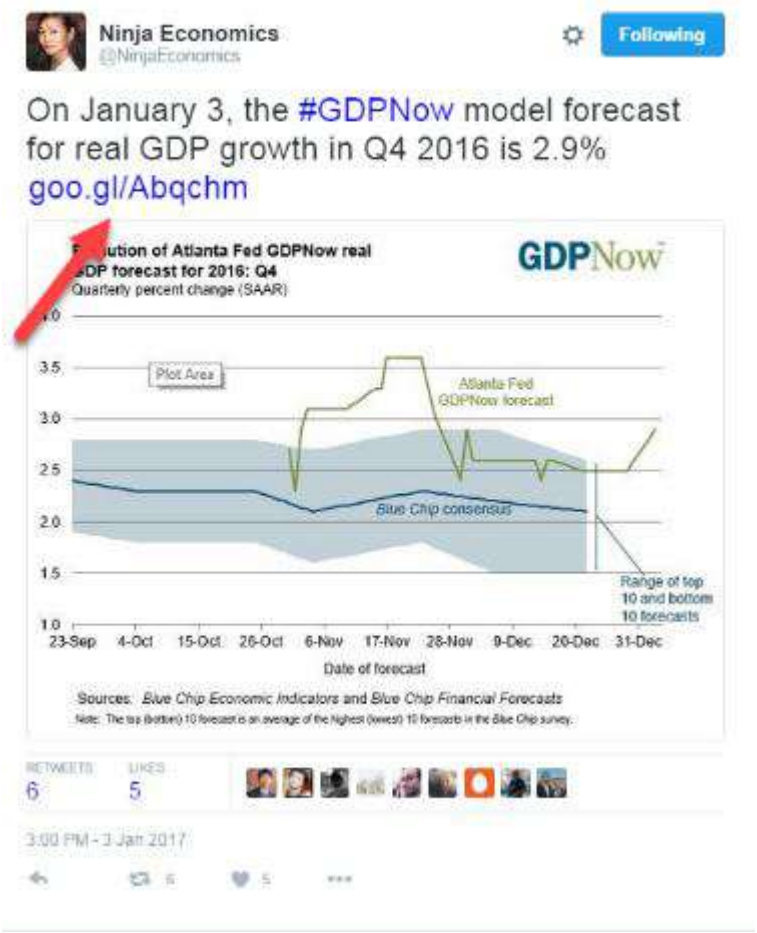
You'll also occasionally see people complaining about a story from the *New York Times*, claiming it shows a New York "liberal bias" only to find the story was not even

written by the *New York Times*, but by the *Associated Press*, *Reuters*, or some other syndicator.

Going upstream means following a piece of content to its true source, and beginning your analysis there. Your first question when looking at a claim on a page should be “Where did this come from, and who produced it?” The answer quite often has very little to do with the website you are looking at.

USING GOOGLE REVERSE IMAGE SEARCH

Most of the time finding the origin of an image on *Twitter* is easy. Just follow the links. For instance, take the chart in this tweet from *Twitter* user @NinjaEconomics. Should you evaluate it by figuring out who @NinjaEconomics is?



Nope. Just follow that link to the source. Links are usually the last part of a tweet.

If you do follow that link, the chart is there, with a bunch more information about the data behind it and how it was produced. It's from the Atlanta Federal Reserve, and it's the Fed—not @NinjaEconomics—that you want to evaluate.

But sometimes people will post a photo that has no source, as this person does here:

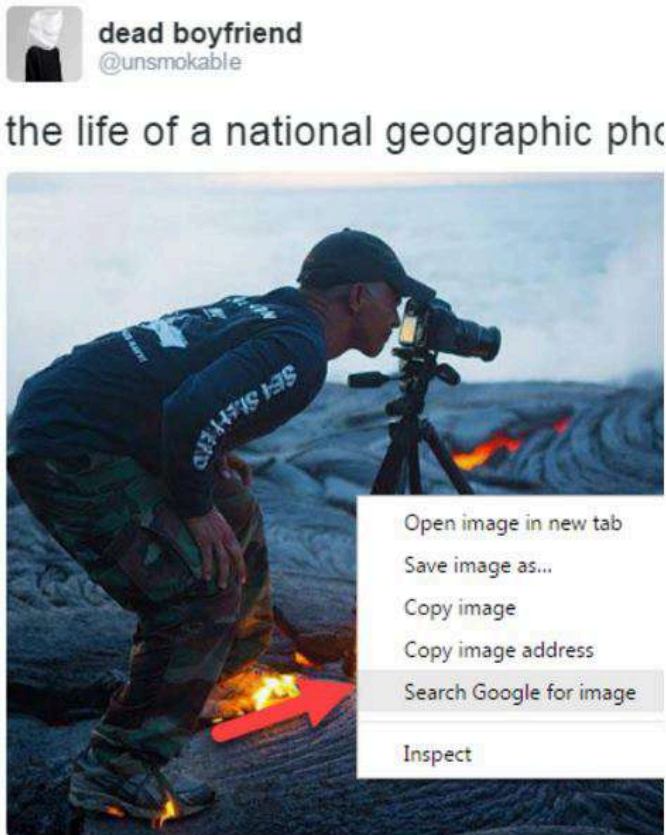


So we have questions.

First, is this actually a *National Geographic* photographer? More importantly, is this real? Is that lava so hot that it will literally set a metal tripod on fire? That seems weird, but we're not lava experts.

There's no link here, so we're going to use reverse image search. If you're using Google Chrome as a browser, put the cursor over the photo and right-click (control-click on

a Mac). A “context menu” will pop up and one of the options will be “Search Google for image.”



(For the sake of narrative simplicity we will show solutions in this text as they would be implemented in Chrome. Classes using this text are advised to use Chrome.)

When we reverse search this image we find a bunch of pages that contain the photo, from a variety of sites. One of the sites returned is *Reddit*. *Reddit* is a site that is famous

for sharing these sorts of photos, but it also has a reputation for having a user base that is very good at spotting fake photos.

Visually similar images



Report images

Pages that include matching images

In the heat of the moment : pics - Reddit



https://www.reddit.com/r/pics/comments/.../in_the_heat_of_the_moment/ 1600 x 1066 - Jan 28, 2014 - A place to share photographs and pictures. Feel free to post your own, but please read the rules first (see below), and note that we are not a ...

Mind Blowing Images of the Planet With Live On - Page 2 of 2 ...



<https://www.outdoorrevival.com/news/mind-blowing-images-of-the-.../2> 640 x 426 - Aug 26, 2015 - IN THE HEAT OF THE MOMENT, kawika-singson-standing-on-lava-shoes-tripod-on-. Photograph of KAWIKA SINGSON | Taken by Chris Hirata.

similar image search for post: When you want the perfect shot. [PIC ...



karmadecay.com/r/woahdude/.../when_you_want_the_perfect_shot_pic/

Moment., - YohYoh.com Showcase online and Promote



www.yohyoh.com/tags/moment.. 481 x 320 - An Extremely Dedicated Photographer In The Heat Of The Moment.. Tag it. Add your own tag. Login, click on the image in inner page, fill the form and save.

When we go to the *Reddit* page we find there is an argument there over whether the photo is fake or not. But again, *Reddit* is not our source here—we need to go further upstream. So we click the link in the *Reddit* forum that says it's real and get [taken to an article](#) where they actually talk to the photographer:



In the heat of the moment {Lingur.com}

submitted 2 years ago by gabberc

54 comments share

all 54 comments

sorted by: **best** ▼

[~] **WhiteRun** 107 points 2 years ago

It's fake.

permalink embed

load more comments (10 replies)

[~] **weezermc78** 36 points 2 years ago

...Hey man

permalink embed

[~] **prickinthewall** 18 points 2 years ago

Looks real to me

permalink embed

load more comments (3 replies)

That brings us to one of the original stories about this photo:

Hot Lava Sets Adventurous Photographer's Feet on Fire

By Katie Hosmer on July 15, 2013

LIKE MY MODERN MET ON FACEBOOK Like 1.0M

GET OUR WEEKLY NEWSLETTER



Now we could stop here and just read the headline. But all good fact-checkers know that headlines lie. So we read the article down to the bottom:

For this particular shot, Singson says, “Always trying to be creative, I thought it would be pretty cool (hot!) to take a lava pic with my shoes and tripod on fire while photographing lava.”

This may be a bit pedantic, but I still don’t know if this was staged. Contrary to the headline the photographer doesn’t say lava made his shoes catch on fire. He says he wanted to take a picture of himself with his shoes on fire while standing on lava.

So did his shoes catch on fire, or did he set them on fire? I do notice at the bottom of this page though that this is just a retelling of an article published elsewhere; it’s not this publication who talked to the photographer! It’s a similar situation to what we saw in an earlier chapter, where the *Blaze* was simply retelling a story that was investigated by the *Daily Dot*.



Kawika Singson’s website

via [PetaPixel]



In web speak, “via” means you learned of a story or photo from someone else. In other words, we still haven’t gotten to the source. So we lumber upstream once again, to the *PetaPixel* site from whence this came. When we go

upstream to that site, we find an addendum on the original article:

Update on 7/17/13: *Hawaii News Now* confirms that this was done as a stunt:

|| *The photo is real, but the flames are not the result of spontaneous combustion. "The flames on the tripod and my shoes did not start because of the lava" Singson freely admits. "It's like if you put your shoe in a hot frying pan, it will not catch fire right away".*

Singson used an accelerant to start the flames then had his buddy snap the shot. The reason? "It's just something I wanted for my Facebook cover photo".

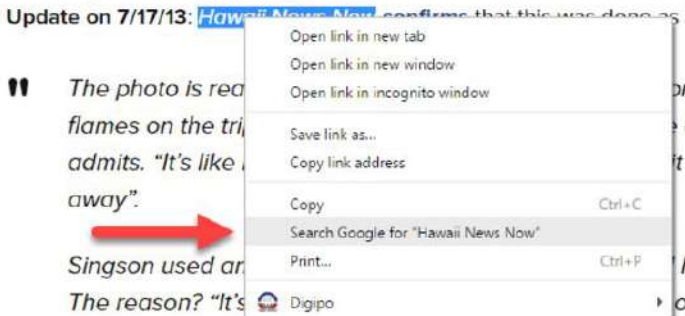
So a local news outfit has confirmed the photographer did use an accelerant. The photograph was staged. Are we done now?

Not quite. You know what the next step is, right?

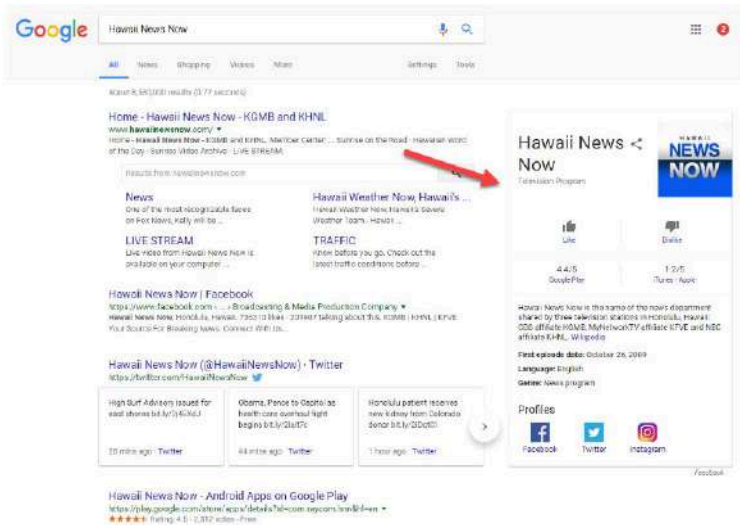
Go upstream to *Hawaii News Now*!

So we do that. We click the link, and we find the quote is good. I like *Hawaii News Now* for another reason—they are a local news service, so they know a bit about lava fields. That's probably why they asked the question no one else seemed to ask: "Is that really possible?"

Finally, let's find out about *Hawaii News Now*. We start by selecting *Hawaii News Now* and using our Google search option:



And what we get back is pretty promising: there's a Google knowledge panel that comes up that tells us it's a bona fide local news program from a CBS affiliate in Hawaii.



Honestly, you could stop there. We've solved this riddle. The photographer was really on hot lava, which is impressive in itself, but used some accelerant (such as

lighter fluid) to set his shoes and tripod on fire. Additionally, the photo was a stunt, and not part of any naturally occurring *National Geographic* shoot. We've traced the story back to its source, found the answer, and got confirmation on the authoritative nature of the source.

We're sticklers for making absolutely sure of this, so we're going to go upstream one more time, and click on the *Wikipedia* link to the article on the *Google* knowledge panel to make sure we aren't missing anything. But I don't have to make you watch that. I'll tell you right now it will turn out fine.

In this case at least.

WHAT "READING Laterally" MEANS

Time for our third move: good fact-checkers read “laterally,” across many connected sites instead of digging deep into the site at hand.

When you start to read a book, a journal article, or a physical newspaper in the “real world,” you already know quite a bit about your source. You’ve subscribed to the newspaper or picked it up from a newsstand because you’ve heard of it. You’ve ordered the book from Amazon or purchased it from a local bookstore because it was a book you were interested in reading. You’ve chosen a journal article either because of the quality of the journal article or because someone whose expertise and background you know cited it. In other words, when you get to the document you need to evaluate, the process of getting there has already given you some initial bearings.

Compared to these intellectual journeys, web reading is a bit more like teleportation. Even after following a source upstream, you arrive at a page, site, and author that are often all unknown to you. How do you analyze the author’s qualifications or the trustworthiness of the site?

Researchers have found that most people go about this the wrong way. When confronted with a new site, they poke around the site and try to find out what the site says about itself by going to the “about page,” clicking around in onsite author biographies, or scrolling up and down the page. This is a faulty strategy for two reasons. First, if the site is untrustworthy, then what the site says about itself is most likely untrustworthy, as well. And, even if the site is generally trustworthy, it is inclined to paint the most favorable picture of its expertise and credibility possible.

The solution to this is, in the words of Sam Wineburg’s Stanford research team, to “read laterally.” Lateral readers don’t spend time on the page or site until they’ve first

gotten their bearings by looking at what other sites and resources say about the source at which they are looking.

For example, when presented with a new site that needs to be evaluated, professional fact-checkers don't spend much time on the site itself. Instead, they get off the page and see what other authoritative sources have said about the site. They open up many tabs in their browser, piecing together different bits of information from across the web to get a better picture of the site they're investigating. Many of the questions they ask are the same as the vertical readers scrolling up and down the pages of the source they are evaluating. But unlike those readers, they realize that the truth is more likely to be found in the network of links to (and commentaries about) the site than in the site itself.

Only when they've gotten their bearings from the rest of the network do they re-engage with the content. Lateral readers gain a better understanding as to whether to trust the facts and analysis presented to them.

You can tell lateral readers at work: they have multiple tabs open and they perform web searches on the author of the piece and the ownership of the site. They also look at pages linking to the site, not just pages coming from it.

Lateral reading helps the reader understand both the perspective from which the site's analyses come and if the site has an editorial process or expert reputation that would allow one to accept the truth of a site's facts.

We're going to deal with the latter issue of factual reliability while noting that lateral reading is just as important for the first issue.

EVALUATING A WEBSITE OR

PUBLICATION'S AUTHORITY

Authority and reliability are tricky to evaluate. Whether we admit it or not, most of us would like to ascribe authority to sites and authors who support our conclusions and deny authority to publications that disagree with our worldview. To us, this seems natural: the trustworthy publications are the ones saying things that are correct, and we define “correct” as what we believe to be true. A moment’s reflection will show the flaw in this way of thinking.

How do we get beyond our own myopia here? For the Digital Polarization Project for which this text was created, we ended up adopting [Wikipedia’s guidelines](#) for determining the reliability of publications. These guidelines were developed to help people with diametrically opposed positions argue in rational ways about the reliability of sources using common criteria.

For Wikipedians, reliable sources are defined by *process*, *aim*, and *expertise*. I think these criteria are worth thinking about as you fact-check.

PROCESS

Above all, a reliable source for facts should have a process in place for encouraging the accuracy, verifying facts, and correcting mistakes. Note that reputation and process might be apart from issues of bias: the *New York Times* is thought by many to have a center-left bias, the *Wall Street Journal* a center-right bias, and *USA Today* a centrist bias. Yet fact-checkers of all political stripes are happy to be able to track a fact down to one of these publications since they have reputations for a high degree of accuracy and issue corrections when they get facts wrong.

The same thing applies to peer-reviewed publications.

While there is much debate about the inherent flaws of peer review, peer review does get many eyes on data and results. Their process helps to keep many obviously flawed results out of publication. If a peer-reviewed journal has a large following of experts, that provides even more eyes on the article, and more chances to spot flaws. Since one's reputation for research is on the line in front of one's peers, it also provides incentives to be precise in claims and careful in analysis in a way that other forms of communication might not.

EXPERTISE

According to Wikipedians, researchers and certain classes of professionals have the expertise, and their usefulness is defined by that expertise. For example, we would expect a marine biologist to have a more informed opinion about the impact of global warming on marine life than the average person, particularly if they have done research in that area. Professional knowledge matters too: we'd expect a health inspector to have a reasonably good knowledge of health code violations, even if they are not a scholar of the area. And while we often think researchers are more knowledgeable than professionals, this is not always the case. For a range of issues, professionals in a given area might have better insight than researchers, especially where questions deal with common practice.

Reporters, on the other hand, often have no domain expertise, but may write for papers that accurately summarize and convey the views of experts, professionals, and event participants. As reporters write in a niche area over many years (e.g. opioid drug policy) they may acquire expertise themselves.

AIM

The aim is defined by what the publication, author, or media source is attempting to accomplish. Aims are complex. Respected scientific journals, for example, aim for prestige within the scientific community, but must also have a business model. A site like the *New York Times* relies on ad revenue but is also dependent on maintaining a reputation for accuracy.

One way to think about the aim is to ask what incentives an article or author has to get things right. An opinion column that gets a fact or two wrong won't cause its author much trouble, whereas an article in a newspaper that gets facts wrong may damage the reputation of the reporter. On the far ends of the spectrum, a single bad or retracted article by a scientist can ruin a career, whereas an advocacy blog site can twist facts daily with no consequences.

Policy think tanks, such as the Cato Institute and the Center for American Progress, are interesting hybrid cases. To maintain their funding, they must continue to promote aims that have a particular bias. At the same time, their prestige (at least for the better-known ones) depends on them promoting these aims while maintaining some level of honesty.

In general, you want to choose a publication that has strong incentives to get things right, as shown by both authorial intent and business model, reputational incentives, and history.

ACTIVITY: EVALUATE A SITE

Evaluate the reputations of the following sites by “reading laterally.” Answer the following questions to determine the reputability of each site: Who runs them? To what purpose? What is their history of accuracy, and how do they rate on the process, aim, and expertise?

1. [http://cis.org/vaughan/...](http://cis.org/vaughan/)
2. [http://www.al.com/news/montgomery/...](http://www.al.com/news/montgomery/)
3. [https://codoh.com/media/files/...](https://codoh.com/media/files/)
4. [http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/...](http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/)
5. [http://www.dailykos.com/...](http://www.dailykos.com/)
6. <https://nsidc.org/>
7. [http://www.smh.com.au/environment/weather/...](http://www.smh.com.au/environment/weather/)
8. [http://occupydemocrats.com/2017/02/11/...](http://occupydemocrats.com/2017/02/11/)
9. [http://principia-scientific.org/...](http://principia-scientific.org/)
10. [http://www.europhysicsnews.org/articles/epn/abs/2016/05/...](http://www.europhysicsnews.org/articles/epn/abs/2016/05/)
11. [https://www.rt.com/news/...](https://www.rt.com/news/)
12. [http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/us/...](http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/us/)
13. [http://www.naturalnews.com/...](http://www.naturalnews.com/)
14. [http://fauxcountrynews.com/...](http://fauxcountrynews.com/)

STUPID JOURNAL TRICKS

There's no more dreaded phrase to the fact-checker than "a recent study says." Recent studies say that chocolate cures cancer prevents cancer, and may have no impact on cancer whatsoever. Recent studies say that holding a pencil in your teeth makes you happier. Recent studies say that the scientific process is failing, and others say it is just fine.

Most studies are data points—emerging evidence that lends weight to one conclusion or another but does not resolve questions definitively. What we want as a fact-checker is not data points, but the broad consensus of experts. And the broad consensus of experts is rare.

The following are *not* meant to show you how to meticulously evaluate research claims. Instead, they are meant to give you, the reader, some quick and frugal ways to decide what sorts of research can be safely passed over when you are looking for a reliable source. We take as our premise that information is abundant and time is scarce. As such, it's better to err on the side of moving onto the next article than to invest time in an article that displays warning signs regarding either expertise or accuracy.

FINDING A JOURNAL'S IMPACT FACTOR

I mentioned earlier that this process is one of elimination. In a world where information is plentiful, we can be a bit demanding about what counts as evidence. When it comes to research, one gating expectation can be that published academic research cited for a claim comes from respected peer-reviewed journals.

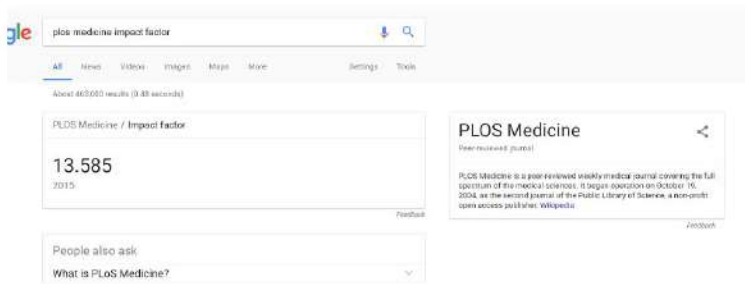
Consider this journal:

The screenshot shows the PLOS Medicine article page. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'PLOS MEDICINE', 'Browse', 'Publish', 'About', and a search bar. Below the navigation bar, there's a section for 'RESEARCH ARTICLE' with the title 'Socioeconomic Inequalities in Body Mass Index across Adulthood: Coordinated Analyses of Individual Participant Data from Three British Birth Cohort Studies Initiated in 1946, 1958 and 1970'. The authors listed are David Barr, William Johnson, Leah Li, Diana Kuh, and Rebecca Hardy. The article was published on January 10, 2017. On the right side, there's a statistics box showing 1 Save, 0 Citation, 2,357 View, and 143 Share. Below the title, there's a table with tabs for Article, Authors, Metrics, Comments, and Related Content. The 'Article' tab is selected, showing the Abstract, Author Summary, Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion. The 'Abstract' section is expanded, showing the 'Background' text: 'High body mass index (BMI) is an important contributor to the global burden of ill-health and health inequality. Lower socioeconomic position (SEP) in both childhood and adulthood is...'. On the right side, there are buttons for 'Download PDF', 'Print', 'Share', and 'Check for updates'. There's also a 'Subject Areas' section with 'Adults' and 'Socioeconomic exp.' listed.

Is it a journal that gives any authority to this article? Or is it just another web-based paper mill?

Our first check is to see what the “impact factor” of the journal is. This is a measure of the journal’s influence in the academic community. While a flawed metric for assessing the relative importance of journals, it is a useful tool for quickly identifying journals that are not part of a known circle of academic discourse, or that are not peer-reviewed.

We search Google for *PLOS Medicine*, and it pulls up a knowledge panel for us with an impact factor.



Impact factor can go into the 30s, but we're using this as a quick elimination test, not a ranking, so we're happy with anything over 1. We still have work to do on this article, but it's worth keeping in the mix.

What about this one?



In this case we get a result with a link to this journal at the top, but no panel, as there is no registered impact factor for this journal:



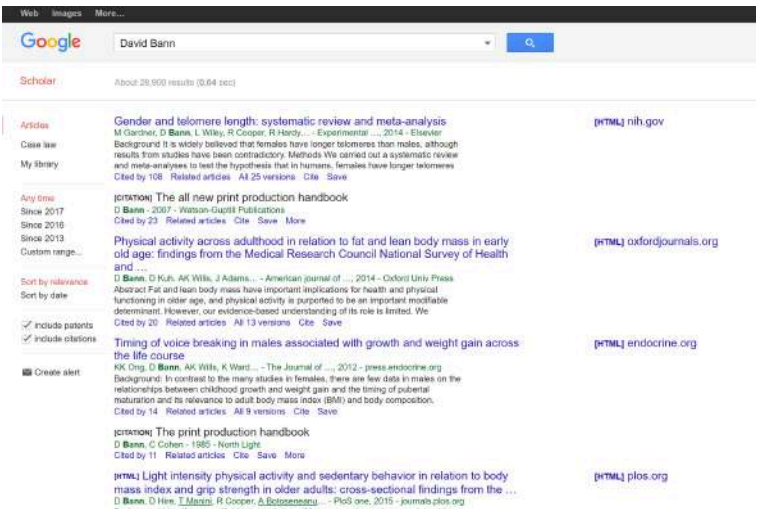
Again, we stress that the article here may be excellent—we don't know. Likewise, there are occasionally articles published in the most prestigious journals that are pure junk. Be careful in your use of impact factor; a journal with an impact factor of 10 is not necessarily better than a journal with an impact factor of 3, especially if you are dealing with a niche subject.

But in a quick and dirty analysis, we have to say that the *PLOS Medicine* article is more trustworthy than the *Journal of Obesity and Weight-loss Medication* article. In fact, if you were deciding whether to reshare a story in your feed and the evidence for the story came from this *Obesity* journal, I'd skip reposting it entirely.

USING GOOGLE SCHOLAR TO CHECK AUTHOR EXPERTISE

Not all, or even most, expertise is academic. But when the expertise cited is academic, scholarly publications by the researcher can go a long way to establishing their position in the academic community.

Let's look at David Bann, who wrote the *PLOS Medicine* article we looked at a chapter ago. To do that we go to *Google Scholar* (not the general page) and type in his name.



We see a couple of things here. First, he has a history of publishing in this area of lifespan obesity patterns. At the bottom of each result, we see how many times each article he is associated with is cited. These aren't amazing numbers, but for a niche area, they are a healthy citation rate. Many articles published aren't cited at all, and here at least one work of his has over 100 citations.

Additionally, if we scan down that right side column

we see some names we might recognize—the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and another *PLOS* article.

Keep in mind that we are looking for expertise in the area of the claim. These are great credentials for talking about obesity. They are not great credentials for talking about opiate addiction. But right now we care about obesity, so that's OK.

By the point of comparison, we can look at a publication in *Europhysics News* that attacks the standard view of the 9/11 World Trade Center collapse. We see this represented in this story on popular alternative news and conspiracy site *AnonHQ*:

Home » Politics » Intelligence » It's Official: European Scientific Journal Concludes 9/11 was a Controlled Demolition

Politics Intelligence

It's Official: European Scientific Journal Concludes 9/11 was a Controlled Demolition

By EV - September 11, 2016

14330 277

Share on Facebook Tweet on Twitter G+ Like 1586 Tweet

The image shows a large plume of smoke or dust rising from the ground, likely representing the World Trade Center towers on 9/11.

The journal cited is *Europhysics News*, and when we look it up in *Google* we find no impact factor at all. In fact, a short investigation of the journal reveals it is not a peer-reviewed journal, but a magazine associated with the European Physics Society. The author here is either lying or does not understand the difference between a scientific journal and a scientific organization's magazine.

So much for the source. But what about the authors?

Do they have a variety of papers on the mathematical modeling of building demolitions?

If you punch the names into *Google Scholar*, you'll find that at least one of the authors does have some modeling experience on architectural stresses, although most of his published work was from years ago.

The screenshot shows a Google Scholar search interface. At the top, there's a search bar with 'Robert Korol' entered. Below the search bar, it says 'About 4,310 results (0.61 sec)'. On the left side, there are filters for 'Articles', 'Case law', and 'My library'. Below these, there are filters for 'Any time' (Since 2017, Since 2016, Since 2013, Custom range...), 'Sort by relevance', and 'Sort by date'. There are also checkboxes for 'Include patents', 'Include citations', and 'Create alert'. The main area displays three search results:

- Cyclic behavior of extended end-plate joints**
A Ghossein, RM Korol, A German - *Journal of Structural Engineering*, 1992 - ascelibrary.org
Four tests are performed to investigate the cyclic behavior of beam-to-column subassemblages utilizing bolted extended end-plate joints. The tests are conducted by applying a constant axial load to the column while subjecting the beam to cyclic controlled
Cited by 39 Related articles All 2 versions Cite Save
- Finite element analysis of RHS T-joints**
RM Korol, FA Mirza - *Journal of the Structural Division*, 1982 - cedb.asce.org
The finite element method (FEM) is used to model the behavior of rectangular hollow section (RHS) T-joints beyond the elastic limit, and is applied to determine their ultimate and working strengths. Punching shear and rotational stiffnesses under branch axial force and
Cited by 48 Related articles All 2 versions Cite Save More
- [Citation] Strength predictions of plates in uniaxial compression**
RM Korol, AN Sherbourne - *Journal of the Structural Division*, 1972
Cited by 32 Related articles Cite Save

Below the third result, there is another article:

- Post-buckling of axially compressed plates**
AN Sherbourne, RM Korol - *Journal of the Structural Division*, 1972 - cedb.asce.org
Aluminum square tubular sections subjected to axial compression generally exhibit a significant reserve of strength above the critical stress levels associated with plate buckling. Load-transverse deflection curves averaged over the four faces of each of six specimens
Cited by 18 Related articles All 2 versions Cite Save More

What do we make of this? It's fair to say that the article here was not peer-reviewed and shouldn't be treated as a substantial contribution to the body of research on the g/π collapse. The headline of the blog article that brought us here is wrong, as is their claim that a *European Scientific Journal* concluded g/π was a controlled demolition. That's flat out false.

But it's worthwhile to note that at least one of the people writing this paper does have some expertise in a related field. We're left with that question of "What does generally mean?" in the phrase "Experts generally agree on X."

What should we do with this article? Well, it's an article published in a non-peer-reviewed journal by an expert who published a number of other respected articles (though quite a long time ago, in one case). To an expert, that definitely could be interesting. To a novice looking for the majority and significant minority views of the field, it's probably not the best source.

HOW TO THINK ABOUT RESEARCH

This brings us to my third point, which is how to think about research articles. People tend to think that newer is better with everything. Sometimes this is true: new phones are better than old phones and new textbooks are often more up-to-date than old textbooks. But the understanding many students have about scholarly articles is that the newer studies “replace” the older studies. You see this assumption in the headline: “It’s Official: European Scientific Journal Concludes...”

In general, that’s not how science works. In science, multiple conflicting studies come in over long periods of time, each one a drop in the bucket of the claim it supports. Over time, the weight of the evidence ends up on one side or another. Depending on the quality of the new research, some drops are bigger than others (some much bigger), but overall it is an incremental process.

As such, studies that are consistent with previous research are often more trustworthy than those that have surprising or unexpected results. This runs counter to the narrative promoted by the press: “news,” after all, favors what is new and different. The unfortunate effect of the press’s presentation of science (and in particular science around popular issues such as health) is that they would rather not give a sense of the slow accumulation of evidence for each side of an issue. Their narrative often presents a world where last month’s findings are “overturned” by this month’s findings, which are then, in turn, “overturned” back to the original finding a month from now. This whiplash presentation “Chocolate is good for you! Chocolate is bad for you!” undermines the public’s faith in science. But the whiplash is not from science: it is a product of the inappropriate presentation from the press.

As a fact-checker, your job is not to resolve debates based on new evidence, but to accurately summarize the state of research and the consensus of experts in a given area, taking into account majority and significant minority views.

For this reason, fact-checking communities such as *Wikipedia* discourage authors from over-citing individual research, which tends to point in different directions. Instead, *Wikipedia* encourages users to find high-quality secondary sources that reliably summarize the research base of a certain area or research reviews of multiple works. This is good advice for fact-checkers as well. Without an expert's background, it can be challenging to place new research in the context of old, which is what you want to do.

Here's a claim (two claims, actually) that ran recently in the *Washington Post*:

The alcohol industry and some government agencies continue to promote the idea that moderate drinking provides some health benefits. But new research is beginning to call even that long-standing claim into question.

Reading down further, we find a more specific claim: the medical consensus is that alcohol is a carcinogen even at low levels of consumption. Is this true?

The first thing we do is look at the authorship of the article. It's from the *Washington Post*, which is a generally reliable publication, and one of its authors has made a career of data analysis (and actually won a Pulitzer prize as part of a team that analyzed data and discovered election

fraud in a Florida mayoral race). So one thing to think about is that these people may be better interpreters of the data than you. (Key thing for fact-checkers to keep in mind: You are often not a person in a position to know.)

But suppose we want to dig further and find out if they are really looking at a shift in the expert consensus, or just adding more drops to the evidence bucket. How would we do that?

First, we'd sanity check where the pieces they mention were published. The *Post* article mentions two articles by "Jennie Connor, a professor at the University of Otago Dunedin School of Medicine," one published last year and the other published earlier. Let's find the more recent one, which seems to be a key input into this article. We go to *Google Scholar* and type in "'Jennie Connor' 2016":

Web Images More...

Google "Jennie Connor" 2016

Scholar About 58 results (0.07 sec)

Articles	Case law	My library
Alcohol consumption as a cause of cancer J Connor · Addiction, 2017 · Wiley Online Library Methods Recent epidemiological and biological research on alcohol and cancer was reviewed and summarized, drawing upon published meta-analyses identified from the Medline database and the archives of the International Agency for Research on Cancer. Cited by 12 Cite Save		
Suicidal ideation, antidepressant medication and car crash injury LT Lam, R Norton, J Connor, S Ameratunga · Accident Analysis & ..., 2016 · Elsevier OBJECTIVE: This study aimed to investigate the association between suicidal ideation, antidepressant medication and the risk of a car crash resulting in serious injury. DESIGN: This was a population-based case-control study. Cases were car drivers who were involved Cited by 23 Related articles All 9 versions Cite Save		
[HTML] Non-response bias in a web-based health behaviour survey of New Zealand tertiary students K Kygi, A Samaranyaka, J Connor, JD Langley · Preventive ..., 2011 · Elsevier OBJECTIVE: There has been little investigation of non-response bias in web-based health surveys. We hypothesised that non-respondents have a higher prevalence of risk behaviours than respondents. METHOD: In 2005, random samples of students aged 17- Cited by 36 Related articles All 10 versions Cite Save		

Sort by relevance
Sort by date

☒ Include patents
☒ Include citations

As usual, we're scanning quickly to get to the article we want, but also minding our peripheral vision here. So, we see that the top one is what we probably want, but we also

notice that Connor has other well-cited articles in the field of health.

What about this article on “Alcohol consumption as a cause of cancer”? It was published in 2017 (which is probably the physical journal’s publication date, the article having been released in 2016). Nevertheless, it’s already been cited by twelve other papers.

What about this publication *Addiction*? Is it reputable? Let’s take a look at an impact factor search.

The screenshot shows a Google search for "addiction impact factor". The search bar at the top contains the text "addiction impact factor". Below the search bar, the results are displayed. On the left, there is a box titled "Addiction / impact factor" showing a value of "4.145" for the year "2010". Below this box, there is a link to "Addiction - Wiley Online Library" with a URL: "onlineibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/ISSN1360-0443". To the right of the search results, there is a knowledge panel for "Addiction". The panel includes the text: "Addiction is a monthly peer-reviewed scientific journal established in 1884 by the Society for the Study of Addiction to Alcohol and other Drugs. It covers original research relating to alcohol, other drugs, tobacco, and behavioural addictions. Wikipedia." Below the knowledge panel, there is a link to "Addiction Biology - Wiley Online Library".

Yep, it looks legit. We also see in the knowledge panel to the right that the journal was founded in the 1880s. If we click through to that *Wikipedia* article, it will tell us that this journal ranks second in impact factor for journals on substance abuse.

Again, you should never use the impact factor for fine-grained distinctions. What we’re checking for here is that the *Washington Post* wasn’t fooled into covering some research far out of the mainstream of substance abuse studies, or tricked into covering something published in a sketchy journal. It’s clear from this quick check that this is a researcher well within the mainstream of her profession, publishing in prominent journals.

Next, we want to see what kind of article this is. Sometimes journals publish short reactions to other works or smaller opinion pieces. What we'd like to see here is that this was either new research or a substantial review of research. We find from the abstract that it is primarily a review of research, including some of the newer studies. We note that it is a six-page article, and therefore not likely to be a simple letter or response to another article. The abstract also goes into detail about the breadth of the evidence reviewed.

Frustratingly, we can't get our hands on the article, but this probably tells us enough about it for our purposes.

FINDING HIGH-QUALITY SECONDARY SOURCES

Let's continue with the "alcohol is closely associated with cancer" claim from the last chapter. Let's see if we can get a decent summary from a respected organization that deals with these issues.

This takes a bit of domain knowledge, but for information on the disease, the United States's National Institutes of Health (NIH) is considered one of the leading authorities. What do they say about this issue?

The image is a screenshot of a Google search interface. The search bar contains the text "nih alcohol and cancer". Below the search bar, there are tabs for "All", "News", "Images", "Maps", "Videos", and "More". To the right of the tabs are links for "Settings" and "Tools". Below the tabs, it says "About 3,810,000 results (0.54 seconds)". The search results are listed below, each with a title, a URL, and a brief description. The first result is "Alcohol Consumption and the Risk of Cancer" from the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA). The second result is "Scientists rethink alcohol/breast cancer relationship | National Institute ...". The third result is "Alcohol Flush Signals Increased Cancer Risk among East Asians ...". The fourth result is "Alcohol Consumption and Cancer Risk - NCBI Bookshelf". The fifth result is "Alcohol and Cancer Risk Fact Sheet - National Cancer Institute".

Google

nih alcohol and cancer

All News Images Maps Videos More Settings Tools

About 3,810,000 results (0.54 seconds)

Alcohol Consumption and the Risk of Cancer
<https://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications>
by A Policy - Related articles
Alcohol consumption has been linked to an increased risk for various types of cancer. A combined analysis of more than 200 studies assessing the link between ...

Scientists rethink alcohol/breast cancer relationship | National Institute ...
<https://www.niaaa.nih.gov/scientists-rethink-alcoholbreast-cancer-relationships>
Oct 16, 2012 - Time course and metabolism are important factors. According to National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) scientists, existing ...

Alcohol Flush Signals Increased Cancer Risk among East Asians ...
<https://www.nih.gov/alcohol-flush-signals-increased-cancer-risk-among-east-asians>
Mar 23, 2009 - National Institutes of Health (NIH) - Turning Discovery into Health ... Alcohol Flush Signals Increased Cancer Risk among East Asians ...

Alcohol Consumption and Cancer Risk - NCBI Bookshelf
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/NCBI/Literature/Bookshelf>
by O Oyesanmi - 2010 - Cited by 27 - Related articles
The purpose of this report is to systematically examine the possible causal mechanism(s) that may explain the association between alcohol (ethanol) ...

Alcohol and Cancer Risk Fact Sheet - National Cancer Institute
<https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/causes-prevention/alcohol/alcohol-fact-sheet>
A fact sheet that summarizes the evidence linking alcohol consumption to the risk of various cancers. Includes information about factors that affect the risk of ...

What we don't want here is a random article. We're not an expert and we don't want to have to guess at the weights to give individual research. We want a summary.

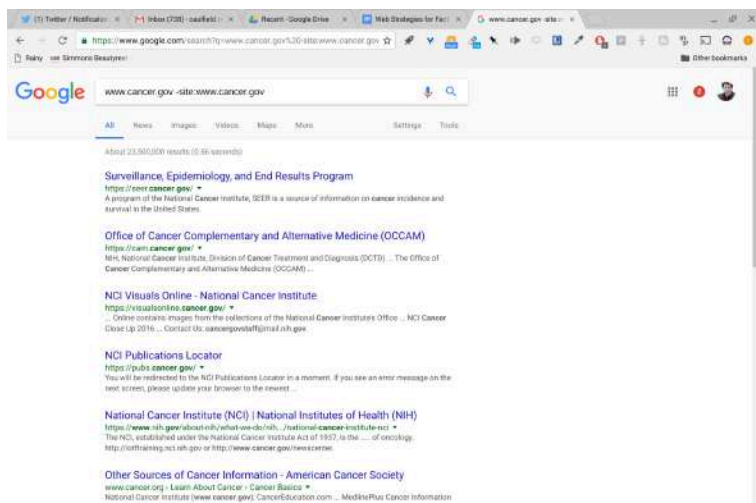
And as we scan the results we see a "risk fact-sheet" from the National Cancer Institute. In general, domain suffixes (com/org/net/etc) don't mean anything, but ".gov" domains are strictly regulated, so we know this is from

the (U.S.) federal government. A fact sheet is a summary, which is what we want, so we click through.

This page doesn't mince words:

Based on extensive reviews of [research studies](#), there is a strong scientific consensus of an association between [alcohol](#) drinking and several types of cancer ([1](#), [2](#)). In its Report on Carcinogens, the National Toxicology Program of the US Department of Health and Human Services lists consumption of alcoholic beverages as a known human [carcinogen](#). The research evidence indicates that the more alcohol a person drinks—particularly the more alcohol a person drinks regularly over time—the higher his or her risk of developing an alcohol-associated cancer. Based on data from 2009, an estimated 3.5 percent of all cancer deaths in the United States (about 19,500 deaths) were alcohol related ([3](#)).

With the “.gov” extension, this page is pretty likely to be linked to the NIH. But just in case, we *Google* search the site to see who runs it and what their reputation is.



Since we're reading laterally, let's click on the link five results down to see what the NIH says about the National Cancer Institute. Again, we're just sanity checking our impression that this is an authoritative body of the NIH. Here's its blurb from the [fifth result down](#):

The National Cancer Institute (NCI) is part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), which is one of 11 agencies that compose the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The NCI, established under the National Cancer Institute Act of 1937, is the Federal Government's principal agency for cancer research and training.

As always, we glance up to the web address and make sure we are really getting this information from the NIH. We are.

If we were a researcher, we would sort through more of this. We might review individual articles or make sure that some more out-of-the-mainstream views are not being

ignored. Such an effort would take a deep background and understanding of the underlying issues. But we're not researchers. We're just people looking to find out if our rationalization for those two after-work drinks is maybe a bit bogus. And on that level, it's not looking particularly good for us. We have a major review of the evidence in a major journal stating there's really no safe level of drinking when it comes to cancer, and we have the NIH—one of the most trusted sources of health information in the U.S. (and not exactly a fad-chaser) telling us in an FAQ that there is a strong consensus that alcohol consumption predicts cancer.

CHOOSING YOUR EXPERTS FIRST

One other thing to note here is that we followed a different pattern than a lot of web searching. Here we decided who would be the most trustworthy source of medical consensus (the NIH) and looked up what they said.

This is an important technique to have in your research mix. Too often, we execute web search after web search without first asking who would constitute an expert. Unsurprisingly, when we do things in this order, we end up valuing the expertise of people who agree with us and devaluing the expertise of those who don't. If you find yourself going down a rabbit hole of conflicting information in your searches, back up a second and ask yourself: whose expertise would you respect? Maybe it's not the NIH. Maybe it's the Mayo Clinic, or Medline, or the World Health Organization. But deciding who has expertise before you search will mediate some of your worst tendencies toward confirmation bias.

So, given the evidence we've seen in previous sections about alcohol and cancer, am I going to give up my after-work porter? I don't know. I really like a porter. The evidence is still emerging, and maybe the risk increase is worth it. But I've also convinced the *Washington Post* article isn't the newest version of "eating grapefruit will make you thinner." It's not even "Nutrasweet may make you fat," which is an interesting finding, but a point around which there is no consensus. Instead "small amounts of daily alcohol increase cancer risk" represents a real emerging consensus in the research, and from our review, we find it's not even a particularly new trend. The consensus emerged some time ago (the NIH FAQ dates back to 2010); it's just been poorly communicated to the public.

EVALUATING NEWS SOURCES

Evaluating news sources is one of the more contentious issues out there. People have their favorite news sources and don't like to be told that their news source is untrustworthy.

For fact-checking, it's helpful to draw a distinction between two activities:

- Newsgathering, where news organizations do investigative work—calling sources, researching public documents, and checking and publishing facts (e.g. getting the facts of Bernie Sanders involvement in the passage of several bills)
- News analysis, which takes those facts and strings them into a larger narrative, such as “Senator Sanders an effective legislator behind the scenes” or “Senator Sanders largely ineffective Senator behind the scenes.”

Most newspaper articles are not lists of facts, which means that outfits like the *Wall Street Journal* and the *New York Times* do both newsgathering and news analysis in stories. What has been lost in the dismissal of the *New York Times* as liberal and the *Wall Street Journal* as conservative is that these are primarily biases of the news analysis portion of what they do. To the extent the bias exists, it's in what they choose to cover, to whom they choose to talk, and what they imply in the way they arrange those facts they collect.

The news gathering piece is affected by this, but in many ways largely separate, and the reputation for fact-checking is largely separate as well. MSNBC, for example, has a liberal slant to its news, but a smart liberal would be more likely to trust a fact in the *Wall Street Journal* than a fact uttered on MSNBC because the *Wall Street Journal* has a

reputation for fact-checking and accuracy that MSNBC does not. The same holds true for someone looking at the *New York Observer* vs. the *New York Times*. Even if you like the perspective of the *Observer*, if you were asked to bet on the accuracy of two pieces—one from the *Observer* and one from the *Times*—you could make a lot of money betting on the *Times*.

Narratives are a different matter. You may like the narrative of MSNBC or the *Observer*—or even find it more in line with reality. You might rely on them for insight. But if you are looking to validate a *fact*, the question you want to ask is not always “What is the bias of this publication?” but rather, “What is this publication’s record with concern to accuracy?”



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=61#h5p-83>

WHAT MAKES A TRUSTWORTHY NEWS SOURCE?

Experts have looked extensively at what sorts of qualities in a news source tend to result in fair and accurate coverage. Sometimes, however, the number and complexity of the various qualities can be daunting. We suggest the following short list of things to consider.

- **Machinery of care:** Good news sources have significant processes and resources dedicated to promoting accuracy, and correcting error.
- **Transparency:** Good news sources clearly mark opinion columns as opinion, disclose conflicts of interest, indicate in stories where information was obtained and how it was verified, and provide links to sources.
- **Expertise:** Good news sources hire reporters with reporting or area expertise who have been educated in the processes of ethical journalism. Where new writers with other expertise are brought in, they are educated by the organization.
- **Agenda:** The primary mission of a good news source is to inform its readers, not elect Democrats, promote tax cuts, or reform schools. You should absolutely read writers with activist missions like these, but do not treat them as “pure” news sources.

Here’s an important tip: *approach agenda last*. It’s easy to see bias in people you disagree with, and hard to see bias in people you agree with. But bias isn’t agenda. Bias is about how people see things; the agenda is about what the news source is set up to *do*. A site that clearly marks opinion

columns as opinion employs dozens of fact-checkers, hires professional reporters, and takes care to be transparent about sources, methods, and conflicts of interest is less likely to be driven by political agenda than a site that does not do these things. And this holds even if the reporters themselves may have personal bias. Good process and news culture go a long way to mitigating personal bias.

Yet, you may see some level of these things and still have doubt. If the first three indicators don't settle the question for you, you should consider the agenda. Is the source connected to political party leadership? Funded by oil companies? Have the owners made comments about what they are trying to achieve with their publication, and are those ends about specific social or political change or about creating a more informed public?

Again, we cannot stress enough: you should read things by people with political agendas. It's an important part of your news diet. It's also the case that sometimes the people with the most expertise work for organizations that are trying to accomplish social or political goals. But when sourcing a fact or a statistic, agenda can get in the way and you'd want to find a less agenda-driven source if possible.

NATIONAL NEWSPAPERS OF RECORD

When it comes down to accuracy, there are a number of national newspapers in most countries that are well-staffed with reporters and have an editorial process that places a premium on accuracy. These papers are sometimes referred to as “newspapers of record.”¹ “National newspapers of record” are distinguished in two ways:

1. They are rigorous, showing attention to detail and having accountability in their editorial processes.
2. They have a truly national view and attempt to be the best possible record of what happened in the nation (not just a region) on a given day.

The United States is considered by some to have at least four national newspapers of record:

- *The New York Times*
- *The Wall Street Journal*
- *The Los Angeles Times*
- *The Washington Post*

You could add in the *Boston Globe*, *Miami Herald*, or *Chicago Tribune*. Or subtract the *LA Times* or *Washington Post*. These lists are meant to be starting points, indicating that a given publication has a greater reputation and reach than, say, the *Clinton Daily Item*.

1. [1]

Some other English-language newspapers of record:

- *The Times* (UK)
- *The Daily Telegraph* (UK)
- *The Irish Times* (Ireland)
- *The Times of India* (India)
- *New Zealand Herald* (New Zealand)
- *Sydney Morning Herald* (Australia)
- *The Age* (Australia)
- *The Globe and Mail* (Canada)

Does that mean these papers are the arbiters of truth? Nope. Where there are disagreements between these papers and other reputable sources, it could be worth investigating.

As an example, in the run-up to the Iraq War, the Knight-Ridder news agency was in general a far more reliable news source on issues of faulty intelligence than the *New York Times*. In fact, reporting from the *New York Times* back then was particularly bad, and many have pointed to one reporter, in particular Judith Miller, who was [far too credulous](#) in repeating information fed to her by war hawks. Had you relied on just the *New York Times* for your information on these issues, you would have been misinformed.

There is much to be said about failings such as this, and it is certainly the case that high profile failings such as these have eroded faith in the press more generally, and, for some, created the impression that there really is

no difference between the *New York Times*, the *Springfield Herald*, and your neighbor's political *Facebook* page. This is, to say the least, overcompensation. We rely on major papers to tell us the truth and rely on them to allocate resources to investigate and present that truth with an accuracy hard to match on a smaller budget. When they fail, as we saw with Iraq, horrible things can happen. But that is as much a testament to how much we rely on these publications to inform our discourse as it is a statement on their reliability.

A literate fact-checker does not take what is said in newspapers of record as truth. But, likewise, any person who doesn't recognize the *New York Times* or *Sydney Morning Herald* as more than your average newspaper is going to be less than efficient at evaluating information. Learn to recognize the major newspapers in countries whose news you follow to assess information more quickly.

-
1. We're aware that the origin of the term was originally a marketing plan to distinguish the *New York Times* from its rivals. At the same time, it captures an aspiration that is not common across many publications in a country. When I wrote code for *Newsbank's Historical Paper Archive*, we took the idea of Newspapers of Record seriously even on a local level. With the mess of paper startups and failures in the 1800s, understanding what was reliable was key. Which of that multitude of papers was likely to make the best go at covering all matters of local importance? [↩](#)

ACTIVITY: EXPERT OR CRANK?

TWITTER EXPERTISE?

This guy has a pretty negative reaction to something published in a highly reputable journal. Is he an expert, or just a guy with opinions about things?



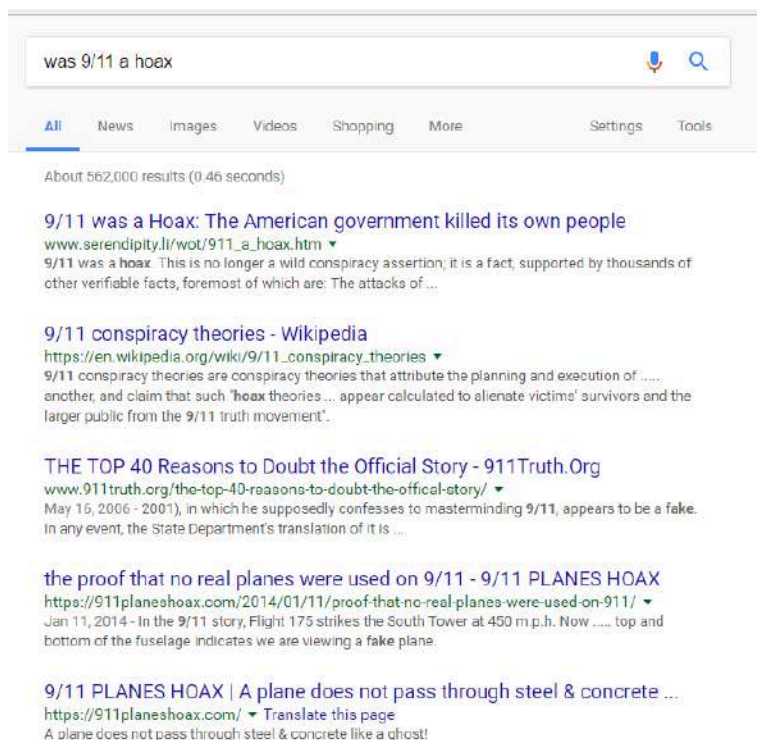
WOODWARD AND BERNSTEIN

Are these the reporters who brought down Nixon? Is this a trustworthy reporter sharing this photo?



AVOIDING CONFIRMATION BIAS IN SEARCHES

Was 9/11 a hoax? Let's find out. We type in 'was 9/11 a hoax' and we get:



Well, look at that. Not only the top result says that the attack on 9/11 was faked—the *top five* results do. To the untrained eye it looks like the press has been hiding something from you.

But of course, the 9/11 attacks were not faked. So, why does Google return these results?

The main reason here is the term. The term “hoax” is applied to the 9/11 attacks primarily on conspiracy sites. So when Google looks for clusters on that term (and links to

documents containing that term), it finds that conspiracy sites rank highly.

Think about it: reputable physics journals, policy magazines, and national newspapers are not likely to run headlines asking if the attacks were a hoax. But conspiracy sites are.

The same holds true even for more benign searches. The question, “Are we eating too much protein” has *Google* return a panel from the *Huffington Post* (now *HuffPost*) and a website from a vegan advocacy group.

Google are we eating too much protein

All News Images Shopping Videos More Settings Tools

About 4,670,000 results (0.70 seconds)

These nine essential amino acids can only be obtained from the foods **we eat**. But **are we eating too much?** ... For starters, meat is a major source of **protein** in the American diet, and animal foods high in **protein** are often high in saturated fat. Sep 21, 2012

The Protein Myth: Why You Need Less Protein Than You Think | The ...
www.huffingtonpost.com/jessica-jones-ms-rd/protein-diet_b_1882372.html

About this result • Feedback

People also ask

How many grams of protein do you need per day?	▼
What happens when you eat too much protein?	▼
How much protein do you need?	▼
Why is too much protein bad?	▼

Feedback

The Protein Myth | The Physicians Committee
www.pcrm.org/health/diets/vsk/vegetarian-starter-kill-protein ▼

To consume a diet that contains enough, but not too much, protein, simply replace animal products with grains, vegetables, legumes (peas, beans, and lentils), and fruits. As long as one is eating a variety of plant foods in sufficient quantity to maintain one's weight, the body gets plenty of protein.

Are We Eating Too Much Protein? A Scientist Makes the Connection ...
www.onegreenplanet.org/news/t-colin-campbell-protein-and-cancer/ ▼

Dec 10, 2016 - We're constantly bombarded with the message that we might die if we don't eat enough protein, but our country isn't sick or dying from protein ...

To avoid confirmation bias in searches:

- Avoid asking questions that imply a certain answer. If I ask “Did the Holocaust happen?,” for example, I am implying that it is likely that the Holocaust was faked. If you want information on the Holocaust, sometimes it’s better just to start with a simple noun search, e.g. “Holocaust,” and read summaries that show how we know what happened.
- Avoid using terms that imply a certain answer. As an example, if you query “Women 72 cents on the dollar” you’ll likely get articles that tell you [women make 72 cents on the dollar](#). But if you search for “Women 80 cents on the dollar” you’ll get [articles that say women make 80 cents on the dollar](#). Searching for general articles on the “wage gap” might be a better choice.
- Avoid culturally loaded terms. As an example, the term “black-on-white crime” is a term used by white supremacist groups but is not a term generally used by sociologists. As such, if you put that term into the *Google* search bar, you are going to get some sites that will carry the perspective of white supremacist sites, and be lousy sources of serious sociological analysis.
- Plan to reformulate. Think carefully about what constitutes an authoritative source before you search. Once you search you’ll find you have an irrepressible urge to click on the top results. If you can, think of what sorts of sources and information you would like

to see in the results before you search. If you don't see those in the results, fight the impulse to click on forward, and reformulate your search.

- Scan results for better terms. Maybe your first question about whether the holocaust happened turned up a lousy result set in general but did pop up a *Wikipedia* article on Holocaust denialism. Use that term to make a better search for what you actually want to know.

ATTRIBUTIONS

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12

Logical Fallacy



Logical Fallacies

Logical fallacies are errors in reasoning that are based on poor or faulty logic. When presented in a formal argument, they can cause you to lose your credibility as a writer, so you have to be careful of them.



Sometimes, writers will purposefully use logical fallacies to make an argument seem more persuasive or valid than it really is. In fact, the examples of fallacies on the following pages might be examples you have heard or read. While using fallacies might work in some situations,

it's irresponsible as a writer, and, chances are, an academic audience will recognize the fallacy.

However, most of the time, students accidentally use logical fallacies in their arguments, so being aware of logical fallacies and understanding what they are can help you avoid them. Plus, being aware of these fallacies can help you recognize them when you are reading and looking for source material. You wouldn't want to use a source as evidence if the author included some faulty logic.

Last semester, several students worked together to create activities to help their peers understand Logical Fallacy. Now, you can benefit from their work. While there may be errors, these activities are a great way to learn some of the logical fallacies.

There are approximately 145 different logical fallacies. No, you don't need to know them all! We are going to look at some of the most common logical fallacies in this chapter. Let's start with a brief interactive page that shows the definitions of different logical fallacies.

Follow [this link to see "Your Logical Fallacy"](#).

If you hover over the images, it will tell you the definition. If you click on it, they will give deeper explanations and examples.

Several students created projects to help you define logical fallacies. Take a look at these lovely examples.

[Student Creation 1:](#)

[Student Creation 2](#)

[Student Creation 3](#)

Let's take a look at some of the most common fallacies that can be found in student essays:

Straw Man Fallacy
False Dilemma Fallacy
Hasty Generalization Fallacy
Appeal to Fear Fallacy
Ad Hominem Fallacy
Slippery Slope Fallacy
Bandwagon Fallacy
Guilt by Association Fallacy

Straw Man Fallacy

A straw man fallacy occurs when someone takes another person's argument or point, distorts it, or exaggerates it in some kind of extreme way, and then attacks the extreme distortion as if that is really the claim the first person is making.

Example

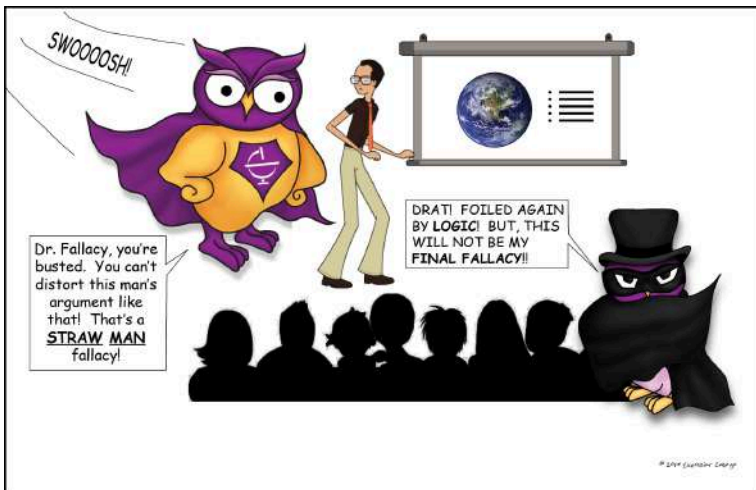
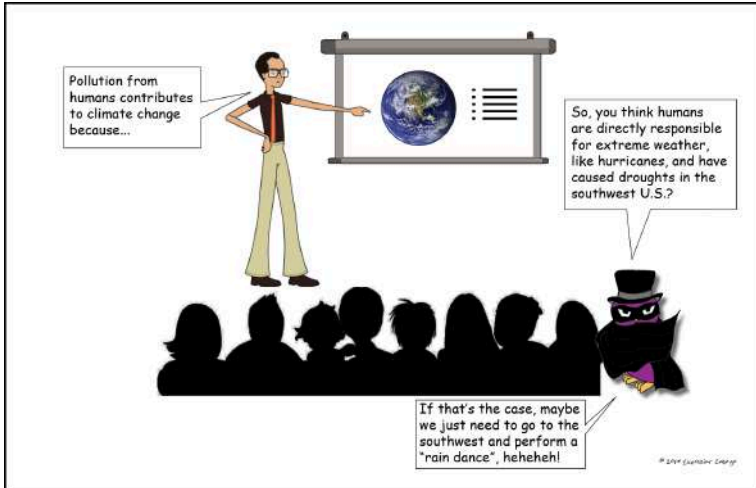
Person 1: I think pollution from humans contributes to climate change.

Person 2:

So, you think humans are directly responsible for extreme weather, like hurricanes, and have caused the droughts in the southwestern U.S.? If that's the case, maybe we just need to go to the southwest and perform a "rain dance."

The comic below gives you a little insight into what this

fallacy might look like. Join Captain Logic as he works to thwart the evil fallacies of Dr. Fallacy!



In this example, you'll notice how Dr. Fallacy completely distorted the speaker's point. While this is an extreme example, it's important to be careful not to fall into this kind of fallacy on a smaller scale because it's quite easy to do. Think about times you may have even accidentally misrepresented the other side in an argument.

We have to be careful to avoid even the accidental straw man fallacy!

False Dilemma Fallacy

Sometimes called the “either-or” fallacy, a false dilemma is a logical fallacy that presents only two options or sides when there are many options or sides. Essentially, a false dilemma presents a “black and white” kind of thinking when there are actually many shades of gray.

Example

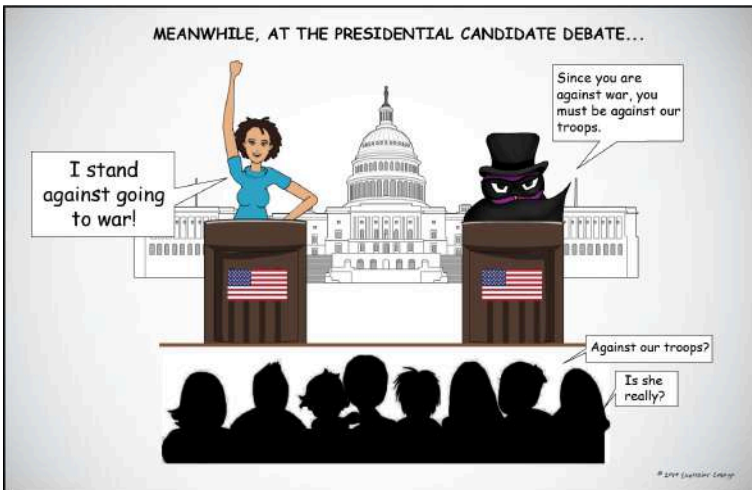
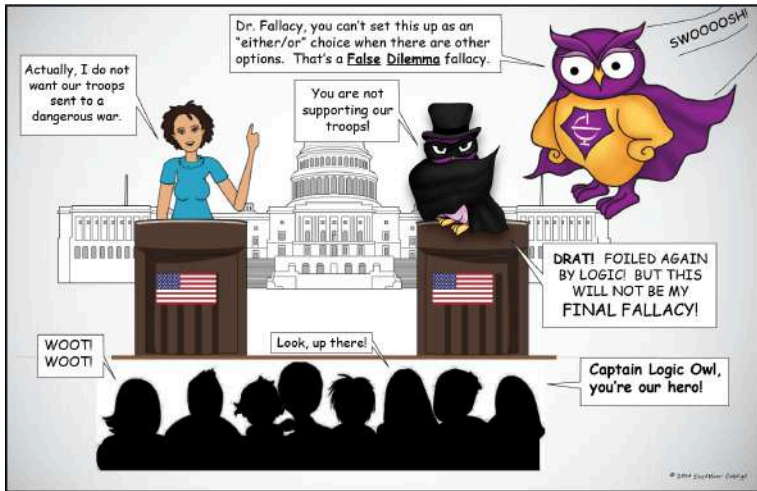
Person 1:

You're either for the war or against the troops.

Person 2:

Actually, I do not want our troops sent into a dangerous war.

The comic below gives you a little insight into what this fallacy might look like. Observe as Captain Logic saves the day from faulty logic and the evil Dr. Fallacy!



In this comic, you'll notice that Dr. Fallacy is presenting only two options, but the first person clearly has a middle position. You have to be really careful of this kind of fallacy, as it can really turn your audience away from your position. The world is complex, and the way people think is complex. If you dismiss that, you could lose the respect and interest of your audience.

Hasty Generalization Fallacy

The hasty generalization fallacy is sometimes called the **over-generalization** fallacy. It is basically making a claim based on evidence that is just too small. Essentially, you can't make a claim and say that something is true if you have only an example or two as evidence.

Example

Some teenagers in our community recently vandalized the park downtown. Teenagers are so irresponsible and destructive.

You can see Dr. Fallacy in action with this type of fallacy in the comic below.





In this example, Dr. Fallacy is making a claim that all teenagers are bad based on the evidence of one incident. Even with the evidence of ten incidences, Dr. Fallacy couldn't make the claim that all teenagers are problems.

In this instance, the fallacy seems clear, but this kind of fallacious thinking is quite common. People will make claims about all kinds of things based on one or two pieces of evidence, which is not only wrong but can be dangerous. It's really easy to fall into this kind of thinking, but we must work to avoid it. We must hold ourselves to higher standards when we are making arguments.

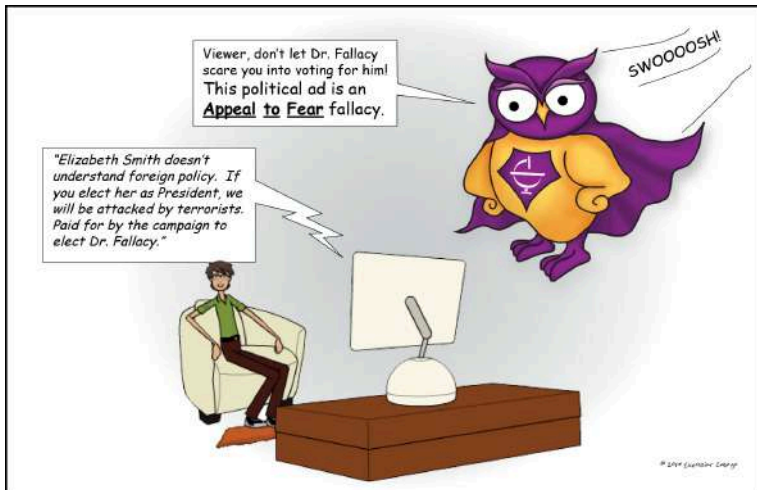
Appeal to Fear Fallacy

This type of fallacy is one that, as noted in its name, plays upon people's fear. In particular, this fallacy presents a scary future if a certain decision is made today.

Example

Elizabeth Smith doesn't understand foreign policy. If you elect Elizabeth Smith as president, we will be attacked by terrorists.

You can see this fallacy in action in Dr. Fallacy's campaign ad in the comic below.





Thankfully, the voters saw through Dr. Fallacy’s faulty logic. While this kind of claim seems outlandish, similar claims have been made by candidates in elections for years. Obviously, this kind of claim isn’t logical, however. No one can predict the future, but making a bold claim like this with no evidence at all is a clear logical fallacy.

Ad Hominem Fallacy

Ad hominem means “against the man,” and this type of fallacy is sometimes called **name-calling** or the **personal-attack** fallacy. This type of fallacy occurs when someone attacks the person instead of attacking his or her argument.

Example

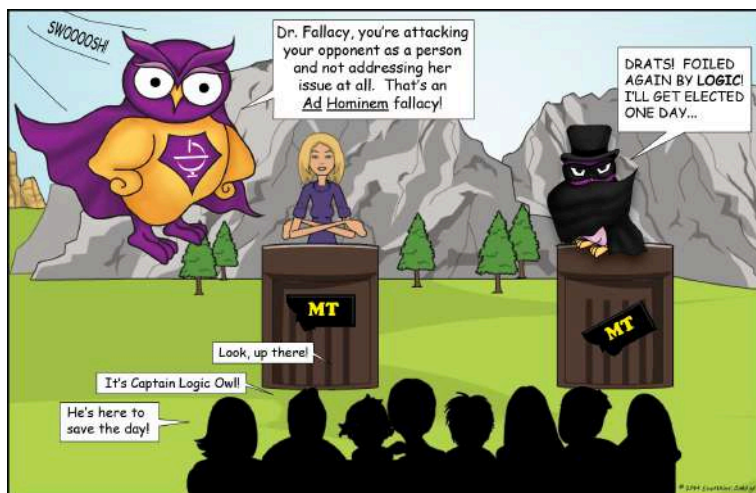
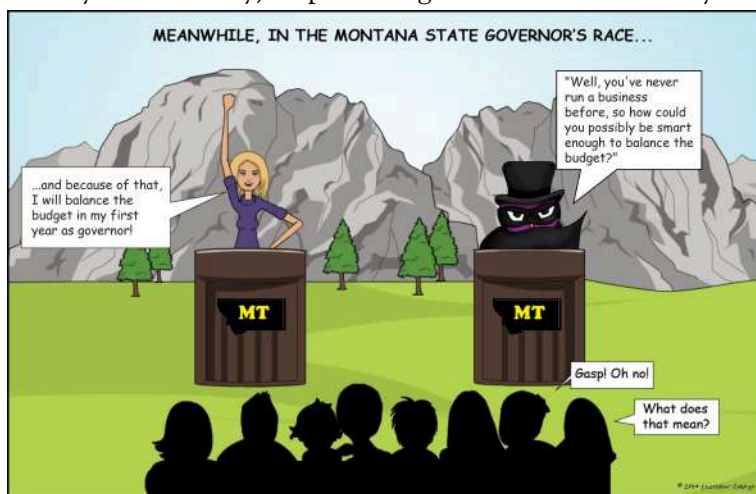
Person 1:

I am for raising the minimum wage in our state.

Person 2:

She is for raising the minimum wage, but she is not smart enough to even run a business.

Check out Dr. Fallacy as he tries to get away with this type of fallacy. Thankfully, Captain Logic OWL saves the day!



In this example, Dr. Fallacy doesn't address the issue of minimum wage and, instead, attacks the person. When we attack the person instead of tackling the issue, our audience might think we don't understand the issue or can't disprove our opponent's view. It's better to stick to the issue at hand and avoid ad hominem fallacies.

Slippery Slope Fallacy

A slippery slope fallacy occurs when someone makes a claim about a series of events that would lead to one major event, usually a bad event. In this fallacy, a person makes a claim that one event leads to another event and so on until we come to some awful conclusion. Along the way, each step or event in the faulty logic becomes more and more improbable.

Example:

If we enact any kind of gun control laws, the next thing you know, we won't be allowed to have any guns at all. When that happens, we won't be able to defend ourselves against terrorist attacks, and when that happens terrorists will take over our country. Therefore, gun control laws will cause us to lose our country to terrorists.

See Dr. Fallacy in the comic below try to get away with this fallacy. Fortunately, Captain Logic saves logic and saves the day!



In this example, Dr. Fallacy is following a slippery slope to get to the point that any kind of gun regulation will lead to terrorists taking over the country. The series of events is extremely improbable, and we simply can't make claims like this and be taken seriously in our arguments.

Of course, this example is extreme, but we do need to make sure if we are creating a line of reasoning in terms of events leading to other events, that we aren't falling into a slippery slope fallacy.

Bandwagon Fallacy

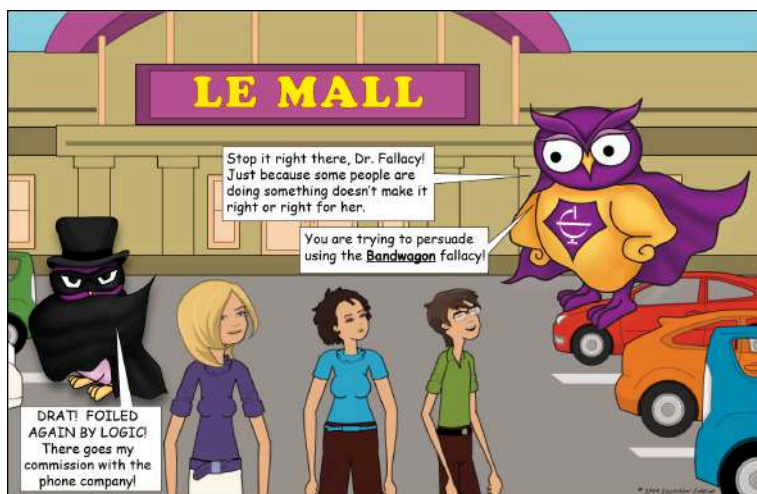
The bandwagon fallacy is also sometimes called the **appeal to common belief** or **appeal to the masses** because it's all about getting people to do or think something because "everyone else is doing it" or "everything else thinks this."

Example

Everyone is going to get the new smartphone when it comes out this weekend. Why aren't you?

In the comic below, Dr. Fallacy tries to persuade people using this type of fallacy.





Of course, the problem with this fallacy is not everyone is actually doing this, but there is another problem that's important to point out. Just because a lot of people think something or do something does not mean it's right or good to do. For example, in the 16th century, most people believed the earth was the center of the universe; of course, believing that did not make it true.

You want to be careful to avoid this fallacy, as it's easy to fall into this kind of thinking. Think about what your parents asked you when you insisted that "everyone" was doing something that you were not getting to do: "If every one of your friends jumped off of a cliff, would you?" It's important to fight the urge to fall into a bandwagon fallacy.

Guilt by Association Fallacy

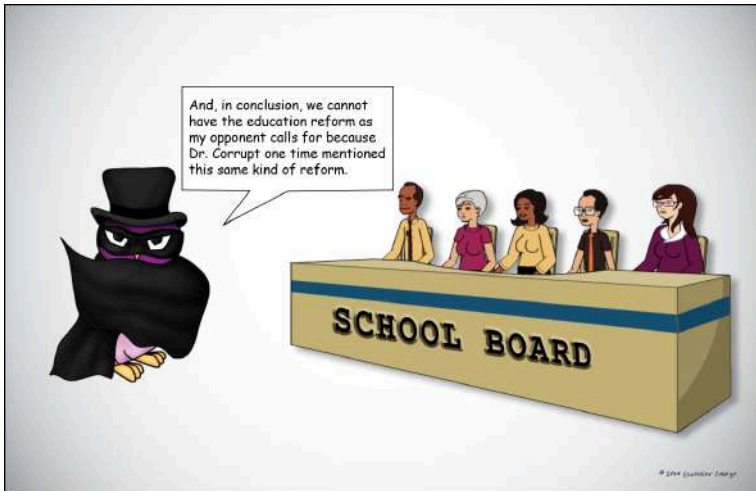
A guilt by association fallacy occurs when someone connects an opponent to a demonized group of people or to a bad person in order to discredit his or her argument. The idea is that the person is "guilty" by simply being

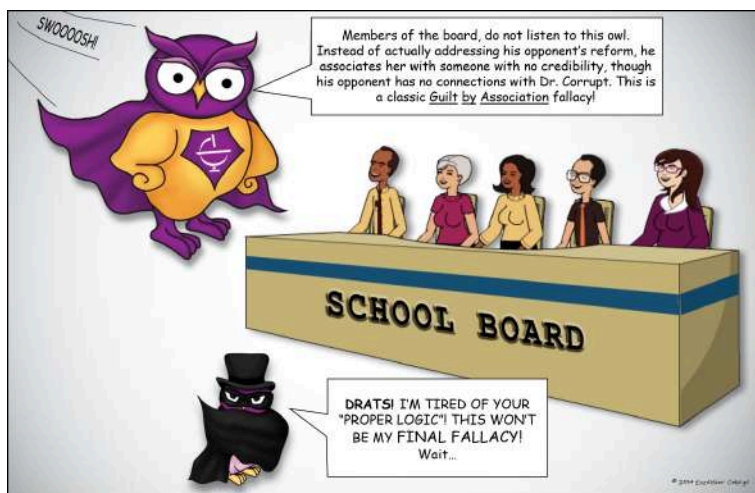
similar to this “bad” group and, therefore, should not be listened to about anything.

Example

We cannot have the educational reform that my opponent calls for because Dr. Crazy has also mentioned this kind of educational reform.

See Dr. Fallacy use this fallacy by associating his opponent with someone named Dr. Crazy. Clearly, this person isn't someone to be associated with. Thankfully, Captain Logic OWL points out this flawed logic to the school board.





Here, we don't see what issues Dr. Fallacy has with the educational reform plan, as this isn't addressed in the fallacy. Instead of dealing with the issue, this person tries to just dismiss the point by connecting his or her opponent's ideas with the ideas of a person who the audience wouldn't believe.

This is problematic, of course, because we don't deal with the issue at hand. Plus, just because "Dr. Crazy" thinks the same thing or something similar doesn't mean we should automatically dismiss it. We need to look more closely at the issue at hand, and it seems like the person using this fallacy doesn't want us to.

Since Dr. Fallacy is once again thwarted by Captain Logic, this may, indeed, be his last fallacy, at least for now...

Putting It All Together



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this

version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=59#h5p-62>



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=59#h5p-82>

After completing this activity, you may download or print a completion report that summarizes your results.

Analyze This

Fallacies are everywhere! You have learned about some of the most common logical fallacies but now it's time to see some examples of how we encounter these fallacies in our everyday lives.

In the video below, a student examines some ads for fallacies. Watch and listen as he identifies fallacies that we should be aware of.



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=59#h5p-63>

See It in Practice

The key thing to remember with logical fallacies is that we want to avoid faulty logic in our writing and we want to be

aware of faulty logic in the source material we find. Even if you can't remember the different types of fallacies, as long as you are aware of logical fallacies and work to avoid any kind of faulty logic, you're going to be in good shape as you develop arguments.

In this video, watch as our student revises her essay to make sure she has avoided logical fallacies in her arguments.



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=59#h5p-64>

Fallacy Quick Reference Chart

The following is a fairly comprehensive table of fallacies, and its purpose is for you to use a reference to ensure that you do not create a logical fallacy as you are writing about your discoveries throughout your rhetorical analysis.

FALLACY	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE
APPEAL TO FORCE	Arguer threatens the reader/listener	If you don't agree with me, I will beat you up.
APPEAL TO PITY	Arguer elicits pity from reader/listener	If you don't pass me in this course, I will get kicked out of school and have to flip burgers for the rest of my life.
DIRECT APPEAL TO THE PEOPLE	Arguer arouses mob mentality	The terrorists came from the middle east. Our only course of action is to turn it into a parking lot.
INDIRECT APPEAL TO THE PEOPLE	Arguer appeals to the reader/listener's desire for security, love, respect, etc.	Of course you want to read my book, it's what all the intellectuals read.
ABUSIVE ARGUMENT AGAINST THE PERSON (AD HOMINEM)	Arguer verbally abuses the other arguer	You're a moron; therefore your point is invalid.
CIRCUMSTANTIAL ARGUMENT AGAINST THE PERSON (AD HOMINEM)	Arguer presents the other arguer as predisposed to argue in this way	Of course you'd say I need braces, you're a dentist. (Anyone may be able to note I need braces.)
CONSISTENCY ARGUMENT AGAINST THE PERSON (TU QUOQUE)	Arguer presents other arguer as a hypocrite	How can you tell me not to drink and drive when you did it last weekend? (Note: don't drink and drive.)
ACCIDENT	The general rule is applied to a specific case it was not intended to cover	Americans are entitled to freedom of speech, so you cannot arrest him for yelling "fire" in the theater. (Note: don't yell "fire" in the theater.)

STRAW MAN	Arguer distorts the opponent's argument and then attacks the distorted argument	Our campus is "dry" and doesn't allow alcohol. Obviously, the administration is composed of a bunch of puritans who don't speak for the majority and can be ignored.
MISSING THE POINT	Arguer draws a conclusion different from that supported by the premises	College education costs are rising exponentially; therefore we should reduce the number of years needed to obtain a degree.
RED HERRING	Arguer leads reader/listener off track	People continually talk about the negative effects of tobacco, but did you know that the Native Americans used to smoke tobacco? Many Native American folk remedies are still used today in holistic medicine.
APPEAL TO UNQUALIFIED AUTHORITY	Arguer cites untrustworthy authority	My sixteen-year-old cousin Billy said that there was no moon landing, and he wants to be an astronaut, so it must be true.
APPEAL TO IGNORANCE	Premises report that nothing is known or proved, and then a conclusion is drawn	There is no way of disproving the existence of God, therefore he exists. Or, conversely: There is no way of proving the existence of God, therefore he doesn't exist.
HASTY GENERALIZATION	Conclusion is drawn from atypical sample	Mrs. Dobson's Rottweiler bit a neighbor boy; therefore all Rottweilers are violent dogs.

FALSE CAUSE	Conclusion depends on nonexistent or minor causal connection	Every time I change the channel, my sports team scores. Therefore, any time I want my team to score, I need only change the channel
SLIPPERY SLOPE	Conclusion depends on unlikely chain reaction	If Americans' rights to bear arms is taken away, foreigners will view the country as weak and disarmed and attack, easily crushing our crippled defenses and enslaving our nation to submit to their will and whim.
WEAK ANALOGY	Conclusion depends on defective analogy	My cousin Billy is just like Yao Ming, he is tall and loves basketball; therefore he will be a pro ball player just like Yao Ming.
BEGGING THE QUESTION	Arguer creates the illusion that inadequate premises are adequate by leaving out key premises, by restating the conclusion as a premise, or by reasoning in a circle	Of course animals have rights, just look at how they're being treated.
COMPLEX QUESTION	Multiple questions are concealed in a single question	Have you stopped sleeping with your secretary?
FALSE DICHOTOMY	"Either/or" statement that hides additional alternatives	Either you buy Axe body spray or you risk not attracting the ladies. Obviously, you want to attract the ladies, so you will buy Axe body spray.

SUPPRESSED EVIDENCE	Arguer ignores important evidence that requires a different conclusion	Of course that child can't practice medicine, he is only a boy. (If said child is Doogie Howser.)
EQUIVOCATION	Conclusion depends on a shift in meaning of a word or phrase	A squirrel is a mammal; therefore a large squirrel is a large mammal.
AMPHIBOLY	Conclusion depends on the wrong interpretation of a syntactically ambiguous statement	John rode his bike past the tree with a helmet. (The tree has a helmet?)
COMPOSITION	Attribute is wrongly transferred from parts to whole	Bleach and ammonia individually are strong chemical cleaners; therefore if I mix them I will have a stronger chemical cleaner. (This produces various lethal gases, which would be foolish to do)
DIVISION	Attribute is wrongly transferred from whole to parts	Our campus is over one hundred years old; therefore every building on campus is over one hundred years old.

Your Turn

It's your turn now to make sure you are aware of fallacies and have worked to avoid them in your writing and in the sources you use in your essay. It's a good idea to review the fallacy activities to have them fresh in your mind as you revise for logic in your argument.



This is also a good time to get outside feedback and support. It can be especially difficult to identify faulty logic in our own writing, especially if we feel emotionally connected to our content. Have your professor, a classmate, or a friend or family member review your essay with an eye toward the logic in your arguments.

ATTRIBUTIONS

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13

Logical Fallacy Master List



Master List of Logical Fallacies

By Owen Williamson

Fallacies are fake or deceptive arguments, “junk cognition,” that is, arguments that seem irrefutable but prove nothing. Fallacies often seem superficially sound and they far too often retain immense persuasive power even after being clearly exposed as false. Like epidemics, fallacies sometimes “burn through” entire populations, often with the most tragic results, before their power is diminished or lost. Fallacies are not always deliberate, but a good scholar’s purpose is always to identify and unmask fallacies in arguments. Note that many of these definitions overlap, but the goal here is to identify contemporary and classic fallacies as they are used in today’s discourse. Effort

has been made to avoid mere word-games (e.g., “The Fallacist’s Fallacy,” or the famous “Crocodile’s Paradox” of classic times), or the so-called “fallacies” of purely formal and symbolic, business and financial, religious or theological logic. No claim is made to “academic rigor” in this listing.

1. The A Priori Argument (also, Rationalization; Dogmatism, Proof Texting.): A corrupt argument from logos, starting with a given, pre-set belief, dogma, doctrine, scripture verse, “fact” or conclusion and then searching for any reasonable or reasonable-sounding argument to rationalize, defend or justify it. Certain ideologues and religious fundamentalists are proud to use this fallacy as their primary method of “reasoning” and some are even honest enough to say so. E.g., since we know there is no such thing as “evolution,” a prime duty of believers is to look for ways to explain away growing evidence, such as is found in DNA, that might suggest otherwise. See also the Argument from Ignorance. The opposite of this fallacy is the Taboo.
2. Ableism (also, The Con Artist’s Fallacy; The Dacoit’s Fallacy; Shearing the Sheep; Profiteering; “Vulture Capitalism,” “Wealth is a disease, and I am the cure.”): A corrupt argument from ethos, arguing that because someone is intellectually slower, physically or emotionally less capable, less ambitious, less aggressive, older or less healthy (or simply more trusting or less lucky) than others, s/he “naturally” deserves less

in life and may be freely victimized by those who are luckier, quicker, younger, stronger, healthier, greedier, more powerful, less moral or more gifted (or who simply have more immediate felt need for money, often involving some form of addiction). This fallacy is a “softer” argumentum ad baculum. When challenged, those who practice this fallacy seem to most often shrug their shoulders and mumble “Life is ruff and you gotta be tuff [sic],” “You gotta do what you gotta do to get ahead in this world,” “It’s no skin off my nose,” “That’s free enterprise,” “That’s the way life is!” or similar.

3. Actions have Consequences: The contemporary fallacy of a person in power falsely describing an imposed punishment or penalty as a “consequence” of another’s negative act. E.g., “The consequences of your misbehavior could include suspension or expulsion.” A corrupt argument from ethos, arrogating to oneself or to one’s rules or laws an ethos of cosmic inevitability, i.e., the ethos of God, Fate, Karma, Destiny or Reality Itself. Illness or food poisoning is likely “a consequence” of eating spoiled food while being “grounded” is a punishment for, not a “consequence,” of childhood misbehavior. Freezing to death is a natural “consequence” of going out naked in subzero weather but going to prison is a punishment for bank robbery, not a natural, inevitable or unavoidable “consequence,” of robbing a bank. Not to be confused with the Argument from Consequences, which is quite different. See also

Blaming the Victim. An opposite fallacy is that of Moral Licensing.

4. The Ad Hominem Argument (also, “Personal attack,” “Poisoning the well”): The fallacy of attempting to refute an argument by attacking the opposition’s intelligence, morals, education, professional qualifications, personal character or reputation, using a corrupted negative argument from ethos. E.g., “That so-called judge;” or “He’s so evil that you can’t believe anything he says.” See also “Guilt by Association.” The opposite of this is the “Star Power” fallacy. Another obverse of Ad Hominem is the Token Endorsement Fallacy, where, in the words of scholar Lara Bhasin, “Individual A has been accused of anti-Semitism, but Individual B is Jewish and says Individual A is not anti-Semitic, and the implication of course is that we can believe Individual B because, being Jewish, he has special knowledge of anti-Semitism. Or, a presidential candidate is accused of anti-Muslim bigotry, but someone finds a testimony from a Muslim who voted for said candidate, and this is trotted out as evidence against the candidate’s bigotry.” The same fallacy would apply to a sports team offensively named after a marginalized ethnic group, but which has obtained the endorsement (freely given or paid) of some member, traditional leader or tribal council of that marginalized group so that the otherwise-offensive team name and logo magically become “okay” and nonracist.
5. The Affective Fallacy (also The Romantic Fallacy; Emotion over Reflection; “Follow Your Heart”):

An extremely common modern fallacy of Pathos, that one's emotions, urges or "feelings" are innate and in every case self-validating, autonomous, and above any human intent or act of will (one's own or others'), and are thus immune to challenge or criticism. (In fact, researchers now [2017] have robust scientific evidence that emotions are actually cognitive and not innate.) In this fallacy one argues, "I feel it, so it must be true. My feelings are valid, so you have no right to criticize what I say or do, or how I say or do it." This latter is also a fallacy of stasis, confusing a respectful and reasoned response or refutation with personal invalidation, disrespect, prejudice, bigotry, sexism, homophobia or hostility. A grossly sexist form of the Affective Fallacy is the well-known crude fallacy that the phallus "Has no conscience" (also, "A man's gotta do what a man's gotta do;" "Thinking with your other head."), i.e., since (male) sexuality is self-validating and beyond voluntary control what one does with it cannot be controlled either and such actions are not open to criticism, an assertion eagerly embraced and extended beyond the male gender in certain reifications of "Desire" in contemporary academic theory. See also, *Playing on Emotion*. Opposite to this fallacy is the Chosen Emotion Fallacy (thanks to scholar Marc Lawson for identifying this fallacy), in which one falsely claims complete, or at least reliable prior voluntary control over one's own autonomic, "gut level" affective reactions. Closely related if not identical to this last is the ancient

fallacy of Angelism, falsely claiming that one is capable of “objective” reasoning and judgment without emotion, claiming for oneself a viewpoint of Olympian “disinterested objectivity” or pretending to place oneself far above all personal feelings, temptations or bias. See also, Mortification.

6. Alphabet Soup: A corrupt modern implicit fallacy from ethos in which a person inappropriately overuses acronyms, abbreviations, form numbers and arcane insider “shop talk” primarily to prove to an audience that s/he “speaks their language” and is “one of them” and to shut out, confuse or impress outsiders. E.g., “It’s not uncommon for a K-12 with ASD to be both GT and LD;” “I had a twenty-minute DX Q-so on 15 with a Zed-S1 and a couple of LU2’s even though the QR-Nancy was 10 over Sg;” or “I hope I’ll keep on seeing my BAQ on my LES until the day I get my DD214.” See also, Name Calling. This fallacy has recently become common in media pharmaceutical advertising in the United States, where “Alphabet Soup” is used to create false identification with and to exploit patient groups suffering from specific illnesses or conditions, e.g., “If you have DPC with associated ZL you can keep your B2D under control with Luglugmena®. Ask your doctor today about Luglugmena® Helium Tetracarbide lozenges to control symptoms of ZL and to keep your B2D under that crucial 7.62 threshold. Side effects of Luglugmena® may include K4 Syndrome which may lead to lycanthropic

bicephaly, BMJ and occasionally, death. Do not take Luglugmena® if you are allergic to dogbite or have type D Flinder's Garbosis..."

7. Alternative Truth (also, Alt Facts; Counterknowledge; Disinformation; Information Pollution): A newly-famous contemporary fallacy of logos rooted in postmodernism, denying the resilience of facts or truth as such. Writer Hannah Arendt, in her *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951) warned that "The ideal subject of totalitarian rule is not the convinced Nazi or the dedicated communist, but people for whom the distinction between fact and fiction, true and false, no longer exists." Journalist Leslie Grass (2017) writes in her Blog Reachoutrecovery.com, "Is there someone in your life who insists things happened that didn't happen, or has a completely different version of events in which you have the facts? It's a form of mind control and is very common among families dealing with substance and behavior problems." She suggests that such "Alternate Facts" work to "put you off balance," "control the story," and "make you think you're crazy," and she notes that "presenting alternate facts is the hallmark of untrustworthy people." The Alternative Truth fallacy is related to the Big Lie Technique. See also Gaslighting, Blind Loyalty, The Big Brain/Little Brain Fallacy, and Two Truths
8. The Appeal to Closure: The contemporary fallacy that an argument, standpoint, action or conclusion no matter how questionable must be accepted as final or else the point will remain

unsettled, which is unthinkable because those affected will be denied “closure.” This fallacy falsely reifies a specialized term (closure) from Gestalt Psychology while refusing to recognize the undeniable truth that some points will indeed remain open and unsettled, perhaps forever. E.g., “Society would be protected, real punishment would be inflicted, crime would be deterred and justice served if we sentenced you to life without parole, but we need to execute you in order to provide some closure.” See also, Argument from Ignorance, and Argument from Consequences. The opposite of this fallacy is the Paralysis of Analysis.

9. The Appeal to Heaven: (also, Argumentum ad Coelum, Deus Vult, Gott mit Uns, Manifest Destiny, American Exceptionalism, or the Special Covenant): An ancient, extremely dangerous fallacy (a deluded argument from ethos) that of claiming to know the mind of God (or History, or a higher power), who has allegedly ordered or anointed, supports or approves of one’s own country, standpoint or actions so no further justification is required and no serious challenge is possible. (E.g., “God ordered me to kill my children,” or “We need to take away your land, since God [or Scripture, or Manifest Destiny, or Fate, or Heaven] has given it to us as our own.”) A private individual who seriously asserts this fallacy risks ending up in a psychiatric ward, but groups or nations who do it are far too often taken seriously. Practiced by those who will not or cannot tell God’s will from their own, this

vicious (and blasphemous) fallacy has been the cause of endless bloodshed over history. See also, Moral Superiority, and Magical Thinking. Also applies to deluded negative Appeals to Heaven, e.g., “You say that famine and ecological collapse due to climate change are real dangers during the coming century, but I know God wouldn’t ever let that happen to us!” The opposite of the Appeal to Heaven is the Job’s Comforter fallacy.

10. The Appeal to Nature (also, Biologizing; The Green Fallacy): The contemporary romantic fallacy of ethos (that of “Mother Nature”) that if something is “natural” it has to be good, healthy and beneficial. E.g., “Our premium herb tea is lovingly brewed from the finest freshly-picked and delicately dried natural T. Radicans leaves. Those who dismiss it as mere ‘Poison Ivy’ don’t understand that it’s 100% organic, with no additives, GMO’s or artificial ingredients It’s time to Go Green and lay back in Mother’s arms.” One who employs or falls for this fallacy forgets the old truism that left to itself, nature is indeed “red in tooth and claw.” This fallacy also applies to arguments alleging that something is “unnatural,” or “against nature” and thus evil (The Argument from Natural Law) e.g. “Homosexuality should be outlawed because it’s against nature,” arrogating to oneself the authority to define what is “natural” and what is unnatural or perverted. E.g., during the American Revolution British sources widely condemned rebellion against King George III as “unnatural,” and American revolutionaries as

“perverts,” because the Divine Right of Kings represented Natural Law, and according to 1 Samuel 15:23 in the Bible, rebellion is like unto witchcraft.

- ii. The Appeal to Pity: (also, “Argumentum ad Miserecordiam”): The fallacy of urging an audience to “root for the underdog” regardless of the issues at hand. A classic example is, “Those poor, cute little squeaky mice are being gobbled up by mean, nasty cats ten times their size!” A contemporary example might be America’s uncritical popular support for the Arab Spring movement of 2010-2012 in which The People (“The underdogs”) were seen to be heroically overthrowing cruel dictatorships, a movement that has resulted in retrospect in chaos, impoverishment, anarchy, mass suffering, civil war, the regional collapse of civilization and rise of extremism, and the largest refugee crisis since World War II. A corrupt argument from pathos. See also, *Playing to Emotions*. The opposite of the Appeal to Pity is the Appeal to Rigor, an argument (often based on machismo or on manipulating an audience’s fear) based on mercilessness. E.g., “I’m a real man, not like those bleeding hearts, and I’ll be tough on [fill in the name of the enemy or bogeyman of the hour].” In academia this latter fallacy applies to politically-motivated or elitist calls for “Academic Rigor,” and rage against university developmental / remedial classes, open admissions, “dumbing down” and “grade inflation.”
12. The Appeal to Tradition: (also, Conservative

Bias; Back in Those Good Times, “The Good Old Days”): The ancient fallacy that a standpoint, situation or action is right, proper and correct simply because it has “always” been that way, because people have “always” thought that way, or because it was that way long ago (most often meaning in the audience members’ youth or childhood, not before) and still continues to serve one particular group very well. A corrupted argument from ethos (that of past generations). E.g., “In America, women have always been paid less, so let’s not mess with long-standing tradition.” See also Argument from Inertia, and Default Bias. The opposite of this fallacy is The Appeal to Novelty (also, “Pro-Innovation bias,” “Recency Bias,” and “The Bad Old Days;” The Early Adopter’s Fallacy), e.g., “It’s NEW, and [therefore it must be] improved!” or “This is the very latest discovery—it has to be better.”

13. Appeasement (also, “Assertiveness,” “The squeaky wheel gets the grease;” “I know my rights!”): This fallacy, most often popularly connected to the shameful pre-World War II appeasement of Hitler, is in fact still commonly practiced in public agencies, education and retail business today, e.g. “Customers are always right, even when they’re wrong. Don’t argue with them, just give’em what they want so they’ll shut up and go away, and not make a stink—it’s cheaper and easier than a lawsuit.” Widespread unchallenged acceptance of this fallacy encourages offensive, uncivil public behavior and sometimes the development of a coarse subculture of

obnoxious, “assertive” manipulators who, like “spoiled” children, leverage their knowledge of how to figuratively (or sometimes even literally!) “make a stink” into a primary coping skill in order to get what they want when they want it. The works of the late Community Organizing guru Saul Alinsky suggest practical, nonviolent ways for groups to harness the power of this fallacy to promote social change, for good or for evil.. See also Bribery.

14. The Argument from Consequences (also, Outcome Bias): The major fallacy of logos, arguing that something cannot be true because if it were the consequences or outcome would be unacceptable. (E.g., “Global climate change cannot be caused by human burning of fossil fuels, because if it were, switching to non-polluting energy sources would bankrupt American industry,” or “Doctor, that’s wrong! I can’t have terminal cancer, because if I did that’d mean that I won’t live to see my kids get married!”) Not to be confused with Actions have Consequences.
15. The Argument from Ignorance (also, Argumentum ad Ignorantiam): The fallacy that since we don’t know (or can never know, or cannot prove) whether a claim is true or false, it must be false, or it must be true. E.g., “Scientists are never going to be able to positively prove their crazy theory that humans evolved from other creatures, because we weren’t there to see it! So, that proves the Genesis six-day creation account is literally true as written!” This fallacy includes

Attacking the Evidence (also, “Whataboutism”; The Missing Link fallacy), e.g. “Some or all of your key evidence is missing, incomplete, or even faked! What about that? That proves you’re wrong and I’m right!” This fallacy usually includes fallacious “Either-Or Reasoning” as well: E.g., “The vet can’t find any reasonable explanation for why my dog died. See! See! That proves that you poisoned him! There’s no other logical explanation!” A corrupted argument from logos, and a fallacy commonly found in American political, judicial and forensic reasoning. The recently famous “Flying Spaghetti Monster” meme is a contemporary refutation of this fallacy—simply because we cannot conclusively disprove the existence of such an absurd entity does not argue for its existence. See also A Priori Argument, Appeal to Closure, The Simpleton’s Fallacy, and Argumentum ex Silentio.

16. The Argument from Incredulity: The popular fallacy of doubting or rejecting a novel claim or argument out of hand simply because it appears superficially “incredible,” “insane” or “crazy,” or because it goes against one’s own personal beliefs, prior experience or ideology. This cynical fallacy falsely elevates the saying popularized by Carl Sagan, that “Extraordinary claims require extraordinary proof,” to an absolute law of logic. See also Hoyle’s Fallacy. The common, popular-level form of this fallacy is dismissing surprising, extraordinary or unfamiliar arguments and evidence with a wave of the hand, a shake of the head, and a mutter of “that’s crazy!”

17. The Argument from Inertia (also “Stay the Course”): The fallacy that it is necessary to continue on a mistaken course of action regardless of pain and sacrifice involved and even after discovering it is mistaken, because changing course would mean admitting that one’s decision (or one’s leader, or one’s country, or one’s faith) was wrong, and all one’s effort, expense, sacrifice and even bloodshed was for nothing, and that’s unthinkable. A variety of the Argument from Consequences, E for Effort, or the Appeal to Tradition. See also “Throwing Good Money After Bad.”
18. The Argument from Motives (also Questioning Motives): The fallacy of declaring a standpoint or argument invalid solely because of the evil, corrupt or questionable motives of the one making the claim. E.g., “Bin Laden wanted us to withdraw from Afghanistan, so we have to keep up the fight!” Even evil people with the most corrupt motives sometimes say the truth (and even good people with the highest and purest motives are often wrong or mistaken). A variety of the Ad Hominem argument. The opposite side of this fallacy is falsely justifying or excusing evil or vicious actions because of the perpetrator’s apparent purity of motives or lack of malice. (E.g., “Sure, she may have beaten her children bloody now and again but she was a highly educated, ambitious professional woman at the end of her rope, deprived of adult conversation and stuck between four walls for years on end with a bunch of screaming, fighting brats, doing the best she

could with what little she had. How can you stand there and accuse her of child abuse?") See also Moral Licensing.

19. Argumentum ad Baculum ("Argument from the Club." Also, "Argumentum ad Baculam," "Argument from Strength," "Muscular Leadership," "Non-negotiable Demands," "Hard Power," Bullying, The Power-Play, Fascism, Resolution by Force of Arms, Shock and Awe.): The fallacy of "persuasion" or "proving one is right" by force, violence, brutality, terrorism, superior strength, raw military might, or threats of violence. E.g., "Gimmee your wallet or I'll knock your head off!" or "We have the perfect right to take your land, since we have the big guns and you don't." Also applies to indirect forms of threat. E.g., "Give up your foolish pride, kneel down and accept our religion today if you don't want to burn in hell forever and ever!" A mainly discursive Argumentum ad Baculum is that of forcibly silencing opponents, ruling them "out of order," blocking, censoring or jamming their message, or simply speaking over them or/ speaking more loudly than they do, this last a tactic particularly attributed to men in mixed-gender discussions.
20. Argumentum ad Mysteriam ("Argument from Mystery;" also Mystagogy.): A darkened chamber, incense, chanting or drumming, bowing and kneeling, special robes or headgear, holy rituals and massed voices reciting sacred mysteries in an unknown tongue have a quasi-hypnotic effect and can often persuade more strongly than any

logical argument. The Puritan Reformation was in large part a rejection of this fallacy. When used knowingly and deliberately this fallacy is particularly vicious and accounts for some of the fearsome persuasive power of cults. An example of an *Argumentum ad Mysteriam* is the “Long Ago and Far Away” fallacy, the fact that facts, evidence, practices or arguments from ancient times, distant lands and/or “exotic” cultures seem to acquire a special gravitas or ethos simply because of their antiquity, language or origin, e.g., publicly chanting Holy Scriptures in their original (most often incomprehensible) ancient languages, preferring the Greek, Latin, Assyrian or Old Slavonic Christian Liturgies over their vernacular versions, or using classic or newly invented Greek and Latin names for fallacies in order to support their validity. See also, Esoteric Knowledge. An obverse of the *Argumentum ad Mysteriam* is the Standard Version Fallacy.

21. *Argumentum ex Silentio* (Argument from Silence): The fallacy that if available sources remain silent or current knowledge and evidence can prove nothing about a given subject or question this fact in itself proves the truth of one’s claim. E.g., “Science can tell us nothing about God. That proves God doesn’t exist.” Or “Science admits it can tell us nothing about God, so you can’t deny that God exists!” Often misused in the American justice system, where, contrary to the 5th Amendment and the legal presumption of innocence until proven guilty, remaining silent or “taking the Fifth” is often

falsely portrayed as proof of guilt. E.g., “Mr. Hixon can offer no alibi for his whereabouts the evening of January 15th. This proves that he was in fact in room 331 at the Smuggler’s Inn, murdering his wife with a hatchet!” In today’s America, choosing to remain silent in the face of a police officer’s questions can make one guilty enough to be arrested or even shot. See also, *Argument from Ignorance*.

22. *Availability Bias* (also, *Attention Bias*, *Anchoring Bias*): A fallacy of *logos* stemming from the natural tendency to give undue attention and importance to information that is immediately available at hand, particularly the first or last information received, and to minimize or ignore broader data or wider evidence that clearly exists but is not as easily remembered or accessed. E.g., “We know from experience that this doesn’t work,” when “experience” means the most recent local attempt, ignoring overwhelming experience from other places and times where it has worked and does work. Also related is the fallacy of *Hyperbole* [also, *Magnification*, or sometimes *Catastrophizing*] where an immediate instance is immediately proclaimed “the most significant in all of human history,” or the “worst in the whole world!” This latter fallacy works extremely well with less-educated audiences and those whose “whole world” is very small indeed, audiences who “hate history” and whose historical memory spans several weeks at best.
23. *The Bandwagon Fallacy* (also, *Argument from Common Sense*, *Argumentum ad Populum*): The

fallacy of arguing that because “everyone,” “the people,” or “the majority” (or someone in power who has widespread backing) supposedly thinks or does something, it must therefore be true and right. E.g., “Whether there actually is large scale voter fraud in America or not, many people now think there is and that makes it so.” Sometimes also includes Lying with Statistics, e.g. “Over 75% of Americans believe that crooked Bob Hodiak is a thief, a liar and a pervert. There may not be any evidence, but for anyone with half a brain that conclusively proves that Crooked Bob should go to jail! Lock him up! Lock him up!” This is sometimes combined with the “Argumentum ad Baculum,” e.g., “Like it or not, it’s time to choose sides: Are you going to get on board the bandwagon with everyone else, or get crushed under the wheels as it goes by?” Or in the 2017 words of former White House spokesperson Sean Spicer, “”They should either get with the program or they can go,” A contemporary digital form of the Bandwagon Fallacy is the Information Cascade, “in which people echo the opinions of others, usually online, even when their own opinions or exposure to information contradicts that opinion. When information cascades form a pattern, this pattern can begin to overpower later opinions by making it seem as if a consensus already exists.” (Thanks to Teaching Tolerance for this definition!) See also Wisdom of the Crowd, and The Big Lie Technique. For the opposite of this fallacy see the Romantic Rebel fallacy.

24. The Big Brain/Little Brain Fallacy (also, the Führerprinzip; Mad Leader Disease): A not-uncommon but extreme example of the Blind Loyalty Fallacy below, in which a tyrannical boss, military commander, or religious or cult-leader tells followers “Don’t think with your little brains (the brain in your head), but with your BIG brain (mine).” This last is sometimes expressed in positive terms, i.e., “You don’t have to worry and stress out about the rightness or wrongness of what you are doing since I, the Leader, am assuming all moral and legal responsibility for all your actions. So long as you are faithfully following orders without question I will defend you and gladly accept all the consequences up to and including eternal damnation if I’m wrong.” The opposite of this is the fallacy of “Plausible Deniability.” See also, “Just Do It!”, and “Gaslighting.”
25. The Big “But” Fallacy (also, Special Pleading): The fallacy of enunciating a generally-accepted principle and then directly negating it with a “but.” Often this takes the form of the “Special Case,” which is supposedly exempt from the usual rules of law, logic, morality, ethics or even credibility E.g., “As Americans we have always believed on principle that every human being has God-given, inalienable rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, including in the case of criminal accusations a fair and speedy trial before a jury of one’s peers. BUT, your crime was so unspeakable and a trial would be so problematic for national security that it justifies locking you

up for life in Guantanamo without trial, conviction or possibility of appeal.” Or, “Yes, Honey, I still love you more than life itself, and I know that in my wedding vows I promised before God that I’d forsake all others and be faithful to you ‘until death do us part,’ but you have to understand, this was a special case...” See also, “Shopping Hungry,” and “We Have to do Something!”

26. The Big Lie Technique (also the Bold Faced Lie; “Staying on Message.”): The contemporary fallacy of repeating a lie, fallacy, slogan, talking-point, nonsense-statement or deceptive half-truth over and over in different forms (particularly in the media) until it becomes part of daily discourse and people accept it without further proof or evidence. Sometimes the bolder and more outlandish the Big Lie becomes the more credible it seems to a willing, most often angry audience. E.g., “What about the Jewish Problem?” Note that when this particular phony debate was going on there was no “Jewish Problem,” only a Nazi Problem, but hardly anybody in power recognized or wanted to talk about that, while far too many ordinary Germans were only too ready to find a convenient scapegoat to blame for their suffering during the Great Depression. Writer Miles J. Brewer expertly demolishes The Big Lie Technique in his classic (1930) short story, “The Gostak and the Doshes.” However, more contemporary examples of the Big Lie fallacy might be the completely fictitious August 4, 1964 “Tonkin Gulf Incident”

concocted under Lyndon Johnson as a false justification for escalating the Vietnam War, or the non-existent “Weapons of Mass Destruction” in Iraq (conveniently abbreviated “WMD’s” in order to lend this Big Lie a legitimizing, military-sounding “Alphabet Soup” ethos), used in 2003 as a false justification for the Second Gulf War. The November, 2016 U.S. President-elect’s statement that “millions” of ineligible votes were cast in that year’s American. presidential election appears to be a classic Big Lie. See also, Alternative Truth; The Bandwagon Fallacy, the Straw Man, Alphabet Soup, and Propaganda.

27. Blind Loyalty (also Blind Obedience, Unthinking Obedience, the “Team Player” appeal, the Nuremberg Defense): The dangerous fallacy that an argument or action is right simply and solely because a respected leader or source (a President, expert, one’s parents, one’s own “side,” team or country, one’s boss or commanding officers) says it is right. This is over-reliance on authority, a gravely corrupted argument from ethos that puts loyalty above truth, above one’s own reason and above conscience. In this case a person attempts to justify incorrect, stupid or criminal behavior by whining “That’s what I was told to do,” or “I was just following orders.” See also, The Big Brain/Little Brain Fallacy, and The “Soldiers’ Honor” Fallacy.
28. Blood is Thicker than Water (also Favoritism; Compadrismo; “For my friends, anything.”): The reverse of the “Ad Hominem” fallacy, a corrupt argument from ethos where a statement,

argument or action is automatically regarded as true, correct and above challenge because one is related to, knows and likes, or is on the same team or side, or belongs to the same religion, party, club or fraternity as the individual involved. (E.g., “My brother-in-law says he saw you goofing off on the job. You’re a hard worker but who am I going to believe, you or him? You’re fired!”) See also the Identity Fallacy.

29. Brainwashing (also, Propaganda, “Radicalization.”): The Cold War-era fantasy that an enemy can instantly win over or “radicalize” an unsuspecting audience with their vile but somehow unspeakably persuasive “propaganda,” e.g., “Don’t look at that website! They’re trying to brainwash you with their propaganda!” Historically, “brainwashing” refers more properly to the inhuman Argumentum ad Baculum of “beating an argument into” a prisoner via a combination of pain, fear, sensory or sleep deprivation, prolonged abuse and sophisticated psychological manipulation (also, the “Stockholm Syndrome.”). Such “brainwashing” can also be accomplished by pleasure (“Love Bombing,”); e.g., “Did you like that? I know you did. Well, there’s lots more where that came from when you sign on with us!” (See also, “Bribery.”) An unspeakably sinister form of persuasion by brainwashing involves deliberately addicting a person to drugs and then providing or withholding the substance depending on the addict’s compliance. Note: Only the other side brainwashes. “We” never brainwash.

Bribery (also, Material Persuasion, Material Incentive, Financial Incentive). The fallacy of “persuasion” by bribery, gifts or favors is the reverse of the *Argumentum ad Baculum*. As is well known, someone who is persuaded by bribery rarely “stays persuaded” in the long term unless the bribes keep on coming in and increasing with time. See also *Appeasement*.

30. Calling “Cards”: A contemporary fallacy of logos, arbitrarily and falsely dismissing familiar or easily-anticipated but valid, reasoned objections to one’s standpoint with a wave of the hand, as mere “cards” in some sort of “game” of rhetoric, e.g. “Don’t try to play the ‘Race Card’ against me,” or “She’s playing the ‘Woman Card’ again,” or “That ‘Hitler Card’ won’t score with me in this argument.” See also, *The Taboo*, and *Political Correctness*.
31. Circular Reasoning (also, *The Vicious Circle*; *Catch 22*, *Begging the Question*, *Circulus in Probando*): A fallacy of logos where A is because of B, and B is because of A, e.g., “You can’t get a job without experience, and you can’t get experience without a job.” Also refers to falsely arguing that something is true by repeating the same statement in different words. E.g., “The witchcraft problem is the most urgent spiritual crisis in the world today. Why? Because witches threaten our very eternal salvation.” A corrupt argument from logos. See also the “Big Lie technique.”
32. The Complex Question: The contemporary fallacy of demanding a direct answer to a

question that cannot be answered without first analyzing or challenging the basis of the question itself. E.g., “Just answer me ‘yes’ or ‘no’: Did you think you could get away with plagiarism and not suffer the consequences?” Or, “Why did you rob that bank?” Also applies to situations where one is forced to either accept or reject complex standpoints or propositions containing both acceptable and unacceptable parts. A corruption of the argument from logos. A counterpart of Either/Or Reasoning.

33. Confirmation Bias: A fallacy of logos, the common tendency to notice, search out, select and share evidence that confirms one’s own standpoint and beliefs, as opposed to contrary evidence. This fallacy is how “fortune tellers” work—If I am told I will meet a “tall, dark stranger” I will be on the lookout for a tall, dark stranger, and when I meet someone even marginally meeting that description I will marvel at the correctness of the “psychic’s” prediction. In contemporary times Confirmation Bias is most often seen in the tendency of various audiences to “curate their political environments, subsisting on one-sided information diets and [even] selecting into politically homogeneous neighborhoods” (Michael A. Neblo et al., 2017, *Science* magazine). Confirmation Bias (also, Homophily) means that people tend to seek out and follow solely those media outlets that confirm their common ideological and cultural biases, sometimes to an degree that leads a the false (implicit or even explicit) conclusion that

“everyone” agrees with that bias and that anyone who doesn’t is “crazy,” “looney,” evil or even “radicalized.” See also, “Half Truth,” and “Defensiveness.”

34. Cost Bias: A fallacy of ethos (that of a product), the fact that something expensive (either in terms of money, or something that is “hard fought” or “hard won” or for which one “paid dearly”) is generally valued more highly than something obtained free or cheaply, regardless of the item’s real quality, utility or true value to the purchaser. E. g., “Hey, I worked hard to get this car! It may be nothing but a clunker that can’t make it up a steep hill, but it’s mine, and to me it’s better than some millionaire’s limo.” Also applies to judging the quality of a consumer item (or even of its owner!) primarily by the item’s brand, price, label or source, e.g., “Hey, you there in the Jay-Mart suit! Har-har!” or, “Ooh, she’s driving a Mercedes!”
35. Default Bias: (also, Normalization of Evil, “Deal with it;” “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it;” Acquiescence; “Making one’s peace with the situation;” “Get used to it;” “Whatever is, is right;” “It is what it is;” “Let it be, let it be;” “This is the best of all possible worlds [or, the only possible world];” “Better the devil you know than the devil you don’t.”): The logical fallacy of automatically favoring or accepting a situation simply because it exists right now, and arguing that any other alternative is mad, unthinkable, impossible, or at least would take too much effort, expense, stress or risk to change. The opposite of

this fallacy is that of Nihilism (“Tear it all down!”), blindly rejecting what exists in favor of what could be, the adolescent fantasy of romanticizing anarchy, chaos (an ideology sometimes called political “Chaos Theory”), disorder, “permanent revolution,” or change for change’s sake.

36. **Defensiveness** (also, **Choice-support Bias: Myside Bias**): A fallacy of ethos (one’s own), in which after one has taken a given decision, commitment or course of action, one automatically tends to defend that decision and to irrationally dismiss opposing options even when one’s decision later on proves to be shaky or wrong. E.g., “Yeah, I voted for Snith. Sure, he turned out to be a crook and a liar and he got us into war, but I still say that at that time he was better than the available alternatives!” See also “Argument from Inertia” and “Confirmation Bias.”
37. **Deliberate Ignorance**: (also, **Closed-mindedness**; “I don’t want to hear it!”; **Motivated Ignorance**; **Tuning Out**; **Hear No Evil, See No Evil, Speak No Evil** [The Three Monkeys’ Fallacy]): As described by author and commentator Brian Resnik on Vox.com (2017), this is the fallacy of simply choosing not to listen, “tuning out” or turning off any information, evidence or arguments that challenge one’s beliefs, ideology, standpoint, or peace of mind, following the popular humorous dictum: “Don’t try to confuse me with the facts; my mind is made up!” This seemingly innocuous fallacy has enabled the most vicious tyrannies and abuses over history,

and continues to do so today. See also Trust your Gut, Confirmation Bias, The Third Person Effect, “They’re All Crooks,” the Simpleton’s Fallacy, and The Positive Thinking Fallacy.

38. Diminished Responsibility: The common contemporary fallacy of applying a specialized judicial concept (that criminal punishment should be less if one’s judgment was impaired) to reality in general. E.g., “You can’t count me absent on Monday—I was hung over and couldn’t come to class so it’s not my fault.” Or, “Yeah, I was speeding on the freeway and killed a guy, but I was buzzed out of my mind and didn’t know what I was doing so it didn’t matter that much.” In reality the death does matter very much to the victim, to his family and friends and to society in general. Whether the perpetrator was high or not does not matter at all since the material results are the same. This also includes the fallacy of Panic, a very common contemporary fallacy that one’s words or actions, no matter how damaging or evil, somehow don’t “count” because “I panicked!” This fallacy is rooted in the confusion of “consequences” with “punishment.” See also “Venting.”
39. Disciplinary Blinders: A very common contemporary scholarly or professional fallacy of ethos (that of one’s discipline, profession or academic field), automatically disregarding, discounting or ignoring a priori otherwise-relevant research, arguments and evidence that come from outside one’s own professional discipline, discourse community or academic area

of study. E.g., “That might be relevant or not, but it’s so not what we’re doing in our field right now.” See also, “Star Power” and “Two Truths.” An analogous fallacy is that of Denominational Blinders, arbitrarily ignoring or waving aside without serious consideration any arguments or discussion about faith, morality, ethics, spirituality, the Divine or the afterlife that come from outside one’s own specific religious denomination or faith tradition.

40. Dog-Whistle Politics: An extreme version of reductionism and sloganeering in the public sphere, a contemporary fallacy of logos and pathos in which a brief phrase or slogan of the hour, e.g., “Abortion,” “The 1%,” “9/11,” “Zionism,” “Chain Migration,” “Islamic Terrorism,” “Fascism,” “Communism,” “Big government,” “Taco trucks!”, “Tax and tax and spend and spend,” “Gun violence,” “Gun control,” “Freedom of choice,” “Lock ‘em up,” “Amnesty,” etc. is flung out as “red meat” or “chum in the water” that reflexively sends one’s audience into a snapping, foaming-at-the-mouth feeding-frenzy. Any reasoned attempt to more clearly identify, deconstruct or challenge an opponent’s “dog whistle” appeal results in puzzled confusion at best and wild, irrational fury at worst. “Dog whistles” differ widely in different places, moments and cultural milieux, and they change and lose or gain power so quickly that even recent historic texts sometimes become extraordinarily difficult to interpret. A common but sad instance of the fallacy of Dog Whistle

Politics is that of candidate “debaters” of differing political shades simply blowing a succession of discursive “dog whistles” at their audience instead of addressing, refuting or even bothering to listen to each other’s arguments, a situation resulting in contemporary (2017) allegations that the political Right and Left in America are speaking “different languages” when they are simply blowing different “dog whistles.” See also, Reductionism..

41. The “Draw Your Own Conclusion” Fallacy (also the Non-argument Argument; Let the Facts Speak for Themselves): In this fallacy of logos an otherwise uninformed audience is presented with carefully selected and groomed, “shocking facts” and then prompted to immediately “draw their own conclusions.” E.g., “Crime rates are more than twice as high among middle-class Patzinaks than among any other similar population group—draw your own conclusions.” It is well known that those who are allowed to “come to their own conclusions” are generally much more strongly convinced than those who are given both evidence and conclusion up front. However, Dr. William Lorimer points out that “The only rational response to the non-argument is ‘So what?’ i.e. ‘What do you think you’ve proved, and why/how do you think you’ve proved it?’” Closely related (if not identical) to this is the well-known “Leading the Witness” Fallacy, where a sham, sarcastic or biased question is asked solely in order to evoke a desired answer.
42. The Dunning-Kruger Effect: A cognitive bias

that leads people of limited skills or knowledge to mistakenly believe their abilities are greater than they actually are. (Thanks to Teaching Tolerance for this definition!) E.g., “I know Washington was the Father of His Country and never told a lie, Pocahontas was the first Native American, Lincoln freed the slaves, Hitler murdered six million Jews, Susan B. Anthony won equal rights for women, and Martin Luther King said “I have a dream!” Moses parted the Red Sea, Caesar said “Et tu, Brute?” and the only reason America didn’t win the Vietnam War hands-down like we always do was because they tied our generals’ hands and the politicians cut and run. See? Why do I need to take a history course? I know everything about history!”

43. E” for Effort. (also Noble Effort; I’m Trying My Best; The Lost Cause): The common contemporary fallacy of ethos that something must be right, true, valuable, or worthy of respect and honor solely because one (or someone else) has put so much sincere good-faith effort or even sacrifice and bloodshed into it. (See also Appeal to Pity; Argument from Inertia; Heroes All; or Sob Story). An extreme example of this fallacy is Waving the Bloody Shirt (also, the “Blood of the Martyrs” Fallacy), the fallacy that a cause or argument, no matter how questionable or reprehensible, cannot be questioned without dishonoring the blood and sacrifice of those who died so nobly for that cause. E.g., “Defend the patriotic gore / That flecked the streets of Baltimore...” (from the official Maryland State

Song). See also Cost Bias, The Soldier's Honor Fallacy, and the Argument from Inertia.

44. Either/Or Reasoning: (also False Dilemma, All or Nothing Thinking; False Dichotomy, Black/White Fallacy, False Binary): A fallacy of logos that falsely offers only two possible options even though a broad range of possible alternatives, variations and combinations are always readily available. E.g., "Either you are 100% Simon Straightarrow or you are as queer as a three dollar bill—it's as simple as that and there's no middle ground!" Or, "Either you're in with us all the way or you're a hostile and must be destroyed! What's it gonna be?" Or, if your performance is anything short of perfect, you consider yourself an abject failure. Also applies to falsely contrasting one option or case to another that is not really opposed, e.g., falsely opposing "Black Lives Matter" to "Blue Lives Matter" when in fact not a few police officers are themselves African American, and African Americans and police are not (or ought not to be!) natural enemies. Or, falsely posing a choice of either helping needy American veterans or helping needy foreign refugees, when in fact in today's United States there are ample resources available to easily do both should we care to do so. See also, Overgeneralization.
45. Equivocation: The fallacy of deliberately failing to define one's terms, or knowingly and deliberately using words in a different sense than the one the audience will understand. (E.g., President Bill Clinton stating that he did not

have sexual relations with “that woman,” meaning no sexual penetration, knowing full well that the audience will understand his statement as “I had no sexual contact of any kind with that woman.”) This is a corruption of the argument from logos, and a tactic often used in American jurisprudence. Historically, this referred to a tactic used during the Reformation-era religious wars in Europe, when people were forced to swear loyalty to one or another side and did as demanded via “equivocation,” i.e., “When I solemnly swore true faith and allegiance to the King I really meant to King Jesus, King of Kings, and not to the evil usurper squatting on the throne today.” This latter form of fallacy is excessively rare today when the swearing of oaths has become effectively meaningless except as obscenity or as speech formally subject to perjury penalties in legal or judicial settings.

46. The Eschatological Fallacy: The ancient fallacy of arguing, “This world is coming to an end, so...” Popularly refuted by the observation that “Since the world is coming to an end you won’t need your life savings anyhow, so why not give it all to me?”
47. Esoteric Knowledge (also Esoteric Wisdom; Gnosticism; Inner Truth; the Inner Sanctum; Need to Know): A fallacy from logos and ethos, that there is some knowledge reserved only for the Wise, the Holy or the Enlightened, (or those with proper Security Clearance), things that the masses cannot understand and do not deserve to know, at least not until they become wiser, more

trusted or more “spiritually advanced.” The counterpart of this fallacy is that of Obscurantism (also Obscurationism, or Willful Ignorance), that (almost always said in a basso profundo voice) “There are some things that we mere mortals must never seek to know!” E.g., “Scientific experiments that violate the privacy of the marital bed and expose the deep and private mysteries of human sexual behavior to the harsh light of science are obscene, sinful and morally evil. There are some things that we as humans are simply not meant to know!” For the opposite of this latter, see the “Plain Truth Fallacy.” See also, *Argumentum ad Mysteriam*.

48. Essentializing: A fallacy of logos that proposes a person or thing “is what it is and that’s all that it is,” and at its core will always be the way it is right now (E.g., “All terrorists are monsters, and will still be terrorist monsters even if they live to be 100,” or “The poor you will always have with you,’ so any effort to eliminate poverty is pointless.”). Also refers to the fallacy of arguing that something is a certain way “by nature,” an empty claim that no amount of proof can refute. (E.g., “Americans are cold and greedy by nature,” or “Women are naturally better cooks than men.”) See also “Default Bias.” The opposite of this is Relativizing, the typically postmodern fallacy of blithely dismissing any and all arguments against one’s standpoint by shrugging one’s shoulders and responding “Whatever..., I don’t feel like arguing about it;” “It all depends...;” “That’s your opinion; everything’s

relative;” or falsely invoking Einstein’s Theory of Relativity, Heisenberg’s Uncertainty Principle, Quantum Weirdness or the Theory of Multiple Universes in order to confuse, mystify or “refute” an opponent. See also, “Red Herring” and “Appeal to Nature.”

49. The Etymological Fallacy: (also, “The Underlying Meaning”): A fallacy of logos, drawing false conclusions from the (most often long-forgotten) linguistic origins of a current word, or the alleged meanings or associations of that word in another language. E.g., “As used in physics, electronics and electrical engineering the term ‘hysteresis’ is grossly sexist since it originally came from the Greek word for ‘uterus’ or ‘womb.’” Or, “I refuse to eat fish! Don’t you know that the French word for “fish” is ‘poisson,’ which looks just like the English word ‘poison’? And doesn’t that suggest something to you?” Famously, postmodern philosopher Jacques Derrida played on this fallacy at great length in his (1968) “Plato’s Pharmacy.”
50. The Excluded Middle: A corrupted argument from logos that proposes that since a little of something is good, more must be better (or that if less of something is good, none at all is even better). E.g., “If eating an apple a day is good for you, eating an all-apple diet is even better!” or “If a low fat diet prolongs your life, a no-fat diet should make you live forever!” An opposite of this fallacy is that of Excluded Outliers, where one arbitrarily discards evidence, examples or results that disprove one’s standpoint by simply

describing them as “Weird,” “Outliers,” or “Atypical.” See also, “The Big ‘But’ Fallacy.” Also opposite is the Middle of the Road Fallacy (also, *Falacia ad Temperantiam*; “The Politics of the Center;” *Marginalization of the Adversary*), where one demonstrates the “reasonableness” of one’s own standpoint (no matter how extreme) not on its own merits, but solely or mainly by presenting it as the only “moderate” path among two or more obviously unacceptable extreme alternatives. E.g., anti-Communist scholar Charles Roig (1979) notes that Vladimir Lenin successfully argued for Bolshevism in Russia as the only available “moderate” middle path between bomb-throwing Nihilist terrorists on the ultra-left and a corrupt and hated Czarist autocracy on the right. As Texas politician and humorist Jim Hightower famously declares in an undated quote, “The middle of the road is for yellow lines and dead armadillos.”

51. The “F-Bomb” (also Cursing; Obscenity; Profanity). An adolescent fallacy of pathos, attempting to defend or strengthen one’s argument with gratuitous, unrelated sexual, obscene, vulgar, crude or profane language when such language does nothing to make an argument stronger, other than perhaps to create a sense of identity with certain young male “urban” audiences. This fallacy also includes adding gratuitous sex scenes or “adult” language to an otherwise unrelated novel or movie, sometimes simply to avoid the dreaded “G” rating. Related to this fallacy is the Salacious Fallacy, falsely

attracting attention to and thus potential agreement with one's argument by inappropriately sexualizing it, particularly connecting it to some form of sex that is perceived as deviant, perverted or prohibited (E.g., Arguing against Bill Clinton's presidential legacy by continuing to wave Monica's Blue Dress, or against Donald Trump's presidency by obsessively highlighting his past boasting about genital groping). Historically, this dangerous fallacy was deeply implicated with the crime of lynching, in which false, racist accusations against a Black or minority victim were almost always salacious in nature and the sensation involved was successfully used to whip up public emotion to a murderous pitch. See also, Red Herring.

52. The False Analogy: The fallacy of incorrectly comparing one thing to another in order to draw a false conclusion. E.g., "Just like an alley cat needs to prowl, a normal adult can't be tied down to one single lover." The opposite of this fallacy is the Sui Generis Fallacy (also, Differance), a postmodern stance that rejects the validity of analogy and of inductive reasoning altogether because any given person, place, thing or idea under consideration is "sui generis" i.e., different and unique, in a class unto itself.
53. Finish the Job: The dangerous contemporary fallacy, often aimed at a lesser-educated or working class audience, that an action or standpoint (or the continuation of that action or standpoint) may not be questioned or discussed

because there is “a job to be done” or finished, falsely assuming “jobs” are meaningless but never to be questioned. Sometimes those involved internalize (“buy into”) the “job” and make the task a part of their own ethos. (E.g., “Ours is not to reason why / Ours is but to do or die.”) Related to this is the “Just a Job” fallacy. (E.g., “How can torturers stand to look at themselves in the mirror? But I guess it’s OK because for them it’s just a job like any other, the job that they get paid to do.”) See also “Blind Loyalty,” “The Soldiers’ Honor Fallacy” and the “Argument from Inertia.”

54. The Free Speech Fallacy: The infantile fallacy of responding to challenges to one’s statements and standpoints by whining, “It’s a free country, isn’t it? I can say anything I want to!” A contemporary case of this fallacy is the “Safe Space,” or “Safe Place,” where it is not allowed to refute, challenge or even discuss another’s beliefs because that might be too uncomfortable or “triggery” for emotionally fragile individuals. E.g., “All I told him was, ‘Jesus loves the little children,’ but then he turned around and asked me ‘But what about birth defects?’ That’s mean. I think I’m going to cry!” Prof. Bill Hart Davidson (2017) notes that “Ironically, the most strident calls for ‘safety’ come from those who want us to issue protections for discredited ideas. Things that science doesn’t support AND that have destroyed lives – things like the inherent superiority of one race over another. Those ideas wither under demands for evidence. They *are* unwelcome. But let’s be clear: they are

unwelcome because they have not survived the challenge of scrutiny.” Ironically, in contemporary America “free speech” has often become shorthand for freedom of racist, offensive or even neo-Nazi expression, ideological trends that once in power typically quash free speech. Additionally, a recent (2017) scientific study has found that, in fact, “people think harder and produce better political arguments when their views are challenged” and not artificially protected without challenge.

55. The Fundamental Attribution Error (also, Self Justification): A corrupt argument from ethos, this fallacy occurs as a result of observing and comparing behavior. “You assume that the bad behavior of others is caused by character flaws and foul dispositions while your behavior is explained by the environment. So, for example, I get up in the morning at 10 a.m. I say it is because my neighbors party until 2 in the morning (situation) but I say that the reason why you do it is that you are lazy. Interestingly, it is more common in individualistic societies where we value self volition. Collectivist societies tend to look at the environment more. (It happens there, too, but it is much less common.)” [Thanks to scholar Joel Sax for this!] The obverse of this fallacy is Self Deprecation (also Self Debasement), where, out of either a false humility or a genuine lack of self-esteem, one deliberately puts oneself down, most often in hopes of attracting denials, gratifying compliments and praise.

56. **Gaslighting:** A recently-prominent, vicious fallacy of logic, denying or invalidating a person's own knowledge and experiences by deliberately twisting or distorting known facts, memories, scenes, events and evidence in order to disorient a vulnerable opponent and to make him or her doubt his/her sanity. E.g., "Who are you going to believe? Me, or your own eyes?" Or, "You claim you found me in bed with her? Think again! You're crazy! You seriously need to see a shrink." A very common, though cruel instance of Gaslighting that seems to have been particularly familiar among mid-20th century generations is the fallacy of Emotional Invalidation, questioning, after the fact, the reality or "validity" of affective states, either another's or one's own. E.g., "Sure, I made it happen from beginning to end, but but it wasn't me doing it, it was just my stupid hormones betraying me." Or, "You didn't really mean it when you said you 'hate' Mommy. Now take a time-out and you'll feel better." Or, "No, you're not really in love; it's just infatuation or 'puppy love.'" The fallacy of "Gaslighting" is named after British playwright Patrick Hamilton's 1938 stage play "Gas Light," also known as "Angel Street." See also, Blind Loyalty, "The Big Brain/Little Brain Fallacy," The Affective Fallacy, and "Alternative Truth."
57. **Guilt by Association:** The fallacy of trying to refute or condemn someone's standpoint, arguments or actions by evoking the negative ethos of those with whom the speaker is identified or of a group, party, religion or race to

which he or she belongs or was once associated with. A form of Ad Hominem Argument, e.g., “Don’t listen to her. She’s a Republican so you can’t trust anything she says,” or “Are you or have you ever been a member of the Communist Party?” An extreme instance of this is the Machiavellian “For my enemies, nothing” Fallacy, where real or perceived “enemies” are by definition always wrong and must be conceded nothing, not even the time of day, e.g., “He’s a Republican, so even if he said the sky is blue I wouldn’t believe him.”

58. The Half Truth (also Card Stacking, Stacking the Deck, Incomplete Information): A corrupt argument from logos, the fallacy of consciously selecting, collecting and sharing only that evidence that supports one’s own standpoint, telling the strict truth but deliberately minimizing or omitting important key details in order to falsify the larger picture and support a false conclusion. (E.g. “The truth is that Bangladesh is one of the world’s fastest-growing countries and can boast of a young, ambitious and hard-working population, a family-positive culture, a delightful, warm climate of tropical beaches and swaying palms where it never snows, low cost medical and dental care, a vibrant faith tradition and a multitude of places of worship, an exquisite, world-class spicy local curry cuisine and a swinging entertainment scene. Taken together, all these solid facts clearly prove that Bangladesh is one of the world’s most desirable places for young families to live, work and raise a

- family.”) See also, Confirmation Bias.
59. Hero-Busting (also, “The Perfect is the Enemy of the Good”): A postmodern fallacy of ethos under which, since nothing and nobody in this world is perfect there are not and have never been any heroes: Washington and Jefferson held slaves, Lincoln was (by our contemporary standards) a racist, Karl Marx sexually exploited his family’s own young live-in domestic worker and got her pregnant, Martin Luther King Jr. had an eye for women too, Lenin condemned feminism, the Mahatma drank his own urine (ugh!), Pope Francis is wrong on abortion, capitalism, same-sex marriage and women’s ordination, Mother Teresa loved suffering and was wrong on just about everything else too, etc., etc. Also applies to the now near-universal political tactic of ransacking everything an opponent has said, written or done since infancy in order to find something to misinterpret or condemn (and we all have something!). An early example of this latter tactic is deftly described in Robert Penn Warren’s classic (1946) novel, *All the King’s Men*. This is the opposite of the “Heroes All” fallacy, below. The “Hero Busting” fallacy has also been selectively employed at the service of the Identity Fallacy (see below) to falsely “prove” that “you cannot trust anyone” but a member of “our” identity-group since everyone else, even the so-called “heroes” or “allies” of other groups, are all racist, sexist, anti-Semitic, or hate “us.” E.g., In 1862 Abraham Lincoln said he was willing to settle the U.S. Civil War either with or without

freeing the slaves if it would preserve the Union, thus “conclusively proving” that all whites are viciously racist at heart and that African Americans must do for self and never trust any of “them,” not even those who claim to be allies.

60. **Heroes All** (also, “Everybody’s a Winner”): The contemporary fallacy that everyone is above average or extraordinary. A corrupted argument from pathos (not wanting anyone to lose or to feel bad). Thus, every member of the Armed Services, past or present, who serves honorably is a national hero, every student who competes in the Science Fair wins a ribbon or trophy, and every racer is awarded a winner’s yellow jersey. This corruption of the argument from pathos, much ridiculed by disgraced American humorist Garrison Keeler, ignores the fact that if everybody wins nobody wins, and if everyone’s a hero no one’s a hero. The logical result of this fallacy is that, as children’s author Alice Childress writes (1973), “A hero ain’t nothing but a sandwich.” See also the “Soldiers’ Honor Fallacy.”
61. **Hoyle’s Fallacy**: A fallacy of logos, falsely assuming that a possible event of low (even vanishingly low) probability can never have happened and/or would never happen in real life. E.g., “The probability of something as complex as human DNA emerging by purely random evolution in the time the earth has existed is so negligible that it is for all practical purposes impossible and must have required divine intervention.” Or, “The chance of a casual,

Saturday-night poker player being dealt four aces off an honest, shuffled deck is so infinitesimal that it would never occur even once in a normal lifetime! That proves you cheated!" See also, Argument from Incredulity. An obverse of Hoyle's Fallacy is "You Can't Win if You Don't Play," (also, "Someone's gonna win and it might as well be YOU!") a common and cruel contemporary fallacy used to persuade vulnerable audiences, particularly the poor, the mathematically illiterate and gambling addicts to throw their money away on lotteries, horse races, casinos and other long-shot gambling schemes.

62. I Wish I Had a Magic Wand: The fallacy of regretfully (and falsely) proclaiming oneself powerless to change a bad or objectionable situation over which one has power. E.g., "What can we do about gas prices? As Secretary of Energy I wish I had a magic wand, but I don't" [shrug]. Or, "No, you can't quit piano lessons. I wish I had a magic wand and could teach you piano overnight, but I don't, so like it or not, you have to keep on practicing." The parent, of course, ignores the possibility that the child may not want or need to learn piano. See also, TINA.
63. The Identity Fallacy (also Identity Politics; "Die away, ye old forms and logic!"): A corrupt postmodern argument from ethos, a variant on the Argumentum ad Hominem in which the validity of one's logic, evidence, experience or arguments depends not on their own strength but rather on whether the one arguing is a member of a given social class, generation,

nationality, religious or ethnic group, color, gender or sexual orientation, profession, occupation or subgroup. In this fallacy, valid opposing evidence and arguments are brushed aside or “othered” without comment or consideration, as simply not worth arguing about solely because of the lack of proper background or ethos of the person making the argument, or because the one arguing does not self-identify as a member of the “in-group.” E.g., “You’d understand me right away if you were Burmese but since you’re not there’s no way I can explain it to you,” or “Nobody but another nurse can know what a nurse has to go through.” Identity fallacies are reinforced by common ritual, language, and discourse. However, these fallacies are occasionally self-interested, driven by the egotistical ambitions of academics, politicians and would-be group leaders anxious to build their own careers by carving out a special identity group constituency to the exclusion of existing broader-based identities and leadership. An Identity Fallacy may lead to scorn or rejection of potentially useful allies, real or prospective, because they are not of one’s own identity. The Identity Fallacy promotes an exclusivist, sometimes cultish “do for self” philosophy which in today’s world virtually guarantees self-marginalization and ultimate defeat. A recent application of the Identity Fallacy is the fallacious accusation of “Cultural Appropriation,” in which those who are not of the right Identity are condemned for “appropriating” the cuisine,

clothing, language or music of a marginalized group, forgetting the old axiom that “Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.” Accusations of Cultural Appropriation very often stem from competing selfish economic interests (E.g., “What right do those p*nche Gringos have to set up a taco place right here on Guadalupe Drive to take away business from Doña Teresa’s Taquería? They even dare to play Mexican music in their dining room! That’s cultural appropriation!”). See also, Othering.

64. Infotainment (also Infortainment; Fake News; InfoWars); A very corrupt and dangerous modern media-driven fallacy that deliberately and knowingly stirs in facts, news, falsities and outright lies with entertainment, a mixture usually concocted for specific, base ideological and profit-making motives. Origins of this fallacy predate the current era in the form of “Yellow” or “Tabloid” Journalism. This deadly fallacy has caused endless social unrest, discontent and even shooting wars (e.g., the Spanish American War) over the course of modern history. Practitioners of this fallacy sometimes hypocritically justify its use on the basis that their readers/listeners/viewers “know beforehand” (or should know) that the content offered is not intended as real news and is offered for entertainment purposes only, but in fact this caveat is rarely observed by uncritical audiences who eagerly swallow what the purveyors put forth. See also Dog-Whistle Politics.
65. The Job’s Comforter Fallacy (also, “Karma is a

bi**h;” “What goes around comes around.”): The fallacy that since there is no such thing as random chance and we (I, my group, or my country) are under special protection of heaven, any misfortune or natural disaster that we suffer must be a punishment for our own or someone else’s secret sin or open wickedness. The opposite of the Appeal to Heaven, this is the fallacy employed by the Westboro Baptist Church members who protest fallen service members’ funerals all around the United States. See also, *Magical Thinking*.

66. Just Do it. (also, “Find a way;” “I don’t care how you do it;” “Accomplish the mission;” “By Any Means Necessary.”): A pure, abusive Argumentum ad Baculum (argument from force), in which someone in power arbitrarily waves aside or overrules the moral objections of subordinates or followers and orders them to accomplish a goal by any means required, fair or foul The clear implication is that unethical or immoral methods should be used. E.g., “You say there’s no way you can finish the dig on schedule because you found an old pioneer gravesite with a fancy tombstone on the excavation site? Well, find a way! Make it disappear! Just do it! I don’t want to know how you do it, just do it! This is a million dollar contract and we need it done by Tuesday.” See also, *Plausible Deniability*.
67. Just Plain Folks (also, “Values”): This corrupt modern argument from ethos argues to a less-educated or rural audience that the one arguing is “just plain folks” who is a “plain talker,” “says

what s/he is thinking,” “scorns political correctness,” someone who “you don’t need a dictionary to understand” and who thinks like the audience and is thus worthy of belief, unlike some member of the fancy-talking, latte-sipping Left Coast Political Elite, some “double-domed professor,” “inside-the-beltway Washington bureaucrat,” “tree-hugger” or other despised outsider who “doesn’t think like we do” or “doesn’t share our values.” This is a counterpart to the Ad Hominem Fallacy and most often carries a distinct reek of xenophobia or racism as well. See also the Plain Truth Fallacy and the Simpleton’s Fallacy.

68. The Law of Unintended Consequences (also, “Every Revolution Ends up Eating its own Young;” Grit; Resilience Doctrine): In this very dangerous, archly pessimistic postmodern fallacy the bogus “Law of Unintended Consequences,” once a semi-humorous satirical corollary of “Murphy’s Law,” is elevated to the status of an iron law of history. This fallacy arbitrarily proclaims a priori that since we can never know everything or securely foresee anything, sooner or later in today’s “complex world” unforeseeable adverse consequences and negative side effects (so-called “unknown unknowns”) will always end up blindsiding and overwhelming, defeating and vitiating any and all naive “do-gooder” efforts to improve our world. Instead, one must always expect defeat and be ready to roll with the punches by developing “grit” or “resilience” as a primary survival skill. This nihilist fallacy is a

practical negation of the the possibility of any valid argument from logos. See also, TINA.

69. Lying with Statistics: The contemporary fallacy of misusing true figures and numbers to “prove” unrelated claims. (e.g. “In real terms, attending college has never been cheaper than it is now. When expressed as a percentage of the national debt, the cost of getting a college education is actually far less today than it was back in 1965!”). A corrupted argument from logos, often preying on the public’s perceived or actual mathematical ignorance. This includes the Tiny Percentage Fallacy, that an amount or action that is quite significant in and of itself somehow becomes insignificant simply because it’s a tiny percentage of something much larger. E.g., the arbitrary arrest, detention or interception of “only” a few hundred legally-boarded international travelers as a tiny percentage of the tens of thousands who normally arrive. Under this same fallacy a consumer who would choke on spending an extra dollar for two cans of peas will typically ignore \$50 extra on the price of a car or \$1000 extra on the price of a house simply because these differences are “only” a tiny percentage of the much larger amount being spent. Historically, sales taxes or value-added taxes (VAT) have successfully gained public acceptance and remain “under the radar” because of this latter fallacy, even though amounting to hundreds or thousands of dollars a year in extra tax burden. See also Half-truth, the Snow Job, and the Red Herring.

70. Magical Thinking (also, the Sin of Presumption; Expect a Miracle!): An ancient but deluded fallacy of logos, arguing that when it comes to “crunch time,” provided one has enough faith, prays hard enough, says the right words, does the right rituals, “names it and claims it,” or “claims the Promise,” God will always suspend the laws of the universe and work a miracle at the request of or for the benefit of the True Believer. In practice this nihilist fallacy denies the existence of a rational or predictable universe and thus the possibility of any valid argument from logic. See also, Positive Thinking, the Appeal to Heaven, and the Job’s Comforter fallacy.
71. Mala Fides (Arguing in Bad Faith; also Sophism): Using an argument that the arguer himself or herself knows is not valid. E.g., An unbeliever attacking believers by throwing verses from their own Holy Scriptures at them, or a lawyer arguing for the innocence of someone whom s/he knows full well to be guilty. This latter is a common practice in American jurisprudence, and is sometimes portrayed as the worst face of “Sophism.” [Special thanks to Bradley Steffens for pointing out this fallacy!] Included under this fallacy is the fallacy of Motivational Truth (also, Demagoguery, or Campaign Promises), deliberately lying to “the people” to gain their support or motivate them toward some action the rhetor perceives to be desirable (using evil discursive means toward a “good” material end). A particularly bizarre and corrupt form of this latter fallacy is Self Deception (also, Whistling by the

- Graveyard). in which one deliberately and knowingly deludes oneself in order to achieve a goal, or perhaps simply to suppress anxiety and maintain one's energy level, enthusiasm, morale, peace of mind or sanity in moments of adversity.
72. Measurability: A corrupt argument from logos and ethos (that of science and mathematics), the modern Fallacy of Measurability proposes that if something cannot be measured, quantified and replicated it does not exist, or is "nothing but anecdotal, touchy-feely stuff" unworthy of serious consideration, i.e., mere gossip or subjective opinion. Often, achieving "Measurability" necessarily demands preselecting, "fiddling" or "massaging" the available data simply in order to make it statistically tractable, or in order to support a desired conclusion. Scholar Thomas Persing thus describes "The modernist fallacy of falsely and inappropriately applying norms, standardizations, and data point requirements to quantify productivity or success. This is similar to complex question, measurability, and oversimplification fallacies where the user attempts to categorize complicated / diverse topics into terms that when measured, suit their position. For example, the calculation of inflation in the United States doesn't include the changes in the price to gasoline, because the price of gasoline is too volatile, despite the fact gasoline is necessary for most people to live their lives in the United States." See also, "A Priori Argument," "Lying with Statistics," and the "Procrustean

Fallacy.”

73. Mind-reading (Also, “The Fallacy of Speculation;” “I can read you like a book”): An ancient fallacy, a corruption of stasis theory, speculating about someone else’s thoughts, emotions, motivations and “body language” and then claiming to understand these clearly, sometimes more accurately than the person in question knows themselves. The rhetor deploys this phony “knowledge” as a fallacious warrant for or against a given standpoint. Scholar Myron Peto offers as an example the baseless claim that “Obama doesn’t a da** [sic] for human rights.” Assertions that “call for speculation” are rightly rejected as fallacious in U.S. judicial proceedings but far too often pass uncontested in public discourse. The opposite of this fallacy is the postmodern fallacy of Mind Blindness (also, the Autist’s Fallacy), a complete denial of any normal human capacity for “Theory of Mind,” postulating the utter incommensurability and privacy of minds and thus the impossibility of ever knowing or truly understanding another’s thoughts, emotions, motivations or intents. This fallacy, much promoted by the late postmodernist guru Jacques Derrida, necessarily vitiates any form of Stasis Theory. However, the Fallacy of Mind Blindness has been decisively refuted in several studies, including recent (2017) research published by the Association for Psychological Science, and a (2017) Drexel University study indicating how “our minds align when we communicate.”

74. Moral Licensing: The contemporary ethical fallacy that one's consistently moral life, good behavior or recent extreme suffering or sacrifice earns him/her the right to commit an immoral act without repercussions, consequences or punishment. E.g., "I've been good all year, so one bad won't matter," or "After what I've been through, God knows I need this." The fallacy of Moral Licensing is also sometimes applied to nations, e.g., "Those who criticize repression and the Gulag in the former USSR forget what extraordinary suffering the Russians went through in World War II and the millions upon millions who died." See also Argument from Motives. The opposite of this fallacy is the (excessively rare in our times) ethical fallacy of Scruples, in which one obsesses to pathological excess about one's accidental, forgotten, unconfessed or unforgiven sins and because of them, the seemingly inevitable prospect of eternal damnation.
75. Moral Superiority (also, Self Righteousness; the Moral High Ground): An ancient, immoral and extremely dangerous fallacy, enunciated in Thomistic / Scholastic philosophy in the late Middle Ages, arguing that Evil has no rights that the Good and the Righteous are bound to respect. That way lies torture, heretic-burning, and the Spanish Inquisition. Those who practice this vicious fallacy reject any "moral equivalency" (i.e., even-handed treatment) between themselves (the Righteous) and their enemies (the Wicked), against whom anything is fair, and to whom

nothing must be conceded, not even the right to life. This fallacy is a specific denial of the ancient “Golden Rule,” and has been the cause of endless intractable conflict, since if one is Righteous no negotiation with Evil and its minions is possible; The only imaginable road to a “just” peace is through total victory, i.e., the absolute defeat and liquidation of one’s Wicked enemies. American folk singer and Nobel Laureate Bob Dylan expertly demolishes this fallacy in his 1963 protest song, “With God on Our Side.” See also the Appeal to Heaven, and Moving the Goalposts.

76. Mortification (also, Live as Though You’re Dying; Pleasure-hating; No Pain No Gain): An ancient fallacy of logos, trying to “beat the flesh into submission” by extreme exercise or ascetic practices, deliberate starvation or infliction of pain, denying the undeniable fact that discomfort and pain exist for the purpose of warning of lasting damage to the body. Extreme examples of this fallacy are various forms of self-flagellation such as practiced by the New Mexico “Penitentes” during Holy Week or by Shia devotees during Muharram. More familiar contemporary manifestations of this fallacy are extreme “insanity” exercise regimes not intended for normal health, fitness or competitive purposes but just to “toughen” or “punish” the body. Certain pop-nutritional theories and diets seem based on this fallacy as well. Some contemporary experts suggest that self-mortification (an English word related to the Latinate French root “mort,” or “death.”) is in

fact “suicide on the installment plan.” Others suggest that it involves a narcotic-like addiction to the body’s natural endorphins. The opposite of this fallacy is the ancient fallacy of Hedonism, seeking and valuing physical pleasure as a good in itself, simply for its own sake.

77. Moving the Goalposts (also, Changing the Rules; All’s Fair in Love and War; The Nuclear Option; “Winning isn’t everything, it’s the only thing”): A fallacy of logos, demanding certain proof or evidence, a certain degree of support or a certain number of votes to decide an issue, and then when this is offered, demanding even more, different or better support in order to deny victory to an opponent. For those who practice the fallacy of Moral Superiority (above), Moving the Goalposts is often perceived as perfectly good and permissible if necessary to prevent the victory of Wickedness and ensure the triumph of one’s own side, i.e, the Righteous.
78. MYOB (Mind Your Own Business; also You’re Not the Boss of Me; “None of yer beeswax,” “So What?”, The Appeal to Privacy): The contemporary fallacy of arbitrarily prohibiting or terminating any discussion of one’s own standpoints or behavior, no matter how absurd, dangerous, evil or offensive, by drawing a phony curtain of privacy around oneself and one’s actions. A corrupt argument from ethos (one’s own). E.g., “Sure, I was doing eighty and weaving between lanes on Mesa Street—what’s it to you? You’re not a cop, you’re not my nanny. It’s my business if I want to speed, and your business to

get the hell out of my way. Mind your own damn business!" Or, "Yeah, I killed my baby. So what? Butt out! It wasn't your brat, so it's none of your damn business!" Rational discussion is cut off because "it is none of your business!" See also, "Taboo." The counterpart of this is "Nobody Will Ever Know," (also "What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas;" "I Think We're Alone Now," or the Heart of Darkness Syndrome) the fallacy that just because nobody important is looking (or because one is on vacation, or away in college, or overseas) one may freely commit immoral, selfish, negative or evil acts at will without expecting any of the normal consequences or punishment . Author Joseph Conrad graphically describes this sort of moral degradation in the character of Kurtz in his classic novel, *Heart of Darkness*.

79. Name-Calling: A variety of the "Ad Hominem" argument. The dangerous fallacy that, simply because of who one is or is alleged to be, any and all arguments, disagreements or objections against one's standpoint or actions are automatically racist, sexist, anti-Semitic, bigoted, discriminatory or hateful. E.g., "My stand on abortion is the only correct one. To disagree with me, argue with me or question my judgment in any way would only show what a pig you really are." Also applies to refuting an argument by simply calling it a "fallacy," or declaring it invalid without proving why it is invalid, or summarily dismissing arguments or opponents by labeling them "racist," "communist," "fascist," "moron," any name followed by the suffix "tard" (short for

the highly offensive “retard”) or some other negative name without further explanation. E.g., “He’s an a**hole, end of story” or “I’m a loser.” A subset of this is the Newspeak fallacy, creating identification with a certain kind of audience by inventing or using racist or offensive, sometimes military-sounding nicknames for opponents or enemies, e.g., “The damned DINO’s are even worse than the Repugs and the Neocons.” Or, “In the Big One it took us only five years to beat both the J*ps and the Jerries, so more than a decade and a half after niner-eleven why is it so hard for us to beat a raggedy bunch of Hajjis and Towel-heads?” Note that originally the word “Nazi” belonged in this category, but this term has long come into use as a proper English noun. See also, “Reductionism,” “Ad Hominem Argument,” and “Alphabet Soup.”

80. The Narrative Fallacy (also, the Fable; the Poster Child) The ancient fallacy of persuasion by telling a “heartwarming” or horrifying story or fable, particularly to less-educated or uncritical audiences who are less likely to grasp purely logical arguments or general principles. E.g., Charles Dickens’ “A Christmas Carol.” Narratives and fables, particularly those that name names and personalize arguments, tend to be far more persuasive at a popular level than other forms of argument and are virtually irrefutable, even when the story in question is well known to be entirely fictional. This fallacy is found even in the field of science, as noted by a recent (2017) scientific study.

81. The NIMBY Fallacy (Not in My Back Yard; also “Build a Wall!”; “Lock’em up and throw away the key;” The Ostrich Strategy; The Gitmo Solution.). The infantile fallacy that a problem, challenge or threat that is not physically nearby or to which I am not directly exposed has for all practical purposes “gone away” and ceased to exist. Thus, a problem can be permanently and definitively solved by “making it go away,” preferably to someplace “out of sight,” a walled-off ghetto or a distant isle where there is no news coverage, and where nobody important stays. Lacking that, it can be made to go away by simply eliminating, censoring or ignoring “negative” media coverage and public discussion of the problem and focusing on “positive, encouraging” things instead.
82. No Discussion (also No Negotiation; the Control Voice; Peace through Strength; a Muscular Foreign Policy; Fascism): A pure Argumentum ad Baculum that rejects reasoned dialogue, offering either instant, unconditional compliance/surrender or defeat/death as the only two options for settling even minor differences, e.g., screaming “Get down on the ground, now!” or declaring “We don’t talk to terrorists.” This deadly fallacy falsely paints real or potential “hostiles” as monsters devoid of all reason, and far too often contains a very strong element of “machismo” as well. I.e. “A real, muscular leader never resorts to pantywaist pleading, apologies, excuses, fancy talk or argument. That’s for lawyers, liars and pansies and is nothing but a

delaying tactic. A real man stands tall, says what he thinks, draws fast and shoots to kill.” The late actor John Wayne frequently portrayed this fallacy in his movie roles. See also, *The Pout*.

83. Non-recognition: A deluded fallacy in which one deliberately chooses not to publicly “recognize” ground truth, usually on the theory that this would somehow reward evil-doers if we recognize their deeds as real or consequential. Often the underlying theory is that the situation is “temporary” and will soon be reversed. E.g., In the decades from 1949 until Richard Nixon’s presidency the United States officially refused to recognize the existence of the most populous nation on earth, the People’s Republic of China, because America supported the U.S.-friendly Republic of China government on Taiwan instead and hoped they might somehow return to power on the mainland. Perversely, in 2016 the U.S. President-Elect caused a significant international flap by chatting with the President of the government on Taiwan, a *de facto* violation of long-standing American non-recognition of that same regime. More than half a century after the Korean War the U.S. still refuses to pronounce the name of, or recognize (much less conduct normal, peaceful negotiations with) a nuclear-armed DPRK (North Korea). An individual who practices this fallacy risks institutionalization (e.g., “I refuse to recognize Mom’s murder, ‘cuz that’d give the victory to the murderer! I refuse to watch you bury her! Stop! Stop!”) but tragically, such behavior is only too

common in international relations. See also the State Actor Fallacy, Political Correctness, and The Pout.

84. The Non Sequitur: The deluded fallacy of offering evidence, reasons or conclusions that have no logical connection to the argument at hand (e.g. "The reason I flunked your course is that the U. S. government is now putting out purple five-dollar bills! Purple!"). (See also Red Herring.)
85. Occasionally involves the breathtaking arrogance of claiming to have special knowledge of why God, fate, karma or the Universe is doing certain things. E.g., "This week's earthquake was obviously meant to punish those people for their great wickedness." See also, Magical Thinking, and the Appeal to Heaven.
Nothing New Under the Sun (also, Uniformitarianism, "Seen it all before;" "Surprise, surprise;" "Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose."): Fairly rare in contemporary discourse, this deeply cynical fallacy, a corruption of the argument from logos, falsely proposes that there is not and will never be any real novelty in this world. Any argument that there are truly "new" ideas or phenomena is judged a priori to be unworthy of serious discussion and dismissed with a jaded sigh and a wave of the hand as "the same old same old." E.g., "[Sigh!] Idiots! Don't you see that the current influx of refugees from the Mideast is just the same old Muslim invasion of Christendom that's been going on for 1,400 years?" Or, "Libertarianism is nothing but re-

warmed anarchism, which, in turn, is nothing but the ancient Antinomian Heresy. Like I told you before, there's nothing new under the sun!"

86. Olfactory Rhetoric (also, "The Nose Knows"): A vicious, zoological-level fallacy of pathos in which opponents are marginalized, dehumanized or hated primarily based on their supposed odor, lack of personal cleanliness, imagined diseases or filth. E. g., "Those demonstrators are demanding something or another but I'll only talk to them if first they go home and take a bath!" Or, "I can smell a Jew a block away!" Also applies to demeaning other cultures or nationalities based on their differing cuisines, e.g., "I don't care what they say or do, their breath always stinks of garlic. And have you ever smelled their kitchens?" Olfactory Rhetoric straddles the borderline between a fallacy and a psychopathology. A 2017 study by Ruhr University Bochum suggests that olfactory rhetoric does not arise from a simple, automatic physiological reaction to an actual odor, but in fact, strongly depends on one's predetermined reaction or prejudices toward another, and one's olfactory center "is activated even before we perceive an odour." See also, Othering.
87. Oops! (also, "Oh, I forgot...", "The Judicial Surprise," "The October Surprise"): A corrupt argument from logos in which toward the decisive end of a discussion, debate, trial, electoral campaign period, or decision-making process an opponent suddenly, elaborately and usually sarcastically shams having just

remembered or uncovered some salient fact, argument or evidence. E.g., “Oops, I forgot to ask you: You were convicted of this same offense twice before, weren’t you?!” Banned in American judicial argument, this fallacy is only too common in public discourse. Also applies to supposedly “discovering” and sensationally reporting some potentially damning information or evidence and then, after the damage has been done or the decision has been made, quietly declaring, “Oops, I guess that really wasn’t that significant after all. Ignore what I said. Sorry ’bout that!”

88. Othering (also Otherizing, “They’re Not Like Us,” Stereotyping, Xenophobia, Racism, Prejudice): A badly corrupted, discriminatory argument from ethos where facts, arguments, experiences or objections are arbitrarily disregarded, ignored or put down without serious consideration because those involved “are not like us,” or “don’t think like us.” E.g., “It’s OK for Mexicans to earn a buck an hour in the maquiladoras [Mexico-based “Twin Plants” run by American or other foreign corporations]. If it happened here I’d call it brutal exploitation and daylight robbery but south of the border, down Mexico way the economy is different and they’re not like us.” Or, “You claim that life must be really terrible over there for terrorists to ever think of blowing themselves up with suicide vests just to make a point, but always remember that they’re different from us. They don’t think about life and death the same way we do.” A vicious

variety of the Ad Hominem Fallacy, most often applied to non-white or non-Christian populations. A variation on this fallacy is the “Speakee” Fallacy (“You speakee da English?”; also the Shibboleth), in which an opponent’s arguments are mocked, ridiculed and dismissed solely because of the speaker’s alleged or real accent, dialect, or lack of fluency in standard English, e.g., “He told me ‘Vee vorkers need to form a younion!’ but I told him I’m not a ‘vorker,’ and to come back when he learns to speak proper English.” A very dangerous, extreme example of Othering is Dehumanization, a fallacy of faulty analogy where opponents are dismissed as mere cockroaches, lice, apes, monkeys, rats, weasels or bloodsucking parasites who have no right to speak or to live at all, and probably should be “squashed like bugs.” This fallacy is ultimately the “logic” behind ethnic cleansing, genocide and gas ovens. See also the Identity Fallacy, “Name Calling” and “Olfactory Rhetoric.” The opposite of this fallacy is the “Pollyanna Principle” below.

89. Overexplanation: A fallacy of logos stemming from the real paradox that beyond a certain point, more explanation, instructions, data, discussion, evidence or proof inevitably results in less, not more, understanding. Contemporary urban mythology holds that this fallacy is typically male (“Mansplaining”), while barely half a century ago the prevailing myth was that it was men who were naturally monosyllabic, grunting or non-verbal while women would typically overexplain (e.g., the 1960 hit song by Joe Jones,

“You Talk Too Much”). “Mansplaining” is, according to scholar Danelle Pecht, “the infuriating tendency of many men to always have to be the smartest person in the room, regardless of the topic of discussion and how much they actually know!” See also The Snow Job, and the “Plain Truth” fallacy.

90. Overgeneralization (also Hasty Generalization; Totus pro Partes Fallacy; the Merological Fallacy): A fallacy of logos where a broad generalization that is agreed to be true is offered as overriding all particular cases, particularly special cases requiring immediate attention. E.g., “Doctor, you say that this time of year a flu vaccination is essential. but I would counter that ALL vaccinations are essential” (implying that I’m not going to give special attention to getting the flu shot). Or, attempting to refute “Black Lives Matter” by replying, “All Lives Matter,” the latter undeniably true but still a fallacious overgeneralization in that specific and urgent context. ” Overgeneralization can also mean one sees a single negative outcome as an eternal pattern of defeat. Overgeneralization may also include the the Pars pro Toto Fallacy, the stupid but common fallacy of incorrectly applying one or two true examples to all cases. E.g., a minority person who commits a particularly horrifying crime, and whose example is then used to smear the reputation of the entire group, or when a government publishes special lists of crimes committed by groups who are supposed to be hated, e.g., Jews, or undocumented immigrants.

Famously, the case of one Willie Horton was successfully used in this manner in the 1988 American presidential election to smear African Americans, Liberals, and by extension, Democratic presidential candidate Michael Dukakis. See also the fallacy of “Zero Tolerance” below.

91. The Paralysis of Analysis (also, Procrastination; the Nirvana Fallacy): A postmodern fallacy that since all data is never in, any conclusion is always provisional, no legitimate decision can ever be made and any action should always be delayed until forced by circumstances. A corruption of the argument from logos. (See also the “Law of Unintended Consequences.”)
92. The Passive Voice Fallacy (also, the Bureaucratic Passive): A fallacy from ethos, concealing active human agency behind the curtain of the grammatical passive voice, e.g., “It has been decided that you are to be let go,” arrogating an ethos of cosmic infallibility and inevitability to a very fallible conscious decision made by identifiable, fallible and potentially culpable human beings. Scholar Jackson Katz notes (2017): “We talk about how many women were raped last year, not about how many men raped women. We talk about how many girls in a school district were harassed last year, not about how many boys harassed girls. We talk about how many teenage girls in the state of Vermont got pregnant last year, rather than how many men and boys impregnated teenage girls. ... So you can see how the use of the passive voice has a political effect.

[It] shifts the focus off of men and boys and onto girls and women. Even the term 'Violence against women' is problematic. It's a passive construction; there's no active agent in the sentence. It's a bad thing that happens to women, but when you look at the term 'violence against women' nobody is doing it to them, it just happens to them... Men aren't even a part of it." See also, Political Correctness. An obverse of the Passive Voice Fallacy is the Be-verb Fallacy, a cultish linguistic theory and the bane of many a first-year composition student's life, alleging that an extraordinary degree of "clarity," "sanity," or textual "liveliness" can be reached by strictly eliminating all passive verb forms and all forms of the verb "to be" from English-language writing. This odd but unproven contention, dating back to Alfred Korzybski's "General Semantics" self-improvement movement of the 1920's and '30's via S. I. Hayakawa, blithely ignores the fact that although numerous major world languages lack a ubiquitous "be-verb," e.g., Russian, Hindi and Arabic, speakers of these languages, like English-speaking General Semantics devotees themselves, have never been proven to enjoy any particular cognitive advantage over ordinary everyday users of the passive voice and the verb "to be." Nor have writers of the curiously stilted English that results from applying this fallacy achieved any special success in academia, professional or technical writing, or in the popular domain.

93. Paternalism: A serious fallacy of ethos, arbitrarily

tut-tutting, dismissing or ignoring another's arguments or concerns as "childish" or "immature;" taking a condescending attitude of superiority toward opposing standpoints or toward opponents themselves. E.g., "Your argument against the war is so infantile. Try approaching the issue like an adult for a change," "I don't argue with children," or "Somebody has to be the grownup in the room, and it might as well be me. Here's why you're wrong..." Also refers to the sexist fallacy of dismissing a woman's argument because she is a woman, e.g., "Oh, it must be that time of the month, eh?" See also "Ad Hominem Argument" and "Tone Policing."

94. Personalizaion: A deluded fallacy of ethos, seeing yourself or someone else as the essential cause of some external event for which you or the other person had no responsibility. E.g., "Never fails! It had to happen! It's my usual rotten luck that the biggest blizzard of the year had to occur just on the day of our winter festival. If it wasn't for ME being involved I'm sure the blizzard wouldn't have happened!" This fallacy can also be taken in a positive sense, e.g. Hitler evidently believed that simply because he was Hitler every bullet would miss him and no explosive could touch him. "Personalization" straddles the borderline between a fallacy and a psychopathology. See also, "The Job's Comforter Fallacy," and "Magical Thinking."
95. The Plain Truth Fallacy; (also, the Simple Truth fallacy, Salience Bias, the KISS Principle [Keep it

Short and Simple / Keep it Simple, Stupid], the Monocausal Fallacy; the Executive Summary): A fallacy of logos favoring familiar, singular, summarized or easily comprehensible data, examples, explanations and evidence over those that are more complex and unfamiliar but much closer to the truth. E.g., “Ooooh, look at all those equations and formulas! Just boil it down to the Simple Truth,” or “I don’t want your damned philosophy lesson! Just tell me the Plain Truth about why this is happening.” A more sophisticated version of this fallacy arbitrarily proposes, as did 18th century Scottish rhetorician John Campbell, that the Truth is always simple by nature and only malicious enemies of Truth would ever seek to make it complicated. (See also, The Snow Job, and Overexplanation.) The opposite of this is the postmodern fallacy of Ineffability or Complexity (also, Truthiness; Post-Truth),, arbitrarily declaring that today’s world is so complex that there is no truth, or that Truth (capital-T), if indeed such a thing exists, is unknowable except perhaps by God or the Messiah and is thus forever inaccessible and irrelevant to us mere mortals, making any cogent argument from logos impossible. See also the Big Lie, and Paralysis of Analysis.

96. Plausible Deniability: A vicious fallacy of ethos under which someone in power forces those under his or her control to do some questionable or evil act and to then falsely assume or conceal responsibility for that act in order to protect the ethos of the one in command. E.g., “Arrange a

fatal accident but make sure I know nothing about it!"

97. Playing on Emotion (also, the Sob Story; the Pathetic Fallacy; the "Bleeding Heart" fallacy, the Drama Queen / Drama King Fallacy): The classic fallacy of pure argument from pathos, ignoring facts and evoking emotion alone. E.g., "If you don't agree that witchcraft is a major problem just shut up, close your eyes for a moment and picture in your mind all those poor moms crying bitter tears for their innocent tiny children whose cozy little beds and happy tricycles lie all cold and abandoned, just because of those wicked old witches! Let's string'em all up!" The opposite of this is the Apathetic Fallacy (also, Cynicism; Burnout; Compassion Fatigue), where any and all legitimate arguments from pathos are brushed aside because, as noted country music artist Jo Dee Messina sang (2005), "My give-a-damn's busted." Obverse to Playing on Emotion is the ancient fallacy of Refinement ("Real Feelings"), where certain classes of living beings such as plants and non-domesticated animals, infants, babies and minor children, barbarians, slaves, deep-sea sailors, farmworkers, criminals and convicts, refugees, addicts, terrorists, Catholics, Jews, foreigners, the poor, people of color, "Hillbillies," "Hobos," homeless or undocumented people, or "the lower classes" in general are deemed incapable of experiencing real pain like we do, or of having any "real feelings" at all, only brutish appetites, vile lusts, evil drives, filthy cravings, biological instincts, psychological

reflexes and automatic tropisms. Noted rhetorician Kenneth Burke falls into this last, behaviorist fallacy in his otherwise brilliant (1966) *Language as Symbolic Action*, in his discussion of a bird trapped in a lecture room. See also, *Othering*.

98. Political Correctness (“PC”): A postmodern fallacy, a counterpart of the “Name Calling” fallacy, supposing that the nature of a thing or situation can be changed by simply changing its name. E.g., “Today we strike a blow for animal rights and against cruelty to animals by changing the name of ‘pets’ to ‘animal companions.’” Or “Never, ever play the ‘victim’ card, because it’s so manipulative and sounds so negative, helpless and despairing. Instead of being ‘victims,’ we are proud to be ‘survivors.’” (Of course, when “victims” disappear then perpetrators conveniently vanish as well!) See also, *The Passive Voice Fallacy*, and *The Scripted Message*. Also applies to other forms of political “Language Control,” e.g., being careful never to refer to North Korea or ISIS/ISIL by their rather pompous proper names (“the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea” and “the Islamic State,” respectively) or to the Syrian government as the “Syrian government,” (It’s always the “Regime” or the “Dictatorship.”). Occasionally the fallacy of “Political Correctness” is falsely confused with simple courtesy, e.g., “I’m sick and tired of the tyranny of Political Correctness, having to watch my words all the time—I want to be free to speak my mind and to call out a N—

or a Queer in public any time I damn well feel like it!" See also, Non-recognition. An opposite of this fallacy is the fallacy of Venting, below.

99. The Pollyanna Principle (also, "The Projection Bias," "They're Just Like Us," "Singing 'Kumbaya.'"): A traditional, often tragic fallacy of ethos, that of automatically (and falsely) assuming that everyone else in any given place, time and circumstance had or has basically the same (positive) wishes, desires, interests, concerns, ethics and moral code as "we" do. This fallacy practically if not theoretically denies both the reality of difference and the human capacity to chose radical evil. E.g., arguing that "The only thing most Nazi Storm Troopers wanted was the same thing we do, to live in peace and prosperity and to have a good family life," when the reality was radically otherwise. Dr. William Lorimer offers this explanation: "The Projection Bias is the flip side of the 'They're Not Like Us' [Othering] fallacy. The Projection bias (fallacy) is 'They're just people like me, therefore they must be motivated by the same things that motivate me.' For example: 'I would never pull a gun and shoot a police officer unless I was convinced he was trying to murder me; therefore, when Joe Smith shot a police officer, he must have been in genuine fear for his life.' I see the same fallacy with regard to Israel: 'The people of Gaza just want to be left in peace; therefore, if Israel would just lift the blockade and allow Hamas to import anything they want, without restriction, they would stop firing rockets at Israel.' That may or

may not be true – I personally don't believe it – but the argument clearly presumes that the people of Gaza, or at least their leaders, are motivated by a desire for peaceful co-existence.” The Pollyanna Principle was gently but expertly demolished in the classic twentieth-century American animated cartoon series, “The Flintstones,” in which the humor lay in the absurdity of picturing “Stone Age” characters having the same concerns, values and lifestyles as mid-twentieth century white working class Americans. This is the opposite of the Othering fallacy. (Note: The Pollyanna Principle fallacy should not be confused with a psychological principle of the same name which observes that positive memories are usually retained more strongly than negative ones.)

100. The Positive Thinking Fallacy: An immensely popular but deluded modern fallacy of logos, that because we are “thinking positively” that in itself somehow biases external, objective reality in our favor even before we lift a finger to act. See also, Magical Thinking. Note that this particular fallacy is often part of a much wider closed-minded, somewhat cultish ideology where the practitioner is warned against paying attention to to or even acknowledging the reality of evil, or of “negative” evidence or counter-arguments against his/her standpoints. In the latter case rational discussion, argument or refutation is most often futile. See also, Deliberate Ignorance.
101. The Post Hoc Argument: (also, “Post Hoc Propter Hoc;” “Post Hoc Ergo Propter Hoc;” “Too much

of a coincidence,” the “Clustering Illusion”): The classic paranoid fallacy of attributing an imaginary causality to random coincidences, concluding that just because something happens close to, at the same time as, or just after something else, the first thing is caused by the second. E.g., “AIDS first emerged as an epidemic back in the very same era when Disco music was becoming popular—that’s too much of a coincidence: It proves that Disco caused AIDS!” Correlation does not equal causation.

102. The Pout (also The Silent Treatment; Nonviolent Civil Disobedience; Noncooperation): An often-infantile *Argumentum ad Baculum* that arbitrarily rejects or gives up on dialogue before it is concluded. The most benign nonviolent form of this fallacy is found in passive-aggressive tactics such as slowdowns, boycotts, lockouts, sitdowns and strikes. Under President Barack Obama the United States finally ended a half-century long political Pout with Cuba. See also “No Discussion” and “Nonrecognition.”
103. The Procrustean Fallacy (also, “Keeping up Standards,” Standardization, Uniformity, Fordism): The modernist fallacy of falsely and inappropriately applying the norms and requirements of standardized manufacturing, quality control and rigid scheduling, or of military discipline to inherently diverse free human beings, their lives, education, behavior, clothing and appearance. This fallacy often seems to stem from the pathological need of someone in power to place in “order” their disturbingly free,

messy and disordered universe by restricting others' freedom and insisting on rigid standardization, alphabetization, discipline, uniformity and "objective" assessment of everyone under their power. This fallacy partially explains why marching in straight lines, mass calisthenics, goose-stepping, drum-and-bugle or flag corps, standing at attention, saluting, uniforms, and standardized categorization are so typical of fascism, tyrannical regimes, and of tyrants petty and grand everywhere. Thanks to author Eimar O'Duffy for identifying this fallacy!

104. Prosopology (also, Prosopography, Reciting the Litany; "Tell Me, What Were Their Names?"; Reading the Roll of Martyrs): An ancient fallacy of pathos and ethos, publicly reading out loud, singing, or inscribing at length a list of names (most or all of which will be unknown to the reader or audience), sometimes in a negative sense, to underline the gravity of a past tragedy or mass-casualty event, sometimes in a positive sense, to emphasize the ancient historical continuity of a church, organization or cause. Proper names, especially if they are from the same culture or language group as the audience, can have near-mystical persuasive power. In some cases, those who use this fallacy in its contemporary form will defend it as an attempt to "personalize" an otherwise anonymous recent mass tragedy. This fallacy was virtually unknown in secular American affairs before about 100 years ago, when the custom emerged of listing of the names of local World War I casualties on

community monuments around the country. That this is indeed a fallacy is evident by the fact that the names on these century-old monuments are now meaningful only to genealogists and specialized historians, just as the names on the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington or the names of those who perished on 9/11 will surely be in another several generations.

105. The Red Herring (also, Distraction): An irrelevant argument, attempting to mislead and distract an audience by bringing up an unrelated but emotionally loaded issue. E.g., “In regard to my several bankruptcies and recent indictment for corruption let’s be straight up about what’s really important: Terrorism! Just look at what happened last week in [name the place]. Vote for me and I’ll fight those terrorists anywhere in the world!” Also applies to raising unrelated issues as falsely opposing the issue at hand, e.g., “You say ‘Black Lives Matter,’ but I would rather say ‘Climate Change Matters!’” when the two contentions are in no way opposed, only competing for attention. See also Availability Bias, and Dog Whistle Politics.
106. Reductio ad Hitlerum (or, ad Hitleram): A highly problematic contemporary historical-revisionist contention that the argument “That’s just what Hitler said (or would have said, or would have done)” is a fallacy, an instance of the Ad Hominem argument and/or Guilt by Association. Whether the Reductio ad Hitlerum can be considered an actual fallacy or not seems to fundamentally depend on one’s personal view of

- Hitler and the gravity of his crimes.
107. Reductionism: (also, Oversimplifying, Sloganeering): The fallacy of deceiving an audience by giving simple answers or bumper-sticker slogans in response to complex questions, especially when appealing to less educated or unsophisticated audiences. E.g., “If the glove doesn’t fit, you must vote to acquit.” Or, “Vote for Snith. He’ll bring back jobs!” In science, technology, engineering and mathematics (“STEM subjects”) reductionism is intentionally practiced to make intractable problems computable, e.g., the well-known humorous suggestion, “First, let’s assume the cow is a sphere!”. See also, the Plain Truth Fallacy, and Dog-whistle Politics.
108. Reifying (also, Mistaking the Map for the Territory): The ancient fallacy of treating imaginary intellectual categories, schemata or names as actual, material “things.” (E.g., “The War against Terror is just another chapter in the eternal fight to the death between Freedom and Absolute Evil!”) Sometimes also referred to as “Essentializing” or “Hypostatization.”
109. The Romantic Rebel (also, the Truthdig / Truthout Fallacy; the Brave Heretic; Conspiracy theories; the Iconoclastic Fallacy): The contemporary fallacy of claiming Truth or validity for one’s standpoint solely or primarily because one is supposedly standing up heroically to the dominant “orthodoxy,” the current Standard Model, conventional wisdom or Political Correctness, or whatever may be the

Bandwagon of the moment; a corrupt argument from ethos. E.g., “Back in the day the scientific establishment thought that the world was flat, that was until Columbus proved them wrong! Now they want us to believe that ordinary water is nothing but H₂O. Are you going to believe them? The government is frantically trying to suppress the truth that our public drinking-water supply actually has nitrogen in it and causes congenital vampirism! And what about Area 51? Don’t you care? Or are you just a kiss-up for the corrupt scientific establishment?” The opposite of the Bandwagon fallacy.

110. The “Save the Children” Fallacy (also, Humanitarian Crisis): A cruel and cynical contemporary media-driven fallacy of pathos, an instance of the fallacious Appeal to Pity, attracting public support for intervention in somebody else’s crisis in a distant country by repeatedly showing in gross detail the extreme (real) suffering of the innocent, defenseless little children (occasionally extended even to their pets!) on “our” side, conveniently ignoring the reality that innocent children on all sides usually suffer the most in any war, conflict, famine or crisis. Recent (2017) examples include the so-called “Rohingya” in Myanmar/Burma (ignoring multiple other ethnicities suffering ongoing hunger and conflict in that impoverished country), children in rebel-held areas of Syria (areas held by our rebels, not by the Syrian government or by Islamic State rebels), and the children of Mediterranean boat-people (light

complected children from the Mideast, Afghanistan and North Africa, but not darker, African-complected children from sub-Saharan countries, children who are evidently deemed by the media to be far less worthy of pity). Scholar Glen Greenwald points out that a cynical key part of this tactic is hiding the child and adult victims of one's own violence while "milking" the tragic, blood-soaked images of children killed by the "other side" for every tear they can generate as a *causus belli* [a puffed-up excuse for war, conflict or American/Western intervention].

- III. Scapegoating (also, Blamecasting): The ancient fallacy that whenever something goes wrong there's always someone other than oneself to blame. Although sometimes this fallacy is a practical denial of randomness or chance itself, today it is more often a mere insurance-driven business decision ("I don't care if it was an accident! Somebody with deep pockets is gonna pay for this!"), though often scapegoating is no more than a cynical ploy to shield those truly responsible from blame. The term "Scapegoating" is also used to refer to the tactic of casting collective blame on marginalized or scorned "Others," e.g., "The Jews are to blame!" A particularly corrupt and cynical example of scapegoating is the fallacy of Blaming the Victim, in which one falsely casts the blame for one's own evil or questionable actions on those affected, e.g., "If you move an eyelash I'll have to kill you and you'll be to blame!" "If you don't bow to our demands we'll shut down the government and

it'll be totally YOUR fault!" or "You bi**h, you acted flirty and made me rape you! Then you snitched on me to the cops and let them collect a rape kit on you, and now I'm going to prison and every bit of it is your fault!" See also, the Affective Fallacy.

112. Scare Tactics (also Appeal to Fear; Paranoia; the Bogeyman Fallacy; Shock Doctrine [ShockDoc]; Rally 'Round the Flag; Rally 'Round the President): A variety of Playing on Emotions, a corrupted argument from pathos, taking advantage of a emergent or deliberately-created crisis and its associated public shock, panic and chaos in order to impose an argument, action or solution that would be clearly unacceptable if carefully considered. E.g., "If you don't shut up and do what I say we're all gonna die! In this moment of crisis we can't afford the luxury of criticizing or trying to second-guess my decisions when our very lives and freedom are in peril! Instead, we need to be united as one!" Or, in the (2017) words of former White House Spokesperson Sean Spicer, "This is about the safety of America!" This fallacy is discussed at length in Naomi Klein's (2010) *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* and her (2017) *No is Not Enough: Resisting Trump's Shock Politics and Winning the World We Need*. See also, *The Shopping Hungry Fallacy*, *Dog-Whistle Politics*, "We Have to do Something!", and *The Worst Case Fallacy*.
113. "Scoring" (also, Moving the Ball Down the Field, the Sports World Fallacy; "Hey, Sports Fans!"):

An instance of faulty analogy, the common contemporary fallacy of inappropriately and most often offensively applying sports, gaming, hunting or other recreational imagery to unrelated areas of life, such as war or intimacy. E.g., “Nope, I haven’t scored with Francis yet, but last night I managed to get to third base!” or “We really need to take our ground game into Kim’s half of the field if we ever expect to score against North Korea.” This fallacy is almost always soaked in testosterone and machismo. An associated fallacy is that of Evening up the Score (also, Getting Even), exacting tit-for-tat vengeance as though life were some sort of “point-score” sports contest. Counter-arguments to the “Scoring” fallacy usually fall on deaf ears, since the one and only purpose for playing a game is to “score,” isn’t it?

114. The Scripted Message (also, Talking Points): A contemporary fallacy related to Big Lie Technique, where a politician or public figure strictly limits her/his statements on a given issue to repeating carefully scripted, often exaggerated or empty phrases developed to achieve maximum acceptance or maximum desired reaction from a target audience. See also, Dog Whistle Politics, and Political Correctness, above. The opposite of this fallacy is that of “Venting.”
115. Sending the Wrong Message: A dangerous fallacy of logos that attacks a given statement, argument or action, no matter how good, true or necessary, because it will “send the wrong message.” In effect, those who use this fallacy are openly

confessing to fraud and admitting that the truth will destroy the fragile web of illusion they have deliberately created by their lies. E.g., “Actually, we haven’t a clue about how to deal with this crisis, but if we publicly admit it we’ll be sending the wrong message.” See also, “Mala Fides.”

116. Shifting the Burden of Proof: A classic fallacy of logos that challenges an opponent to disprove a claim rather than asking the person making the claim to defend his/her own argument. E.g., “These days space-alien are everywhere among us, masquerading as true humans, even right here on campus! I dare you to prove it isn’t so! See? You can’t! You admit it! That means what I say has to be true. Most probably, you’re one of them, since you seem to be so soft on space-alien!” A typical tactic in using this fallacy is first to get an opponent to admit that a far-fetched claim, or some fact related to it, is indeed at least theoretically “possible,” and then declare the claim “proven” absent evidence to the contrary. E.g., “So you admit that massive undetected voter fraud is indeed possible under our current system, and could have happened in this country at least in theory, and you can’t produce even the tiniest scintilla of evidence that it didn’t actually happen! Ha-ha! I rest my case.” See also, Argument from Ignorance.
117. The Shopping Hungry Fallacy: A fallacy of pathos, a variety of Playing on Emotions and sometimes Scare Tactics, making stupid but important decisions (or being prompted, manipulated or forced to “freely” take public or

private decisions that may be later regretted but are difficult to reverse) “in the heat of the moment” when under the influence of strong emotion (hunger, fear, lust, anger, sadness, regret, fatigue, even joy, love or happiness). E.g., Trevor Noah, (2016) host of the Daily Show on American television attributes public approval of draconian measures in the Patriot Act and the creation of the U. S. Department of Homeland Security to America’s “shopping hungry” immediately after 9/11. See also, Scare Tactics; “We Have to Do Something;” and The Big “But” Fallacy.

118. The Silent Majority Fallacy: A variety of the argument from ignorance, this fallacy, famously enunciated by disgraced American President Richard Nixon, alleges special knowledge of a hidden “silent majority” of voters (or of the population in general) that stands in support of an otherwise unpopular leader and his/her policies, contrary to the repeated findings of polls, surveys and popular vote totals. In an extreme case the leader arrogates to him/herself the title of the “Voice of the Voiceless.”
119. The Simpleton’s Fallacy: (Or, The “Good Simpleton” Fallacy): A corrupt fallacy of logos, described in an undated quote from science writer Isaac Asimov as “The false notion that democracy means that ‘my ignorance is just as good as your knowledge.’” The name of this fallacy is borrowed from Walter M. Miller Jr.’s classic (1960) post-apocalyptic novel, *A Canticle for Leibowitz*, in which in the centuries after a nuclear holocaust knowledge and learning

become so despised that “Good Simpleton” becomes the standard form of interpersonal salutation. This fallacy is masterfully portrayed in the person of the title character in the 1994 Hollywood movie, “Forrest Gump.” The fallacy is widely alleged to have had a great deal to do with the outcome of the 2016 US presidential election, See also “Just Plain Folks,” and the “Plain Truth Fallacy.” U.S. President Barrack Obama noted to the contrary (2016), “In politics and in life, ignorance is not a virtue. It’s not cool to not know what you’re talking about. That’s not real or telling it like it is. That’s not challenging political correctness. That’s just not knowing what you’re talking about.” The term “Simpleton’s Fallacy” has also been used to refer to a deceptive technique of argumentation, feigning ignorance in order to get one’s opponent to admit to, explain or overexplain something s/he would rather not discuss. E.g., “I see here that you have a related prior conviction for something called ‘Criminal Sodomy.’ I may be a poor, naive simpleton but I’m not quite sure what that fine and fancy lawyer-talk means in plain English. Please explain to the jury in simple terms what exactly you did to get convicted of that crime.” See also, Argument from Ignorance, and The Third Person Effect.

120. The Slippery Slope (also, the Domino Theory): The common fallacy that “one thing inevitably leads to another.” E.g., “If you two go and drink coffee together one thing will lead to another and next thing you know you’ll be pregnant and end

up spending your life on welfare living in the Projects,” or “If we close Gitmo one thing will lead to another and before you know it armed terrorists will be strolling through our church doors with suicide belts, proud as you please, smack in the middle of the 10:30 a.m. Sunday worship service right here in Garfield, Kansas!”

121. The Snow Job (also Falacia ad Verboſium; Information Bias): A fallacy of logos, “proving” a claim by overwhelming an audience (“snowing them under”) with mountains of true but marginally-relevant documents, graphs, words, facts, numbers, information and statistics that look extremely impressive but which the intended audience cannot be expected to understand or properly evaluate. This is a corrupted argument from logos. See also, “Lying with Statistics.” The opposite of this fallacy is the Plain Truth Fallacy.
122. The Soldiers’ Honor Fallacy: The ancient fallacy that all who wore a uniform, fought hard and followed orders are worthy of some special honor or glory or are even “heroes,” whether they fought for freedom or fought to defend slavery, marched under Grant or Lee, Hitler, Stalin, Eisenhower or McArthur, fought to defend their homes, fought for oil or to spread empire, or even fought against and killed U.S. soldiers! A corrupt argument from ethos (that of a soldier), closely related to the “Finish the Job” fallacy (“Sure, he died for a lie, but he deserves honor because he followed orders and did his job faithfully to the end!”). See also “Heroes All.” This fallacy was

recognized and decisively refuted at the Nuremberg Trials after World War II but remains powerful to this day nonetheless. See also “Blind Loyalty.” Related is the State Actor Fallacy, that those who fight and die for their country (America, Russia, Iran, the Third Reich, etc.) are worthy of honor or at least pardonable while those who fight for a non-state actor (armed abolitionists, guerrillas, freedom-fighters, jihadis, mujahideen) are not and remain “terrorists” no matter how noble or vile their cause, until or unless they win and become the recognized state, or are adopted by a state after the fact.

123. The Standard Version Fallacy: The ancient fallacy, a discursive *Argumentum ad Baculum*, of choosing a “Standard Translation” or “Authorized Version” of an ancient or sacred text and arbitrarily declaring it “correct” and “authoritative,” necessarily eliminating much of the poetry and underlying meaning of the original but conveniently quashing any further discussion about the meaning of the original text, e.g., the Vulgate or The King James Version. The easily demonstrable fact that translation (beyond three or four words) is neither uniform nor reversible (i.e., never comes back exactly the same when retranslated from another language) gives the lie to any efforts to make translation of human languages into an exact science. Islam clearly recognizes this fallacy when characterizing any attempt to translate the sacred text of the Holy Qur’an out of the original Arabic as a “paraphrase” at very best. An obverse of this

fallacy is the *Argumentum ad Mysteriam*, above. An extension of the Standard Version Fallacy is the Monolingual Fallacy, at an academic level the fallacy of ignorantly assuming (as a monolingual person) that transparent, in-depth translation between languages is the norm, or even possible at all, allowing one to conveniently and falsely ignore everyday issues of translation when close-reading translated literature or academic text and theory. At the popular level the Monolingual Fallacy allows monolinguals to blithely demand that visitors, migrants, refugees and newcomers learn English, either before arriving or else overnight after arrival in the United States, while applying no such demand to themselves when they go to Asia, Europe, Latin America, or even French-speaking areas of Canada. Not rarely, this fallacy descends into gross racism or ethnic discrimination, e.g., the demagoguery of warning of “Spanish being spoken right here on Main Street and taco trucks on every corner!” See also, Othering, and Dog-Whistle Politics.

124. Star Power (also Testimonial, Questionable Authority, Faulty Use of Authority, *Falacia ad Vericundiam*; Eminence-based Practice): In academia and medicine, a corrupt argument from ethos in which arguments, standpoints and themes of professional discourse are granted fame and validity or condemned to obscurity solely by whoever may be the reigning “stars” or “premier journals” of the profession or discipline at the moment. E.g., “Foster’s take on Network Theory has been thoroughly criticized and is so

last-week!.This week everyone's into Safe Spaces and Pierce's Theory of Microaggressions. Get with the program." (See also, the Bandwagon.) Also applies to an obsession with journal Impact Factors. At the popular level this fallacy also refers to a corrupt argument from ethos in which public support for a standpoint or product is established by a well-known or respected figure (i.e., a star athlete or entertainer) who is not an expert and who may have been well paid to make the endorsement (e.g., "Olympic gold-medal pole-vaulter Fulano de Tal uses Quick Flush Internet-Shouldn't you?" Or, "My favorite rock star warns that vaccinations spread cooties, so I'm not vaccinating my kids!"). Includes other false, meaningless or paid means of associating oneself or one's product or standpoint with the ethos of a famous person or event (e.g., "Try Salsa Cabria, the official taco sauce of the Winter Olympics!"). This fallacy also covers Faulty use of Quotes (also, The Devil Quotes Scripture), including quoting out of context or against the clear intent of the original speaker or author. E.g., racists quoting and twisting the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s statements in favor of racial equality against contemporary activists and movements for racial equality.

125. The Straw Man (also "The Straw Person" "The Straw Figure"): The fallacy of setting up a phony, weak, extreme or ridiculous parody of an opponent's argument and then proceeding to knock it down or reduce it to absurdity with a rhetorical wave of the hand. E.g., "Vegetarians

say animals have feelings like you and me. Ever seen a cow laugh at a Shakespeare comedy? Vegetarianism is nonsense!" Or, "Pro-choicers hate babies and want to kill them!" Or, "Pro-lifers hate women and want them to spend their lives barefoot, pregnant and chained to the kitchen stove!" A too-common example of this fallacy is that of highlighting the most absurd, offensive, silly or violent examples in a mass movement or demonstration, e.g. "Tree huggers" for environmentalists, "bra burners" for feminists, or "rioters" when there are a dozen violent crazies in a peaceful, disciplined demonstration of thousands or tens of thousands, and then falsely portraying these extreme examples as typical of the entire movement in order to condemn it with a wave of the hand. See also Olfactory Rhetoric.

126. The Taboo (also, Dogmatism): The ancient fallacy of unilaterally declaring certain "bedrock" arguments, assumptions, dogmas, standpoints or actions "sacrosanct" and not open to discussion, or arbitrarily taking some emotional tones, logical standpoints, doctrines or options "off the table" beforehand. (E.g., "No, let's not discuss my sexuality," "Don't bring my drinking into this," or "Before we start, you need to know I won't allow you to play the race card or permit you to attack my arguments by claiming 'That's just what Hitler would say!'"") Also applies to discounting or rejecting certain arguments, facts and evidence (or even experiences!) out of hand because they are supposedly "against the Bible" or other sacred dogma (See also the A Priori Argument). This

fallacy occasionally degenerates into a separate, distracting argument over who gets to define the parameters, tones, dogmas and taboos of the main argument, though at this point reasoned discourse most often breaks down and the entire affair becomes a naked Argumentum ad Baculum. See also, MYOB, Tone Policing, and Calling “Cards.”

127. They’re All Crooks: The common contemporary fallacy of refusing to get involved in public politics because “all” politicians and politics are allegedly corrupt, ignoring the fact that if this is so in a democratic country it is precisely because decent people like you and I refuse to get involved, leaving the field open to the “crooks” by default. An example of Circular Reasoning. Related to this fallacy is “They’re All Biased,” the extremely common contemporary cynical fallacy of ignoring news and news media because none tells the “objective truth” and all push some “agenda.” This basically true observation logically requiring audiences to regularly view or read a variety of media sources in order to get any approximation of reality, but for many younger people today (2017) it means in practice, “Ignore news, news media and public affairs altogether and instead pay attention to something that’s fun, exciting or personally interesting to you.” The sinister implication for democracy is, “Mind your own business and leave all the ‘big’ questions to your betters, those whose job is to deal with these questions and who are well paid to do so.” See also the Third Person Effect, and

Deliberate Ignorance.

128. The “Third Person Effect” (also, “Wise up!” and “They’re All Liars”): An example of the fallacy of Deliberate Ignorance, the arch-cynical postmodern fallacy of deliberately discounting or ignoring media information a priori, opting to remain in ignorance rather than “listening to the lies” of the mainstream media, the President, the “medical establishment,” professionals, professors, doctors and the “academic elite” or other authorities or information sources, even about urgent subjects (e.g., the need for vaccinations) on which these sources are otherwise publicly considered to be generally reliable or relatively trustworthy. According to Drexel University researchers (2017), the “Third Person Effect ... suggests that individuals will perceive a mass media message to have more influence on others, than themselves. This perception tends to counteract the message’s intended ‘call-to-action.’ Basically, this suggests that over time people wised up to the fact that some mass media messages were intended to manipulate them — so the messages became less and less effective.” This fallacy seems to be opposite to and an overreaction to the Big Lie Technique. See also, Deliberate Ignorance, the Simpleton’s Fallacy, and Trust your Gut.
129. The “Thousand Flowers” Fallacy (also, “Take names and kick butt.”): A sophisticated, modern “Argumentum ad Baculum” in which free and open discussion and “brainstorming” are temporarily allowed and encouraged (even

- demanded) within an organization or country not primarily in order to hear and consider opposing views, but rather to “smoke out,” identify and later punish, fire or liquidate dissenters or those not following the Party Line. The name comes from the Thousand Flowers Period in Chinese history when Communist leader Chairman Mao Tse Tung applied this policy with deadly effect.
130. Throwing Good Money After Bad (also, “Sunk Cost Fallacy”): In his excellent book, *Logically Fallacious* (2015), Author Bo Bennett describes this fallacy as follows: “Reasoning that further investment is warranted on the fact that the resources already invested will be lost otherwise, not taking into consideration the overall losses involved in the further investment.” In other words, risking additional money to “save” an earlier, losing investment, ignoring the old axiom that “Doing the same thing and expecting different results is the definition of insanity.” E.g., “I can’t stop betting now, because I already bet the rent and lost, and I need to win it back or my wife will kill me when I get home!” See also *Argument from Inertia*.
131. TINA (There Is No Alternative. Also the “Love it or Leave It” Fallacy; “Get over it,” “Suck it up,” “It is what it is,” “Actions/Elections have consequences,” or the “Fait Accompli”): A very common contemporary extension of the either/or fallacy in which someone in power quashes critical thought by announcing that there is no realistic alternative to a given standpoint, status or action, arbitrarily ruling any and all other

options out of bounds, or announcing that a decision has been made and any further discussion is insubordination, disloyalty, treason, disobedience or simply a waste of precious time when there's a job to be done. (See also, "Taboo;" "Finish the Job.") TINA is most often a naked power-play, a slightly more sophisticated variety of the Argumentum ad Baculum. See also Appeal to Closure.

132. **Tone Policing:** A corrupt argument from pathos and delivery, the fallacy of judging the validity of an argument primarily by its emotional tone of delivery, ignoring the reality that a valid fact or argument remains valid whether it is offered calmly and deliberatively or is shouted in a "shrill" or even "hysterical" tone, whether carefully written and published in professional, academic language in a respected, peer-reviewed journal or screamed through a bull-horn and peppered with vulgarity. Conversely, a highly urgent emotional matter is still urgent even if argued coldly and rationally. This fallacy creates a false dichotomy between reason and emotion and thus implicitly favors those who are not personally involved or emotionally invested in an argument, e.g., "I know you're upset, but I won't discuss it with you until you calm down," or "I'd believe what you wrote were it not for your adolescent overuse of exclamation points throughout the text." Or alternately, "You seem to be taking the death of your spouse way too calmly. You're under arrest for homicide. You have the right to remain silent..." **Tone Policing** is

frequent in contemporary discourse of power, particularly in response to discourse of protest, and is occasionally used in sexist ways, e.g. the accusation of being “shrill” is almost always used against women, never against men. See also, *The F-Bomb*.

133. **Transfer: (also, Name Dropping)** A corrupt argument from ethos, falsely associating a famous or respected person, place or thing with an unrelated thesis or standpoint (e.g. putting a picture of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on an advertisement for mattresses, using Genghis Khan, a Mongol who hated Chinese, as the name of a Chinese restaurant, or using the Texas flag to sell more cars or pickups in Texas that were made in Detroit, Kansas City or Korea). This fallacy is common in contemporary academia in the form of using a profusion of scholarly-looking citations from respected authorities to lend a false gravitas to otherwise specious ideas or text. See also “Star Power.”
134. **Trust your Gut (also, Trust your Heart; Trust Your Feelings; Trust your Intuition; Trust your Instincts; Emotional Reasoning):** A corrupt argument from pathos, the ancient fallacy of relying primarily on “gut feelings” rather than reason or evidence to make decisions. A recent (2017) Ohio State University study finds, unsurprisingly, that people who “trust their gut” are significantly more susceptible to falling for “fake news,” phony conspiracy theories, frauds and scams than those who insist on hard evidence or logic. See also *Deliberate Ignorance*,

the Affective Fallacy, and The “Third Person Effect.”

135. Tu Quoque (“You Do it Too!”; also, Two Wrongs Make a Right): A corrupt argument from ethos, the fallacy of defending a shaky or false standpoint or excusing one’s own bad action by pointing out that one’s opponent’s acts, ideology or personal character are also open to question, or are perhaps even worse than one’s own. E.g., “Sure, we may have tortured prisoners and killed kids with drones, but we don’t cut off heads like they do!” Or, “You can’t stand there and accuse me of corruption! You guys are all into politics and you know what we have to do to get reelected!” Unusual, self-deprecating variants on this fallacy are the Ego / Nos Quoque Fallacies (“I / we do it too!”), minimizing or defending another’s evil actions because I am / we are guilty of the same thing or of even worse. E.g., In response to allegations that Russian Premier Vladimir Putin is a “killer,” American President Donald Trump (2/2017) told an interviewer, “There are a lot of killers. We’ve got a lot of killers. What, do you think our country’s so innocent?” This fallacy is related to the Red Herring and to the Ad Hominem Argument.
136. Two-sides Fallacy (also, Teach the Controversy): The presentation of an issue that makes it seem to have two sides of equal weight or significance, when in fact a consensus or much stronger argument supports just one side. Also called “false balance” or “false equivalence.” (Thanks to Teaching Tolerance for this definition!) E.g.,

“Scientists theorize that the Earth is a sphere, but there are always two sides to any argument: Others believe that the Earth is flat and is perched on the back of a giant turtle, and a truly balanced presentation of the issue requires teaching both explanations without bias or unduly favoring either side over the other.”

137. Two Truths (also, Compartmentalization; Epistemically Closed Systems; Alternative Truth): A very corrupt and dangerous fallacy of logos and ethos, first formally described in medieval times but still common today, holding that there exists one “truth” in one given environment (e.g., in science, work or school) and simultaneously a different, formally contradictory but equally true “truth” in a different epistemic system, context, environment, intended audience or discourse community (e.g., in one’s religion or at home). This can lead to a situation of stable cognitive dissonance where, as UC Irvine scholar Dr. Carter T. Butts describes it (2016), “I know but don’t believe,” making rational discussion difficult, painful or impossible. This fallacy also describes the discourse of politicians who cynically proclaim one “truth” as mere “campaign rhetoric” used “to mobilize the base,” or “for domestic consumption only,” and a quite different and contradictory “truth” for more general or practical purposes once in office. See also Disciplinary Blindness; Alternative Truth.
138. Venting (also, Letting off Steam; Loose Lips): In the Venting fallacy a person argues that her/his

words are or ought to be exempt from criticism or consequence because s/he was “only venting,” even though this very admission implies that the one “venting” was, at long last, freely expressing his/her true, heartfelt and uncensored opinion about the matter in question. This same fallacy applies to minimizing, denying the significance of or excusing other forms of frank, unguarded or uninhibited offensive expression as mere “Locker-room Talk,” “Alpha-male Speech” or nothing but cute, adorable, perhaps even sexy “Bad-boy Talk.” See also, the Affective Fallacy. Opposite to this fallacy are the fallacies of Political Correctness and the Scripted Message, above.

139. Venue: The ancient fallacy of Venue, a corrupt argument from kairos, falsely and arbitrarily invalidates an otherwise-valid argument or piece of evidence because it is supposedly offered in the wrong place, at the wrong moment or in an inappropriate court, medium or forum. According to PhD student Amanda Thran, “Quite often, people will say to me in person that Facebook, Twitter, etc. are ‘not the right forums’ for discussing politically and socially sensitive issues. ... In this same vein, I’ve also encountered the following argument: ‘Facebook, which is used for sharing wedding, baby, and pet photos, is an inappropriate place for political discourse; people don’t wished to be burdened with that when they log in.’ In my experience, this line of reasoning is most often employed (and abused) to shut down a conversation when one feels they are losing it.

Ironically, I have seen it used when the argument has already been transpiring on the platform [in] an already lengthy discussion.” See also *Disciplinary Blinders*.

140. We Have to Do Something: (also, the Placebo Effect; Political Theater; Security Theater; We have to send a message): The dangerous contemporary fallacy that when “People are scared / People are angry / People are fed up / People are hurting / People want change” it becomes necessary to do something, anything, at once without stopping to ask “What?” or “Why?”, even if what is done is an overreaction, is a completely ineffective sham, an inert placebo, or actually makes the situation worse, rather than “just sitting there doing nothing.” (E.g., “Banning air passengers from carrying ham sandwiches onto the plane and making parents take off their newborn infants’ tiny pink baby-shoes probably does nothing to deter potential terrorists, but people are scared and we have to do something to respond to this crisis!”) This is a badly corrupted argument from pathos. (See also “Scare Tactic” and “The Big ‘But’ Fallacy.”)
141. Where there’s Smoke, there’s Fire (also Hasty Conclusion; Jumping to a Conclusion): The dangerous fallacy of ignorantly drawing a snap conclusion and/or taking action without sufficient evidence. E.g., “Captain! The guy sitting next to me in coach has dark skin and is reading a book in some kind of funny language all full of accent marks, weird squiggles above the “N’s” and upside-down question marks. It must

be Arabic! Get him off the plane before he blows us all to kingdom come!” A variety of the “Just in Case” fallacy. The opposite of this fallacy is the “Paralysis of Analysis.”

142. The Wisdom of the Crowd (also, The Magic of the Market; the Wikipedia Fallacy; Crowdsourcing): A very common contemporary fallacy that individuals may be wrong but “the crowd” or “the market” is infallible, ignoring historic examples like witch-burning, lynching, and the market crash of 2008. This fallacy is why most American colleges and universities currently (2017) ban students from using Wikipedia as a serious reference source.
143. The Worst-Case Fallacy (also, “Just in case;” “We can’t afford to take chances;” “An abundance of caution;” “Better Safe than Sorry;” “Better to prevent than to lament.”): A pessimistic fallacy by which one’s reasoning is based on an improbable, far-fetched or even completely imaginary worst-case scenario rather than on reality. This plays on pathos (fear) rather than reason, and is often politically motivated. E.g., “What if armed terrorists were to attack your county grain elevator tomorrow morning at dawn? Are you ready to fight back? Better stock up on assault rifles and ammunition today, just in case!” See also Scare Tactics. The opposite of this is the Positive Thinking Fallacy.
144. The Worst Negates the Bad (also, Be Grateful for What You’ve Got): The extremely common modern logical fallacy that an objectively bad situation somehow isn’t so bad simply because it

could have been far worse, or because someone, somewhere has it even worse. E.g., “I cried because I had no shoes until I saw someone who had no feet.” Or, “You’re protesting because you earn only \$7.25 an hour? You could just as easily be out on the street! I happen to know there are people in Uttar Pradesh who are doing the very same work you’re doing for one-tenth of what you’re making, and they’re pathetically glad just to have worked at all. You need to shut up, put down that picket sign, get back to work for what I care to pay you, and thank me each and every day for giving you a job!”

145. Zero Tolerance (also, Zero Risk Bias, Broken Windows Policing, Disproportionate Response; Even One is Too Many; Exemplary Punishment; Judenrein): The contemporary fallacy of declaring an “emergency” and promising to disregard justice and due process and devote unlimited resources (and occasionally, unlimited cruelty) to stamp out a limited, insignificant or even nonexistent problem. E.g., “I just read about an actual case of cannibalism somewhere in this country. That’s disgusting, and even one case is way, way too many! We need a Federal Taskforce against Cannibalism with a million-dollar budget and offices in every state, a national SCAN program in all the grade schools (Stop Cannibalism in America Now!), and an automatic double death penalty for cannibals; in other words, zero tolerance for cannibalism in this country!” This is a corrupt and cynical argument from pathos, almost always politically

driven, a particularly sinister variety of Dog Whistle Politics and the “We Have to do Something” fallacy. See also, “Playing on Emotions,” “Red Herring,” and also the “Big Lie Technique.”

14

Primary and Secondary Sources



The Research Paper
Amy Guptill

There is a [distinction between primary and secondary sources](#). Primary sources are original documents, data, or images: the law code of the Le Dynasty in Vietnam, the letters of Kurt Vonnegut, data gathered from an experiment on color perception, an interview, or Farm Service Administration photographs from the 1930s. Secondary sources are produced by analyzing primary sources. They include news articles, scholarly articles, reviews of films or art exhibitions, documentary films, and other pieces that have some descriptive or

analytical purpose. Some things may be primary sources in one context but secondary sources in another. For example, if you're using news articles to inform an analysis of a historical event, they're serving as secondary sources. If you're counting the number of times a particular newspaper reported on different types of events, then the news articles are serving as primary sources because they're more akin to raw data.

When searching for information on a topic, it is important to understand the value of primary, secondary, and tertiary sources.

Primary sources allow researchers to get as close as possible to original ideas, events, and empirical research as possible. Such sources may include creative works, first-hand or contemporary accounts of events, and the publication of the results of empirical observations or research.

Secondary sources analyze, review, or summarize information in primary resources or other secondary resources. Even sources presenting facts or descriptions about events are secondary unless they are based on direct participation or observation. Moreover, secondary sources often rely on other secondary sources and standard disciplinary methods to reach results, and they provide the principle sources of analysis about primary sources.

Tertiary sources provide overviews of topics by synthesizing information gathered from other resources. Tertiary resources often provide data in a convenient form or provide information with context by which to interpret it.

The distinctions between primary, secondary, and tertiary sources can be ambiguous. An individual document may be a primary source in one context and a

secondary source in another. Encyclopedias are typically considered tertiary sources, but a study of how encyclopedias have changed on the Internet would use them as primary sources. Time is a defining element.

While these definitions are clear, the lines begin to blur in the different discipline areas.

In the Humanities & Social Sciences

In the humanities and social sciences, primary sources are the direct evidence or first-hand accounts of events without secondary analysis or interpretation. A primary source is a work that was created or written contemporary with the period or subject being studied. Secondary sources analyze or interpret historical events or creative works.

Primary sources

- Diaries
- Interviews
- Letters
- Original works of art
- Photographs
- Speeches
- Works of literature

A **primary source** is an *original* document containing firsthand information about a topic. Different fields of study may use different types of primary sources.

Secondary sources

- Biographies
- Dissertations
- Indexes, abstracts, bibliographies (used to locate a secondary source)

- Journal articles
- Monographs

A **secondary source** contains commentary on or discussion about a primary source. The most important feature of secondary sources is that they offer an *interpretation* of information gathered from primary sources.

Tertiary sources

- Dictionaries
- Encyclopedias
- Handbooks

A **tertiary source** presents summaries or condensed versions of materials, usually with references back to the primary and/or secondary sources. They can be a good place to look up facts or get a general overview of a subject, but they rarely contain original material.

Examples

Subject	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
Art	Painting	Critical review of the painting	Encyclopedia article on the artist
History	Civil War diary	Book on a Civil War Battle	List of battle sites
Literature	Novel or poem	Essay about themes in the work	Biography of the author
Political science	Geneva Convention	Article about prisoners of war	Chronology of treaties

In the Sciences

In the sciences, primary sources are documents that provide full description of the original research. For

example, a primary source would be a journal article where scientists describe their research on the genetics of tobacco plants. A secondary source would be an article commenting or analyzing the scientists' research on tobacco.

Primary sources

- Conference proceedings
- Interviews
- Journals
- Lab notebooks
- Patents
- Preprints
- Technical reports
- Theses and dissertations

These are where the results of original research are usually first published in the sciences. This makes them the best source of information on cutting edge topics. However the new ideas presented may not be fully refined or validated yet.

Secondary sources

- Monographs
- Reviews
- Textbooks
- Treatises

These tend to summarize the existing state of knowledge in a field at the time of publication. Secondary sources are good to find comparisons of different ideas and theories and to see how they may have changed over time.

Tertiary sources

- Compilations
- Dictionaries

- Encyclopedias
- Handbooks
- Tables

These types of sources present condensed material, generally with references back to the primary and/or secondary literature. They can be a good place to look up data or to get an overview of a subject, but they rarely contain original material.

Examples

Subjects	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
Agriculture	Conference paper on tobacco genetics	Review article on the current state of tobacco research	Encyclopedia article on tobacco
Chemistry	Chemical patent	Book on chemical reactions	Table of related reactions
Physics	Einstein's diary	Biography on Einstein	Dictionary of relativity

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PART IV

PART 4: RHETORICAL MODES

Though there are as many ways to write a paper as there are papers, it is helpful to categorize different types of writing under specific names or genres. This section defines the types (called modes) of writing that are research-focused found in English 102. Each describes the way the piece is written. Knowing the mode helps organize thinking and writing to make concentrating on content a swifter, more instinctive process.

15

Investigative Reports



Investigation

An investigative report argument is a structure of argument that focuses on defining some kind of problem, outlining the details of the problem, and providing evidence that the problem is an important one. In this type of argument, you must propose a problem exists. First, you must establish a clear problem and then examine all the factors that are involved in that problem. For example, you might argue for a problem with retention rates at your college.

This type of essay works well if you see a problem you want to fix or see the change you want to make. For example, if you wanted to research solar panels, you would need to know WHY solar panels are of interest.

You see, the problem here is not solar power. It is your job to figure out what the problem really is. Perhaps

it is the “energy crisis” of the southwestern United States. So, you may want to research solar panels, but they won’t be your starting point. The problem of the energy crisis will be the starting point.



“Braziers Park House — library (1)” by karenblakeman is marked with CC0

1.0

An investigative report, in the technical sense, is a document that tries to persuade the reader that a problem exists, is important to pay attention to, and has an impact on the world around. This is the first half of your research. Without a clear understanding of what the problem is, your final essay “The Proposal Essay” will not work. This is the problem that you will eventually propose a solution to.

Your essay must **persuade** the reader that your problem is the one most worth solving.

All investigative reports must be convincing, logical, and credible, and to do this, they must consider audience, purpose, and tone.

The problem/solution pattern is commonly used in identifying something that’s wrong and in contemplating what might be done to remedy the situation. For example, the problem of water pollution could be described, followed by a clear understanding of what is causing water pollution and what the outstanding effects of water

pollution are. There are probably more ways to organize a problem approach, but here are three possibilities:

- Describe the problem in the form of a definition essay
- Discuss the causes first and then describe the effects
- Define a problem, followed by cause and effect research

Time to Write

Purpose: This assignment will demonstrate the understanding of how to do a thorough investigation of a topic. Students will research a topic (a problem) and identify the full context of that issue.

Task: This assignment frames the topic, purpose, audience, and context for the approved research topic.

Write an Investigative Report. This report should clearly identify a problem that interests you. This problem should be something that you can research. Your research should include what the problem is and all of the causes or effects of the problem. This is an **INFORMATIVE** (Expository) essay, so you aren't making an argument, you are just presenting facts. State the problem, define the problem, show who, what, where is affected by the problem, examine why the problem exists. Conclude with a statement of what the readers should understand after reading your essay. Your research should support the who, what, where, and why of the problem, as well as showing that the issue is a problem.

Always make sure your topic has been approved by your

instructor before you go through the effort to try and write the paper.

Key Features of a Report:

- Defines an issue, problem, or phenomenon in precise terms
- Provides the who, what, where, and why of the topic
- Makes clear why the topic under consideration needs to be investigated
- Provides trustworthy facts and details that help readers understand the effect of this topic and determine who has a stake in the situation
- Is factual and objective
- Uses direct quotations to convey the perspectives of various groups with a stake in the issue
- Relies on the appropriate organization and design
- Identifies the conclusion the readers should reach
- At this time you should have 5 – 7 sources.

Your investigative report will have the following sections. Please note: these are **sections, not paragraphs**. You will have a new paragraph for every new idea.

Introductory Paragraph with your research question and thesis	Write t
Describe why the problem is a problem.	You'll b
For whom is the problem a problem?	Be spec
How will these people suffer if the problem is not solved?	Use yo
Who has the power to solve the problem?	You're
Why hasn't the problem been solved up to this point?	What a
Concluding paragraph; restate the thesis.	Write t

Key Grading Considerations

- Problem
 1. Presents the problem with all the needed information to fully understand the problem.
 2. Subject knowledge is evident.
 3. All information is clear, appropriate, and correct.
 4. Demonstrated social significance
 5. Included related information
 - Observation Questions
 1. Who
 2. What
 3. When
 4. Where
 5. Why
 - Uses Academic Tone
 - Uses Synthesis
 - Multiple sources
 1. Connections between sources are also demonstrated
 2. Does not quote drop
 3. Quotes are analyzed
 4. Includes tag words and lead-ins.
 - Language Use, Mechanics & Organization
 - Appropriate Format
-

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16

Rhetorical Analysis



What is a Rhetorical Analysis?

A Rhetorical analysis begins with the examination of the *content* and the *style* of the author. A rhetorical analysis is an examination of the topic, purpose, audience, and context of a piece of text. A text can be written, spoken, or conveyed in some other manner.

Sometimes, the best way to learn how to write a good argument is to start by analyzing other arguments. When you do this, you get to see what works, what doesn't, what strategies another author uses, what structures seem to work well and why, and more.

In the paragraphs that follow, you will learn about analyzing arguments for both content and rhetorical strategies. The content analysis may come a little easier for

you, but the rhetorical analysis is extremely important. To become a good writer, we must develop the language of writing and learn how to use that language to talk about the “moves” other writers make.

When we understand the decisions other writers make and why, it helps us make more informed decisions as writers. We can move from being the “accidental” writer, where we might do well but are not sure why, to being a “purposeful” writer, where we have an awareness of the impact our writing has on our audience at all levels.

The ultimate goal of a rhetorical analysis is twofold:

1. to analyze how well the rhetorical elements work together to create a fitting response, and
2. to evaluate the overall effectiveness of that response.

To examine that goal, there are a couple of approaches that can be made in writing an analysis. The first is to ask some basic questions.

1. How has the place affected the writing?
2. How have the rhetorical elements (rhetorical appeals) affected the writing?
3. Do the means of delivery, genre, or medium impact the audience?

As you begin, search your answers for an idea that can serve as your claim or thesis. For example, you might focus on the declared goal—if there is one—of the creator of the text and whether it has been achieved.

You might evaluate how successfully that creator has

identified the rhetorical audience, shaped a fitting response, or employed the best available means.

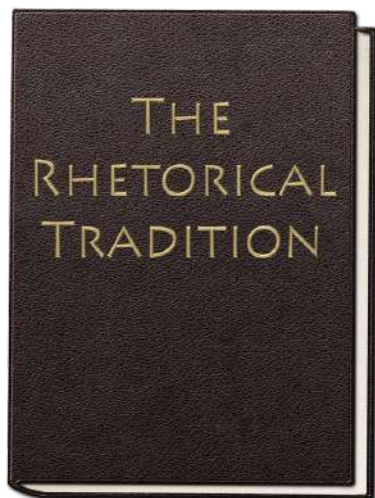
Or you might focus on the use of the rhetorical appeals and the overall success of their use.

Whether or not you agree with the text is beside the point. Your job is to analyze **how** and **how well** the text's creator has accomplished the purpose of that text.

1. **HOW** is the analysis of the parts
2. **HOW WELL** is the overall evaluation

Thinking Rhetorically

As a part of thinking rhetorically about an argument, your professor may ask you to write a formal or informal rhetorical analysis essay. Rhetorical analysis is about “digging in” and exploring the strategies and writing style of a particular piece. Rhetorical analysis can be tricky because, chances are, you haven't done a lot of rhetorical analysis in the past.



To add to this trickiness, you can write a rhetorical analysis of any piece of information, not just an essay. You may be asked to write a rhetorical analysis of an ad, an image, or a commercial.

The key is to start now! Rhetorical analysis is going to help you think about strategies other authors have made and how or why these strategies work or don't work. In turn, your goal is to be more aware of these things in your own writing.

When you analyze a work rhetorically, you are going to explore the following concepts in a piece:

- Audience
- Purpose
- Style or Voice
- Ethos
- Pathos
- Logos

You will be thinking about the decisions an author has made along these lines and thinking about whether these decisions are effective or ineffective.

Types of Argument

Just as there many types of essays you will write in college and many types of writing in general, argumentative essays come in many forms as well. There are three basic structures or types of an argument you are likely to encounter in college: the Toulmin argument, the Rogerian argument, and the Classical or Aristotelian argument. Although the Toulmin method was originally developed to analyze arguments, some professors will ask you to model its components. Each of these serves a different purpose, and deciding which type to use depends upon the rhetorical situation: In other words, you have to think about what is going to work best

for your audience given your topic and the situation in which you are writing.

Toulmin Argument

The Toulmin method, developed by philosopher [Stephen Toulmin](#), is essentially a structure for *analyzing* arguments. But the elements for analysis are so clear and structured that many professors now have students write argumentative essays with the elements of the Toulmin method in mind.



Stephen Toulmin [photograph].

Retrieved from

[https://www.theguardian.com/
theguardian/2010/jan/10/
stephen-toulmin-obituary](https://www.theguardian.com/theguardian/2010/jan/10/stephen-toulmin-obituary)

This type of argument works well when there are no clear truths or absolute solutions to a problem. Toulmin arguments take into account the complex nature of most situations.

There are six elements for analyzing, and, in this case, presenting arguments that are important to the Toulmin method.

These elements of a Toulmin analysis can help you as both a reader and a writer. When you're analyzing arguments as a reader, you can look for these elements to help you understand the argument and evaluate its validity. When you're writing an argument, you can

include these same elements to ensure your audience will see the validity in your claims.



Toulmin, S. (1969). *The Uses of Argument*, Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press. Retrieved from http://changingminds.org/disciplines/argument/making_argument/toulmin.htm [accessed April 2011]

Claims

The **claim** is a statement of opinion that the author is asking her or his audience to accept as true.

Example

There should be more laws to regulate texting while driving in order to cut down on dangerous car accidents.

Grounds

The **grounds** are the facts, data, or reasoning upon which the claim is based. Essentially, the grounds are the facts making the case for the claim.

Example

The National Safety Council estimates that 1.6 million car accidents per year are caused by cell phone use and texting.

Warrant

The **warrant** is what links the grounds to the claim. This is what makes the audience understand how the grounds are connected to supporting the claim. Sometimes, the warrant is implicit (not directly stated), but the warrant can be stated directly as well. As a writer, you are making assumptions about what your audience already believes, so you have to think about how clear your warrant is and if you need to state it directly for your audience. You must also think about whether or not a warrant is actually an unproven claim.

Example

Being distracted by texting on a cell phone while driving a car is dangerous and causes accidents.

Backing

The **backing** gives additional support for the claim by addressing different questions related to your claim.

Example

With greater fines and more education about the consequences, people might think twice about texting and driving.

Qualifier

The **qualifier** is essentially the limits to the claim or an understanding that the claim is not true in all situations. Qualifiers add strength to claims because they help the audience understand the author does not expect her or his opinion to be true all of the time or for her or his ideas to work all of the time. If writers use qualifiers that are too broad, such as “always” or “never,” their claims can be really difficult to support. Qualifiers like “some” or “many” help limit the claim, which can add strength to the claim.

Example

There should be more laws to regulate texting while driving in order to cut down on some of the dangerous car accidents that happen each year.

Rebuttal

The **rebuttal** is when the author addresses the opposing views. The author can use a rebuttal to pre-empt counter-arguments, making the original argument stronger.

Example

Although police officers are busy already, making anti-texting laws a priority saves time, money, and lives. Local departments could add extra staff to address this important priority.

Toulmin Argument

What is the Toulmin method?

The Toulmin method, developed by philosopher Stephen Toulmin, is essentially a structure for analyzing argument but can also be used to construct arguments.

This type of argument works well when there are no clear truths or absolute solutions to a problem. Toulmin arguments take into account the complex nature of most situations.

There are six elements for analyzing, and, in this case, presenting arguments that are important to the Toulmin method.



Claim

The claim is a statement of opinion that the author is asking her or his audience to accept as true.

Grounds

The grounds are the facts or data or reasoning upon which the claim is based. Essentially, the grounds are the facts making the case for the claim.

Warrant



The warrant is what links the grounds to the claim. This is what makes the audience understand how the grounds are connected to supporting the claim.

Backing



The backing gives additional support for the claim by addressing different questions related to your claim.

Qualifier

The qualifier is essentially the limits to the claim or an understanding that the claim is not true in all situations.

Rebuttal

The rebuttal is when the author addresses the opposing views.

This info graphic brought to you by the Excelsior College OWL
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Aristotelian Argument

The Aristotelian or classical argument is a style of argument developed by the famous Greek philosopher and rhetorician, [Aristotle](#).

In this style of argument, your goal as a writer is to convince your audience of something. The goal is to use a series of strategies to persuade your audience to adopt your side of the issue.



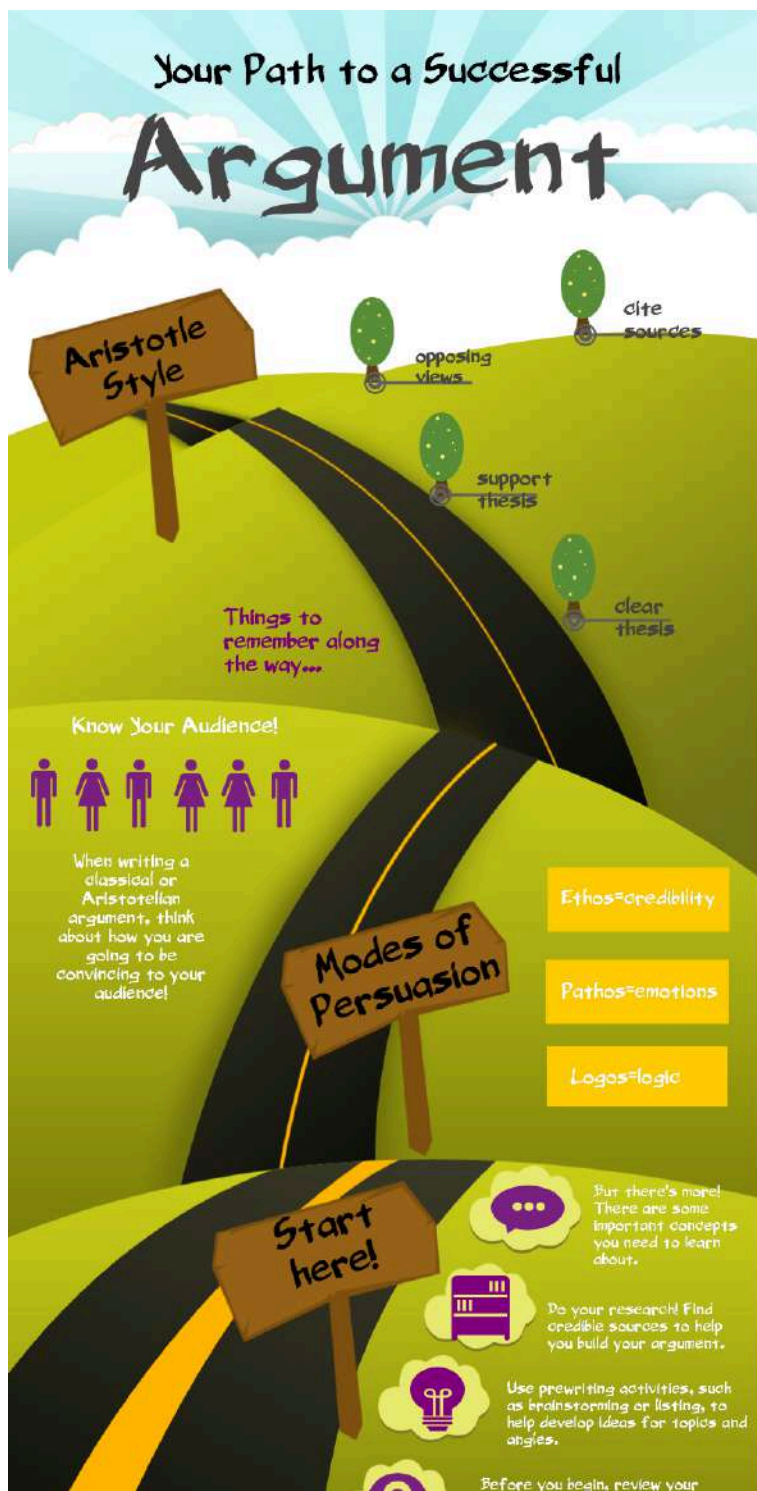
Although **ethos**, **pathos**, and **logos** play a role in any argument, this style of argument utilizes them in the most persuasive ways possible.

Of course, your professor may require some variations, but here is the basic format for an Aristotelian, or classical, argumentative essay:

1. **Introduce your issue.** At the end of your introduction, most professors will ask you to present your thesis. The idea is to present your readers with your main point and then dig into it.

2. **Present your case** by explaining the issue in detail and why something must be done or a way of thinking is not working. This will take place over several paragraphs.
3. **Address the opposition.** Use a few paragraphs to explain the other side. Refute the opposition one point at a time.
4. **Provide your proof.** After you address the other side, you'll want to provide clear evidence that your side is the best side.
5. **Present your conclusion.** In your conclusion, you should remind your readers of your main point or thesis and summarize the key points of your argument. If you are arguing for some kind of change, this is a good place to give your audience a call to action. Tell them what they could do to make a change.

For a visual representation of this type of argument, check out the Aristotelian infographic below.



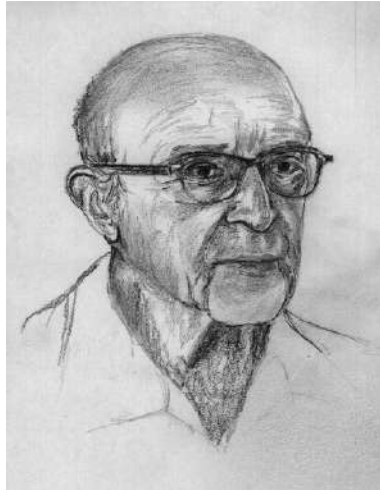
Rogerian Argument

When most of us think of arguments, we think about winners of arguments and losers of arguments. Arguments, even sometimes academic arguments, can be strong and forceful.

An Aristotelian or classical argument is a strong, “this is my assertion and here’s why I am right” kind of argument. But that kind of argument isn’t going to work in all situations. When your audience is a really difficult one in the sense

that you know your audience isn’t going to completely agree with your side of the issue, it can be a good idea to try to find a middle ground. The Rogerian argument finds that middle ground.

Based on the work of psychologist [Carl Rogers](#) (pictured on the right), a Rogerian argument focuses on finding a middle ground between the author and the audience. This type of argument can be extremely persuasive and can help you, as a writer, understand your own biases and how you might work to find common ground with others.



[Carl Rogers sketch]. Retrieved from
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/
Special:GlobalUsage/
Carl_Ransom_Rogers.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Special:GlobalUsage/Carl_Ransom_Rogers.jpg)

Here is a summary of the basic strategy for a Rogerian argument, and the infographic on the following page should be helpful as well.

1. In your essay, first, **introduce the problem**.
2. **Acknowledge the other side** before you present your side of the issue. This may take several paragraphs.
3. Next, you should carefully **present your side** of the issue in a way that does not dismiss the other side. This may also take several paragraphs.
4. You should then work to **bring the two sides together**. Help your audience see the benefits of the middle ground. Make your proposal for the middle ground here, and be sure to use an even, respectful tone. This should be a key focus of your essay and may take several paragraphs.
5. Finally, in your conclusion, **remind your audience of the balanced perspective** you have presented and make it clear how both sides benefit when they meet in the middle.

For a visual representation of this type of argument, check out the Rogerian infographic below.

10 Steps to Writing

a Rogerian Argument

1

FIND COMMON GROUND



Because a Rogerian argument will help you find common ground with your audience, you should consider this style of argument when you have a difficult or controversial topic and want to use a connection with your audience as a part of your persuasive style. But what is common ground? Finding a common ground involves meeting your opposition in the middle.



KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

2

Is your audience going to be reluctant to change on this issue? If so, a Rogerian argument can be persuasive. It is also going to be a wonderful exercise in helping you see things from your audience's perspective, as your goal is to understand the other side of an issue and then meet your audience in the middle. Some brainstorming can help you as you think about how you are going to approach your audience and find the common ground you need.

3

INTRODUCE THE PROBLEM



When you begin your argumentative essay, you should introduce the problem or issue in a way that makes it clear to an opposing audience that you understand their position.

ACKNOWLEDGE OTHER SIDE

4

Unlike some other argument structures, in a Rogerian argument, you should address the opposition in the very beginning of your essay. After your introduction, you should explain the contexts in which your opposition's viewpoints make sense and are valid.



STATE YOUR POSITION

5

It's now time to present your side. Your goal is to evenly and

Types of Argument Activity

This interaction will give you a chance to practice what you have learned about the different types of argument and when it might be most appropriate to use one type over another. Read the scenarios and, then, choose a rhetorical style. You will be told if you are correct or not, and which type of argument would work best in that scenario, and why.



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=53#h5p-33>

After completing this activity, you may download or print a completion report that summarizes your results.

Analyze This

You have learned about some of the most common organizational structures for academic arguments and learned about the benefits of each one—as well as when it might be best to use each one.

Before you begin working with your own academic argument structure, it might be helpful to review another academic argument for its organizational structure.

In the following video, watch as one student analyzes a traditional academic argumentative essay ([Cheap Thrills](#):

[The Price of Fast Fashion](#)), one that most closely follows the Aristotelian structure.



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=53#h5p-34>

See It in Practice

Although there are many options for organizing your argument, understanding these three basic argumentative types can help you make a good decision about which type of argument would work best given your topic and audience.

Watch as our student writer makes notes and comes to a decision about which type of argument she'll use as she works with a controversial topic and a potentially difficult audience.



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=53#h5p-35>

Thinking About Content

Content analysis of an argument is really just what it seems—looking closely at the content in an argument. When you're analyzing an argument for content, you're looking at things like claims, evidence to



support those claims, and if that evidence makes sense.

The **Toulmin** method described in this learning area is a great tool for analyzing the content of an argument. In fact, it was developed as a tool for analyzing the content of an argument. Using the different concepts we learn in the Toulmin model, we are able to examine an argument by thinking about what claim is being made, what evidence is being used to support that claim, the warrants behind that evidence, and more.

When you analyze an argument, there is a good chance your professor will have you review and use the Toulmin information provided in the Excelsior OWL.

However, the lessons you have learned about **logical fallacies** will also help you analyze the content of an argument. You'll want to look closely at the logic being presented in the claims and evidence. Does the logic hold up, or do you see logical fallacies? Obviously, if you see fallacies, you should really question the argument.

Basic Questions for a Rhetorical Analysis

What is the rhetorical situation?

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

Who is the author/speaker?

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

What is his/her intention in speaking?

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

Who makes up the audience?

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

What is the content of the message?

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

to emotion?

What is the form in which it is conveyed?

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

How do form and content correspond?

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

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

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

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

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

Sample Rhetorical Analysis

Seeing rhetorical analysis in action is one of the best ways to understand it. Read the [sample rhetorical analysis of an article](#). If you like, you can read the original article the student analyzes: [Why I won't buy an iPad \(and think you shouldn't, either\)](#).

Time to Write

Purpose: This assignment will demonstrate the understanding of Rhetorical Analysis and Preliminary Research. This assignment will connect to the course competencies of writing for specific rhetorical contexts, using appropriate conventions in writing, an

Task:

This assignment frames the topic, purpose, audience, and context for the approved research topic from Research Prospectus 1.

At this time you will utilize two or three sources as in-text citations and on the References.

Choose a single source (selection) for rhetorical analysis that meets the following criteria.

- Is the text responding to an opportunity to make a change? (Does it look at solving a problem?)
- What is the rhetorical opportunity for change?
- How is it identified?
- How is it connected to your research proposal topic?

After you have selected a text, read it carefully, keeping in mind that the ultimate goal of a rhetorical analysis is

twofold: (1) to analyze how well the rhetorical elements work together to create a fitting response, and (2) to assess the overall effectiveness of that response. Then, write answers to the following questions, citing material from the text itself to support each answer:

Are the available means anchored to the writer's place?

1. Who created the text? What credentials or expertise does that person or group have? Why is the creator of the text engaged with this opportunity? Is this an opportunity that can be modified through language? What opinions or biases did the person or group bring to the text?
2. What is the place (physical, social, academic, economic, and so on) from which the creator of the text forms and sends the response? What are the resources of that place? What are its constraints (or limitations)?
3. Who is the audience for the message? What relationship is the creator of the text trying to establish with the audience? What opinions or biases might the audience hold? How might the audience feel about this rhetorical opportunity? And, most important, can this audience modify or help bring about a modification of the rhetorical opportunity? How?

Do the available means include the rhetorical elements of the message itself?

1. Identify the rhetorical elements of the message itself. In other words, where and how does the person or group employ the rhetorical appeals of ethos, pathos, and logos? How are credentials, goodwill, or good sense evoked to establish

ethos? How is evidence (examples, statistics, data, and so forth) used to establish logos? And how is an emotional connection created to establish pathos? Keep in mind that the rhetorical appeals can sometimes overlap.

2. What kind of language does the creator of the text use? Is it plain or specialized, slang or formal? How does the choice of language reveal how the person or group views the intended audience?

Do the available means deliver a message in a genre and medium that reaches the audience?

1. Is the intended audience for the text a rhetorical audience? Draw on evidence from the text to support your answer.
2. If the audience is a rhetorical one, what can it do to resolve the problem?
3. Does the response address and fit the rhetorical opportunity? How exactly? If not, how might the response be reshaped so that it does fit?
4. Is the response delivered in an appropriate medium that reaches its intended audience? Why is that medium appropriate? Or how could it be adjusted to be appropriate?
5. Can you think of other responses to similar rhetorical situations? What genre is commonly used? Does the creator of this text use that genre? If not, what is the effect of going against an audience's expectations?

Now that you have carefully read the text and answered all of the questions, you are ready to write your rhetorical

analysis. How does your analysis of the use of the available means reveal

1. How well the rhetorical elements work together to create a fitting response to an opportunity for change?
2. How effective the response is?

As you begin, search your answers for an idea that can serve as your claim or thesis. For example, you might focus on the declared goal—if there is one—of the creator of the text and whether it has been achieved. You might assess how successfully that creator has identified the rhetorical audience, shaped a fitting response, or employed the best available means. Or you might focus on the use of the rhetorical appeals and the overall success of their use.

Whether or not you agree with the text is beside the point.

Your job is to analyze an essay, examining how, and how well, the text's creator has accomplished the purpose of that text.

Key Grading Considerations

- Standard Structure
 1. The intro provides context for the rest of the paper
 2. The thesis is explicit, specific, and clear
 3. The thesis is analytical in nature
 4. The conclusion recasts the thesis and provides cohesion to the whole paper

- Rhetorical Triangle & Appeals
 1. Source text is thoroughly and effectively contextualized with well-supported analysis
 1. structure
 2. rhetorical triangle (audience, author, purpose)
 3. and rhetorical appeals (logos, ethos, pathos)
 2. focus is on an analysis (not a summary or the author's own ideas of the issue)
- Cohesion & Flow
 1. Smooth flow of ideas ordered in a logical sequence that effectively guides the reader
 2. Each paragraph has a well-supported clearly-stated main point
 3. The topic sentences focus on analysis
 4. There is an effective use of transitions.
- Uses the Rhetorical Triangle to Target the Audience
- Language Use & Mechanics
- Fully in APA Format

ATTRIBUTIONS

- Content Adapted from Excelsior Online Writing Lab (OWL). (2020). Excelsior College. Retrieved from

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17

Profiles



Introduction to the Profile

by Kate Geiselman, Sinclair Community College

The purpose of a profile is to give the reader new insight into a particular person, place, or event. The distinction between a profile and, for example, a memoir or a biography is that a profile relies on newly acquired knowledge. It is a first-hand account of someone or something as told by the writer. You have probably read profiles of famous or interesting people in popular magazines or newspapers. Travel and science publications may profile interesting or unusual places. All of these are, in effect, observation essays. A curious writer gathers as much information as s/he can about a subject, and then presents it in an engaging way. A good profile shows the reader something new or unexpected about the subject.

Dialogue, description, specific narrative action, and

vivid details are all effective means of profiling your subject. Engage your reader's senses. Try to show your reader what's behind the scenes or introduce them to someone unique.

A profile is not strictly objective. Rather than merely reporting facts, a profile works to create a dominant impression. The focus of a profile is on the subject, not on the writer's experience. However, the writer is still "present" in a profile, as it is s/he who selects which details to reveal and decides what picture they want to paint. It is the writer's job to use the information and writing strategies that best contribute to this dominant impression, which was a concept discussed in the narrative introduction as well.

Above all, a profile should have a clear angle. In other words, there should be an idea or purpose guiding it. Why do you think your subject is something other people will be interested in reading about? What is the impression you hope to convey? The answer to these questions will help you discover your angle.

Writing Strategies for Profiles

Conducting research

Observation

The best way to conduct research about your subject is to observe it firsthand. Once you have decided on a topic, you should spend some time gathering information about it. If you decide to profile a person, watch an interview and take notes. Write down everything you can; you can decide later whether or not it's relevant. If you have a

smartphone, take pictures or make recordings to refer to later. Most people think of observing as something you do with your eyes, but try to use all of your senses. Smells, sounds, and sensations will add texture to your descriptions. You may also spend time observing your subject at his/her work or in different contexts. Again, write everything down so you don't forget the key details. Remember, it's the specific details that will distinguish the great profiles from the merely proficient ones.

Interviewing

If you choose to profile a person, you may want to conduct an interview with him/her. Before doing so, plan what you are going to ask. You probably have a good idea of why this person will be a good subject for a profile, so be sure your questions reflect that. Saying "tell me about yourself" is unlikely to get your subject talking. Saying, "tell me what it was like to be the first person in your family to go to college," will get a much more specific answer.

Due to time constraints and distance, an interview may not be possible. If interviews have already been video recorded, watch them carefully as if you were there.

Organizing your profile

Once you have gathered all of your information, it's time to start thinking about how to organize it. There are all different ways to write a profile, but the most common organizational strategies are chronological, spatial, and topical. Most profiles are some combination of the three.

Chronological order is presenting details as they happened in time, from start to finish. A chronological profile of a person might talk about their past, work up to their present, and maybe even go on to plans for the future. The advantage to writing in chronological order is that your writing will unfold naturally and transition

easily from start to finish. The disadvantage, though, is that strict chronological order can get tedious. Merely recounting a conversation or experience can be dry, and can also pull focus from the subject onto the writer's experience.

Spatial organization is presenting information as it occurs in space or by location. This is a great choice if you're writing about a place. Think of it as taking your reader on a tour: from room to room of a house, for example. Spatial organization can even work for a person, depending on your focus. Try profiling a person at home, work, and school, for example.

Topical organization is just what it sounds like: one topic at a time. Think first of what you want to say about a person and organize details and information by subject. A profile of a person might talk about their home life, their work, and their hobbies. Look at the information you gather from observation and/or interviewing and see if any topics stand out, and organize your paper around them. Most profiles are some combination of chronological, spatial, and topical organization. A profile might begin with a chronological narrative of a hockey game, and then flashback to provide some background information about the star player. Then it might go on to talk about that player's philosophy of the sport, returning to the narrative about the game later on.

Using description

Vivid descriptions are key in a profile. They immerse your reader in the subject and add texture and depth to your writing. However, describing something is more than deploying as many adjectives as possible. In fact, the best descriptions may not have any adjectives at all. They rely instead on sensory detail and figurative language. Sensory

detail is exactly what it sounds like: appealing to as many of the reader's senses as possible. Adjectives can be vague, and even subjective. Think about this example:

"My grandmother always smelled good."

What does good mean? What does good smell like? Do we even agree on what kinds of things smell good? Instead, try this:

"My grandmother always smelled good: like Shalimar, Jergen's lotion, and menthol cigarettes."

Now your reader knows much more. Perhaps they are even familiar enough with those scents that they can imagine what that combination would smell like. Moreover, you have delivered some emotional information here. Not every reader would agree that the smell of cigarettes is "good," but perhaps that smell is comforting to you because you associate it so strongly with someone you care about. Of course, smell is not the only sense you can appeal to. Sights, sounds, temperatures and tastes will also enliven your writing.

Figurative language can add depth and specificity to your descriptions. Use metaphors, similes, comparisons, and images creatively and purposefully. Consider the following:

"She was so beautiful."

"Beautiful" just doesn't tell us much. It is, like "good," both vague and subjective. We don't all have the same standards of beauty, nor is beauty one particular quality. Try a comparison instead:

"She was so beautiful that the conversation stopped every time she entered a room."

True, we don't know much about what she looks like, but we do know that nearly everyone finds her striking.

Similes (comparisons using like or as) are not only

efficient but are also more vivid than adjectives. Compare these two sentences:

“He was short and muscular.” vs. “He was built like a bulldog.”

See?

Profiles, Another Perspective

by Sybil Priebe

On the cover of most magazines are people posing and photoshopped. Profiles are the textual piece that's written about that person about halfway into the magazine. Rolling Stone might do a profile piece on the most influential band at the time, Glamour might have a profile piece on some actress who has a movie coming out, and even Hunting might have a profile piece on the newest species to watch out for.

The best profile pieces typically include interviewee statistics, intriguing quotes from that interviewee woven in with a summary of the interview, concluding analysis of what the interviewer thought of the whole interview, as well as background information on the interviewee before or during the interviewer's body paragraphs.

Unlike some profile pieces in magazines, most teachers will not want students to simply report back every single word the interviewee said. They will want that nice balance of quote + summary: approximately 30% quotes and 70% summary/analysis.

Why Read Profiles?

To learn about others' lives through the unique perspective of a particular (yet biased) journalist, etc.

Memorable Profiles

Anyone Barbara Walters has interviewed? Anyone Diane Sawyer has interviewed? Anyone Chuck Klosterman interviews?

When to Write Profiles?

For class, for the "About Us" page on a company's web site, etc.

How to Write Profiles?

Ask specific questions that will lead to finding out more about your subject.

Profile Creation

A good profile piece requires a well-rounded person; these are people who are fleshed out in detail, with, for example, a back story that explains their motivations. A flat profile piece is less well rounded, possibly even one-dimensional. They are not as interesting to read.

The following takes you through the steps to create a well-rounded profile piece – it starts on the outside and works its way to the insides of the person.

Profile's Appearance

The appearance of a person is important, but remember as a writer you are describing the appearance and much will be left to the readers' imagination. Of course, if you are writing for film or television or for a visual work like a comic book, then appearance becomes more important.

Physical Attributes

You should decide the physical attributes of your profile person. At the least you should consider:

- Height – are they tall, short, average?
- Weight – are they overweight, underweight, average?
- Skin tone and freckles, hair and eye color
- Distinguishing features – birthmarks, scars, tattoos
- Hair color – brunette, blonde?
- Hair length – short, long, shoulder-length?

Some of these attributes will be worked into the writing early on to allow the reader to form an image of the stakeholder in their “mind’s eye.” You should try to avoid the stereotypes – not all pirates have only one eye and have a wooden leg!

Accessories & Clothing

Think about the things your stakeholder wears, carries, and uses and whether any should be distinctive. Think of Doctor Who’s sonic screwdriver, James Bond’s Walther

PPK, or Carrie's heels in *Sex in the City*! These are all iconic accessories. People in real life tend to favor certain items and these items are part of how we recognize them and think of them. The glasses they wear, the type of watch they use, the jewelry they wear. Add accessories to shape your profile person. Are they fascinated with different sorts of glasses? Funny t-shirts? Vintage Levi's jeans? Use a pocket watch instead of a wristwatch? Wear a locket around his/her neck?

Profile Background

This section covers the creation of the profile person's background. The background is essential, even if it is not actually detailed. As well as making the profile more interesting and adding depth to the story, the writer can use the background to ensure the profile person's behavior remains consistent. If the writer has written up the background and stated that the stakeholder is claustrophobic, then the readers are more likely to understand why the profiled person doesn't like MRIs if the interviewer asks them about medical issues the profiled person has had. Educational background, early years, how they got into the environmental field (or connected to your topic), there are any number of areas you can focus on as you establish their background.

The Basics

Start out with writing down some of the basic facts:

- Is your stakeholder male, female, transgender?
- Where was your stakeholder born?

- How old are they?
- What kind of education do they have?
- What is their current job?
- What are their interests outside their job?
- How did they get involved with the environment?
- Who are their enemies and friends?

Motivations & Roundedness

You need to understand why your profile person behaves the way they do. Ask them about motivations that you can't understand – otherwise, you won't be able to write effectively about them.

Very few real people are static or completely stable. Your profile person might have things that drive them and things that repel them – but there will probably be more than one. Nobody is just a custodian, nobody is just a mother caring for her children, nobody is just a busy doctor.

Profile's Personality

Is your profile person mean, nice, funny? That can be determined all by their personality...

Personality Mix

Most people have a mixture of a few personalities. The caring mother mentioned above might be a Type-A scrapbooker and a wine lover. The busy doctor might compete in triathlons and have three pit bulls who she/he puts into competitions. The custodian may be a collector of vintage motorcycles, obsess over a particular hockey

team, and spoil his/her grand-daughters. It is your job to explore the person beyond what you already know. Here are a few questions to look into that you would ask if you were interviewing them:

- What adjectives would your friends use to describe you?
- What hobbies do you have?
- What would your “best day” consist of?
- What is on your Bucket List?
- Describe yourself in one sentence.
- What’s something weird in your fridge right now?
- What three items would you want on a deserted island?

Profile: The Little Details

Details are very important in writing a profile piece; they could make or break your story! I won’t give you tips on little details, since there can be so many, but I will tell you one thing: when writing out details, be careful, they can change your profile piece a lot! For example, a reader can tell that a stakeholder is impatient if he/she taps her feet from time to time.

Example: Profile

Example

She “Wants to be a Zombie in a Future Life”

When she was born, I called her “that girl.” Apparently, I wasn’t too keen on having another kid around. I had the place to myself for three years, so, I guess I had territorial issues.

She was chubby = “Just say I was a fat kid already.” She still claims that her baby gut never went away; in college, it was expanded with her addiction to diesel Pepsi. Since then, she’s given up that all-out sugar and fills the baby gut with beer. “It’s the only right thing to do.”

She also felt the oddness, once the other siblings were born, of being the middle child = “It sucks.” Alisa was accused of things the rest of us did, which was not cool but it happened. Of all of us, she was an easy target; she feels guilt quicker (“It’s that damn Catholicism at worked!”) and had a very secretive rebel side that no one knew of until later. Did she really start smoking at age 14? Yep. And drinking at 15? Yes. But we didn’t suspect it.

We lived together when she decided to go to NDSU. At that point, I was a clean freak and she wasn’t, but when I ended up on my own later, teaching & exhausted, we would switch spots. Now, she’s almost got OCD (“I like things done in 5s; when people touch the volume in my car, I have to ask them to do it in units of 5.”). And what adds to it is her English degree. We both get easily irritated with spelling and punctuation errors.

With that English degree came more awkwardness of what to do with it. She’s very creative but lacks confidence. And she’s not a huge book reader, either, which shocks most. Her most recently read book was *The Zombie Survival Guide*.

While at times I have felt like a mom to her, she is my best friend. We look similar, but her very blue eyes and naturally brown hair make her look wiser and more authentic (“Do

people think I'm older than you because I'm angry?" Me: "I think it's your hair color."). She's brutal and fun and knows how to kick ass. Any mention of zombies or pirates or sharks ("Shark Week! Did you know...") or Peyton Manning, and she'll talk your face off. She's almost gotten two nicknames related to her storytelling skills = Sideline and Bulldozer. She tends not to stay on track, and, yes, she'll bulldoze you over with statistics any time.

She's the glue in our family. I wouldn't be as close to my youngest siblings if it weren't for Alisa. We've been through a lot together, but we stick by each other. We've paid each other's way, financially or otherwise ("Red Lobster, courtesy of Ma & Pa!").

At the end of my life, I hope her and I follow-through on our wishes = to have purple hair and wear sweatpants along with t-shirts that say stupid stuff like "Princess" or "Bite Me."

Works Cited

Priebe, Alisa. Personal Interview. 14 Dec 09.

Time to Write

Purpose: This assignment will demonstrate the understanding of how to do a thorough investigation of a person. Students will research a person and identify the full context of that person in relation to the topic they have chosen.

Task: This assignment frames a single individual (stakeholder) for the approved research topic.

Write a Profile Essay. This essay should clearly identify a person that interests you. This person should be someone that you can research. Your research should include who this person is, their background, and how they connect to your topic. This is an **INFORMATIVE** (Expository) essay, so you aren't making an argument, you are just presenting facts about this person. Explain who the person is, their background, their presence (descriptive essay style), their opinions and perspectives, anecdotes of their actions, and how they connect to the problem. Conclude with a statement of what the readers should understand about this person after reading your essay. Your research should include quotations from the person to show their perspectives. Don't just state what you "think" they believe, show their own words that demonstrate that stance. Draw on a variety of sources that include interviews, observations, and research.

Key Features of a Profile:

- The subject is someone compelling, interesting, maybe even puzzling
- Profiles provide descriptive, sensory details to help readers imagine how the subject looks, sounds, act, maybe even smells
- Profiles include several direct quotations from the subject or others that help readers understand the person's opinions and perspectives
- Profiles draw on evidence and insights from a variety of sources, such as personal observations,

- interviews, and library and online research
- Profiles present several anecdotes about the subject that show readers the background and experiences that have shaped the subject
 - Profiles lead readers to a particular emotional response to, a fresh take on, or a logical conclusion about the subject

Key Grading Considerations

- Content
 1. A clear controlling idea about this person
 2. Narrative elements
 3. Supporting points are credible, clear, and explained
 4. 3 solid, supporting points
 5. Subject knowledge is evident.
 6. All information is clear, appropriate, and correct.
- Key Features are included
- Organization
 1. Transitions
 2. Expository Thesis Statement
 3. Topic Sentences
 4. Some Narrative Elements that flow with the paper
 5. Clear introduction, body, and conclusion
- Descriptive Language
 1. Dialogue is used

2. Academic vocabulary
 3. Descriptions and quotes to help visualize the person
- Language Use, Mechanics & Organization
 1. Correct, appropriate, and varied integration of textual examples, including in-text citations
 2. Limited errors in spelling, grammar, word order, word usage, sentence structure, and punctuation
 3. Good use of academic English
 4. Demonstrates cohesion and flow
 - Fully in APA Format
 1. Paper Format
 2. Citation Format
 3. Cover Page

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Dedication.

18

Proposal Arguments



Proposal Argument

A proposal argument is a structure of argument that focuses on presenting some kind of proposal as a solution to a problem, outlining the details of the proposal, and providing good reasons to support the proposal. In this type of argument, you must propose a solution to a problem. First, you must establish a clear problem and then propose a specific solution to that problem. For example, you might argue for a proposal that would increase retention rates at your college.

This type of essay works well if you see a problem you want to fix or see the change you want to make. For example, it's not enough to argue that cigarette smoking is bad for one's health. Most people would agree. But, you

could make a good argument that we need a plan to cut down on teens who are becoming addicted to cigarettes.

A proposal, in the technical sense, is a document that tries to persuade the reader to implement a proposed plan or approve a proposed project. Most businesses rely on effective proposal writing to ensure the successful continuation of their business and to get new contracts. The writer tries to convince the reader that the proposed plan or project is worth doing (worth the time, energy, and expense necessary to implement or see it through), that the author represents the best candidate for implementing the idea, and that it will result in tangible benefits.

Your proposal must **persuade** the reader that your idea is the one most worth pursuing. Proposals are persuasive documents intended to initiate a project and get the reader to authorize a course of action proposed in the document. These might include proposals to

- Perform a task (such as a feasibility study, a research project, *etc.*)
- Provide a product
- Provide a service

All proposals must be convincing, logical, and credible, and to do this, they must consider audience, purpose, and tone.

The problem/solution pattern is commonly used in identifying something that's wrong and in contemplating what might be done to remedy the situation. For example, the problem of water pollution could be described, followed by ideas of new ways to solve the problem. There are probably more ways to organize a problem/solution approach, but here are three possibilities:

- Describe the problem, followed by the solution

- Propose the solution first and then describe the problems that motivated it
- Explain a problem, followed by several solutions, and select one solution as the best

Emphasize the words *problem* and *solution* to signal these sections of your paper for your reader.

Here's an example article from *The New York Times*, "[Monks Embrace Web to Reach Recruits](#)," that highlights an unexpected approach by a group of Benedictine monks in Rhode Island; they've turned to social media to grow their dwindling membership.

Proposal Structure

Watch the video below to learn more about the structure of a proposal argument.



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://open.maricopa.edu/english102open/?p=55#h5p-50>

TIPS!

When writing a proposal argument, it's important that you **don't try to take on too much** given the length of your assignment and the time you have to write your essay. Think

about proposals that work well given the constraints of the assignment.

If you have a choice in what you write about, **find something you feel passionately about**. If you're going to be writing a specific proposal to solve a problem, it helps if you care about the problem.

Think about your audience members as you plan and write. What kind of information do they need? What will be convincing to them? Think about your audience as you work to use *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*.

A [Sample Essay with annotation can be found here](#).

Time to Write

Purpose: This assignment will demonstrate the understanding of how to do a full research paper in the problem/solution mode. Students will research a problem and identify a legitimate solution to the problem.

Task: This assignment presents a solution to the problem based on your approved topic.

Write a Proposal Essay. This essay should clearly identify a workable solution to the problem you have been researching. Your research should include the solution's details (the costs, feasibility, acceptability, and benefits of the solution). This is an Argument essay, so you aren't making a presentation of facts, you are presenting a position and supporting it. Explain what the problem is very briefly. Then explain in great detail about the solution. Include the costs, not just in money but time and

people and opportunity costs. Explain the steps on how it can be done. Defend the feasibility, can this solution actually be implemented? What are the limitations, what problems are faced? Explain the benefits of using this solution. Present views that are different, other possible solutions, and defend why your solution is the best possible approach. Include how. Conclude with a statement of what the readers should understand after reading your essay. Your research should include quotations, summary, paraphrase, and synthesis. Draw on a variety of sources.

Key Features of a Proposal:

- The outline is present and matches the essay
- The essay is in full APA format, with abstract and reference page
- The problem is clearly identified
- The problem is of some importance
- The audience of the paper is clear
- The thesis presents the solution to the problem in argument form
- The proposal contains specific details about the costs, feasibility, acceptability, and benefits of the solution
- The solution can resolve the problem
- There is a process presented for the solution to be fully enacted
- Evidence is used throughout the paper with books, references, periodicals, scholarly articles, media sources, as in the Annotated Bibliography (sources can be duplicated)
- Clear transitions

- 8-10 Pages (essay)
- Cover Page
- Abstract
- References
- No late papers will be accepted.
- Submit your paper as ONE document only – NOT 4 separate documents (cover page, outline, essay, References).
- The body of the paper should be 10 pages minimum. Papers not meeting the 8-page minimum requirement will be docked 10% for each page it is short. The cover page, outline, and References page DO NOT count in the total page count.

This is the only essay that has AUTOMATIC FAIL restrictions

There are four instances in which your paper could be returned ungraded. They are:

1. [Plagiarism](#): Any paper with plagiarized material in it will receive a zero (0). No do-overs. No rewrites. If you disagree with any findings, be prepared to take up your argument with the Dean of Academic Affairs. "It was an accident" is not a valid argument. We spent class time learning how to cite sources correctly. If you make a mistake at this point, it's like failing the test. You get the grade you earn.
2. Your topic doesn't match the material created in your previous assignments. Your paper doesn't

utilize any of the previous research and materials discovered during the course research process.

3. The paper does not reference at least six sources including a book, periodical article, scholarly journal article, reference source, and primary research. The essay, not the reference page.
4. Excessive errors: grammar, punctuation, and mechanics. You have access to Paperrater, Grammarly, and Brainfuse.

Key Grading Considerations

- APA Cover Page
- Outline
- Abstract
- Problem
 1. The problem is explained briefly
 2. It is a significant problem
- Audience
 1. It is easy to tell who you are talking to
- The thesis is a solution thesis
- Solution is complete
 1. Costs
 2. Feasibility
 3. Acceptability
 4. Benefits
 5. Process
- Some opposition is addressed
- The solution comes to a resolution of some kind

- There is a clear conclusion
- Evidence is used appropriately
- APA Format
- Grammar
- Unity & Coherence
 - i. Transitions

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Dedication.

19

Reflections



Reflection

The final assignment in your English course will include a reflective essay in which you describe your growth as a writer over the course of the semester. This activity of reflecting on your growth and performance is what is called a metacognitive activity: one in which you think and write about your learning.

Writing a formal reflective essay may be a new thing for you, so this chapter will provide an overview of why we write reflections on our learning and how to approach a reflection assignment.

Sometimes the process of figuring out who you are as writers requires reflection, a “looking back” to determine what you were thinking and how your thinking changed over time, relative to key experiences. Mature learners set goals and achieve them by charting a course of action and making adjustments along the way when they



encounter obstacles. They also build on strengths and seek reinforcement when weaknesses surface. What makes them *mature*? They’re not afraid to make mistakes (own them even), and they know that struggle can be a rewarding part of the process. By equal measure, mature learners celebrate their strengths and use them strategically. By adopting a reflective position, they can pinpoint areas that work well and areas that require further help—and all of this without losing sight of their goals.

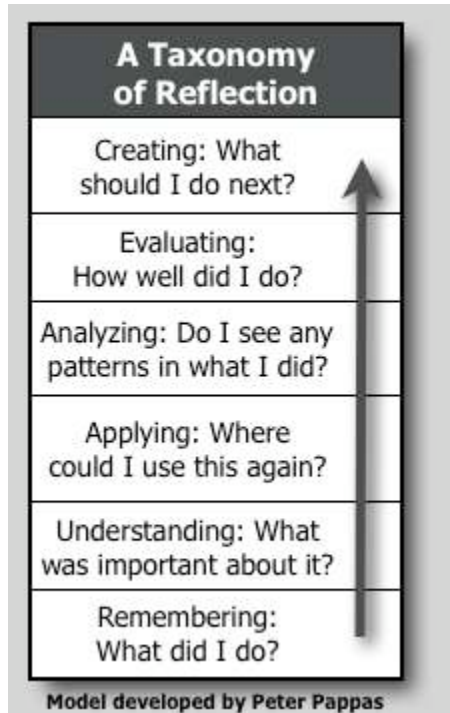
Student reflection about their thinking is such a crucial part of the learning process. You have come to this course with your own writing goals. Now is a good time to think back on your writing practices with reflective writing, also called metacognitive writing. Reflective writing helps you think through and develop your intentions as a writer. Leveraging reflective writing also creates learning habits

that extend to any discipline of learning. It's a set of procedures that helps you step back from the work you have done and ask a series of questions: Is this really what I wanted to do? Is this really what I wanted to say? Is this the best way to communicate my intentions? Reflective writing helps you authenticate your intentions and start identifying places where you either hit the target or miss the mark. You may find, also, that when you communicate your struggles, you can ask others for help! Reflective writing helps you trace and articulate the patterns you have developed, and it fosters independence from relying too heavily on an instructor to tell you what you are doing. Throughout this course, you have been working toward an authentic voice in your writing. Your reflection on writing should be equally authentic or honest when you look at your purposes for writing and the strategies you have been leveraging all the while.

Reflective Learning

Reflective thinking is a powerful learning tool. As we have seen throughout this course, proficient readers are reflective readers, constantly stepping back from the learning process to think about their reading. They understand that just as they need to activate prior knowledge at the beginning of a learning task and monitor their progress as they learn, they also need to make time during learning as well as at the end of learning to think about their learning process, to recognize what they have accomplished, how they have accomplished it, and set goals for future learning. This process of “thinking about thinking” is called metacognition. When we think about our thinking—articulating what we now know and how we came to know it—we close the loop in the learning process.

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



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



By making reflection a key component of our work, students realize that learning is not always about facts and details. Rather, learning is about discovery.

How is reflective writing in the academic setting different from journaling or writing in a diary?

If you write in a diary or a journal, recording your thoughts and feelings about what has happened in your life, you are certainly engaging in the act of reflection. Many of us have some experience with this type of writing. In our diaries, journals, or other informal spaces for speaking – or writing – our mind, write to ourselves, for ourselves, in a space that will largely remain private.

Your reflection essay for college courses will contain some of those same features:

- The subject of the reflective essay is you and your experiences
- You can generally use the first person in a reflective essay

But writing academic reflections, like the one that is due for the English 100/101 portfolio assignment, is a bit different from journaling or keeping a diary:

	Personal diary/journal	Reflection essay for a course
Audience	Only you will read it! (at least, that is often the intention)	Professor, peers, or others will read your essay. A reflective essay is written with the intention of submitting it to someone else
Purpose	To record your emotions, thoughts, analysis; to get a sense of release or freedom to express yourself	To convey your thoughts, emotions, analysis about yourself to your audience, while also answering a specific assignment question or set of questions
Structure	Freeform. No one will be reading or grading your diary or journal, so you get to choose organization and structure; you get to choose whether or not the entries are edited	An essay. The reflection should adhere to the style and content your audience would recognize and expect. These would include traditional paragraph structure, a thesis is the writer's central point (clear, concise, and limited) that provides the foundation for the rest of the essay. Most often located at the end of the introduction, the thesis establishes the core idea that the rest of the essay will develop. It should never be expressed as a question. A thesis can be explanatory or argumentative; if a thesis is argument-based, it is sometimes referred to as a claim. data-uri="https://pressbooks.ulib.csuohio.edu/csu-fyw-rhetoric/glossary/thesis/">thesis that conveys your essay's main points, a well-developed body, strong proofreading, and whatever else the assignment requires

Development	<p>Since you are only writing for yourself, you can choose how much or how little to elaborate on your ideas</p>	<p>All of the points you make in the essay should be developed and supported using examples or evidence which come from your experiences, your actions, or your work</p>
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What can be gained from metacognitive activities that ask you to reflect on your learning and your performance as a writer?

One of the major goals in any First-Year Writing class is to encourage students' growth as writers. No one is expected to be a perfect writer at the end of the semester. Your instructor's hope, however, is that after 16 weeks of reading, writing, and revising several major essays, you are more confident, capable, and aware of yourself as a writer than you were at the beginning of the semester. Reflecting on the process that you go through as you write – even if your writing is not perfect – can help you to identify the behaviors, strategies, and resources that have helped you to be successful or that could support your future success. In short, reflecting on how you write (or how you have written during a particular semester) can be quite powerful in helping you to identify areas where you have grown and areas where you still have room for more growth.

How can I write a reflective essay?

As with any essay, a reflective essay should come with

its own assignment sheet. On that assignment sheet, you should be able to identify what the purpose of the reflective essay is and what the scope of the reflection needs to be. Some key elements of the reflective essay that the assignment sheet should answer are:

- What, exactly, the scope of the reflection is. Are you reflecting on one lesson, one assignment, or the whole semester?
- Do you have detailed guidelines, resources, or reference documents for your reflections that must be met?
- Is there a particular structure for the reflection?
- Should the reflection include any outside resources?

If you are struggling to find the answers to these questions, ask your professor!

Another wonderful resource for writing a reflective essay comes from [Writing Commons](#), in the article [“Writing an Academic Reflection Essay”](#). This article offers great information about the following:

- What it means to be “academic” or “critical” and at the same time personal and reflective
- How you can achieve focus in a reflective essay
- What “evidence” is in a reflective essay

Time to Write

Purpose: This assignment will demonstrate the understanding of how to do a thorough reflection of an

experience. Students will write for a target audience reflecting on the English Composition experiences.

Task: This assignment frames your experiences while utilizing rhetorical appeals to target a specific audience.

Write a reflection in the form of a letter to a specific stakeholder. Consider a parent, a family member, or a student in a future class.

Key Features of a Reflection Letter to a Stakeholder:

- The audience is identified in both the salutation and throughout the body of the paper
- The reflection discusses writing habits and processes
- The reflection discusses challenges
- The reflection addresses course-specific elements
- The reflection discusses Peer Editing or Peer Review
- The letter is in business letter format

Key Grading Considerations

- Content
 1. A critical self-reflection
 2. Connection to experience
 3. Accurate statements about the course experiences
 4. Clearly expresses ideas using examples
 5. Describes relevant learning experiences

- throughout the semester
 - 6. Considers other student's experiences
 - 7. Draws conclusions
 - 8. Discusses personal goals
 - Organization
 - 1. Transitions
 - 2. Some Narrative Elements that flow with the paper
 - 3. Clear introduction, body, and conclusion
 - Language Use, Mechanics & Organization
 - 1. Limited errors in spelling, grammar, word order, word usage, sentence structure, and punctuation
 - 2. Good use of academic English
 - 3. Demonstrates cohesion and flow
 - Fully in Business Letter Format
-

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PART V

PART 5 CRITICAL READING

Most college writing begins as a response to a reading — whether assigned or found. As more and more interaction moves online, we are required daily to sort through written information with a swift and critical eye. Yet few of us are trained in how to determine what is and is not believable. Critical reading skills are vital to navigating college and the wider world, as this section's reading addresses.

20

Research and Critical Reading



Research and Critical Reading

Introduction

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



This chapter is about the importance of critical and active reading. It is also about the connection between critical reading and active, strong writing.

Much of the discussion you will find in this chapter is fundamental to research and writing, no matter what writing genre, medium, or academic discipline you read and write in. Every other approach to research writing, every other research method and assignment offered elsewhere in this book is, in some way, based upon the principles discussed in this chapter.

Reading is at the heart of the research process. No matter what kinds of research sources and, methods you use, you are always reading and interpreting text. Most

of us are used to hearing the word “reading” in relation to secondary sources, such as books, journals, magazines, websites, and so on. But even if you are using other research methods and sources, such as interviewing someone or surveying a group of people, you are reading. You are reading their subjects’ ideas and views on the topic you are investigating. Even if you are studying photographs, cultural artifacts, and other non-verbal research sources, you are reading them, too by trying to connect them to their cultural and social contexts and to understand their meaning. Principles of critical reading which we are about to discuss in this chapter apply to those research situations as well.

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

We will begin this chapter with the definition of the term “critical reading.” We will consider its main

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

What Kind of Reader Are You?

You read a lot, probably more than you think. You read school textbooks, lecture notes, your classmates' papers, and class websites. When school ends, you probably read some fiction, magazines.



But you also read other texts. These may include CD liner notes, product reviews, grocery lists, maps, driving directions, road signs, and the list can go on and on. And you don't read all these texts in the same way. You read them with different purposes and using different reading strategies and techniques. The first step towards becoming a critical and active reader is examining your reading process and your reading preferences. Therefore, you are invited to complete the following exploration activity.

WRITING ACTIVITY: ANALYZING YOUR READING HABITS

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

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

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

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

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

If you share the results of your investigation into your reading habits with your classmates, you may also notice that some of their reading habits and strategies were different from yours. Like writing strategies, approaches to reading may vary from person to person depending on our previous experiences with different topics and types of reading materials, expectations we have of different texts, and, of course, the purpose with which we are reading.

Life presents us with a variety of reading situations which demand different reading strategies and techniques. Sometimes, it is important to be as efficient as possible and read purely for information or “the main

point.” At other times, it is important to just “let go” and turn the pages following a good story, although this means not thinking about the story you are reading. At the heart of writing and research, however, lies the kind of reading known as critical reading. Critical examination of sources is what makes their use in research possible and what allows writers to create rhetorically effective and engaging texts.

Key Features of Critical Reading

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

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

Reading involves a fair measure of push and shove. You

make your mark on the book and it makes its mark on you. Reading is not simply a matter of hanging back and waiting for a piece, or its author, to tell you what the writing has to say. In



fact, one of the difficult things about reading is that the pages before you will begin to speak only when the authors are silent and you begin to speak in their place, sometimes for them—doing their work, continuing their projects—and sometimes for yourself, following your own agenda (1).

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

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

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

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

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

Texts Present Ideas, Not Absolute Truths

In order to understand the mechanisms and intellectual challenges of critical reading, we need to examine some of our deepest and long-lasting assumptions about reading. Perhaps the two most significant challenges facing anyone who wants to become a more active and analytical reader is understanding that printed texts do not contain inarguable truths and learning to question and talk back to those texts. Students in my writing classes often tell me that the biggest challenge they face in trying to become critical readers is getting away from the idea that they have to believe everything they read on a printed page. Years of schooling have taught many of us to believe that published texts present inarguable, almost absolute truths. The

printed page has authority because, before publishing his or her work, every writer goes through a lengthy process of approval, review, revision, fact-checking, and so on. Consequently, this theory goes, what gets published must be true. And if it is true, it must be taken at face value, not questioned, challenged, or extended in any way.

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

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

Critical reading is a collaboration between the reader and the writer. It offers readers the ability to be active participants in the construction of meaning of every text

they read and to use that meaning for their own learning and self-fulfillment. Not even the best researched and written text is absolutely complete and finished. Granted, most fields of knowledge have texts which are called "definitive." Such texts usually represent our best current knowledge on their subjects. However, even the definitive works get revised over time and they are always open to questioning and different interpretations.

Reading is a Rhetorical Tool

To understand how the claim that every reader makes his or her meaning from texts works, it is necessary to examine what is known as the rhetorical theory of reading. The work that best describes and justifies the rhetorical reading theory is Douglas Brent's 1992 book *Reading as Rhetorical Invention: Knowledge, Persuasion, and the Teaching of Research-Based Writing*. I like to apply Brent's ideas to my discussions of critical reading because I think that they do a good job demystifying critical reading's main claims. Brent's theory of reading is a rhetorical device that puts significant substance behind the somewhat abstract ideas of active and critical reading, explaining how the mechanisms of active interaction between readers and texts actually work.



Briefly explained, Brent treats reading not only as a vehicle for transmitting information and knowledge, but also as a means of persuasion. In fact, according to Brent, knowledge equals

persuasion because, in his words, “Knowledge is not simply what one has been told. Knowledge is what one believes, what one accepts as being at least provisionally true.” (xi). This short passage contains two assertions which are key to the understanding of mechanisms of critical reading. Firstly, notice that simply reading “for the main point” will not necessarily make you “believe” what you read. Surely, such reading can fill our heads with information, but will that information become our knowledge in a true sense, will we be persuaded by it, or will we simply memorize it to pass the test and forget it as soon as we pass it? Of course not! All of us can probably recall many instances in which we read a lot to pass a test only to forget, with relief, what we read as soon as we left the classroom where that test was held. The purpose of reading and research, then, is not to get as much as information out of a text as possible but to change and update one’s system of beliefs on a given subject (Brent 55-57).

Brent further states: “The way we believe or disbelieve certain texts clearly varies from one individual to the next. If you present a text that is remotely controversial to a group of people, some will be convinced by it and some not, and those who are convinced will be convinced in

different degrees. The task of a rhetoric of reading is to explain systematically how these differences arise— how people are persuaded differently by texts” (18).

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

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

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

text and understands that much more than simple retrieval of information is at stake when reading.

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

Applied to research writing, Brent’s theory of reading means the following:

- The purpose of research is not simply to retrieve data, but to participate in a conversation about it.

Simple summaries of sources is not research, and writers should be aiming for active interpretation of sources instead

- There is no such thing as an unbiased source. Writers make claims for personal reasons that critical readers need to learn to understand and evaluate.
- Feelings can be a source of shareable good reason for belief. Readers and writers need to use, judiciously, ethical and pathetic proofs in interpreting texts and in creating their own.
- Research is recursive. Critical readers and researchers never stop asking questions about their topic and never consider their research finished.

Active Readers Look for Connections Between Texts

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

Recently, I asked my writing students to investigate some problem on campus and to propose a solution to it. I



asked them to use both primary (interviews, surveys, etc.) and secondary (library, Internet, etc.) research. Conducting secondary research allows a writer to connect a local

problem he or she is investigating and a local solution he or she is proposing with a national and even global context, and to see whether the local situation is typical or atypical.

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

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

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

backdrop for their primary research that they had conducted earlier.

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

At that point, however, those writers hit an obstacle. How and where, they reasoned, would we find other secondary sources, such as books, journals, and websites, about the lack of diversity on our campus? The answer to that question was that, at this stage in their research and writing, they did not need to look for more sources about our local problem with the lack of diversity. They needed to look at diversity and ways to increase it as a national and global issue. They needed to generalize the problem and, instead of looking at a local example, to consider its implications for the issue they were studying overall. Such research would not only have allowed these writers to examine the problem as a whole but also to see how it was being solved in other places. This, in turn, might have helped them to propose a local solution.

Critical readers and researchers understand that it is not enough to look at the research question locally or narrowly. After conducting research and understanding their problem locally, or as it applies specifically to them, active researchers contextualize their investigation by

seeking out texts and other sources which would allow them to see the big picture.

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

From Reading to Writing

Reading and writing are the two essential tools of learning. Critical reading is not a process of passive consumption,

but one of interaction and engagement between the reader and the text. Therefore, when reading critically and actively, it is important not only to take in the words on the page, but also to interpret and to reflect upon what you read through writing and discussing it with others.

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

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

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

Responding to a text, on the other hand, requires a careful study of the ideas presented and arguments advanced in it. Critical readers who possess this skill are not willing to simply reject or accept the arguments

presented in the text after the first reading right away. To continue with our example from the preceding paragraph, a reader who responds to a controversial text rather than reacting to it might apply several of the following strategies before forming and expressing an opinion about that text.



- Read the text several times, taking notes, asking questions, and underlining key places.
- Study why the author of the text advances ideas, arguments, and convictions, so different from the reader's own. For example, is the text's author advancing an agenda of some social, political, religious, or economic group of which he or she is a member?
- Study the purpose and the intended audience of the text.
- Study the history of the argument presented in the text as much as possible. For example,

modern texts on highly controversial issues such as the death penalty, abortion, or euthanasia often use past events, court cases, and other evidence to advance their claims. Knowing the history of the problem will help you to construct meaning of a difficult text.

- Study the social, political, and intellectual context in which the text was written. Good writers use social conditions to advance controversial ideas. Compare the context in which the text was written to the one in which it is read. For example, have social conditions changed, thus invalidating the argument or making it stronger?
- Consider the author's (and your own) previous knowledge of the issue at the center of the text and your experiences with it. How might such knowledge or experience have influenced your reception of the argument?

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

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

Reacting to Texts

- Works on an emotional level rather than an intellectual level
- Prevents readers from studying purposes, intended audiences, and contexts of texts they are working with
- Fails to establish dialog between the reader and the text by locking the reader in his or her pre-existing opinion about the argument

Responding to Texts

- Works on an intellectual and emotional level by asking the readers to use all three rhetorical appeals in reading and writing about the text
- Allows for careful study of the text's rhetorical aspects
- Establishes dialog among the reader, text, and other readers by allowing all sides to reconsider existing positions and opinions

Binary Reading

- Provides only “agree or disagree” answers
- Does not allow for an understanding of complex arguments
- Prevents the reader from a true rhetorical engagement with the text

Nuanced Reading

- Allows for a deep and detailed understanding of complex texts
 - Takes into account “gray areas” of complex arguments
 - Establishes rhetorical engagement between the reader and the text
-

Critical Readers Resist Oversimplified Binary Responses

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

approach is needed when dealing with complex arguments.

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

Two Sample Student Responses

To illustrate the principles laid out in this section, consider the following two reading responses. Both texts respond to a very well known piece, “A Letter from Birmingham Jail,” by Martin Luther King, Jr. In the letter, King responds to criticism from other clergymen who had called his methods of civil rights struggle “unwise and untimely.” Both student writers were given the same response prompt:

“After reading King’s piece several times and with a pen or pencil in hand, consider what shapes King’s letter.

Specifically, what rhetorical strategies is he using to achieve a persuasive effect on his readers? In making your decisions, consider such factors as background information that he gives, ways in which he addresses his immediate audience, and others. Remember that your goal is to explore King's text, thus enabling you to understand his rhetorical strategies better."

Student "A"

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

Student "B"

King begins his "Letter from Birmingham Jail" by addressing it to his "fellow clergymen." Thus, he immediately sets the tone of inclusion rather than exclusion. By using the word "fellow" in the address, I think he is trying to do two things. First of all, he presents himself as a colleague and a spiritual brother of his audience. That, in effect, says "you can trust me," "I am one of

your kind.” Secondly, by addressing his readers in that way, King suggests that everyone, even those Americans who are not directly involved in the struggle for civil rights, should be concerned with it. Hence the word “fellow.” King’s opening almost invokes the phrase “My fellow Americans” or “My fellow citizens” used so often by American Presidents when they address the nation.

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

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

often in my own writing, depending on the audience I am facing.

Reflecting on the Responses

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

- Which response fulfills the goals set in the prompt better and why?
- Which responses shows a deeper understanding of the texts by the reader and why?
- Which writer does a better job at avoiding binary thinking and creating a sophisticated reading of King's text and why?
- Which writer is more likely to use the results of the reading in his or her own writing in the future and why?
- Which writer leaves room for response to his text by others and why?

Critical Readers Do not Read Alone and in Silence

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

As a college student, you are probably used to taking notes of what you read. When I was in college, my favorite way of preparing for a test was reading a chapter or two from my textbook, then closing the book,



then trying to summarize what I have read on a piece of paper. I tried to get the main points of the chapters down and the explanations and proofs that the textbooks' authors used. Sometimes, I wrote a summary of every chapter in the textbook and then studied for the test from those summaries rather than from the textbook itself. I am sure you have favorite methods of note-taking and studying from your notes, too.

But now it strikes me that what I did with those notes was not critical reading. I simply summarized my textbooks in a more concise, manageable form and then tried to memorize those summaries before the test. I did not take my reading of the textbooks any further than what was already on their pages. Reading for information

and trying to extract the main points, I did not talk back to the texts, did not question them, and did not try to extend the knowledge which they offered in any way. I also did not try to connect my reading with my personal experiences or pre-existing knowledge in any way. I also read in silence, without exchanging ideas with other readers of the same texts. Of course, my reading strategies and techniques were dictated by my goal, which was to pass the test.

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

Strategies for Connecting Reading and Writing

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

UNDERLINE INTERESTING AND IMPORTANT PLACES IN THE

TEXT

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

TAKE NOTES

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

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

Here are some things you can do in your comments

- Ask questions.
- Agree or disagree with the author.
- Question the evidence presented in the text
- Offer counter-evidence

- Offer additional evidence, examples, stories, and so on that support the author's argument
- Mention other texts which advance the same or similar arguments
- Mention personal experiences that enhance your reading of the text

WRITE EXPLORATORY RESPONSES

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

When writing extended responses to the readings, it is important to keep one thing in mind, and that is their purpose. The purpose of these exploratory responses, which are often rather informal, is not to produce a complete argument, with an introduction, thesis, body, and conclusion. It is not to impress your classmates and your teacher with "big" words and complex sentences. On the contrary, it is to help you understand the text you are

working with at a deeper level. The verb “explore” means to investigate something by looking at it more closely. Investigators get leads, some of which are fruitful and useful and some of which are dead-ends. As you investigate and create the meaning of the text you are working with, do not be afraid to take different directions with your reading response. In fact, it is important to resist the urge to make conclusions or think that you have found out everything about your reading. When it comes to exploratory reading responses, lack of closure, and the presence of more leads at the end of the piece is usually a good thing. Of course, you should always check with your teacher for standards and the format of reading responses.

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

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

As you write, “talk back to the text.” Make comments, ask questions, and elaborate on complex thoughts. This part of the writing becomes much easier if, prior to writing your response, you had read the assignment with a pen in hand and marked important places in the reading.

If your teacher provides a response prompt, make sure you understand it. Then try to answer the questions in the prompt to the best of your ability. While you are doing that, do not be afraid of bringing in related texts, examples, or experiences. Active reading is about making connections, and your readers will appreciate your work because it will help them understand the text better.

While your primary goal is exploration and questioning, make sure that others can understand your

response. While it is OK to be informal in your response, make every effort to write in a clear, error-free language.

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

USE READING FOR INVENTION

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

KEEP A DOUBLE-ENTRY JOURNAL

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

provide the kinds of responses that will later enable you to create an original reading of the text you are working with and use that reading to create your own paper.

DON'T GIVE UP



If the text you are reading seems too complicated or “boring,” that might mean that you have not attacked it aggressively and critically enough. Complex texts are the ones worth pursuing and investigating because they present the most interesting ideas. Critical reading is a liberating practice because you do not have

to worry about “getting it right.” As long as you make an effort to engage with the text and as long as you are willing to work hard on creating meaning out of what you read, the interpretation of the text you are working with will be valid.

IMPORTANT: So far, we have established that no pre-existing meaning is possible in written texts and that critical and active readers work hard to create such meaning. We have also established that interpretations differ from reader to reader and that there is no “right” or “wrong” during the critical reading process. So, you may ask, does this mean that any reading of a text that I create

will be a valid and persuasive one? With the exception of the most outlandish and purposely-irrelevant readings that have nothing to do with the sources text, the answer is “yes.” However, remember that reading and interpreting texts, as well as sharing your interpretations with others are rhetorical acts. First of all, in order to learn something from your critical reading experience, you, the reader, need to be persuaded by your own reading of the text. Secondly, for your reading to be accepted by others, they need to be persuaded by it, too. It does not mean, however, that in order to make your reading of a text persuasive, you simply have to find “proof” in the text for your point of view. Doing that would mean reverting to reading “for the main point,” reading as consumption. Critical reading, on the other hand, requires a different approach. One of the components of this approach is the use of personal experiences, examples, stories, and knowledge for interpretive and persuasive purposes. This is the subject of the next section of this chapter.

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

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

All the writing projects offered to the members of the

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

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

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

Although Rich tells a story of her own, she does so to provide an illustration of an even larger story—one about

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

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

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

Like most other writers in the class, initially Alex seemed a little puzzled, even confused by the requirement to read someone else's text through the prism of his own life and his own experiences. However, as he drafted,

revised, and discussed his writing with his classmates and his instructor, the new approach to reading and writing became clearer to him. After finishing the paper, Alex commented on his reading strategies and techniques and on what he learned about critical reading during the project:

On Previous Reading Habits and Techniques

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

On Developing Critical Reading Strategies

When reading critically I found that the most important thing for me was to set aside a block of time in which I wouldn't have to hurry my reading or skip parts to “Get the gist of it”. Developing an eye for...detail came in two ways. The first method is to read the text several times, and the second is to discuss it with my classmates and my

teacher. It quickly became clear to me that the more I read a certain piece, the more I got from it as I became more comfortable with the prose and writing style. With respect to the second way, there is always something that you can miss and there is always a different perspective that can be brought to the table by either the teacher or a classmate.

On Reading Rich's Essay

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

On Writing the Paper

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

involved taking what is left and refining the style of the paper and taking care of the mechanics.

Advice for Critical Readers

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

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

Conclusion

Reading and writing are rhetorical processes, and one does not exist without the other. The goal of a good writer is to engage his or her readers into a dialog presented in the piece of writing. Similarly, the goal of a critical and active reader is to participate in that dialog and to have

something to say back to the writer and to others. Writing leads to reading and reading leads to writing. We write because we have something to say and we read because we are interested in the ideas of others.

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

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

ATTRIBUTIONS

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