# Writing for Success - 1st Canadian H5P Edition

# Writing for Success - 1st Canadian H5P Edition

Tara Horkoff

# Contents

## Chapter 1: Introduction to Academic Writing

## Chapter 2: Working with Words: Which Word Is Right?

## Chapter 3. Putting Ideas into Your Own Words and Paragraphs

## Chapter 4: What Are You Writing, to Whom, and How?

## Chapter 5: Putting the Pieces Together with a Thesis Statement

## Chapter 6: Working Toward the End Product: Composing a Draft

## Chapter 7: Sources: Choosing the Right Ones

## Chapter 8: Being Critical

## Chapter 9: Citations and Referencing

# Chapter 10: Persuasion

# Chapter 11: Developing a Convincing Argument

# Chapter 12: Peer Review and Final Revisions

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# Preface

Writing is often a challenge. If you were ever challenged to express yourself via the written word, this book is for you.

*Writing for Success* is a text that provides instruction in steps, builds writing, reading, and critical thinking, and combines comprehensive grammar review with an introduction to paragraph writing and composition.

This book addresses each concept with clear, concise, and effective examples that are immediately reinforced with exercises and opportunities to demonstrate learning.

Each chapter allows students to demonstrate mastery of the principles of quality writing. With its incremental approach, this book can address a range of writing levels and abilities, helping each student prepare for the next writing or university course. Constant reinforcement is provided through examples and exercises, and the text involves students in the learning process through reading, problem solving, practicing, listening, and experiencing the writing process.

Each chapter also has integrated examples that unify the discussion and form a common, easy to understand basis for discussion and exploration. This will put students at ease and allow for greater absorption of the material.

Tips for effective writing are included in every chapter, as well. Thought provoking scenarios provide challenges and opportunities for collaboration and interaction. These exercises are especially helpful for working with groups of students. Clear exercises teach sentence and paragraph writing skills that lead to common English composition and research essays.

*Writing for Success* provides a range of discussion, examples, and exercises, from writing development to mastery of the academic essay, that serve both student and instructor.

## Features

- Exercises are integrated in each segment. Each concept is immediately reinforced as soon as it is introduced to keep students on track.
- Exercises are designed to facilitate interaction and collaboration. This allows for peer-peer engagement, development of interpersonal skills, and promotion of critical thinking skills.
- Exercises that involve self editing and collaborative writing are featured. This feature develops and promotes student interest in the knowledge areas and content.
- There are clear internal summaries and effective displays of information. This contributes to ease of access to information and increases students' ability to locate desired content.
- Rule explanations are simplified with clear, relevant, and theme based examples. This feature

provides context that will facilitate learning and increase knowledge retention.

- There is an obvious structure to the chapter and segment level. This allows for easy adaptation to existing and changing course needs or assessment outcomes.

# Chapter 1: Introduction to Academic Writing

# 1.1 Post-Secondary Reading and Writing

- Understand the expectations for reading and writing assignments in post-secondary (university, college, institute) courses
- Understand and apply general strategies to complete post-secondary-level reading assignments efficiently and effectively
- Recognize specific types of writing assignments frequently included in post-secondary courses
- Understand and apply general strategies for managing post-secondary-level writing assignments
- Determine specific reading and writing strategies that work best for you individually

In a post-secondary environment, academic expectations change from what you may have experienced in high school. The quantity of work you are expected to do is increased. When instructors expect you to read pages upon pages or study hours and hours for one particular course, managing your workload can be challenging. This chapter includes strategies for studying efficiently and managing your time.

The quality of the work you do also changes. It is not enough to understand course material and summarize it on an exam. You will also be expected to seriously engage with new ideas by reflecting on them, analyzing them, critiquing them, making connections, drawing conclusions, or finding new ways of thinking about a given subject. Educationally, you are moving into deeper waters. A good introductory writing course will help you swim.

*An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=23#h5p-1 (https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=23#h5p-1)*

**H5P:** High School vs. Post-Secondary Assignments

For each of the following assignment scenarios, decide whether it better reflects the high school or post-secondary experience.

1. Reading assignments are moderately long. Teachers may set aside some class time for reading and reviewing the material in depth.

   A. High School

   B. Post-Secondary

2. Reviewing for exams is primarily your responsibility.

   A. High School

   B. Post-Secondary

3. Your grade is determined by your performance on a wide variety of assessments, including minor and major assignments. Not all assessments are writing based.

   A. High School

   B. Post-Secondary

4. Writing assignments include personal writing and creative writing in addition to expository writing.

   A. High School

   B. Post-Secondary

5. Depending on the course, you may be asked to master new forms of writing and follow standards within a particular professional field.

   A. High School

   B. Post-Secondary

6. 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."

   A. High School

   B. Post-Secondary

**Answer Key**

1. A  3. A  5. B
2. B  4. A  6. A

This chapter covers the types of reading and writing assignments you will encounter as a post-secondary student. You will also learn a variety of strategies for mastering these new challenges—and becoming a more confident student and writer.

Throughout this chapter, you will follow a first-year student named Crystal. After several years of

working as a saleswoman in a department store, Crystal has decided to pursue a degree in elementary education and become a teacher. She is continuing to work part time, and occasionally she finds it challenging to balance the demands of work, school, and caring for her four-year-old son. As you read about Crystal, think about how you can use her experience to get the most out of your own experience.

## Setting Goals

By planning carefully and following through on her daily and weekly goals, Crystal was able to fulfill one of her goals for the semester. Although her exam scores were not as high as she had hoped, her consistently strong performance on writing assignments tipped her grade from a B+ to an A−. She was pleased to have earned a high grade in one of the required courses for her major. She was also glad to have gotten the most out of an introductory course that would help her become an effective teacher.

How does Crystal's experience relate to your own post-secondary educational experience?

To do well in the post-secondary environment, it is important to stay focused on how your day-to-day actions determine your long-term success. You may not have defined your career goals or chosen a major yet. Even so, you surely have some overarching goals for what you want out of your studies to expand your career options, to increase your earning power, or just to learn something new. In time, you will define your long-term goals more explicitly. Doing solid, steady work, day by day and week by week, will help you meet those goals.

### Discussion 1

**With your group, discuss the following issues and questions:**

Introduce yourself: Who are you? Why are you taking the course? Where are you living now?

- How do you feel about writing in general? (You will not be judged on this.)
- Identify one long-term goal you would like to have achieved by the time you complete your diploma or degree. For instance, you might want a particular job in your field.
- Identify one semester goal that will help you fulfill the long-term goal you just set.
- Review the High School versus Post-Secondary Assignments activity above and answer the following questions:
    - In what ways do you think post-secondary education will be rewarding for you as a learner?
    - What aspects of post-secondary education do you expect to find most challenging?
    - What changes do you think you might have to make in your life to ensure your success in a post-secondary learning environment?

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**H5P:** Reflecting on goals

When you finish your group discussion (or if you weren't able to have a group discussion today), reflect on your conversation by noting down some thoughts for each question.

# Reading Strategies

Your post-secondary courses will sharpen both your reading and your writing skills. Most of your writing assignments—from brief response papers to in-depth research projects—will depend on your understanding of course reading assignments or related readings you do on your own. And it is difficult, if not impossible, to write effectively about a text that you have not understood. Even when you do understand the reading, it can be hard to write about it if you do not feel personally engaged with the ideas discussed.

This section discusses strategies you can use to get the most out of your reading assignments. These strategies fall into three broad categories:

- Planning strategies  to help you manage your reading assignments
- Comprehension strategies  to help you understand the material
- Active reading strategies  to take your understanding to a higher and deeper level

## Planning Your Reading

Have you ever stayed up all night cramming just before an exam? Or found yourself skimming a detailed memo from your boss five minutes before a crucial meeting? The first step in handling your reading successfully is planning. This involves both managing your time and setting a clear purpose for your reading.

## Managing Your Reading Time

You will learn more detailed strategies for time management in Section 1.2: Developing Study Skills, but for now, focus on setting aside enough time for reading and breaking your assignments into

manageable chunks. For example, if you are assigned a 70-page chapter to read for next week's class, try not to wait until the night before to get started. Give yourself at least a few days and tackle one section at a time.

Your method for breaking up the assignment will depend on the type of reading. If the text is very dense and packed with unfamiliar terms and concepts, you may need to read no more than 5 or 10 pages in one sitting so that you can truly understand and process the information. With more user-friendly texts, you will be able to handle longer sections—20 to 40 pages, for instance. And if you have a highly engaging reading assignment, such as a novel you cannot put down, you may be able to read lengthy passages in one sitting.

As the semester progresses, you will develop a better sense of how much time you need to allow for the reading assignments in different subjects. It also makes sense to preview each assignment well in advance to assess its difficulty level and to determine how much reading time to set aside.

> Tip: Instructors at the post-secondary level often set aside reserve readings for a particular course. These consist of articles, book chapters, or other texts that are not part of the primary course textbook. Copies of reserve readings are available through the university library, in print, or more often, online. When you are assigned a reserve reading, download it ahead of time (and let your instructor know if you have trouble accessing it). Skim through it to get a rough idea of how much time you will need to read the assignment in full.

## Setting a Purpose

The other key component of planning is setting a purpose. Knowing what you want to get out of a reading assignment helps you determine how to approach it and how much time to spend on it. It also helps you stay focused during those occasional moments when it is late, you are tired, and when relaxing in front of the television sounds far more appealing than curling up with a stack of journal articles.

Sometimes your purpose is simple. You might just need to understand the reading material well enough to discuss it intelligently in class the next day. However, your purpose will often go beyond that. For instance, you might also read to compare two texts, to formulate a personal response to a text, or to gather ideas for future research. Here are some questions to ask to help determine your purpose:

- How did my instructor frame the assignment? Often instructors will tell you what they expect you to get out of the reading. For example:
    - Read Chapter 2 and come to class prepared to discuss current theories related to conducting risk assessments.
    - Read these two articles and compare Smith's and Jones's perspectives on the Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982).
    - Read Chapter 5 and think about how you could apply these guidelines to the first stages of onsite patient assessment.

- How deeply do I need to understand the reading? If you are majoring in emergency management and you are assigned to read Chapter 1, "Introduction to Emergency Management," it is safe to assume the chapter presents fundamental concepts that you will be expected to master. However, for some reading assignments, you may be expected to form a general understanding but not necessarily master the content. Again, pay attention to how your instructor presents the assignment.

- How does this assignment relate to other course readings or to concepts discussed in class? Your instructor may make some of these connections explicitly, but if not, try to draw connections on your own. (Needless to say, it helps to take detailed notes both when in class and when you read.)

- How might I use this text again in the future? If you are assigned to read about a topic that has always interested you, your reading assignment might help you develop ideas for a future research paper. Some reading assignments provide valuable tips or summaries worth bookmarking for future reference. Think about what you can take from the reading that will stay with you.

## Improving Your Comprehension

You have blocked out time for your reading assignments and set a purpose for reading. Now comes the challenge: making sure you actually understand all the information you are expected to process. Some of your reading assignments will be fairly straightforward. Others, however, will be longer or more complex, so you will need a plan for how to handle them.

For any expository writing—that is, nonfiction, informational writing—your first comprehension goal is to identify the main points and relate any details to those main points. Because post-secondary-level texts can be challenging, you will also need to monitor your reading comprehension. That is, you will need to stop periodically and assess how well you understand what you are reading. Finally, you can improve comprehension by taking time to determine which strategies work best for you and putting those strategies into practice.

## Identifying the Main Points

In your courses, you will be reading a wide variety of materials, including the following:

- Textbooks. These usually include summaries, glossaries, comprehension questions, and other study aids.

- Nonfiction trade books. These are less likely to include the study features found in textbooks.

- Popular magazines, newspapers, or web articles. These are usually written for a general audience.

- Scholarly books and journal articles. These are written for an audience of specialists in a given field.

Regardless of what type of expository text you are assigned to read, your primary comprehension goal is to identify the main point: the most important idea that the writer wants to communicate and often

states early on. Finding the main point gives you a framework to organize the details presented in the reading and relate the reading to concepts you have learned in class or through other reading assignments. After identifying the main point, you will find the supporting points, details, facts, and explanations that develop and clarify the main point.

Some texts make that task relatively easy. Textbooks, for instance, include the aforementioned features as well as headings and subheadings intended to make it easier for students to identify core concepts. Graphic features such as sidebars, diagrams, and charts help students understand complex information and distinguish between essential and inessential points. When you are assigned to read from a textbook, be sure to use available comprehension aids to help you identify the main points.

Trade books and popular articles may not be written specifically for an educational purpose; nevertheless, they also include features that can help you identify the main ideas.

Trade books. Many trade books include an introduction that presents the writer's main ideas and purpose for writing. Reading chapter titles (and any subtitles within the chapter) will help you get a broad sense of what is covered. It also helps to read the beginning and ending paragraphs of a chapter closely. These paragraphs often sum up the main ideas presented.

Popular articles. Reading the headings and introductory paragraphs carefully is crucial. In magazine articles, these features (along with the closing paragraphs) present the main concepts. Hard news articles in newspapers present the gist of the news story in the lead paragraph, while subsequent paragraphs present increasingly general details.

At the far end of the reading difficulty scale are scholarly books and journal articles. Because these texts are aimed at a specialized, highly educated audience, the authors presume their readers are already familiar with the topic. The language and writing style is sophisticated and sometimes dense.

When you read scholarly books and journal articles, try to apply the same strategies discussed earlier for other types of text. The introduction usually presents the writer's thesis—the idea or hypothesis the writer is trying to prove. Headings and subheadings can help you understand how the writer has organized support for the thesis. Additionally, academic journal articles often include a summary at the beginning, called an abstract, and electronic databases include summaries of articles too.

## Monitoring Your Comprehension

Finding the main idea and paying attention to text features as you read helps you figure out what you should know. Just as important, however, is being able to figure out what you do not know and developing a strategy to deal with it.

Textbooks often include comprehension questions in the margins or at the end of a section or chapter. As you read, stop occasionally to answer these questions on paper or in your head. Use them to identify sections you may need to reread, read more carefully, or ask your instructor about later.

Even when a text does not have built-in comprehension features, you can actively monitor your own comprehension. Try these strategies, adapting them as needed to suit different kinds of texts:

Summarize. At the end of each section, pause to summarize the main points in a few sentences. If you

have trouble doing so, revisit that section. (You will learn more about this in **Chapter 3: Putting Ideas into Your Own Words and Paragraphs**.)

Ask and answer questions. When you begin reading a section, try to identify two to three questions you should be able to answer after you finish it. Write down your questions and use them to test yourself on the reading. If you cannot answer a question, try to determine why. Is the answer buried in that section of reading but just not coming across to you? Or do you expect to find the answer in another part of the reading?

Do not read in a vacuum. Look for opportunities to discuss the reading with your classmates. Many instructors set up online discussion forums or blogs specifically for that purpose. Participating in these discussions can help you determine whether your understanding of the main points is the same as your peers'.

These discussions can also serve as a reality check. If everyone in the class struggled with the reading, it may be exceptionally challenging. If it was easy for everyone but you, you may need to see your instructor for help.

As a working mother, Crystal found that the best time to get her reading done was in the evening, after she had put her four-year-old to bed. However, she occasionally had trouble concentrating at the end of a long day. She found that by actively working to summarize the reading and asking and answering questions, she focused better and retained more of what she read. She also found that evenings were a good time to check the class discussion forums that a few of her instructors had created.

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**Self-Practice Exercise 1.1**

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**H5P:** Reading Activity

For this activity, you can choose any reading you've been assigned in another class. (This course is intended to help you succeed in your other courses!) If you don't have any assigned readings, you can choose something you need to read for work or for another application, or a news story you've been meaning to get around to.

- Summarize the main points of your text in two or three sentences.

- Write down two to three questions about the text that you can bring up during class discussion.

- Doing this active reading exercise when you have assigned readings will enable you to be more successful because you will be prepared for class discussions.

Tip: Students are often reluctant to seek help. They feel like doing so marks them as slow, weak, or demanding. The truth is, every learner occasionally struggles. If you are sincerely trying to keep up with the course reading but feel like you are in over your head, seek help. Speak up in class, schedule a meeting with your instructor, or visit your university learning centre for assistance.

Deal with the problem as early in the semester as you can. Instructors respect students who are proactive about their own learning. Most instructors will work hard to help students who make the effort to help themselves.

## Taking It to the Next Level: Active Reading

Now that you have acquainted (or reacquainted) yourself with useful planning and comprehension strategies, your reading assignments may feel more manageable. You know what you need to do to get your reading done and make sure you grasp the main points. However, the most successful students in are not only competent readers but active, engaged readers.

There are two common strategies for active reading:

- Applying the four reading stages
- SQ3R

Both will help you look at a text in depth and help prepare you for when you have to study to use the information on an exam. You should try them both and decide which works better for you.

### Four reading stages

Everyone reads and retains (or not) information in different ways. However, applying the following four stages of reading whenever you pick up material will not only help you understand what you are reading, but will also increase the changes of your actually remembering what you have read. While it may seem that this strategy of four reading stages takes a lot of time, it will become more natural for you as you continue applying it. Also, using these four stages will actually save you time because you will already have retained a lot, if not all, of the content, so when it is time to study for your exam, you will find that you already know the material.

Effective academic reading and study seeks not only to gain an understanding of the facts, opinions, and beliefs presented in a text, but also of the biases, assumptions, and perspectives underlying the discussion. The aim is to analyze, interpret, and evaluate the text, and then to draw logical inferences and conclusions.

The four reading strategies you will need to sharpen in order to get through your material are:

- Survey reading
- Close reading

- Inquiry reading
- Critical reading

These four strategies all stress "reading as thinking." You will need to read actively to comprehend and remember what you are reading, for both your own and your instructor's purposes. In order to do that, you need to think about the relevance of ideas to one another and about their usefulness to you personally, professionally, and academically.

Again, this differs from our usual daily reading activities, where interest often determines what we choose to read rather than utility. What happens when we are really not interested in what we are reading or seeing? Our eyes move down the page and our minds are elsewhere. We may read anywhere from one paragraph to several pages and suddenly realize we do not have the foggiest idea what we have just read. Clearly focusing our reading purpose on surveying, reading closely, being inquisitive, and reading critically, means we are reading for specific results: we read faster, know what we want, and read to get it.

### Survey reading

Surveying quickly (2 to 10 minutes if it is a long chapter) allows you to see the overall picture or gist of what the text is sharing with you. Some of the benefits of surveying are listed below:

- It increases reading rate and attention because you have a road map: a mental picture of the beginning, middle, and end of this journey.
- In helps you create a mental map, allowing you to organize your travel by highlighting key topics and getting impressions of relevance, which in turn helps in the business or remembering.
- It aids in budgeting study time because you know the length and difficulty of the material. Usually you read study material to find out what is there in order to go back later and learn it. With surveying you accomplish the same in one-tenth the time.
- It **improves concentration** because you know what is ahead and how what you are reading fits into the total picture.

*Technique for survey reading*

For a text or chapter, look at introductions, summaries, chapter headings, bold print, and graphics to piece together the main theme and its development.

*Practical uses*

Magazines, journals, books, chapters, sections of dense material, anything that allows for an overview.

### Close reading

Close reading allows you to concentrate and make decisions now about what is relevant and what is not. Its main purpose is to help ensure that you understand what you are reading and to help you store

information in a logical and organized way, so when you need to recall the information, it is easier for you to do so. It is a necessary and critical strategy for academic reading for the following reasons:

- You read as if you were going to be tested on it immediately upon completion. You read to remember at least 75 to 80 percent of the information.

- You clearly identify main concepts, key details, and their relationships with one another. Close reading allows you to summarize effectively what you read.

- Your ability to answer essay questions improves because the concepts are more organized and understood rather than merely memorized.

- You become more confident because your understanding improves which, in turn, increases your enjoyment.

*Technique for close reading*

Survey for overall structure; read, annotating main theme, key points, and essential detail; summarize the important ideas and their development.

*Practical uses*

Any reading that requires 80 percent comprehension and retention of main points and supporting detail.

Inquiry reading

Inquiry reading tends to be what we do with material we are naturally interested in. We usually do not notice we are doing this because we enjoy learning and thinking about it. *Discovery reading* is another term that describes this type of reading. Some of its benefits to the study process include:

- **Increased focus**: By asking interpretative questions, determining relevance, and searching for your answers, you are involved and less likely to be bored or distracted.

- **Retention:** Memory of the material is improved because of increased involvement.

- **Stimulation of creativity**: This involvement will raise new questions for you and inspire further research.

- **Matching instructor expectations:** Instructors are usually seeking deeper understanding as well as basic memory of concepts.

*Technique for inquiry reading*

Increase the volume and depth in questions while reading informational, interpretative, analytical, synthesizing, and evaluating kinds of questions.

*Practical uses*

Any material that requires both thorough comprehension and needs or inspires examination

Critical reading

Critical reading is necessary in order to determine the salience (or key points) of the concepts presented, their relevance, and the accuracy of arguments. When you read critically, you become even more deeply involved with the material, which will allow you to make better judgments about what is the more important information.

People often read reactively to material—especially debate, controversy, and politics. When readers react, they bring a wealth of personal experience and opinion to the concept to which they are reacting. But critical reading requires thinking—as you would expect—critically about the material. Critical thinking relies on reason, evidence, and open mindedness and recognizes the biases, assumptions, and motives of both the writer and the reader.

Learning to read critically offers these advantages:

- By substantiating arguments and interpreting, analyzing, and evaluating those supporting the concept moves mere reaction into critical reading and deepens your understanding.
- By analyzing relationships between the material read and other readings or experience, you can make connections.
- By making connections, you will increase your concentration and confidence in being able to discuss and evaluate what you read.

*Technique for critical reading*

Understand and analyze the material in terms of writer's purpose and results, relevance to readers, and value to the field at large.

*Practical uses*

Any material that requires evaluation.

Your memory of facts and concepts will be enhanced by surveying and close reading. Interpretation, relevance, application, and evaluation of presented facts and concepts require deeper questioning and involvement. Inquiry and critical reading are more applicable at these stages. We will be discussing this in the next section: SQ3R.

**Using the SQ3R strategy**

Another strategy you can use to become a more active, engaged reader is SQ3R, which is a step-by-step process to follow before, during, and after reading. You could use SQ3R for a variety of reading purposes:

- Getting main concepts only
- Flushing out key details
- Organizing concepts
- Writing a coherent summary of significant points and their development

This is not a new or unfamiliar process; SQ3R is only a new name. It describes surveying various resources (e.g., papers, journals, other relevant sources) for whatever project we are working on; generating questions to shape our understanding of the topic; reading the material; marking, reciting, or, in some way, logging what is critical to our task; and reviewing on what we have read.

You may already use some variation of SQ3R. In essence, the process works like this:

- Survey the text in advance.
- Form questions before you start reading.
- Read the text.
- Recite and/or record important points during and after reading.
- Review and reflect on the text after you read.

Each of these elements is discussed below.

### Survey

Before you read, first survey or preview the text. As noted earlier, reading introductory paragraphs and headings can help you begin to figure out the author's main point and identify what important topics will be covered. However, surveying does not stop there. Flip through the text and look for any pictures, charts or graphs, the table of contents, index, and glossary. Scan the preface and introduction to each chapter Skim a few paragraphs. Preview any boldfaced or italicized vocabulary terms. This will help you form a first impression of the material and determine the appropriateness of the material.

The final stage of surveying occurs once you have identified which chapters are relevant. Quickly look at any headings as well as the introduction and conclusion to the chapter to confirm the relevance of the information.

Sometimes, this survey step alone may be enough because you may need only a general familiarization with the material. This is also when you will discover whether or not you want to look at the book more deeply.

### Question

If you keep the question of why you are reading the material in mind, it will help you focus because you will be actively engaged in the information you are consuming. Also, if there are any visual aids, you will want to examine what they are showing as they probably represent important ideas.

Next, start brainstorming questions about the text. What do you expect to learn from the reading? You may find that some questions come to mind immediately based on your initial survey or based on previous readings and class discussions. If not, try using headings and subheadings in the text to formulate questions. For instance, if one heading in your textbook is **Conditional Sentence** and another is **Conditional Release**, you might ask yourself these questions:

- What are the major differences between these two concepts?
- Where does each appear in the sentencing process?

Although some of your questions may be simple factual questions, try to come up with a few that are more open ended. Asking in-depth questions will help you stay more engaged as you read. Once you have your questions in mind, you can move to the next step of actively reading to see if you can come up with an answer.

### Read

**The next step is simple: read**. As you read, notice whether your first impressions of the text were correct. Are the author's main points and overall approach about the same as what you predicted—or does the text contain a few surprises? Also, look for answers to your earlier questions and begin forming new ones. Continue to revise your impressions and questions as you read.

### Recite

While you are reading, pause occasionally to recite or record important points. It is best to do this at the end of each section or when there is an obvious shift in the writer's train of thought. Put the book aside for a moment and recite aloud the main points of the section or any important answers you found there. You might also record ideas by jotting down a few brief notes in addition to, or instead of, reciting aloud. Either way, the physical act of articulating information makes you more likely to remember it.

After you have finished reading, set the book aside and briefly answer your initial question by making notes or highlighting/underlining. Try to use your own words as much as possible, but if you find an important quote, you can identify it as well. If there are any diagrams, makes notes from memory on what information they are giving. Then look back at the diagrams to make sure you were accurate.

Repeat this questioning, reading, and reciting process for the rest of the chapter. As you work your way through, occasionally pause and really think about what you have read; it is easy to work through a section or chapter and realize that you have not actually absorbed any of the material.

### Review and reflect

Once you have looked at the whole chapter, try to put each section into the context of the bigger picture. Ask yourself if you have really answered each question you set out with and if you have been accurate in your answers. To make sure that you really remember the information, review your notes again after about one week and then again three or four weeks later. Also, if the textbook includes review questions or your instructor has provided a study guide, use these tools to guide your review. You will want to record information in a more detailed format than you used during reading, such as in an outline or a list.

As you review the material, reflect on what you learned. Did anything surprise you, upset you, or make you think? Did you find yourself strongly agreeing or disagreeing with any points in the text? What topics would you like to explore further? Jot down your reflections in your notes. (Instructors sometimes require students to write brief response papers or maintain a reading journal. Use these assignments to help you reflect on what you read.)

Tip: As you go through your future readings, practice this method considering these points:

- From memory, jot down the key ideas discussed in the section you just read. If you need it, use a separate piece of paper. Look back through the text and check your memory with what you jotted down. How did you do?

- Choose one section from the chapter and write a summary from memory of what you learned from that section.

- Now review that section. Identity what corresponds and what you omitted. How are you doing? When you read that section, did you consciously intend to remember it?

Although this process may seem time-consuming, you will find that it will actually save time. Because you have a question in mind while reading, you have more of a purpose while looking for the important information. The notes you take will also be more organized and concise because you are focused, and this will save you time when it comes to writing essays. Also, since you have reviewed throughout the process, you will not need to spend as much time reviewing for exams because it is already stored in your memory.

## Self-Practice Exercise 1.2

*An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=23#h5p-4 (https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=23#h5p-4)*

**H5P:** Reading Activity

Choose another text that that you have been assigned to read for a class. Use the SQ3R process to complete the reading. (Keep in mind that you may need to spread the reading over more than one session, especially if the text is long.) Again, if you don't have any assigned readings, you can choose something you need to read for work or for another application, or a news story you've been meaning to get around to.

The prompts below will guide you through the SQ3R process.

- **Step One: Survey.** Preview the reading. Read the introduction, headers, figures or charts, and skim a few paragraphs. Identify which parts of the reading are most relevant to your purposes.

- **Step Two: Question.** Brainstorm some questions you have about the text. Aim for a balance of factual questions (what does this word mean?) and open-ended (is this argument successful?).

- **Step Three: Read.** Time to do the reading itself now! Don't be shy about highlights, making notes in the margins, or marking pages with sticky notes to help you flag the things that are

important and that interest you.

- **Step Four: Recite.** As you read, pause to record important details. When you finish reading, see if you can answer the questions you identified in Step One.

- **Step Five: Review and Reflect.** Return to the text and your responses to see if you've accurately answered the questions, and if your understanding of the important points is detailed or correct enough.

**Reflection**

- On a scale from one to ten, how helpful did you find this process?

- How does it compare with other study techniques you have used?

## Using Other Active Reading Strategies

The SQ3R process encompasses a number of valuable active reading strategies: previewing a text, making predictions, asking and answering questions, and summarizing. You can use the following additional strategies to further deepen your understanding of what you read.

- 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. Visualizing is especially helpful when you are reading a narrative text, such as a novel or a historical account, or when you read expository text that describes a process, such as how to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

- 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. For instance, two writers might both address the subject of health care reform, but if one article is an opinion piece and one is a news story, the context is different.

- 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. (This also gives you a source of topic ideas for papers and presentations later in the semester.) Discuss the reading on a class discussion board or blog about it.

As Crystal began her first semester of elementary education courses, she occasionally felt lost in a sea of new terms and theories about teaching and child development. She found that it helped to relate the reading to her personal observations of her son and other kids she knew**.**

# Writing

Many courses require students to participate in interactive online components, such as a discussion forum, a page on a social networking site, or a class blog. These tools are a great way to reinforce learning. Do not be afraid to be the student who starts the discussion.

Remember that when you interact with other students and teachers online, you need to project a mature, professional image. You may be able to use an informal, conversational tone, but complaining about the workload, using off-colour language, or "flaming" other participants is inappropriate.

Active reading can benefit you in ways that go beyond just earning good grades. By practising these strategies, you will find yourself more interested in your courses and better able to relate your academic work to the rest of your life. Being an interested, engaged student also helps you form lasting connections with your instructors and with other students that can be personally and professionally valuable. In short, it helps you get the most out of your education.

## Common Writing Assignments

Writing assignments at the post-secondary level serve a different purpose than the typical writing assignments you completed in high school. In high school, teachers generally focus on teaching you to write in a variety of modes and formats, including personal writing, expository writing, research papers, creative writing, and writing short answers and essays for exams. Over time, these assignments help you build a foundation of writing skills.

Now, however, your instructors will expect you to already have that foundation. Your composition courses will focus on writing for its own sake, helping you make the transition to higher-level writing assignments. However, in most of your other courses, writing assignments serve a different purpose. In those courses, you may use writing as one tool among many for learning how to think about a particular academic discipline.

Additionally, certain assignments teach you how to meet the expectations for professional writing in a given field. Depending on the class, you might be asked to write a lab report, a case study, a literary analysis, a business plan, or an account of a personal interview. You will need to learn and follow the standard conventions for those types of written products.

Finally, personal and creative writing assignments are less common at the post-secondary level than in high school. College and university courses emphasize expository writing—writing that explains or informs. Often expository writing assignments will incorporate outside research, too. Some classes will also require persuasive writing assignments in which you state and support your position on an issue. Your instructors will hold you to a higher standard when it comes to supporting your ideas with reasons and evidence.

The following activity lists some of the most common types assignments you will encounter at the post-secondary level. It includes minor, less formal assignments as well as major ones. Which specific assignments you will be given will depend on the courses you take and the learning objectives developed by your instructors.

*An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=23#h5p-5 (https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=23#h5p-5)*

**H5P:** Match the assignment type to the description. The textual tips will give examples.

**Assignment type**:

A. Research Paper

B. Personal Response Paper

C. Laboratory Report

D. Research Journal

E. Critique

F. Summary

G. Position Paper

H. Literature Review

I. Problem Solution Paper

J. Case Study

**Description**:

1. Expresses and explains your response to a reading assignment, a provocative quote, or a specific issue; may be very brief (sometimes a page or less) or more in depth.

2. Restates the main points of a longer passage objectively and in your own words.

3. States and defends your position on an issue (often a controversial issue).

4. Presents a problem, explains its causes, and proposes and explains a solution.

5. States a thesis about a particular literary work and develops the thesis with evidence from the work and, sometimes, from additional sources.

6. Sums up available research findings on a particular topic.

7. Investigates a particular person, group, or event in depth for the purpose of drawing a larger conclusion from the analysis.

8. Presents a laboratory experiment, including the hypothesis, methods of data collection, results, and conclusions.

9. Records a student's ideas and findings during the course of a long-term research project.

10. Presents a thesis and supports it with original research and/or other researchers' findings on the topic; can take several different formats depending on the subject area.

**Answer Key**

1. B

2. F

3. G

4. I

5. E

6. H

7. J

8. C

9. D

10.  A

## Writing at Work

Part of managing your education is communicating well with others at your institution. For instance, you might need to email your instructor to request an office appointment or explain why you will need to miss a class. You might need to contact administrators with questions about your tuition or financial aid. Later, you might ask instructors to write recommendations on your behalf.

Treat these documents as professional communications. Address the recipient politely; state your question, problem, or request clearly; and use a formal, respectful tone. Doing so helps you make a positive impression and get a quicker response.

### Key Takeaways

- Post-secondary-level reading and writing assignments differ from high school assignments, not only in quantity but also in quality.
- Managing reading assignments successfully requires you to plan and manage your time, set a purpose for reading, practise effective comprehension strategies, and use active reading strategies to deepen your understanding of the text.
- Post-secondary writing assignments place greater emphasis on learning to think critically about a particular discipline and less emphasis on personal and creative writing.

# 1.2 Developing Study Skills

By now you have a general idea of what to expect from your courses. You have probably received course syllabi, started on your first few assignments, and begun applying the strategies you learned about in Section 1.1 Post-Secondary Reading and Writing.

At the beginning of the semester, your workload is relatively light. This is the perfect time to brush up on your study skills and establish good habits. When the demands on your time and energy become more intense, you will have a system in place for handling them.

This section covers specific strategies for managing your time effectively. You will also learn about different note-taking systems that you can use to organize and record information efficiently.

As you work through this section, remember that every student is different. The strategies presented here are tried-and-true techniques that work well for many people. However, you may need to adapt them to develop a system that works well for you personally. If your friend swears by her smartphone, but you hate having to carry extra electronic gadgets around, then using a smartphone will not be the best organizational strategy for you.

Read with an open mind, and consider what techniques have been effective (or ineffective) for you in the past. Which habits from your high school years or your work life could help you succeed now? Which habits might get in your way? What changes might you need to make?

## Understanding Yourself as a Learner

To succeed in your post-secondary education—or any situation where you must master new concepts and skills—it helps to know what makes you tick. For decades, educational researchers and organizational psychologists have examined how people take in and assimilate new information, how some people learn differently than others, and what conditions make students and workers most productive. Here are just a few questions to think about:

- What is your learning style? For the purposes of this chapter, **learning style** refers to the way you prefer to take in new information, by seeing, by listening, or through some other channel. (For more information, see the section on learning styles.)

- What times of day are you most productive? If your energy peaks early, you might benefit from blocking out early morning time for studying or writing. If you are a night owl, set aside a few evenings a week for schoolwork.

- How much clutter can you handle in your workspace? Some people work fine at a messy desk and know exactly where to find what they need in their stack of papers; however, most people benefit from maintaining a neat, organized space.

- How well do you juggle potential distractions in your environment? If you can study at home without being tempted to turn on the television, check your email, fix yourself a snack, and so on, you may make home your workspace. However, if you need a less distracting environment to stay focused, you may be able to find one on campus or in your community.

- Does a little background noise help or hinder your productivity? Some people work better when listening to background music or the low hum of conversation in a coffee shop. Others need total silence.

- When you work with a partner or group, do you stay on task? A study partner or group can sometimes be invaluable. However, working this way takes extra planning and effort, so be sure to use the time productively. If you find that group study sessions turn into social occasions, you may study better on your own.

- How do you manage stress? Accept that at certain points in the semester, you will feel stressed out. In your day-to-day routine, make time for activities that help you reduce stress, such as exercising, spending time with friends, or just scheduling downtime to relax.

## Learning Styles

Most people have one channel that works best for them when it comes to taking in new information. Knowing yours can help you develop strategies for studying, time management, and note taking that work especially well for you.

To begin identifying your learning style, think about how you would go about the process of assembling a piece of furniture. Which of these options sounds most like you?

- You would carefully look over the diagrams in the assembly manual first so you could picture each step in the process.

- You would silently read the directions through, step by step, and then look at the diagrams afterward.

- You would read the directions aloud under your breath. Having someone explain the steps to you would also help.

- You would start putting the pieces together and figure out the process through trial and error, consulting the directions as you worked.

Now read the following explanations of each option in the list above. Again, think about whether each description sounds like you.

- If you chose 1., you may be a **visual learner**. You understand ideas best when they are presented in a visual format, such as a flow chart, a diagram, or text with clear headings and many photos or illustrations.

- If you chose 2., you may be a **verbal learner**. You understand ideas best through reading and writing about them and taking detailed notes.

- If you chose 3., you may be an **auditory learner**. You understand ideas best through listening. You learn well from spoken lectures or books on tape.

- If you chose 4., you may be a **kinesthetic learner**. You learn best through doing and prefer hands-on activities. In long lectures, fidgeting may help you focus.

Your learning style does not completely define you as a student. Auditory learners can comprehend a flow chart, and kinesthetic learners can sit still long enough to read a book. However, if you do have one dominant learning style, you can work with it to get the most out of your classes and study time.

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**H5P:** Learning Style Quiz

1. Which learning style prioritizes the following strategies:

    ◦ When possible, represent concepts visually—in charts, diagrams, or sketches.Use a visual format for taking notes on reading assignments or lectures.

    ◦ Use different coloured highlighters or pens to colour code information as you read.

    ◦ Use visual organizers, such as maps and flow charts, to help you plan writing assignments.

    ◦ Use coloured pens, highlighters, or the review feature of your word processing program to revise and edit writing.

    A. auditory
    B. visual

       C.  verbal

       D.  kinesthetic

2. Which learning style prioritizes the following strategies:

- Use the instructional features in course texts—summaries, chapter review questions, glossaries, and so on—to aid your studying.
- Take notes on your reading assignments.
- Rewrite or condense reading notes and lecture notes to study.
- Summarize important ideas in your own words.
- Use informal writing techniques, such as brainstorming, freewriting, blogging, or posting on a class discussion forum to generate ideas for writing assignments.
- Reread and take notes on your writing to help you revise and edit.

       A.  auditory

       B.  visual

       C.  verbal

       D.  kinesthetic

3. Which learning style prioritizes the following strategies:

- Ask your instructor's permission to tape record lectures to supplement your notes.
- Read parts of your textbook or notes aloud when you study.
- If possible, obtain an audiobook version of important course texts. Make use of supplemental audio materials, such as CDs or DVDs.
- Talk through your ideas with other students when studying or when preparing for a writing assignment.
- Read your writing aloud to help you draft, revise, and edit.

       A.  auditory

       B.  visual

       C.  verbal

       D.  kinesthetic

4. Which learning style prioritizes the following strategies:

- When you read or study, use techniques that will keep your hands in motion, such as highlighting or taking notes.
- Use tactile study aids, such as flash cards or study guides you design yourself.

- ◦ Use self-stick notes to record ideas for writing. These notes can be physically reorganized easily to help you determine how to shape your paper.
- ◦ Use a physical activity, such as running or swimming, to help you break through writing blocks.
- ◦ Take breaks during studying to stand, stretch, or move around.

A. auditory
B. visual
C. verbal
D. kinesthetic

**Answer Key**

1. B
2. C
3. A
4. D

Tip: The material presented here about learning styles is just the tip of the iceberg. There are numerous other variations in how people learn. Some people like to act on information right away while others reflect on it first. Some people excel at mastering details and understanding concrete, tried-and-true ideas while others enjoy exploring abstract theories and innovative, even impractical, ideas. For more information about how you learn, visit your school's academic resource centre.

# Time Management

In university or college, you have increased freedom to structure your time as you please. With that freedom comes increased responsibility. High school teachers often take it upon themselves to track down students who miss class or forget assignments. Your instructors now, however, expect you to take full responsibility for managing yourself and getting your work done on time.

### Getting Started: Short- and Long-Term Planning

At the beginning of the semester, establish a weekly routine for when you will study and write. A general guideline is that for every hour spent in class, you should expect to spend another two to three hours on reading, writing, and studying for tests. Therefore, if you are taking a biology course that meets three times a week for an hour at a time, you can expect to spend six to nine hours per week on it outside of class. You will need to budget time for each class just like an employer schedules shifts at work, and you must make that study time a priority.

That may sound like a lot when taking several classes, but if you plan your time carefully, it is manageable. A typical full-time schedule of 15 credit hours translates into 30 to 45 hours per week spent on schoolwork outside of class. All in all, a full-time student would spend about as much time on school each week as an employee spends on work. Balancing school and a job can be more challenging, but still doable.

In addition to setting aside regular work periods, you will need to plan ahead to handle more intense demands, such as studying for exams and writing major papers. At the beginning of the semester, go through your course syllabi and mark all major due dates and exam dates on a calendar. Use a format that you check regularly, such as your smartphone or the calendar feature in your email. (In Section 1.3 Becoming a Successful Writer, you will learn strategies for planning major writing assignments so you can complete them on time.)

Tip: The two- to three-hour rule may sound intimidating. However, keep in mind that this is only a rule of thumb. Realistically, some courses will be more challenging than others, and the demands will ebb and flow throughout the semester. You may have trouble-free weeks and stressful weeks. When you schedule your classes, try to balance introductory-level classes with more advanced classes so that your work load stays manageable.

Crystal knew that to balance a job, classes, and a family, it was crucial for her to get organized. For the month of September, she drew up a week-by-week calendar that listed not only her own class and work schedules but also the days her son attended preschool and the days her husband had off from work. She and her husband discussed how to share their day-to-day household responsibilities so she would be able to get her schoolwork done. Crystal also made a note to talk to her supervisor at work about reducing her hours during finals week in December.

### Self-Practice Exercise 1.3

**Now that you have learned some time management basics, it is time to apply those skills. For this exercise, you will develop a weekly schedule and a semester calendar.**

Working with your class schedule, map out a week-long schedule of study time. Try to apply the two to three-hour rule. Be sure to include any other nonnegotiable responsibilities, such as a job or child care duties.

Use your course syllabi to record exam dates and due dates for major assignments in a calendar (paper or electronic). Use a star, highlighting, or other special marking to set off any days or weeks that look especially demanding.

## Staying Consistent: Time Management Dos and Do Nots

Setting up a schedule is easy. Sticking with it, however, may be challenging. A schedule that looked

great on paper may prove to be unrealistic. Sometimes, despite students' best intentions, they end up procrastinating or pulling all-nighters to finish a paper or study for an exam.

Keep in mind, however, that your weekly schedule and semester calendar are time management tools. Like any tool, their effectiveness depends on the user: you. If you leave a tool sitting in the box unused (e.g., you set up your schedule and then forget about it), it will not help you complete the task. And if, for some reason, a particular tool or strategy is not getting the job done, you need to figure out why and maybe try using something else.

With that in mind, read the list of time management do's and don'ts. Keep this list handy as a reference you can use throughout the semester to troubleshoot if you feel like your schoolwork is getting off track.

**Do:**

- Do set aside time to review your schedule and calendar regularly and update or adjust them as needed.
- Do be realistic when you schedule study time. Do not plan to write your paper on Friday night when everyone else is out socializing. When Friday comes, you might end up abandoning your plans and hanging out with your friends instead.
- Do be honest with yourself about where your time goes. Do not fritter away your study time on distractions like email and social networking sites.
- Do accept that occasionally your work may get a little off track. No one is perfect.
- Do accept that sometimes you may not have time for all the fun things you would like to do.
- Do recognize times when you feel overextended. Sometimes you may just need to get through an especially demanding week. However, if you feel exhausted and overworked all the time, you may need to scale back on some of your commitments.
- Do make a plan for handling high-stress periods, such as final exam week. Try to reduce your other commitments during those periods—for instance, by scheduling time off from your job. Build in some time for relaxing activities, too.

**Do not:**

- Do not procrastinate on challenging assignments. Instead, break them into smaller, manageable tasks that can be accomplished one at a time.
- Do not fall into the trap of "all or nothing" thinking. (e.g. "There is no way I can fit in a three-hour study session today, so I will just wait until the weekend.") Extended periods of free time are hard to come by, so find ways to use small blocks of time productively. For instance, if you have a free half hour between classes, use it to preview a chapter or brainstorm ideas for an essay.
- Do not let things slide and then promise yourself, "I will do better next week." When next week comes, the accumulated undone tasks will seem even more intimidating, and you will find it harder to get them done.

- Do not rely on caffeine and sugar to compensate for lack of sleep. These stimulants may temporarily perk you up, but your brain functions best when you are rested.

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**Self-Practice Exercise 1.4**

> *An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=27#h5p-7 (https://opentextbc.ca/ writingforsuccessh5p/?p=27#h5p-7)*

**H5P:** Reviewing Your Habits

Establish regular times to "check in" with yourself to identify and prioritize tasks and plan how to accomplish them. Many people find it is best to set aside a few minutes for this each day and to take some time to plan at the beginning of each week.

For the next two weeks, focus on consistently using whatever time management system you have set up. Check in with yourself daily and weekly, stick to your schedule, and take note of anything that interferes. At the end of the two weeks, review your schedule and determine whether you need to adjust it.

Review the list of dos and don'ts.

- Identify at least two habits from the dos list that you could use to improve your time management skills. Make notes below about how you will implement them.

- Identify the habit from the don'ts list that you are most likely to slip into as the semester gets busier. What could you do to combat this habit?

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**Writing at Work**

If you are part of the workforce, you have probably established strategies for accomplishing job-related tasks efficiently. How could you adapt these strategies to help you be a successful student? For instance, you might sync your school and work schedules on an electronic calendar. Instead of checking in with your boss about upcoming work deadlines, establish a buddy system where you check in with a friend about school projects. Give school the same priority you give to work.

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## Note-Taking Methods

One final valuable tool to have in your arsenal as a student is a good note-taking system. Just the act of converting a spoken lecture to notes helps you organize and retain information, and of course, good

notes also help you review important concepts later. Although taking good notes is an essential study skill, many students have never received guidance on note taking.

**Marking, note making, or note taking** is a matter of personal preference in terms of style. The most important thing is to do *something*. Again we stress that reading is like a dialogue with an author. The author wrote this material. Pretend you are actually talking to the author.

- **Do not** let an idea pass without noting it.
- **Do not** let an ambiguity go by without questioning it.
- **Do not** let a term slip away if context does not help you understand it; look it up!
- **Engage** and you will both understand and remember.

Tip: Put small checks in pencil where you would normally underline. When you finish a section, look back and see what you really need to mark. (If you check over 50 percent of the page, you probably are marking to go back and learn later versus thinking about what is really important to learn now!)

Use consistent symbols to visually help you identify what is happening on the page:

- Circle central themes or write at the beginning of the section if it is not directly stated.
- [Bracket] main points.
- Underline key words or phrases for significant details.
- Put numbers 1, 2, 3 for items listed.
- Put square brackets or highlights for key terms when the definition follows.
- Use stars (*), question marks (?), or diagrams in the margins to show relevance.
- Use key word outlines in the margins for highlighting.
- Write questions in the margin that test your memory of what is written right there.
- Use blank spaces indicating the number of ideas to be remembered, forcing you to test yourself versus just rereading.

The following sections discuss different strategies you can use to take notes efficiently. No matter which system you choose, keep these general note-taking guidelines in mind.

## General Note-Taking Guidelines

Before class, quickly review your notes from the previous class and the assigned reading. Fixing key terms and concepts in your mind will help you stay focused and pick out the important points during the lecture.

Come prepared with paper, pens, highlighters, textbooks, and any important handouts.

Come to class with a positive attitude and a readiness to learn. During class, make a point of concentrating. Ask questions if you need to. Be an active participant.

During class, capture important ideas as concisely as you can. Use words or phrases instead of full sentences, and abbreviate when possible.

Visually organize your notes into main topics, subtopics, and supporting points, and show the relationships between ideas. Leave space if necessary so you can add more details under important topics or subtopics.

Record the following:

- Ideas that the instructor repeats frequently or points out as key ideas
- Ideas the instructor lists on a whiteboard or transparency
- Details, facts, explanations, and lists that develop main points
- Review your notes regularly throughout the semester, not just before exams.

## Organizing Ideas in Your Notes

A good note-taking system needs to help you differentiate among major points, related subtopics, and supporting details. It visually represents the connections between ideas. Finally, to be effective, your note-taking system must allow you to record and organize information fairly quickly. Although some students like to create detailed, formal outlines or concept maps when they read, these may not be good strategies for class notes because spoken lectures may not allow time for to create them.

Instead, focus on recording content simply and quickly to create organized, legible notes. Try one of the following techniques.

### Modified outline format

A modified outline format uses indented spacing to show the hierarchy of ideas without including roman numerals, lettering, and so forth. Just use a dash or bullet to signify each new point unless your instructor specifically presents a numbered list of items.

The first example shows Crystal's notes from a developmental psychology class about an important theorist in this field. Notice how the line for the main topic is all the way to the left. Subtopics are indented, and supporting details are indented one level further. Crystal also used abbreviations for terms like development and example.

Child Development – 20th Century Theorists

- Jean Piaget

- Swiss psychologist, influential in education
- First developed theories in 1920s–30s
- 4 major stages of cognitive dev.

    ◦ sensorimotor (0–2)  – infants explore the world through motion and 5 senses

        ▪ self-centred perspective
        ▪ need to learn that environment still exists even when they can't see people/objects (for ex., playing peek-a-boo)

    ◦ preoperational (2–7) – kids use "magical" thinking, often not logical

        ▪ less self-centred
        ▪ poor sense of time
        ▪ can think about people/objects that are not physically present

    ◦ concrete operations (7–12) – kids begin to think logically

        ▪ thinking is very concrete
        ▪ improved understanding of physical world

    ◦ formal operations (12–adulthood) – logical thinking develops further

        ▪ can understand & test abstract ideas
        ▪ more concerned about the future, hypothetical possibilities

**Mind mapping/clustering**

If you are a visual learner, you may prefer to use a more graphic format for notes, such as a mind map. The next example shows how Crystal's lecture notes could be set up differently. Although the format is different, the content and organization are the same.

## Child Development—20th Century Theorists

**Jean Piaget**

Swiss psychologist, influential in education

<u>4 major stages of cognitive dev.</u>

first developed theories in 1920s–30s

<u>sensorimotor (0–2)</u>— infants explore world through motion & 5 senses

<u>preoperational (2–7)</u>— kids use "magical" thinking, often not logical

<u>concrete operations</u> (7–12)— kids begin to think logically

<u>formal operations</u> (12–adulthood)— <u>logical thinking develops further</u>

self-centered perspective

less self-centered

thinking is very concrete

can understand and test abstract ideas

need to learn that environment still exists even when they can't see people/objects (for ex., playing peek-a-boo)

poor sense of time

improved understanding of physical world

more concerned about the future, hypothetical possibilities

can think about people/objects that are not physically present

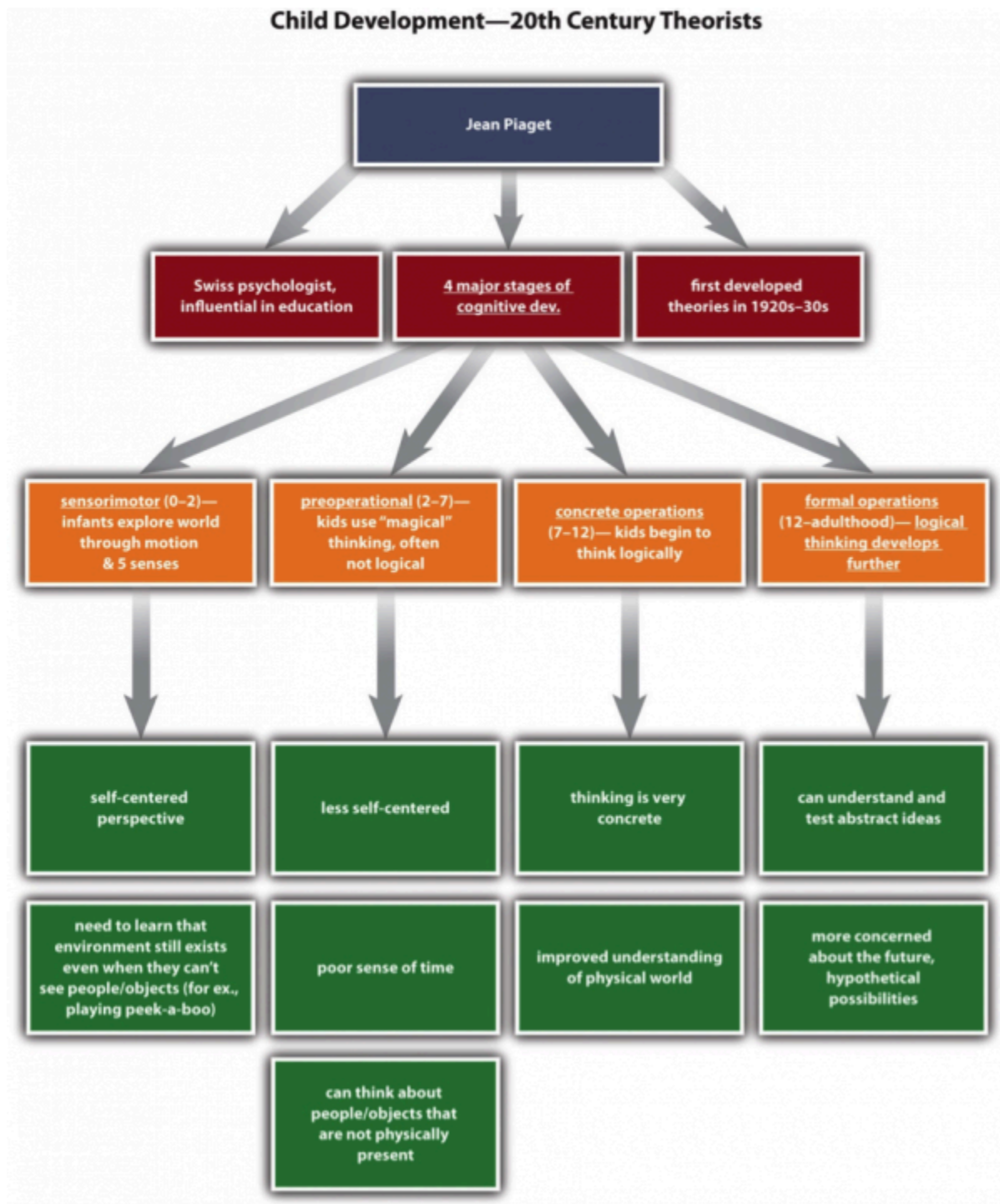*Figure 1.1 A Mind Map of Child Development – 20th Century Theorists*

**Charting**

If the content of a lecture falls into a predictable, well organized pattern, you might choose to use a chart or table to record your notes. This system works best when you already know, either before class or at the beginning of class, which categories you should include. The next figure shows how this system might be used.

**Table 1.1: Notes Organized in a Table**

| Theorist | Country of Origin | Years Active | Stages of Child Development |
|---|---|---|---|
| Jean Piaget | Switzerland | 1920s through 1970s | 1. sensorimotor (0-2)<br>2. preoperational (2-7)<br>3. concrete operational (7-12)<br>4. formal operational (12-adulthood) |
| Erik Erikson | Denmark (studied in Austria, emigrated to US in 1930s) | 1930s through 1980s | 1. trust vs. mistrust (infants)<br>2. autonomy vs. shame and doubt (toddler)<br>3. initiative vs. guilt (preschool-K)<br>4. industry vs. inferiority (elementary school)<br>5. identity vs. role confusion (teen years)<br><br>***See also stages of adult development |

**The Cornell note-taking system**

In addition to the general techniques already described, you might find it useful to practise a specific strategy known as the Cornell note-taking system. This popular format makes it easy not only to organize information clearly but also to note key terms and summarize content.

To use the Cornell system, begin by setting up the page with these components:

- The course name and lecture date at the top of the page
- A narrow column (about two inches) at the left side of the page
- A wide column (about five to six inches) on the right side of the page
- A space of a few lines marked off at the bottom of the page

During the lecture, you record notes in the wide column. You can do so using the traditional modified outline format or a more visual format if you prefer.

Then, as soon as possible after the lecture, review your notes and identify key terms. Jot these down in the narrow left-hand column. You can use this column as a study aid by covering the notes on the right-hand side, reviewing the key terms, and trying to recall as much as you can about them so that you can mentally restate the main points of the lecture. Uncover the notes on the right to check your understanding. Finally, use the space at the bottom of the page to summarize each page of notes in a few sentences.

The next figure shows what Crystal's notes would look like using the Cornell system.

| Child Development | September 13, 2011 |
|---|---|
| Piaget<br><br>cognitive development<br><br>sensorimotor<br><br>preoperational<br><br>concrete operations<br><br>formal operations<br><br>concrete thinking<br><br>abstract thinking | Child Development—20th Century Theorists<br>–Jean Piaget<br>    –Swiss psychologist, influential in education<br>    –first developed theories in 1920s–30s<br>    –4 major stages of cognitive dev.<br>        –sensorimotor (0–2)—infants explore world through motion & 5 senses<br>          –self-centered perspective<br>          –need to learn that environment still exists even when<br>           they can't see people/objects (for ex., playing<br>           peek-a-boo)<br>    –preoperational (2–7)—kids use "magical" thinking, often<br>     not logical<br>        –less self-centered<br>        –poor sense of time<br>        –can think about people/objects that are not<br>         physically present<br>    –concrete operations (7–12)—kids begin to think logically<br>        – thinking is very concrete<br>        –improved understanding of physical world<br>    –formal operations (12–adulthood)—logical thinking<br>     develops further<br>        –can understand & test abstract ideas<br>        –more concerned about the future, hypothetical possibilities |
| Piaget believed children go through four stages of cognitive development—sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete operations, and formal operations. Gradually they progress from having a very limited understanding of the world (infants and young children), to being more logical (older kids), to being able to think abstractly (preteens and teens). ||

*Figure 1.2 The Cornell Note-Taking System*

## Writing at Work

Often, at school or in the workplace, a speaker will provide you with pre-generated notes summarizing electronic presentation slides. You may be tempted not to take notes at all because much of the content is already summarized for you. However, it is a good idea to jot down at least a few notes. Doing so keeps you focused during the presentation, allows you to record details you might otherwise forget, and gives you the opportunity to jot down questions or reflections to personalize the content.

## Self-Practice Exercise 1.5

**Over the next few weeks, establish a note–taking system that works for you.**

If you are not already doing so, try using one of the aforementioned techniques. (Remember that the Cornell system can be combined with other note-taking formats.)

It can take some trial and error to find a note-taking system that works for you. If you find that you are struggling to keep up with lectures, consider whether you need to switch to a different format or be more careful about distinguishing key concepts from unimportant details.

If you find that you are having trouble taking notes effectively, set up an appointment with your school's academic resource centre.

## Key Takeaways

- Understanding your individual learning style and preferences can help you identify the study and time management strategies that will work best for you.

- To manage your time effectively, it is important to look both at the short term (daily and weekly schedules) and the long term (major semester deadlines).

- To manage your time effectively, be consistent about maintaining your schedule. If your schedule is not working for you, make adjustments.

# 1.3 Becoming a Successful Writer

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Learning Objectives

- Identify strategies for successful writing
- Demonstrate comprehensive writing skills
- Identify writing strategies for use in future classes

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In the preceding sections, you learned what you can expect from your courses and identified strategies you can use to manage your work and to succeed. This section covers more about how to handle the demands placed on you as a writer at the post-secondary world. The general techniques you will learn will help ensure your success on any writing task, whether you complete an exam in an hour or an in-depth research project over several weeks.

## Putting It All Together: Strategies for Success

Writing well is difficult. Even people who write for a living sometimes struggle to get their thoughts on the page. Even people who generally enjoy writing have days when they would rather be doing anything else. For people who do not like writing or do not think of themselves as good writers, writing assignments can be stressful or even intimidating. And of course, you cannot get through post-secondary courses without having to write—sometimes a lot, and often at a higher level than you are used to.

No magic formula will make writing quick and easy. However, you can use strategies and resources to manage writing assignments more easily. This section presents a broad overview of these strategies and resources. The remaining chapters of this book provide more detailed, comprehensive instruction to help you succeed at a variety of assignments.

### Using the Writing Process

To complete a writing project successfully, good writers use some variation of the following process.

**The writing process**

1. **Prewriting.** The writer generates ideas to write about and begins developing these ideas.
2. **Outlining a structure of ideas.** The writer determines the overall organizational structure of the writing and creates an outline to organize ideas. Usually this step involves some

additional fleshing out of the ideas generated in the first step.

3. **Writing a rough draft.** The writer uses the work completed in prewriting to develop a first draft. The draft covers the ideas the writer brainstormed and follows the organizational plan that was laid out in the first step.

4. **Revising.** The writer revisits the draft to review and, if necessary, reshape its content. This stage involves moderate and sometimes major changes: adding or deleting a paragraph, phrasing the main point differently, expanding on an important idea, reorganizing content, and so forth.

5. **Editing.** The writer reviews the draft to make additional changes. Editing involves making changes to improve style and adherence to standard writing conventions—for instance, replacing a vague word with a more precise one or fixing errors in grammar and spelling. Once this stage is complete, the work is a finished piece and ready to share with others.

Chances are you have already used this process as a writer. You may also have used it for other types of creative projects, such as developing a sketch into a finished painting or composing a song. The steps listed above apply broadly to any project that involves creative thinking. You come up with ideas (often vague at first), you work to give them some structure, you make a first attempt, you figure out what needs improving, and then you refine it until you are satisfied.

**Common misconceptions about the writing process**

Most people have used this creative process in one way or another, but many people have misconceptions about how to use it to write. Here are a few of the most common misconceptions students have about the writing process:

- **"I do not have to waste time on prewriting if I understand the assignment."** Even if the task is straightforward and you feel ready to start writing, take some time to develop ideas before you plunge into your draft. **Freewriting**—writing about the topic without stopping for a set period of time—is one prewriting technique you might try in that situation.

- **"It is important to complete a formal, numbered outline for every writing assignment."** For some assignments, such as lengthy research papers, proceeding without a formal outline can be very difficult. However, for other assignments, a structured set of notes or a detailed graphic organizer may suffice. The important thing is to have a solid plan for organizing ideas and details.

- **"My draft will be better if I write it when I am feeling inspired."** By all means, take advantage of those moments of inspiration. However, understand that sometimes you will have to write when you are not in the mood. Sit down and start your draft even if you do not feel like it. If necessary, force yourself to write for just one hour. By the end of the hour, you may be far more engaged and motivated to continue. If not, at least you will have accomplished part of the task.

- **"My instructor will tell me everything I need to revise."** If your instructor chooses to review drafts, the feedback can help you improve. However, it is still your job, not your instructor's, to transform the draft to a final, polished piece. That task will be much easier if you give your best effort to the draft before submitting it. During revision, do not just go

through and implement your instructor's corrections. Take time to determine what you can change to make the work the best it can be.

- **"I am a good writer, so I do not need to revise or edit."** Even talented writers still need to revise and edit their work. At the very least, doing so will help you catch an embarrassing typo or two. Revising and editing are the steps that make good writers into great writers.

Tip: The writing process also applies to timed writing tasks, such as essay exams. Before you begin writing, read the question thoroughly and think about the main points to include in your response. Use scrap paper to sketch out a very brief outline. Keep an eye on the clock as you write your response so you will have time to review it and make any needed changes before turning in your exam.

## Managing Your Time

In Section 1.2: Developing Study Skills, you learned general time management skills. By combining those skills with what you have learned about the writing process, you can make any writing assignment easier to manage.

When your instructor gives you a writing assignment, write the due date on your calendar. Then work backward from the due date to set aside blocks of time when you will work on the assignment. Always plan at least two sessions of writing time per assignment, so that you are not trying to move from step 1 to step 5 in one evening. Trying to work that fast is stressful, and it does not yield great results. You will plan better, think better, and write better if you space out the steps.

Ideally, you should set aside at least three separate blocks of time to work on a writing assignment: one for prewriting and outlining, one for drafting, and one for revising and editing. Sometimes those steps may be compressed into just a few days. If you have a couple of weeks to work on a paper, space out the five steps over multiple sessions. Long-term projects, such as research papers, require more time for each step.

Tip: In certain situations you may not be able to allow time between the different steps of the writing process. For instance, you may be asked to write in class or complete a brief response paper overnight. If the time available is very limited, apply a modified version of the writing process (as you would do for an essay exam). It is still important to give the assignment thought and effort. However, these types of assignments are less formal, and instructors may not expect them to be as polished as formal papers. When in doubt, ask the instructor about expectations, resources that will be available during the writing exam, and if he or she has any tips to prepare you to effectively demonstrate your writing skills.

Each Monday in Crystal's Foundations of Education class, the instructor distributed copies of a current news article on education and assigned students to write a one-and-a-half to two-page response that

was due the following Monday. Together, these weekly assignments counted for 20 percent of the course grade. Although each response took just a few hours to complete, Crystal found that she learned more from the reading and got better grades on her writing if she spread the work out in the following way:

| MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY | SUNDAY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Article response assigned. | | Read article, prewrite, and outline response paper. | | Draft response. | | Revise and edit response. |

*Figure 1.3 Sample Schedule*

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Self-Practice Exercise 1.6

> 📄 *An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=30#h5p-8 (https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=30#h5p-8)*

**H5P:** Review Your Goals

Review the long- and short-term goals you set for yourself for the discussion at the beginning of the module.

Brainstorm a list of stepping stones that will help you meet that goal, such as "doing well on my midterm and final exams" or "talking to Professor Gibson about doing an internship." Write down everything you can think of that would help you meet that semester goal.

Identify one action from your brainstorming that you can do today. What is it? How will you do it?

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## Using Available Resources

One reason students sometimes find post-secondary courses overwhelming is that they do not know about, or are reluctant to use, the resources available to them. There is help available; your student fees help pay for resources that can help in many ways, such as a health centre or tutoring service. If you need help, consider asking for help from any of the following:

Your instructor: If you are making an honest effort but still struggling with a particular course, set a time to meet with your instructor and discuss what you can do to improve. He or she may be able to shed light on a confusing concept or give you strategies to catch up.

Your academic counsellor. Many institutions assign students an academic counsellor who can help you choose courses and ensure that you fulfill degree and major requirements.

The academic resource centre: These centres offer a variety of services, which may range from general coaching in study skills to tutoring for specific courses. Find out what is offered at your school and use the services that you need.

The writing centre: These centres employ tutors to help you manage your writing assignments. They will not write or edit your paper for you, but they can help you through the stages of the writing process. (In some schools, the writing centre is part of the academic resource centre.)

The career resource centre: Visit the career resource centre for guidance in choosing a career path, developing a resumé, and finding and applying for jobs.

Counselling services: Many schools offer psychological counselling for free or for a low fee. Use these services if you need help coping with a difficult personal situation or managing depression, anxiety, or other problems.

Students sometimes neglect to use available resources due to limited time, unwillingness to admit there is a problem, or embarrassment about needing to ask for help. Unfortunately, ignoring a problem usually makes it harder to cope with later on. Waiting until the end of the semester may also mean fewer resources are available, since many other students are also seeking last minute help.

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**Self-Practice Exercise 1.7**

Identify at least one resource you think could be helpful to you and that you would like to investigate further. Schedule a time to visit this resource within the next week or two so you can use it throughout the semester.

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## Summary

You now have a solid foundation of skills and strategies you can use to succeed in university or college. The remainder of this book will provide you with guidance on specific aspects of writing, ranging from grammar and style conventions to how to write a research paper.

For any writing assignment, use these strategies:

- **Plan ahead**. Divide the work into smaller, manageable tasks, and set aside time to accomplish each task in turn.

- **Make sure you understand the assignment requirements.** If necessary, clarify the requirements with your instructor. Think carefully about the purpose of the writing, the intended audience, the topics you will need to address, and any specific requirements of the writing form.

- **Complete each step of the writing process**. With practice, using this process will come automatically to you.

- **Use the resources available to you**. Remember that most schools have specific services to help students with their writing.

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**Key Takeaways**

- Following the steps of the writing process helps students complete any writing assignment more successfully.

- To manage writing assignments, it is best to work backward from the due date, allotting appropriate time to complete each step of the writing process.

- Setting concrete long- and short-term goals helps students stay focused and motivated.

- A variety of resources are available to help students with writing and with other aspects of post-secondary life.

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## Flashcards

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*An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=30#h5p-9 (https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=30#h5p-9)*

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# Chapter 2: Working with Words: Which Word Is Right?

# 2.1 Commonly Confused Words

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Learning Objectives

- Identify commonly confused words
- Use strategies to avoid commonly confused words

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Just as a mason uses bricks to build sturdy homes, writers use words to build successful documents. Consider the construction of a building. Builders need to use tough, reliable materials to build a solid and structurally sound skyscraper. From the foundation to the roof and every floor in between, every part is necessary. Writers need to use strong, meaningful words from the first sentence to the last and in every sentence in between.

You already know many words that you use every day as part of your writing and speaking vocabulary. You probably also know that certain words fit better in certain situations. Letters, emails, and even quickly jotted grocery lists require the proper selection of vocabulary. Imagine you are writing a grocery list to purchase the ingredients for a recipe but accidentally write down cilantro when the recipe calls for parsley. Even though cilantro and parsley look remarkably alike, each produces a very different effect in food. This seemingly small error could radically alter the flavour of your dish!

Having a solid everyday vocabulary will help you while writing, but learning new words and avoiding common word errors will make a real impression on your readers. Experienced writers know that deliberate, careful word selection and usage can lead to more polished, more meaningful work. This chapter covers word choice and vocabulary-building strategies that will improve your writing.

## Commonly Confused Words

Some words in English cause trouble for speakers and writers because they share a similar pronunciation, meaning, or spelling with another word. These words are called commonly confused words. For example, read aloud the following sentences containing the commonly confused words new and knew:

- I liked her <u>new</u> sweater.
- I <u>knew</u> she would wear that sweater today.

These words may sound alike when spoken, but they carry entirely different usages and meanings. *New* is an adjective that describes the sweater, and *knew* is the past tense of the verb "to

know." To read more about adjectives, verbs, and other parts of speech see **Section 3.1: Sentence Writing**.

## Recognizing Commonly Confused Words

New and knew are just two of the words that can be confusing because of their similarities. Familiarize yourself with the following list of commonly confused words. Recognizing these words in your own writing and in other pieces of writing can help you choose the correct word to avoid confusing the reader and, ultimately, being incorrect in your writing.

**Table 2.1 Examples of Commonly Confused Words**

| Common Confused Words | What do they mean? | Examples |
|---|---|---|
| A, An, And | • A (article). Used before a word that begins with a consonant.<br>• An (article). Used before a word that begins with a vowel.<br>• And (conjunction). Connects two or more words together. | • A key, a mouse, a screen.<br>• An airplane, an ocean, an igloo<br>• Peanut butter and jelly, pen and pencil, jump and shout |
| Affect, Effect | • Affect (verb). Means to create a change.<br>• Effect (noun). Means an outcome or result. | • Hurricane winds affect the amount of rainfall.<br>• The heavy rains will have an effect on the crop growth. |
| Are, Our | • Are (verb). A conjugated form of the verb to be.<br>• Our (pronoun). Indicates possession, usually follows the pronoun we. | • My cousins are all tall and blonde.<br>• We will bring our cameras to take pictures. |
| By, Buy | • By (preposition). Means next to.<br>• Buy (verb). Means to purchase. | • My glasses are by the bed.<br>• I will buy new glasses after the doctor's appointment. |
| Its, It's | • Its (pronoun). A form of it that shows possession.<br>• It's (contraction). Joins the words it and is. | • The butterfly flapped its wings.<br>• It's the most beautiful butterfly I have ever seen. |
| Know, No | • Know (verb). Means to understand or possess knowledge.<br>• No. Used to make a negative. | • I know the male peacock sports the brilliant feathers.<br>• I have no time to visit the zoo this weekend. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Loose, Lose | • Loose (adjective). Describes something that is not tight or is detached.<br>• Lose (verb). Means to forget, to give up, to fail to earn something, or to fail to find something. | • Without a belt, their pants are loose on their waist.<br>• She is known to regularly lose her keys. |
| Of, Have | • Of (preposition). Means from or about.<br>• Have (verb). Means to possess something.<br>• Have (linking verb). Used to connect verbs. | • I studied maps of the city to know where to rent a new apartment.<br>• I have many friends to help me move.<br>• I should have helped him with that heavy box. |
| Quite, Quiet, Quit | • Quite (adverb). Means really or truly.<br>• Quiet (adjective). Means not loud.<br>• Quit (verb). Means to stop or to end. | • My work will require quite a lot of concentration.<br>• I need a quiet room to complete the assignments.<br>• I will quit when I am hungry for dinner. |
| Right, Write | • Right (adjective). Means proper or correct.<br>• Right (adjective). Also means the opposite of left.<br>• Write (verb). Means to communicate on paper. | • When bowling, she practises the right form.<br>• The ball curved to the right and hit the last pin.<br>• After the team members bowl, I will write down their scores. |
| Set, Sit | • Set (verb). Means to put an item down.<br>• Set (noun). Means a group of similar objects.<br>• Sit (verb). Means to lower oneself down on a chair or another place. | • She set the mug on the saucer.<br>• All the mugs and saucers belonged in a set.<br>• I'll sit on the sofa while she brews the tea. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Suppose, Supposed | • Suppose (verb). Means to think or to consider.<br>• Suppose (verb). Means to suggest.<br>• Supposed (verb). The past tense form of the verb suppose, meaning required or allowed. | • I suppose I will bake the bread, because no one else has the recipe.<br>• Suppose we all split the cost of the dinner.<br>• She was supposed to create the menu. |
| Than, Then | • Than (conjunction). Used to connect two or more items when comparing.<br>• Then (adverb). Means next or at a specific time. | • Registered nurses require less schooling than doctors.<br>• Doctors first complete medical school and then obtain a residency. |
| Their, They're, There | • Their (pronoun). A form of they that shows possession.<br>• They're (contraction). Joins the words they and are.<br>• There (pronoun). Indicates the presence of something | • The dog walker feeds their dogs everyday at two o'clock.<br>• They're the sweetest dogs in the neighbourhood.<br>• There are more treats if the dogs behave. |
| To, Two, Too | • To (preposition). Indicates movement.<br>• To. A word that completes an infinitive verb.<br>• Two. The number after one. It describes how many.<br>• Too (adverb). Means also or very. | • Let's go to the circus.<br>• to play, to ride, to watch.<br>• Two clowns squirted the elephants with water.<br>• The tents were too loud, and we left. |
| Use, Used | • Use (verb). Means to apply for some purpose.<br>• Used. The past tense form of the verb to use<br>• Used to. Indicates something done in the past but not in the present | • We use a weed whacker to trim the hedges.<br>• He used the lawnmower last night before it rained.<br>• He used to hire a team to landscape, but now he landscapes alone. |

| Who's, Whose | • Who's (contraction). Joins the words who and either is or has.<br>• Whose (pronoun). A form of who that shows possession. | • Who's the new student? Who's met him?<br>• Whose schedule allows them to take the new student on a campus tour? |
|---|---|---|
| Your, You're | • Your (pronoun). A form of you that shows possession.<br>• You're (contraction). Joins the words you and are. | • Your book bag is unzipped.<br>• You're the girl with the unzipped book bag. |

The English language contains so many words; no one can say for certain how many words exist. In fact, many words in English are borrowed from other languages. Many words have multiple meanings and forms, further expanding the immeasurable number of English words. Although the list of commonly confused words serves as a helpful guide, even these words may have more meanings than shown here. When in doubt, consult an expert: the dictionary!

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**Self-Practice Exercise 2.1**

*An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=48#h5p-10 (https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=48#h5p-10)*

**H5P:** Complete the following sentences by selecting the correct word.

1. My little cousin turns (to, too, two) years old tomorrow.

2. The next-door neighbour's dog is (quite, quiet, quit) loud. He barks constantly throughout the night.

3. (Your, You're) mother called this morning to talk about the party.

4. I would rather eat a slice of chocolate cake (than, then) eat a chocolate muffin.

5. Before the meeting, he drank a cup of coffee and (than, then) brushed his teeth.

6. Do you have any (loose, lose) change to pay the parking meter?

7. Father must (have, of) left his briefcase at the office.

8. Before playing ice hockey, I was (suppose, supposed) to read the contract, but I only skimmed it and signed my name quickly, which may (affect, effect) my understanding of the rules.

9. Tonight she will (set, sit) down and (right, write) a cover letter to accompany her resumé and job

application.

10. It must be fall, because the leaves (are, our) changing, and (it's, its) getting darker earlier.

**Answer Key**

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. two | 6. loose |
| 2. quite | 7. have |
| 3. Your | 8. supposed, affect |
| 4. than | 9. sit, write |
| 5. then | 10. are, it's |

## Strategies to Avoid Commonly Confused Words

When writing, you need to choose the correct word according to its spelling and meaning in the context. Not only does selecting the correct word improve your vocabulary and your writing, but it also makes a good impression on your readers. It also helps reduce confusion and improve clarity. The following strategies can help you avoid misusing confusing words.

Use a dictionary. Keep a dictionary at your desk while you write. Look up words when you are uncertain of their meanings or spellings. Many dictionaries are also available online, and the Internet's easy access will not slow you down. Check out your cell phone or smartphone to see if a dictionary app is available.

Keep a list of words you commonly confuse. Be aware of the words that often confuse you. When you notice a pattern of confusing words, keep a list nearby, and consult the list as you write. Check the list again before you submit an assignment to your instructor.

Study the list of commonly confused words. You may not yet know which words confuse you, but before you sit down to write, study the words on the list. Prepare your mind for working with words by reviewing the commonly confused words identified in this chapter.

Tip: Commonly confused words appear in many locations, not just at work or at school. Be on the lookout for misused words wherever you find yourself throughout the day. Make a mental note of the error and remember its correction for your own pieces of writing.

## Writing at Work

All employers value effective communication. From an application to an interview to the first month on the job, employers pay attention to your vocabulary. You do not need a large vocabulary to succeed, but you do need to be able to express yourself clearly and avoid commonly misused words.

When giving an important presentation on the effect of inflation on profit margins, you must know the difference between effect and affect and choose the correct word. When writing an email to confirm deliveries, you must know if the shipment will arrive in to days, too days, or two days. Confusion may arise if you choose the wrong word.

Consistently using the proper words will improve your communication and make a positive impression on your boss and colleagues.

## Self-Practice Exercise 2.2

*An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=48#h5p-11 (https://opentextbc.ca/ writingforsuccessh5p/?p=48#h5p-11)*

**H5P:** In the paragraph below, locate all of the misused words and correct them. There are 11 errors in total. You can refer to the list of frequently misused words in this chapter for help as you work.

The original United States Declaration of Independence sets in a case at the Rotunda for the Charters of Freedom as part of the National Archives in Washington, DC. Since 1952, over one million visitors each year of passed through the Rotunda too snap a photograph to capture they're experience. Although signs state, "No Flash Photography," forgetful tourists leave the flash on, an a bright light flickers for just a millisecond. This millisecond of light may not seem like enough to effect the precious document, but supposed how much light could be generated when all those milliseconds are added up. According to the National Archives administrators, its enough to significantly damage the historic document. So, now, the signs display quit a different message: "No Photography." Visitors continue to travel to see the Declaration that began are country, but know longer can personal pictures serve as mementos. The administrators' compromise, they say, is a visit to the gift shop for a preprinted photograph.

## Key Takeaways

- In order to write accurately, it is important for writers to be aware of commonly confused words.

- Although commonly confused words may look alike or sound alike, their meanings are very different.

- Consulting the dictionary is one way to make sure you are using the correct word in your writing. You may also keep a list of commonly confused words nearby when you write, or study the chart in this section.

- Choosing the proper words leaves a positive impression on your readers.

## Writing Application

Review the latest assignment you completed for school or for work. Does it contain any commonly confused

words? Circle each example and use the circled words to begin your own checklist of commonly confused words. Continue to add to your checklist each time you complete an assignment and find a misused word.

# 2.2 Spelling

- Identify common spelling rules
- Identify commonly misused homonyms
- Identify commonly misspelled words

One essential aspect of good writing is accurate spelling. With computer spell checkers at your disposal, spelling may seem simple, but these programs fail to catch every error. Spell checkers identify some errors, but writers still have to consider the flagged words and suggested replacements. Writers are still responsible for the errors that remain.

For example, if the spell checker highlights a word that is misspelled and gives you a list of alternative words, you may choose a word that you never intended even though it is spelled correctly. This can change the meaning of your sentence. It can also confuse readers, making them lose interest. Computer spell checkers are useful editing tools, but they can never replace human knowledge of spelling rules, homonyms, and commonly misspelled words.

## Common Spelling Rules

The best way to master new words is to understand the key spelling rules. Keep in mind, however, that some spelling rules carry exceptions. A spell checker may catch these exceptions, but knowing them yourself will prepare you to spell accurately on the first try. You may want to try memorizing each rule and its exception like you would memorize a rhyme or lyrics to a song.

Write *i* before *e* except after *c*, or when pronounced *ay* like "neighbor" or "weigh."

- achieve, niece, alien
- receive, deceive

- **When words end in a consonant plus y,** drop the y and add an i before adding another ending.

- happy + er = happier
- cry + ed = cried

- **When words end in a vowel plus y,** keep the y and add the ending.

  - delay + ed = delayed
  - Memorize the following exceptions to this rule: day, lay, say, pay = daily, laid, said, paid

- **When adding an ending that begins with a vowel,** such as -able, -ence, -ing, or -ity, drop the last e in a word.

  - write + ing = writing
  - pure + ity = purity

- **When adding an ending that begins with a consonant,** such as -less, -ment, or -ly, keep the last e in a word.

  - hope + less = hopeless
  - advertise + ment = advertisement

- **For many words ending in a consonant and an o,** add -s when using the plural form.

  - photo + s = photos
  - soprano + s = sopranos

- **Add –es to words that end in s, ch, sh, and x.**

  - church + es = churches
  - fax + es = faxes

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**Self-Practice Exercise 2.3**

*An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=50#h5p-12 (https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=50#h5p-12)*

**H5P:** Highlight all the misspelled words in the following paragraph:

Sherman J. Alexie Jr. was born in October 1966. He is a Spokane-Coeur d'Alene Native American writer, poet, and filmmaker. Alexie was born with hydrocephalus, or water on the brain. This condition led doctors to predict that he would likly suffer long-term brain damage. Although Alexie survived with no mental disabilitys, he did suffer other serious side effects from his condition that plagud him throughout his childhood. Amazingly, Alexie learned to read by the age of three, and by age five he had read novels such as John Steinbeck'sThe Grapes of Wrath . Raised on an Indian reservation, Alexie often felt aleinated from his

peers due to his avid love for reading and also from the long-term effects of his illness, which often kept him from socializeing with his peers on the reservation. The reading skills he displaid at such a young age foreshadowed what he would later become. Today Alexie is a prolific and successful writer with several story anthologeis to his credit, noteably The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven and The Toughest Indian in the World . Most of his fiction is about contemporary Native Americans who are influenced by pop culture and powwows and everything in between. His work is sometimes funny but always thoughtful and full of richness and depth. Alexie also writes poetry, novels, and screenplays. His latest collection of storys is called War Dances, which came out in 2009.

Tip: Use these eight tips to improve your spelling skills:

1. Read the words in your assignment carefully, and avoid skimming over the page. Focusing on your written assignment word by word will help you pay close attention to each word's spelling. Skimming quickly, you may overlook misspelled words.

2. Use mnemonic devices to remember the correct spelling of words. Mnemonic devices, or memory techniques and learning aids, include inventive sayings or practices that help you remember. For example, the saying "It is important to be a beautiful person inside and out" may help you remember that beautiful begins with "be a." The practice of pronouncing the word Wednesday Wed-nes-day may help you remember how to spell the word correctly.

3. Use a dictionary. Many professional writers rely on the dictionary—either in print or online. If you find it difficult to use a regular dictionary, ask your instructor to help you find a "poor speller's dictionary."

4. Use your computer's spell checker. The spell checker will not solve all your spelling problems, but it is a useful tool. See the introduction to this section for cautions about spell checkers.

5. Keep a list of frequently misspelled words. You will often misspell the same words again and again, but do not let this discourage you. All writers struggle with the spellings of certain words; they become aware of their spelling weaknesses and work to improve. Be aware of which words you commonly misspell, and you can add them to a list to learn to spell them correctly.

6. Look over corrected papers for misspelled words. Add these words to your list and practise writing each word four to five times. Writing teachers will especially notice which words you frequently misspell, and it will help you excel in your classes if they see your spelling improve.

7. Test yourself with flash cards. Sometimes the old-fashioned methods are best, and for spelling, this tried-and-true technique has worked for many students. You can work with a peer or alone.

8. Review the common spelling rules explained in this chapter. Take the necessary time to master the material; you may return to the rules in this chapter again and again, as needed.

Tip: Remember to focus on spelling during the editing and revising step of the writing process. Start with the big ideas such as organizing your piece of writing and developing effective paragraphs, and then work your way down toward the smaller—but equally important—details like spelling and punctuation.

## Homonyms

Homonyms are words that sound like one another but have different meanings.

**Table 2.2 Commonly Misused Homonyms**

| Commonly Misused Homonyms | What do they mean? | Examples |
|---|---|---|
| Lead, Led | • Lead (noun). A type of metal used in pipes and batteries.<br>• Led (verb). The past tense of the verb lead. | • The lead pipes in my homes are old and need to be replaced.<br>• After the garden, she led the patrons through the museum. |
| Lessen, Lesson | • Lessen (verb). To reduce in number, size, or degree.<br>• Lesson (noun). A reading or exercise to be studied by a student. | • My dentist gave me medicine to lessen the pain of my aching tooth.<br>• Today's lesson was about mortgage interest rates. |
| Passed, Past | • Passed (verb). To go away or move.<br>• Past (noun). Having existed or taken place in a period before the present. | • He passed the slower cars on the road using the left lane.<br>• The argument happened in the past, so there is no use in dwelling on it. |
| Patience, Patients | • Patience (noun). The capacity of being patient (waiting for a period of time or enduring pains and trials calmly).<br>• Patients (plural noun). Individuals under medical care. | • The novice teacher's patience with the unruly class was astounding.<br>• The patients were tired of eating the hospital food, and they could not wait for a home-cooked meal. |
| Peace, Piece | • Peace (noun). A state of tranquility or quiet.<br>• Piece (noun). A part of a whole. | • For once, there was peace between the argumentative brothers.<br>• I would like a large piece of cake, thank you. |
| Principle, Principal | • Principle (noun). A fundamental concept that is accepted as true.<br>• Principal (noun). The original amount of debt on which interest is calculated.<br>• Principal (noun). A person who is the main authority of a school. | • The principle of human equality is an important foundation for all nations.<br>• The payment plan allows me to pay back only the principal amount, not any compounded interest.<br>• The principal held a conference for both parents and teachers. |

| Sees, Seas, Seize | • Sees (verb). To perceive with the eye.<br>• Seas (plural noun). The plural of sea, a great body of salt water.<br>• Seize (verb). To possess or take by force. | • He sees a whale through his binoculars.<br>• The tidal fluctuation of the oceans and seas are influenced by the moon.<br>• The king plans to seize all the peasants' land. |
|---|---|---|
| Threw, Through | • Threw (verb). The past tense of throw.<br>• Through (preposition). A word that indicates movement. | • She threw the football with perfect form.<br>• She walked through the door and out of his life. |
| Where, Wear, Ware | • Where (adverb). The place in which something happens.<br>• Wear (verb). To carry or have on the body.<br>• Ware (noun). Articles of merchandise or manufacture (usually, wares). | • Where is the restaurant?<br>• I will wear my hiking shoes when go on a climb tomorrow morning.<br>• When I return from shopping, I will show you my wares. |
| Which, Witch | • Which (pronoun). Replaces one out of a group.<br>• Witch (noun). A person who practises sorcery or who has supernatural powers. | • Which apartment is yours?<br>• She thinks she is a witch, but she does not seem to have any powers. |

## Self-Practice Exercise 2.4

*An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=50#h5p-13 (https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=50#h5p-13)*

**H5P:** Complete the following sentences by selecting the correct homonym.

1. Do you agree with the underlying (principle, principal) that ensures copyrights are protected in the digital age?

2. Marjorie felt like she was being (led, lead) on a wild goose chase, and she did not like it one bit.

3. Serina described (witch, which) house was hers, but now that I am here, they all look the same.

4. Seeing his friend without a lunch, Miguel gave her a (peace, piece) of his apple.

5. Do you think that it is healthy for mother to talk about the (passed, past) all the time?

6. Eating healthier foods will (lessen, lesson) the risk of heart disease.

7. Daniela (sees, seas, seize) possibilities in the bleakest situations, and that it is why she is successful.

8. Everyone goes (through, threw) hardships in life regardless of who they are.

## Commonly Misspelled Words

Below is a list of commonly misspelled words. You probably use these words every day in either speaking or writing. Refer to this list as needed before, during, and after you write.

Tip: Use these two techniques to help you master these troublesome words:

- Copy each word a few times and underline areas that are tricky.
- Copy the words onto flash cards and have a friend test you.

- across
- address
- answer
- argument
- athlete
- beginning
- behaviour
- calendar
- career
- conscience
- crowded
- definite
- describe

- desperate
- different
- disappoint
- disapprove
- eighth
- embarrass
- environment
- exaggerate
- familiar
- finally
- government
- grammar
- height

- illegal
- immediate
- important
- integration
- intelligent
- interest
- interfere
- jewellery
- judgment
- knowledge
- maintain
- mathematics
- meant

- necessary
- nervous
- occasion
- opinion
- optimist
- particular
- perform
- personnel
- possess
- possible
- prefer
- prejudice
- privilege
- probably
- psychology
- pursue
- reference
- rhythm
- ridiculous
- separate
- speech
- similar
- since
- strength
- success
- surprise
- taught
- temperature
- thorough
- thought
- tired
- until
- weight
- written
- writing

### Self-Practice Exercise 2.5

*An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=50#h5p-14 (https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=50#h5p-14)*

**H5P:** After identifying each incorrectly spelled word, write in the correct spelling at the end of passage below.

Brooklyn is one of the five boroughs that make up New York City. It is located on the eastern shore of Long Island directly accross the East River from the island of Manhattan. Its beginings stretch back to the 16th century when it was founded by the Dutch who originally called it "Breuckelen." Immedietely after the Dutch settled Brooklyn, it came under British rule. However, neither the Dutch nor the British were Brooklyn's first inhabitants. When European settlers first arrived, Brooklyn was largely inhabited by the Lenapi, a collective name for several organized bands of Native American people who settled a large area of land that extended from upstate New York through the entire state of New Jersey. They are sometimes referred to as the Delaware Indians. Over time, the Lenapi succumbed to European diseases or conflicts between European settlers or other Native American enemies. Finalley, they were pushed out of Brooklyn completely by the British.

In 1776, Brooklyn was the site of the first importent battle of the American Revolution known as the Battle of Brooklyn. The colonists lost this battle, which was led by George Washington, but over the next two years they would win the war, kicking the British out of the colonies once and for all.

By the end of the 19th century, Brooklyn grew to be a city in its own right. The completion of the Brooklyn Bridge was an ocasion for celebration; transportation and commerce between Brooklyn and Manhattan now

became much easier. Eventually, in 1898, Brooklyn lost its seperate identity as an independent city and became one of five boroughs of New York City. However, in some people's opinien, the intagration into New York City should have never happened; they though Brooklyn should have remained an independant city.

Now that you have identified the misspelled words, write the correctly spelled words in the order that they appear in the passage above:

## Writing at Work

In today's job market, writing emails has become a means by which many people find employment. Emails to prospective employers require thoughtful word choice, accurate spelling, and perfect punctuation. Employers' inboxes are inundated with countless emails daily. If even the subject line of an email contains a spelling error, it will likely be overlooked and someone else's email will take priority.

The best thing to do after you proofread an email to an employer and run the spell checker is to have an additional set of eyes go over it with you; one of your teachers may be able to read the email and give you suggestions for improvement. Most colleges and universities have writing centres, which may also be able to assist you.

## Key Takeaways

- Accurate, error-free spelling enhances your credibility with the reader.
- Mastering the rules of spelling may help you become a better speller.
- Knowing the commonly misused homonyms may prevent spelling errors.
- Studying the list of commonly misspelled words in this chapter, or studying a list of your own, is one way to improve your spelling skills.

## Writing Application

What is your definition of a successful person? Is it based on a person's profession or character? Perhaps success means a combination of both. In one paragraph, describe in detail what you think makes a person successful. When you are finished, proofread your work for spelling errors. Exchange papers with a partner and read each other's work. See if you catch any spelling errors that your partner missed.

# 2.3 Word Choice

- Identify the reasons why using a dictionary and thesaurus is important when writing
- Identify how to use proper connotations
- Identify how to avoid using slang, clichés, and overly general words in your writing

Effective writing involves making conscious word choices. When you prepare to sit down to write your first draft, you likely have already completed some freewriting exercises, chosen your topic, developed your thesis statement, written an outline, and even selected your sources. When it is time to write your first draft, start to consider which words to use to best convey your ideas to the reader.

Some writers are picky about word choice as they start drafting. They may practise some specific strategies, such as using a dictionary and thesaurus, using words and phrases with proper connotations, and avoiding slang, clichés, and overly general words.

Once you understand these tricks of the trade, you can move ahead confidently in writing your assignment. Remember, the skill and accuracy of your word choice is a major factor in developing your writing style. Precise selection of your words will help you be more clearly understood—in both writing and speaking.

## Using a Dictionary and Thesaurus

Even professional writers need help with the meanings, spellings, pronunciations, and uses of particular words. In fact, they rely on dictionaries to help them write better. No one knows every word in the English language and their multiple uses and meanings, so all writers, from novices to professionals, can benefit from the use of dictionaries.

Most dictionaries provide the following information:

- Spelling: How the word and its different forms are spelled
- Pronunciation: How to say the word
- Part of speech: The function of the word
- Definition: The meaning of the word
- Synonyms: Words that have similar meanings

- Etymology: The history of the word

Look at the following sample dictionary entry and see which of the preceding information you can identify:

myth, mith, n. [Gr. mythos, a word, a fable, a legend.] A fable or legend embodying the convictions of a people as to their gods or other divine beings, their own beginnings and early history and the heroes connected with it, or the origin of the world; any invented story; something or someone having no existence in fact.—myth • ic, myth • i • cal

Like a dictionary, a thesaurus is another indispensable writing tool. A thesaurus gives you a list of synonyms—words that have the same (or close to the same) meaning as another word. It also lists antonyms—words with the opposite meaning of the word. A thesaurus will help you when you are looking for the perfect word with just the right meaning to convey your ideas. It will also help you learn more words and use the ones you already know more correctly. Look at the following thesaurus entry:

precocious adj, She's such a precocious little girl!: uncommonly smart, mature, advanced, smart, bright, brilliant, gifted, quick, clever, apt.

Ant. slow, backward, stupid.

## Using Proper Connotations

A denotation is the dictionary definition of a word. A *connotation,* on the other hand, is the emotional or cultural meaning attached to a word. The connotation of a word can be positive, negative, or neutral. Keep in mind the connotative meaning when choosing a word. Look at the examples below:

**Table 2.3 Denotation vs. Connotation**

| Word | Denotation | Sentence | Connotation |
|------|-----------|----------|-------------|
| Scrawny | Exceptionally thin and slight or meagre in body or size. | Although he was a premature baby and a scrawny child, Martin has developed into a strong man. | (Negative) In this sentence the word scrawny may have a negative connotation in the readers' minds. They might find it to mean a weakness or a personal flaw; however, the word fits into the sentence appropriately. |
| Skinny | Lacking sufficient flesh, very thin. | Skinny jeans have become very fashionable in the past couple of years. | (Positive) Based on cultural and personal impressions of what it means to be skinny, the reader may have positive connotations of the word skinny. |
| Lean | Lacking or deficient in flesh; containing little or no fat. | My brother has a lean figure, whereas I have a more muscular build. | (Neutral) In this sentence, lean has a neutral connotation. It does not call to mind an overly skinny person like the word scrawny, nor does imply the positive cultural impressions of the word skinny. It is merely a neutral descriptive word. |

Notice that all the words have a very similar denotation; however, the connotations of each word differ.

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Self-Practice Exercise 2.6

> *An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:*
> *https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=52#h5p-15 (https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=52#h5p-15)*

**H5P:** Group the following words into positive, negative, and neutral based on their connotation.

- relaxed
- cackle
- foolhardy
- lazy
- slow

- new
- laugh
- curious
- assured
- modern

- shack
- residence
- interested
- courageous
- giggle

- newfangled
- mansion
- nosy

## Avoiding Slang

Slang describes informal words that are considered nonstandard English. Slang often changes with passing fads and may be used by or familiar to only a specific group of people. Most people use slang when they speak and in personal correspondence, such as emails, text messages, and instant messages.

Slang is appropriate between friends in an informal context but should be avoided in formal academic writing.

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### Writing at Work

Frequent exposure to media and popular culture has desensitized many of us to slang. In certain situations, using slang at work may not be problematic, but keep in mind that words can have a powerful effect. Slang in professional emails or during meetings may convey the wrong message or even mistakenly offend someone.

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### Self-Practice Exercise 2.7

*An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=52#h5p-16 (https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=52#h5p-16)*

**H5P:** Revising for Formal Prose

Read the following example of student writing.

I felt like such an airhead when I got up to give my speech. As I walked toward the podium, I banged my knee on a chair. Man, I felt like such a klutz. On top of that, I kept saying "like" and "um," and I could not stop fidgeting. I was so stressed out about being up there. I feel like I've been practising this speech 24/7, and I still bombed. It was 10 minutes of me going off about how we sometimes have to do things we don't enjoy doing. Wow, did I ever prove my point. My speech was so bad I'm surprised that people didn't boo. My teacher said not to sweat it, though. Everyone gets nervous their first time speaking in public, and she said, with time, I would become a whiz at this speech giving stuff. I wonder if I have the guts to do it again.

- Which passages in the paragraph would you describe as "slang" that you should avoid in your writing?

- For each of the examples you noted above, indicate how you will fix the use of slang to reflect more formal academic writing.

- Now, rewrite the entire paragraph to be more reflective of what academic writing should look like.

## Avoiding Clichés

Clichés are descriptive expressions that have lost their effectiveness because they are overused. Writing that uses clichés often suffers from a lack of originality and insight. Avoiding clichés in formal writing will help you write in original and fresh ways.

- Clichéd: Whenever my brother and I get into an argument, he always says something that makes my blood boil.

- Plain: Whenever my brother and I get into an argument, he always says something that makes me really angry.

- Original: Whenever my brother and I get into an argument, he always says something that makes me want to go to the gym and punch the bag for a few hours.

Tip: Think about all the cliché phrases that you hear in popular music or in everyday conversation. What would happen if these clichés were transformed into something unique?

Self-Practice Exercise 2.8

*An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=52#h5p-17 (https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=52#h5p-17)*

**H5P:** In each of the statements below, pick the one that uses a cliché.

1.         A. She is writing a memoir to explore her family history, including the negative parts.

B. She is writing a memoir in which she will air her family's dirty laundry.

2. A. Fran had an axe to grind with Benny, and she planned to confront him that night at the party.

B. Fran was angry with Benny for years of annoyances, and she planned to confront him that night at the party.

3. A. Mr. Muller was at his wit's end with the rowdy class of seventh graders.

B. Mr. Muller could no longer cope with the rowdy class of seventh graders.

4. A. Greg was fired because he missed too many days of work.

B. The bottom line is that Greg was fired because he missed too many days of work.

5. A. Sometimes it is hard to make ends meet with just one paycheque.

B. Sometimes it is hard to pay for everything I need with just one paycheque.

6. A. I'm finding it hard to work today after studying all night.

B. My brain is fried from pulling an all-nighter.

7. A. Maria left the dishes in the sink all week to show Jeff that she was frustrated with his lack of help with daily tasks.

B. Maria left the dishes in the sink all week to give Jeff a taste of his own medicine.

8. A. While they were at the carnival, Janice exclaimed, "I love this, and I'm so sorry we have to go home soon!"

B. While they were at the carnival, Janice exclaimed, "Time sure does fly when you are having fun!"

9. A. Jeremy struggled to find a response when the interviewer asked him where he saw himself in five years.

B. Jeremy became tongue-tied after the interviewer asked him where he saw himself in five years.

**Answer Key**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. B | 4. B | 7. B |
| 2. A | 5. A | 8. B |
| 3. A | 6. B | 9. B |

## Avoiding Overly General Words

Specific words and images make your writing more interesting to read. Whenever possible, avoid overly general words in your writing; instead, try to replace general language with particular nouns,

verbs, and modifiers that convey details and that bring yours words to life. Add words that provide colour, texture, sound, and even smell to your writing.

- General: My new puppy is cute.

- General: My teacher told us that plagiarism is bad.

- Specific: My teacher, Ms. Atwater, created a presentation detailing exactly how plagiarism is illegal and unethical.

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**Self-Practice Exercise 2.9**

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*https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=52#h5p-18 (https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=52#h5p-18)*

**H5P:** Rewrite the Sentences.

For each of the sentences below, rewrite the plain, general prose to be more detailed and specific. See the example above for a suggestion.

1. Reilly got into her car and drove off.
2. I would like to travel to outer space because it would be amazing.
3. Jane came home after a bad day at the office.
4. I thought Milo's essay was fascinating.
5. The dog walked up the street.
6. The coal miners were tired after a long day.
7. The tropical fish are pretty.
8. I sweat a lot after running.
9. The goalie blocked the shot.
10. I enjoyed my Mexican meal.

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**Key Takeaways**

- Using a dictionary and thesaurus as you write will improve your writing by improving your word choice.

- Connotations of words may be positive, neutral, or negative.
- Slang, clichés, and overly general words should be avoided in academic writing.

### Writing Application

Review a piece of writing that you have completed for school. Circle any sentences with slang, clichés, or overly general words and rewrite them using stronger language.

# 2.4 Angle of Vision

On occasion, you will be asked to write an emotionally expressive or sensory piece—something like your journal entries. However, during your academic studies, your instructors will ask you to write essays that are fact based and academic in tone. This means you will only be able to show your opinions by the choice of ideas you discuss and how you present your evidence. Your instructors will expect you to compose emotion-free papers, which means you have to choose your words carefully. When you write pieces full of emotion without facts, the reader is less likely to trust your argument. Imagine that you feel very strongly on an issue but do not use facts to support your argument. What if the reader disagrees with you? Since you have not provided factual supporting evidence, the reader will not be convinced of your point of view.

In this section, we will explore the impact of emotional writing and the impact on the reader; we will also explore word choices and their possible connotations. To begin, look at the two passages in Self-Practice Exercise 2.10 showing different angles of vision or points of view.

Self-Practice Exercise 2.10

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**H5P:** Noticing Angle of Vision

**Passages and Questions**

Read these two passages, and then answer the questions below.

**Passage 1**

What a glorious day! The beautiful sun is shining down on those basking, hoping to absorb its wonderful rays. The surf is playfully nudging the young children who are frolicking in the waves. A group of smiling young people laugh joyously as they plan an exciting game of volleyball. As I watch their rousing game, I enjoy the feel of the warm sand playing between my toes. I love summer at the beach!

**Passage 2**

It is way too hot! The sun is beating down on all those foolish enough to think it is healthy to get a suntan. They will be sorry when they burn. I keep seeing unsupervised children getting knocked down by the strong waves, and their negligent parents are nowhere to be seen. Nearby, some rowdy teenagers keep laughing obnoxiously every time one in their group misses the volleyball; they are really terrible volleyball players. I would like to move from where I am sitting, but the sand is scorching hot and will burn my feet. I wish I had stayed home!

- What are the differences in the physical setting that these passages are describing? Are they in different locations or happening at different times of day? Are there different people involved?
- What evidence beyond sensory perceptions and personal opinion do the writers provide?
- Which one are you more likely to agree with? Why? Is this because it matches your personal opinion of the beach or because it is combined with supporting facts?

It is clear that the two authors like or appreciate conditions and experiences differently. In Passage 1, the writer likes warm weather and does not mind noise, but in Passage 2, the writer would probably prefer to be at home in air conditioning. Ultimately, the passage that you connect with more is probably based on how you personally feel about going to the beach. Because the passages are based solely on opinion, there is nothing in them to convince the reader that other perspectives or angles of vision are valid. This is why you need to use facts to back up your ideas when writing (and of course include citations, which are discussed in **Chapter 9: Citations and Referencing**). However, before we look at objective, fact-based writing, your first assignment will give you an opportunity to practise choosing your words to show differing perspectives; it will also help you to see how changing words can completely change the effect of the writing.

## Assignment 1: Angles of Vision (2.5%)

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*https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=54#h5p-20 (https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=54#h5p-20)*

**H5P:** Angles of Vision

**Assignment Preparation**

Choose a place where you can sit and observe for 15-20 minutes. For this assignment, you will be asked to write two focused descriptions of this scene that will enable your reader to see what you see. You will actually have to write two descriptions of the same scene. One will be of the scene from a positive or favourable perspective; the other needs to convey a negative or unfavourable impression.

Both descriptions must contain only factual details and must describe exactly the same scene from the same location at the same time. This means that you cannot just change the facts like making the weather cloudy instead of sunny; your descriptive words need to do the work for you.

Length: combined total of 300 to 400 words for both paragraphs.

- Spend some time noting details and jotting down the key words that come to mind as you observe this space. Try to focus on the negative details first.
- Spend some time noting details and jotting down the key words that come to mind as you observe this space. Try to focus on the positive details first.

**Reviewing the Criteria**

Remember that your paragraphs should meet the following criteria:

- 150-200 words each (300-400 words total).
- Include only factual details.
- Have one from a positive and one from a negative perspective, but the facts remain the same.
- Be detailed enough to evoke a clear response from the reader.
- For each of the criteria listed here, click the Add Criteria button and explain how you will meet the requirements for this assignment.

**Drafting Your Paragraphs**

Make your first attempt at drafting your negative paragraph. Aim for 150-200 words and include some of the details you identified in your first step.

Reread what you've written, and look at your surroundings some more. Are the change you want to make? Revise your paragraph here.

**Drafting Your Paragraphs**

Make your first attempt at drafting your positive paragraph. Aim for 150-200 words and include some of the details you identified in your first step.

Reread what you've written, and look at your surroundings some more. Are the change you want to make? Revise your paragraph here.

**Reviewing Criteria Again**

Reflect on each of the parts of your assignment as laid out in the criteria.

Assignment 1 shows you that changing your wording even slightly can completely change the impact or effect. This exercise also showed you an example of **subjective** writing—something that is writer centred often based on the writer's sensory perceptions or emotions.

We have also talked about how the reader's angle of vision may differ from the writer's, and since there are no facts to give the reader a solid and believable perspective, the reader could be unconvinced. Now, we will look at an **objective**, or quantifiable, factual/scientific, example of the same type of passage.

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**Self-Practice Exercise 2.11**

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**H5P:** Passages and Questions

Read this passage, which offers a contrast with the kind of writing you read in Self-Practice Exercise 2.10, and answer the questions below.

On the morning of Saturday, June 10, I decided to visit the beach. The sky was clear with no clouds visible in the sky. I arrived at the beach at about 12:30, and it was already quite warm. I had to drive with the windows open, and it read 25C on the car's temperature display. Just before getting out of the car, I remembered to grab my 30 SPF sunscreen because I got burned so badly last year, and I do not want to experience that blistering again this year. In front of me, there were five children who were about six years old playing in the foot-high waves; it looked like their parents were sitting watching them carefully from about four metres away probably just in case the waves got too high and they needed to dash to their children quickly. I chose a spot 10 metres to the right away from a group of young people, maybe 16 years old, playing volleyball, close enough to watch them having fun but far away enough to not get hit by any stray balls. These teenagers must have been playing just for fun because it seemed like someone missed every second ball, and the entire group started laughing when they did. Thankfully I wore my sandals, so I could feel the warmth of the sand between my toes but protect my feet in case the sand got too hot.

**Questions:**

- How is this passage different from the subjective examples in Self-Practice Exercise 2.10?
- What evidence beyond sensory perceptions and personal opinion does the writer provide?
- Is the passage more positive or negative? Does it discuss both good and bad things? What is different about how the different perspectives are presented?

---

In the passage above, the writer has presented both positive and negative situations, but the language she used is neutral and without judgment. The writer has linked bad past experiences and put a positive spin on them or was able to see possible negatives but also present solutions. She also provided enough detail (measurements, temperatures, distances, etc.) to present a more complete description, so the reader could visualize where everyone was situated in the scene, how hot it was, how high the waves were. Essentially, the writer presented a complete, unemotional, and objective perspective that is supported by quantifiable evidence.

## 2.5 Reading Comprehension Techniques

> **Learning Objectives**
>
> - Recognize patterns and identify key words to differentiate between main and supporting ideas
> - Apply pattern identification words to reinforce understanding of main ideas
> - Make inferences from implied information

In the last chapter, we looked at ways to approach reading to help you understand, process, analyze, synthesize, and, ultimately, remember information better. In this chapter, we will take this a step further by developing your skills in how to understand the material you read by helping you to distinguish the main ideas in a passage from the more specific supporting details. One way to do this is to recognize patterns, which will help you organize your thinking in systematic ways that parallel the presentation in the source. Key terms for such patterns are:

- **Main/controlling ideas** (located in topic sentences)
- **Key details** (located within paragraphs)
- **Patterns** (form the structure of the paragraph or section)
- **Inferences** (are not usually written and must be concluded by the reader)

Many people read to remember everything and do not distinguish between key concepts, key supporting details, positions relative to these concepts, and inferences that can be drawn. Creating a road map with these highlights helps you both to understand and to remember what you read. This section includes a few exercises to practise identifying the main and supporting ideas in passages representing the different patterns.

## Reading for Main Ideas and Details

Creating or identifying main ideas is like creating a skeleton that holds all the rest of the information together—creating a body. Key facts are like muscles. The point of view and its implications are like the blood that gives life to the body. Some main ideas are directly stated; others are implied, and you must infer a statement yourself. When you read, you can identify the main idea of a paragraph, section, chapter, or book by asking yourself the following questions:

- What is the topic or subject matter? What/who is this about?
- What am I supposed to understand about this? (This is the idea about the topic.)

- Are there any sentences that help clarify what I am supposed to understand about the topic? (Often the first or last sentence will state the main idea.)

- How do I know for sure? All the important information in the paragraph is covered by the main idea sentence. Does it help me to understand what is being said about the topic?

## Self-Practice Exercise 2.12

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*An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=56#h5p-23 (https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=56#h5p-23)*

*An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=56#h5p-24 (https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=56#h5p-24)*

**H5P:** Read the passage and identify the main idea. It's okay to use the author's own words here.

When we think about it, is there really something that we can call "the public"? The population of communities is really made up of a set of publics. The needs and interests of a population are uniform on only the broadest matters, such as health and the security of the person and his or her property. Beyond those very broad areas of policy, needs and interests differ, sometimes very markedly, and sometimes in ways that cause conflict between competing interests. It is highly unlikely that diverse needs or interests of all groups or individuals can all be satisfied at the same time. Thus, industrial firms that produce hazardous wastes may need sites to dispose of such undesirable by-products. Such firms can be thought of as one "public" and it is apparent that their need will conflict with the interests of another public—the people who live near the proposed disposal site.

**H5P:** Read the passage and identify the main idea. It's okay to use the author's own words here.

Marketing research is a major component or subsystem within a marketing information system. It is used in a very wide variety of marketing situations. Typically, in a marketing research study the problem to be solved is first identified. Then a researcher decides whether to use secondary or primary sources of information. To

gather primary data, the researcher may use the survey, observation, or experimental method. Normally, primary data are gathered by sampling. Then the data are analyzed, and a written report is prepared.

**H5P:** Which of the following sentences is the best main point for this paragraph?

According to psychiatrist Richard Moscotti, the ability to work well is one key to a balanced life. He feels both underworking and overworking are to be avoided. A second key is the ability to love, which requires a certain amount of openness. The ability to be loved is the third key to a balanced life. This is difficult for those who feel unworthy of love. The last key is the ability to play, which involves knowing how to relax.

    A.  According to Moscotti, some people having trouble receiving love.

    B.  The final key to a balanced life, according to Moscotti, is the ability to play.

    C.  According to Moscotti, there are four keys to a balanced life.

    D.  The first key to a balanced life, according to Moscotti, is the ability to work well.

Correct Answer: C

How did you do? Were you able to identify which were the more general statements from the supporting details? Most of the time, the topic sentence (= the controlling/main idea) is at or near the beginning of the paragraph, but sometimes it is not. Always remember that when identifying the topic sentence, all of the other ideas in that paragraph need to be an example or detail relating to that main point. If one of the ideas does not fit, either you have chosen a statement or idea that is too specific (or the writer did not create a strong topic sentence in the paragraph). When we look at creating paragraphs and topic sentences in the next chapter, you will learn what creates a strong topic sentence, and this will help you with identifying them in the future.

## Reading for Patterns

Depending on the writer's purpose and the information being shared, there are four general groupings by which information is organized:

- Definitions, details, and illustrations
- Time sequences, process descriptions, experiment/instructions, and simple listing
- Comparison and contrast
- Cause and effect

## Reading for Key Details

Some details are more important than others in explaining, supporting, or developing the main idea. Others are further illustrations of details.

The following list shows key words you can use to help you identify patterns with ideas in relation to

the four groupings listed above. Whichever words from whichever group are used, they will help the reader follow the logical organization of the material.

- **Definitions, details, and illustrations.** Usually when you see these, a definition or concept preceded it.
  - for example
  - for instance
  - as an illustration
  - to illustrate
  - such as
  - to be specific
  - specifically
  - including one
- **Time sequence, process description, experiment/instructions, simple listing.** Some of these can be used to both show sequence in time and ideas.
  - Time order:
    - first, second, third, etc
    - then, since, next, before, after, as soon as, now, until, later, while, during, when, finally
  - Additive listing: also, another, and, in addition, moreover, next, first of all, first, second, furthermore, last of all, finally
- **Compare and contrast**
  - Compare: similarly, similar to, just as with, in comparison, likewise, like, liken, both, compared to, in the same way, in a similar fashion
  - Contrast: on the other hand, conversely, rather, on the contrary, but, however, alternatively, differ, instead of, in contrast to, despite, nevertheless
- **Cause and Effect**
  - thus, because, because of, causes, as a result, results in, result, affects, therefore, since, leads to, brings about, consequently

The previous list categorizes key words that can help you identify main and supporting ideas when you are reading. You will also need to apply these throughout the rest of the chapters when developing sentences, paragraphs, and essays. In **Chapter 12: Final Revisions and Peer Review**, we will look at the punctuation that you need to use with these words.

The next exercises will give you opportunities to practise identifying the main and key ideas in paragraphs.

Self-Practice Exercise 2.13

The original version of this chapter contained H5P content. You may want to remove or replace this element.

**H5P:** Read the passage below and then make note of the following things: the main term, its definition, key details, and an example.

Eidetic imagery is the technical term for what most people know as photographic memory. People with eidetic imagery can recall every detail of a memory as clearly as if they were looking at a photograph. People often wish they had this ability, but it can lead to trouble. For example, a law student with eidetic imagery was accused of cheating on an examination because his test paper contained exactly the words in his textbook. To prove his innocence, he studied an unfamiliar passage for five minutes and then wrote down more than 400 words from it without making a mistake.

Self-Practice Exercise 2.14

The original version of this chapter contained H5P content. You may want to remove or replace this element.

**H5P:** Read the passage below and then identify the effects caused by the condition described.

Suffering from debilitating guilt causes many self-defeating behaviours in adulthood. We see adults submitting to the outrageous demands of partners or employers. We see individuals who appear to be constantly angry and then, almost immediately, guilty. We see adults who have felt lifelong depression. The rage felt when shamed in childhood and when suffering from debilitating shame in adulthood is turned against the self because of the dependency on the other for survival. When we are rejected in adulthood by a mate or lover, the feelings we experience are anger at being rejected. Furthermore, if we suffer from debilitating shame, we have not been able to gain autonomy. We continue to feel dependent upon attachment figures. It is from them, from their feelings, attitudes and opinions of us, that we feel worthwhile. To be angry at someone depended upon for survival causes us enormous guilt. Anger is redirected on the vulnerable self. We become trapped in a circular bind of shame, anger, anxiety, guilt, and depression.

## Reading for Implications/Inferences: Tracing a Theme to its Conclusion

The methods of recognizing patterns discussed above are concrete and easy to identify. Inferences, on the other hand, are more subtle. When a writer implies something, he or she is giving hints but does not state the point directly. Think about a time, for example, when you had people visiting you at home; it was late, and you wanted them to leave. Did you ask them directly, "Hey, can you leave now"? Probably not, but you may have hinted that you had to wake up early in the morning, or you may have subtly yawned. Hopefully, those people picked up on your cues and inferred it was time to leave: meaning they put the pieces together to arrive at the conclusion you wanted them to leave, yet you did not say it directly.

When a writer does this, the reader may not actually pick up on the hints or maybe even interpret them differently. Sometimes readers make inferences that are based more on their own preferences and experience than on the information provided. This also means that two readers may interpret the same information differently because of differing individual experiences that led them to arrive at their conclusions. For you as a writer, you need to remember that it is your responsibility to give the readers everything they need in order for them to arrive at the conclusions you want them to make. If you are not direct, readers may be left confused or not catch your point.

There are also times that you as a reader will need to read passages requiring you to make inferences. The next exercises will help you to practise reading for inference. Remember, if your answers are different than the ones given, it means you interpreted the information differently and may have missed the author's point. In these passages, you can also use a process of elimination and ask yourself statement best completes the passage.

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### Self-Practice Exercise 2.15

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**H5P**: Reading for Implications

Read each passage and choose the answer that best completes the thought of the passage. Think about why the other answers would not be a correct conclusion to the passage.

1. To a manufacturer, the wages paid to employees are a large portion of production expenses. The fact that wages also determine the buying power of the consumer is sometimes overlooked. In times of overproduction, the manufacturer tries to lower operating costs by decreasing the number of employees. This reduces expenditures of money in wages, but it also:

    A. raises costs

    B. reduces consumption

    C. maintains the status quo

    D. increases population

2. Totally new cities that will be built in the future may be better planned than the large cities that already exist. Old cities were not properly planned for the great growth in population and industry that they have had, and many are in the process of tearing down and rebuilding large sections. This process is helping to improve some old cities—both large and small ones—but it does not give them the choice of complete city designing that will be available to:

    A. foreign cities

B. larger cities

C. richer cities

D. new cities

3. The director of this company believes that there is a growing awareness by management that business corporations are, and should be, guided by policies that are designed to satisfy human needs as well as material needs, and that there is nothing inconsistent between this and the making of:

A. good and satisfying profits

B. political enemies in some quarters

C. better opportunities for workers

D. educational opportunities for workers

4. Knowledge and pleasure are inextricably interlocked. It is impossible for us to learn what we do not enjoy, and we cannot enjoy that which does not impart:

A. a strong emotion

B. a practical use

C. a novelty

D. a lesson

5. Oratory is to be best estimated on different principles from those that are applied to other productions. Truth is the object of philosophy and history. The merit of poetry is in its truth even though the truth is understood only through the imagination, which is aroused by poetry. The object of oratory is not truth but persuasion. A speaker who exhausts the whole philosophy of a question, who displays every grace of style, yet produces no effect on an audience, may be a great essayist, a great politician, a great master of composition, but:

A. essentially a persuader

B. not a poet

C. not an orator

D. essentially an orator

**Answer Key**

1. B          3. A          5. C

2. D          4. D

Check back if you missed any of the answers in this self-exercise. In which instances did you read into the passages your ideas when selecting an answer versus what is stated in the passage?

In the next chapter, we will practise taking these main ideas and supporting ideas and put them into our own words, or paraphrase, to compose summaries which are very useful not only for remembering and studying information before tests but also for looking at sources and incorporating the information in

them into your essays—essentially providing backing evidence to make your arguments more convincing.

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### Journal Entry 1

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**H5P:** Question Prompts

- What did you notice about your writing style? Do you write more subjectively or objectively? Did you find that you struggled with one perspective or angle of vision over the other? What do you think you need to work on in regards to this?
- Which, if any, of the spelling and word choice issues do think you will have to focus on throughout the semester and in your writing in general?
- Reflect on the goals you set in Chapter 1. Is there anything you would like to add or already feel more confident with doing?

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## Flashcards

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# Chapter 3. Putting Ideas into Your Own Words and Paragraphs

# 3.1 Sentence Writing

- Identify the components of a basic sentence
- Identify the four most serious writing errors

Before we work more on piecing ideas together to form summaries and paragraphs, we need to look at fundamental sentence construction. Imagine you are reading a book for school. You need to find important details that you can use for an assignment. However, when you begin to read, you notice that the book has very little punctuation. The sentences fail to form complete paragraphs and instead form one block of text without clear organization. Most likely, this book would frustrate and confuse you. Without clear and concise sentences, it is difficult to find the information you need.

For both students and professionals, clear communication is important. Whether you are typing an email or writing a report or essay, it is your responsibility as the writer to present your thoughts and ideas clearly and precisely. Writing in complete sentences is one way to ensure that you communicate well. This section covers how to recognize and write basic sentence structures and how to avoid some common writing errors.

## Components of a Sentence

Clearly written, complete sentences require key information: a subject, a verb and a complete idea. A sentence needs to make sense on its own. Sometimes, complete sentences are also called independent clauses. A **clause** is a group of words that may make up a sentence. An **independent clause** is a group of words that may stand alone as a complete, grammatically correct thought. The following sentences show independent clauses in curly brackets:

{We went to the store.} {We bought the ingredients on out list}, and then {we went home.}

All complete sentences have at least one independent clause. You can identify an independent clause by reading it on its own and looking for the subject and the verb.

## Subjects

When you read a sentence, you may first look for the **subject** or what the sentence is about. The subject usually appears at the beginning of a sentence as a noun or a pronoun. A **noun** is a word that identifies a person, place, thing, or idea. A **pronoun** is a word that replaces a noun. Common pronouns are I, he, she, it, you, they, and we. In the following sentences, the subject is underlined once.

Malik is the project manager for this project. He will give us our assignments.

In these sentences, the subject is a person: Malik. The pronoun He replaces and refers back to Malik.

The computer lab is where we will work. It will be open twenty-four hours a day.

In the first sentence, the subject is a place: computer lab. In the second sentence, the pronoun It substitutes for computer lab as the subject.

The project will run for three weeks. It will have a quick turnaround.

In the first sentence, the subject is a thing: project. In the second sentence, the pronoun It stands in for the project.

Tip: In this chapter, please refer to the following grammar key:

- Subjects are underlined once.
- Verbs are underlined twice.
- LV means linking verb; HV means helping verb; V means action verb.

### Compound Subjects

A sentence may have more than one person, place, or thing as the subject. These subjects are

called **compound subjects**. Compound subjects are useful when you want to discuss several subjects at once.

> Desmond and Maria have been working on that design for almost a year.
>
> Books, magazines, and online articles are all good resources.

In the first sentence, the subjects are *Desmond* and *Maria*. In the second sentence, *books, magazines,* and *online articles* are the subjects.

## Prepositional Phrases

You will often read a sentence that has more than one noun or pronoun in it. You may encounter a group of words that includes a **preposition** with a noun or a pronoun. Prepositions connect a noun, pronoun, or verb to another word that describes or modifies that noun, pronoun, or verb. Common prepositions include in, on, under, near, by, with, and about. A group of words that begin with a preposition is called a **prepositional phrase**. A prepositional phrase begins with a preposition and modifies or describes a word. It cannot act as the subject of a sentence. The following phrases inside curly brackets are examples of prepositional phrases.

> We went {on a business trip}. That restaurant {with the famous pizza} was on the way. We stopped {for lunch}.

The prepositional phrases in this example include *on a business trip, with the famous pizza,* and *for lunch*.

### Self-Practice Exercise 3.1

*An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=63#h5p-28 (https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=63#h5p-28)*

**H5P:** Circle the subject of the sentence. If the subject is compound, circle all the words relevant to the subject. You can ignore articles and conjunctions. Underline any prepositional phrases in the sentence. Underline words that make up the prepositional phrase. Ignore articles: click only the prepositions and their objects.

1. The gym is open until nine o'clock tonight.
2. The student with the most extra credit will win a homework pass.
3. Maya and Tia found an abandoned cat by the side of the road.
4. The driver of that pickup truck skidded on the ice.
5. Anita won the race with time to spare.
6. The people who work for that company were surprised about the merger.
7. Working in haste means that you are more likely to make mistakes.
8. The soundtrack has over 60 songs in languages from around the world.
9. His latest invention does not work, but it has inspired the rest of us.

# Verbs

Once you locate the subject of a sentence, you can move on to the next part of a complete sentence: the **verb**. A verb is often an action word that shows what the subject is doing. A verb can also link the subject to a describing word. There are three types of verbs that you can use in a sentence: action verbs, linking verbs, or helping verbs.

### Action Verbs

A verb that connects the subject to an action is called an **action verb**. An action verb answers the question what is the subject doing? In the following sentences, the words underlined twice are action verbs.

> The dog <u>barked</u> at the jogger.
>
> He <u>gave</u> a short speech before we ate.

*Barked* and *gave* are action verbs.

**Linking Verbs**

A verb can often connect the subject of the sentence to a describing word. This type of verb is called a **linking verb** because it links the subject to a describing word. In the following sentences, the words underlined twice are linking verbs.

The coat <u>was</u> old and dirty.

The clock <u>seemed</u> broken.

*Was* and *seemed* are linking verbs.

If you have trouble telling the difference between action verbs and linking verbs, remember:

- An action verb shows that the subject is doing something.
- A linking verb simply connects the subject to another word that describes or modifies the subject.

A few verbs can be used as either action verbs or linking verbs.

Action verb: The boy <u>looked</u> for his glove.

Linking verb: The boy <u>looked</u> tired.

Although both sentences use the same verb, the two sentences have completely different meanings. In the first sentence, the verb describes the boy's action. In the second sentence, the verb describes the boy's appearance.

**Helping Verbs**

A third type of verb you may use as you write is a **helping verb**. Helping verbs are verbs that are used with the main verb to describe a mood or tense. Helping verbs are usually a form of be, do, or have. The word can is also used as a helping verb.

The restaurant <u>is known</u> for its variety of dishes.

*Is* is the helping verb. *Known* is the main verb.

> She <u>does speak up</u> when prompted in class.

*Does* is the helping verb. *Speak up* is the main verb.

> We <u>have seen</u> that movie three times.

*Have* is the helping verb. *Seen* is the main verb.

> They <u>can tell</u> when someone walks on their lawn.

*Can* is the helping verb. *Tell* is the main verb.

Tip: Whenever you write or edit sentences, keep the subject and verb in mind. As you write, ask yourself these questions to keep yourself on track:

- Subject: Who or what is the sentence about?
- Verb: Which word shows an action or links the subject to a description?

## Self-Practice Exercise 3.2

*An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=63#h5p-29 (https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=63#h5p-29)*

**H5P:** Please circle on all the verbs in the sentences below. If the very uses two words, circle on both.

1. The cat sounds ready to come back inside.
2. We have not eaten dinner yet.
3. It took four people to move the broken down car.
4. The book was filled with notes from class.
5. We walked from room to room, inspecting for damages.
6. Harold was expecting a package in the mail.
7. The clothes still felt damp even though they had been through the dryer twice.
8. The teacher who runs the studio is often praised for his restoration work on old masterpieces.

Name the type of verb used in each sentence. Use V for action verbs, LV for linking verbs, and HV for helping verbs. The blank comes after each verb.

1. The cat sounds ready to come back inside.
2. We have not eaten dinner yet.
3. It took four people to move the broken down car.
4. The book was filled with notes from class.
5. We walked from room to room, inspecting for damages.
6. Harold was expecting a package in the mail.
7. The clothes still felt damp even though they had been through the dryer twice.
8. The teacher who runs the studio is often praised for his restoration work on old masterpieces.

## Sentence Structure (Including Fragments)

Now that you know what makes a complete sentence—a subject and a verb—you can use other parts of speech to build on this basic structure. Good writers use a variety of sentence structures to make their work more interesting. This section covers different sentence structures that you can use to make longer, more complex sentences.

### Sentence Patterns

Six basic subject-verb patterns can enhance your writing. A sample sentence is provided for each pattern. As you read each sentence, take note of where each part of the sentence falls. Notice that some sentence patterns use action verbs and others use linking verbs.

# Subject – Verb

Computers <u>hum</u>.

# Subject – Linking Verb – Noun

Computers <u>are</u> tools.

# Subject – Linking Verb – Adjective

<u>Computers</u> <u>are</u> expensive.

# Subject – Verb – Adverb

<u>Computers</u> <u>calculate</u> quickly.

# Subject – Verb – Direct Object

When you write a sentence with a direct object (DO), make sure that the DO receives the action of the verb.

> Sally rides a motorcycle.

*Sally* is the subject. *Rides* is the verb. *A motorcycle* is the direct object.

# Subject – Verb – Indirect Object – Direct Object

In this sentence structure, an indirect object () explains *to whom* or *to what* the action is being done. The indirect object is a noun or pronoun, and it comes before the direct object in a sentence.

> My coworker gave me the reports.

*My coworker* is the subject. *Gave* is the verb. *Me* is the indirect object. *Reports* is the direct object.

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**Self-Practice Exercise 3.3**

*An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=63#h5p-30 (https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=63#h5p-30)*

**H5P:** Fill in the blanks to the right of each word to indicate its part of speech. Use **S** for subject, **V** for verb,

N for noun, **LV** for linking verb, **ADJ** for adjective, **ADV** for adverb, **DO** for direct object, **IO** for indirect object.

1.  John _____ runs _____ .
2.  John _____ is _____ an athlete _____ .
3.  John _____ is _____ hurt _____ .
4.  John _____ heals _____ quickly _____ .
5.  John _____ buys _____ a bicycle _____ .
6.  John _____ gives _____ me _____ his running shoes _____ .

## Fragments

The sentences you have encountered so far have been independent clauses. As you look more closely at your past writing assignments, you may notice that some of your sentences are not complete. A sentence that is missing a subject or a verb is called a **fragment**. A fragment may include a description or may express part of an idea, but it does not express a complete thought.

- Fragment: Children helping in the kitchen.

- Complete sentence: Children helping in the kitchen often make a mess.

You can easily fix a fragment by adding the missing subject or verb. In the example, the sentence was missing a verb. Adding often make a mess creates an S-V-N sentence structure. Figure 3.1 illustrates how you can edit a fragment to become a complete sentence.
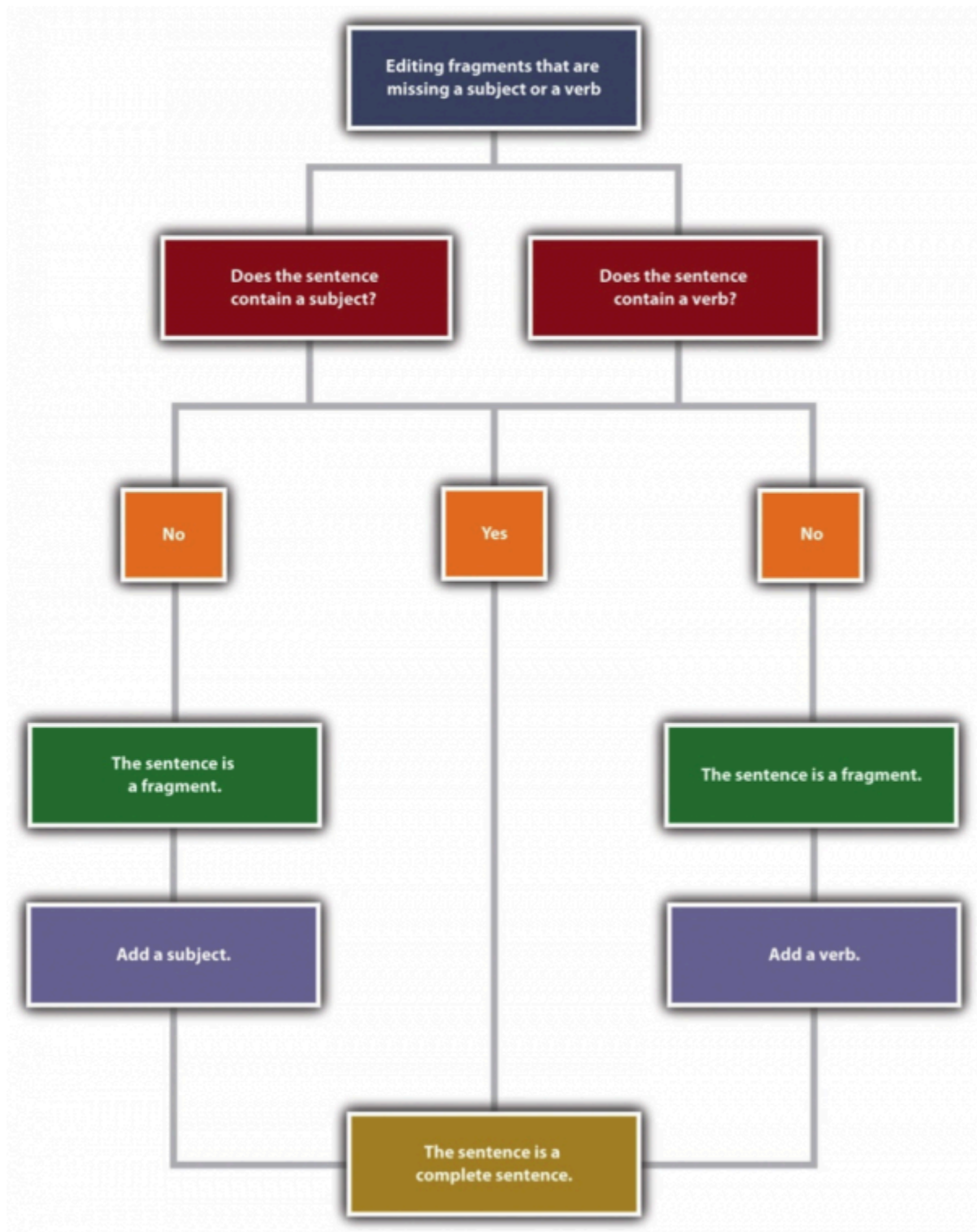
*Figure 3.1 Editing Fragments That Are Missing a Subject or a Verb [Figure 3.1 Image description]*

See whether you can identify what is missing in the following fragments.

- Fragment: Told her about the broken vase.
- Complete sentence: I told her about the broken vase.

- Complete sentence: The store down on Main Street sells music.

## Common Sentence Errors

Fragments often occur because of some common errors, such as starting a sentence with a preposition, a dependent word, an infinitive, or a gerund. If you use the six basic sentence patterns when you write, you should be able to avoid these errors and thus avoid writing fragments.

When you see a preposition, check to see that it is part of a sentence containing a subject and a verb. If it is not connected to a complete sentence, it is a fragment, and you will need to fix this type of fragment by combining it with another sentence. You can add the prepositional phrase to the end of the sentence. If you add it to the beginning of the other sentence, insert a comma after the prepositional phrase. Look at the examples. Figure 3.2 illustrates how you can edit a fragment that begins with a preposition.

Example A:

- **Incorrect:** After walking over two miles. John remembered his wallet.
- **Correct:** After walking over two miles, John remembered his wallet.
- **Correct:** John remembered his wallet after walking over two miles.

Example B

- **Incorrect:** The dog growled at the vacuum cleaner. When it was switched on.
- **Correct:** When the vacuum cleaner was switched on, the dog growled.
- **Correct:** The dog growled at the vacuum cleaner when it was switched on. ()
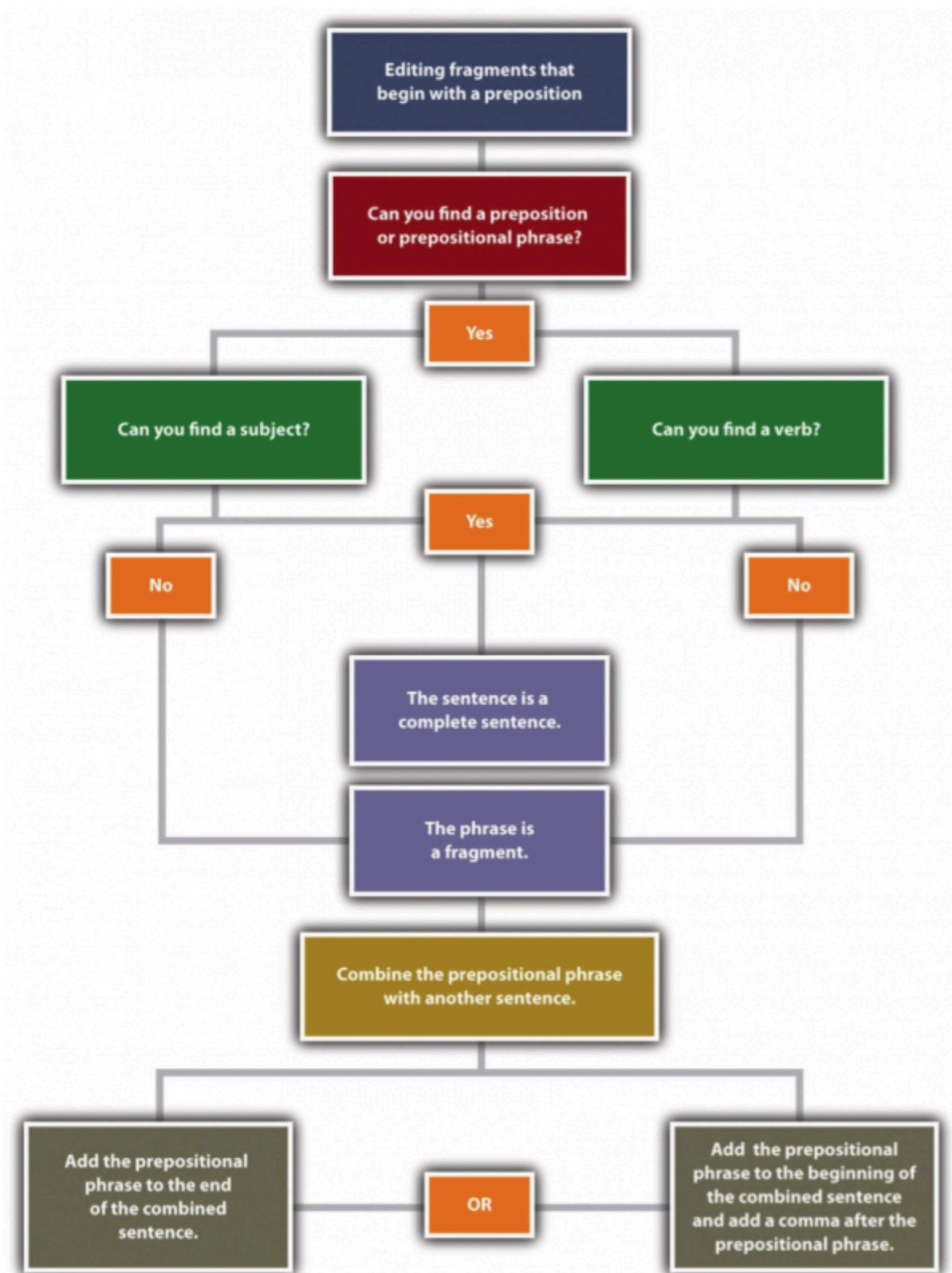
*Figure 3.2 Editing Fragments That Begin with a Preposition [Figure 3.2 Image Description]*

Clauses that start with a **dependent** word—such as since, because, without, or unless—are similar to prepositional phrases. Like prepositional phrases, these clauses can be fragments if they are not

connected to an independent clause containing a subject and a verb. To fix the problem, you can add such

a fragment to the beginning or end of a sentence. If the fragment is added at the beginning of a sentence, add a comma after it before the independent clause.

- **Incorrect:** Because we lost power. The entire family overslept.
- **Correct:** Because we lost power, the entire family overslept.
- **Correct:** The entire family overslept because we lost power.

- **Incorrect:** He has been seeing a physical therapist. Since his accident.
- **Correct:** Since his accident, he has been seeing a physical therapist.
- **Correct:** He has been seeing a physical therapist since his accident.

When you encounter a word ending in -ing in a sentence, identify whether it is being used as a verb in the sentence. You may also look for a helping verb. If the word is not used as a verb or if no helping verb is used with the -ing verb form, the verb is being used as a noun. An -ing verb form used as a noun is called a **gerund**.

- Verb: I <u>was working</u> on homework until midnight.
- Noun: <u>Working</u> until midnight makes me tired the next morning.

Once you know whether the -ing word is acting as a noun or a verb, look at the rest of the sentence. Does the entire sentence make sense on its own? If not, what you are looking at is a fragment. You will need to either add the parts of speech that are missing or combine the fragment with a nearby sentence. Figure 3.3 illustrates how to edit fragments that begin with a gerund.
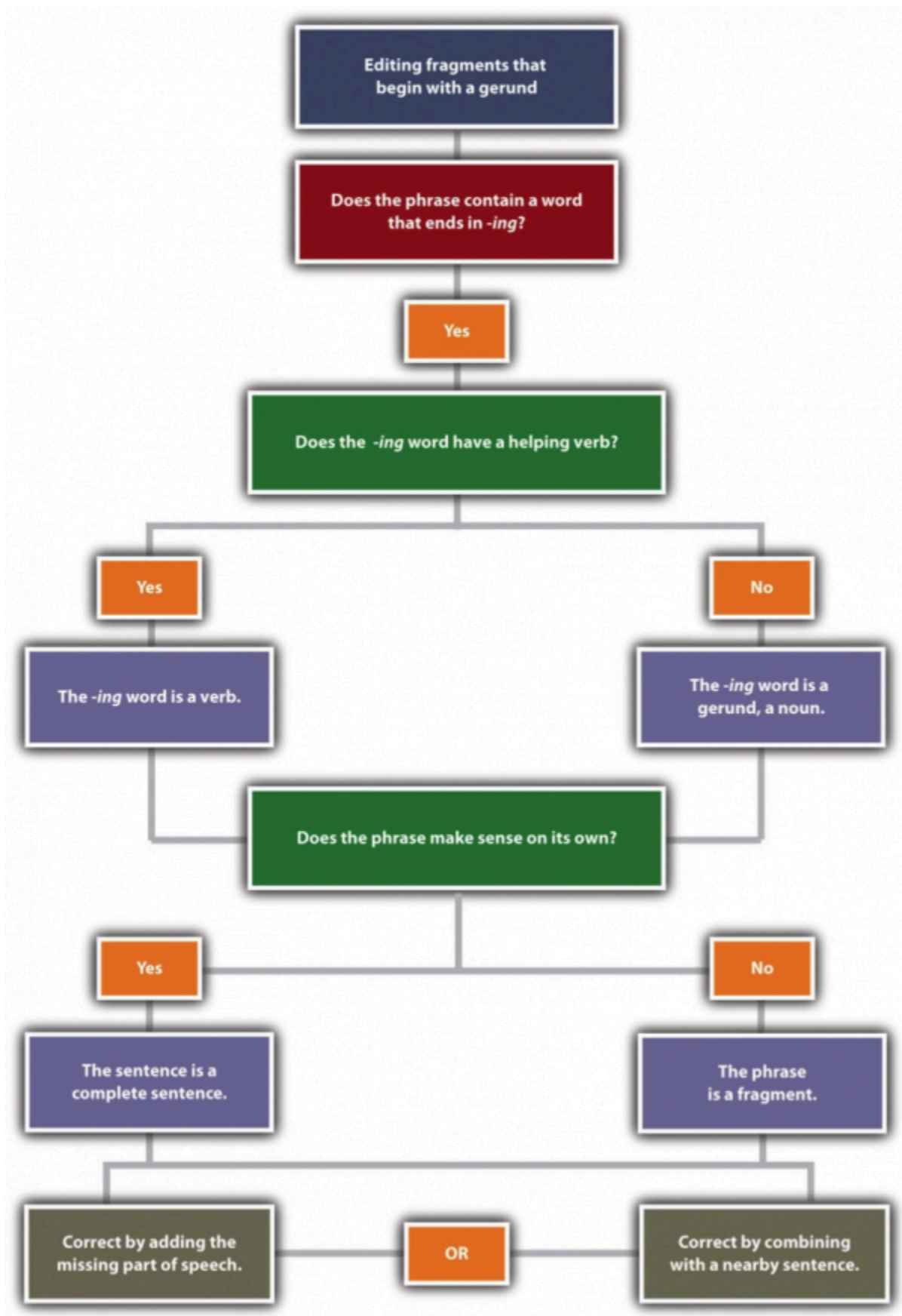
*Figure 3.3 Editing Fragments That Begin with Gerunds [Figure 3.3 Image Description]*

- Incorrect: Congratulating the entire team. Sarah raised her glass to toast their success.

- Correct: She was congratulating the entire team. Sarah raised her glass to toast their success.

- Correct: Congratulating the entire team, Sarah raised her glass to toast their success.

Another error in sentence construction is a fragment that begins with an infinitive. An **infinitive** is a verb paired with the word to; for example, to run, to write, or to reach. Although infinitives are verbs, they can be used as nouns, adjectives, or adverbs. You can correct a fragment that begins with an infinitive by either combining it with another sentence or adding the parts of speech that are missing.

- Incorrect: We needed to make 300 more paper cranes. To reach the one thousand mark.

- Correct: We needed to make 300 more paper cranes to reach the one thousand mark.

- Correct: We needed to make 300 more paper cranes. We wanted to reach the one thousand mark.

## Self-Practice Exercise 3.4

*An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:*
*https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=63#h5p-31 (https://opentextbc.ca/*
*writingforsuccessh5p/?p=63#h5p-31)*

**H5P:** Mark all of the fragments in the list of sentences below.

1. Unless the ground thaws before spring break.
2. You'll find what you need if you look.
3. On the shelf next to the potted plant.
4. Working without taking a break.
5. We try to get as much work done as we can in an hour.
6. I needed to bring work home.
7. We won't be planting any tulips this year.
8. In order to meet the deadline.
9. Deidre scoured the classifieds each day.

> 10. To find the perfect apartment.

**Image Descriptions**

**A decision tree for editing sentence fragments that are missing a subject or a verb:**

1. Does the sentence contain a subject?

   - If yes, go to #2.
   - If no, the sentence is a fragment. Add a subject to make it a complete sentence. Then go to #2.

2. Does the sentence contain a verb?

   - If yes, the sentence is a complete sentence.
   - If no, the sentence is a fragment. Add a verb to make it a complete sentence.

[Return to Figure 3.1]

**A decision tree for editing fragments that begin with a preposition:**

1. Can you find a preposition or prepositional phrase?
2. Can you find a subject?

   - If yes, go to #3.
   - If no, go to #4.

3. Can you find a verb?

   - If yes, the sentence is a complete sentence.
   - If no, go to #4.

4. The phrase is a fragment. Combine the prepositional phrase with another sentence. Add the prepositional phrase to the end of the combined sentence or add the prepositional phrase to the beginning of the combined sentence and add a comma after the prepositional phrase.

[Return to Figure 3.2]

**A decision tree for editing fragments that begin with a gerund:**

1. Does the phrase contain a word that ends in -ing?
2. Does the -ing word have a helping verb?

   - If yes, the -ing word is a verb. Go to

- If no, the -ing word is a gerund, a noun.

3. Does the phrase make sense on its own?

  - If yes, the sentence is a complete sentence.

  - If no, go to #4.

4. The phrase is a fragment. Correct by adding the missing part of speech or correct by combining with a nearby sentence.

[Return to Figure 3.3]

# 3.2 Summarizing

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**Learning Objectives**

- Explain and apply the criteria for making a summary
- Identify and avoid the challenges of creating summaries

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In **Chapter 2: Working with Words**, you practised identifying main and supporting ideas, which is necessary for your understanding and for creating a summary of the information you have read; once you have identified what you think the important ideas are, you can transfer that information into a new paragraph, putting the original source's ideas into your own words or what is called **paraphrasing**.

In this section and in other places throughout this book, you will meet Jorge, who has been assigned a paper on low-carbohydrate papers. You will follow Jorge on the steps to creating his paper, starting with his summary.

## What is a Summary?

When you summarize, you are filtering and condensing the most necessary points from a source, like a book, article, or website.

When summarizing material from a source, you zero in on the main points and restate them concisely in your own words. This technique is appropriate when only the major ideas are relevant to your paper or when you need to simplify complex information into a few key points for your readers. To create a summary, consider the following points:

1. **Review** the source material as you summarize it.

2. **Identify the main idea** and **restate** it as concisely as you can—preferably in one sentence. Depending on your purpose, you may also add another sentence or two condensing any important details or examples.

3. **Check** your summary to make sure it is accurate and complete.

4. **Make a careful record** of where you found the information because you will need to include the reference and citation if you choose to use the information in an essay. It is much easier to do this when you are creating the summary and taking notes than having to go back and hunt for the information later. Guessing where you think you got it from is not good enough.

## Summaries and Abstracts

When you read many journal articles, you will notice there is an **abstract** before the article starts: this is a summary of the article's contents. Be careful when you are summarizing an article to not depend too much on the abstract as it is already a condensed version of the content. The author of the abstract identified the main points from his or her perception; these may not match your own purpose or your own idea of what is important. What may also happen if you try to summarize the abstract is you will probably end up replacing some words with synonyms and not changing the overall ideas into your own words because the ideas are already summarized, and it is difficult to make them more generalized (we will discuss this more in **Section 3.3: Paraphrasing**). You have to read the entire source or section of the source and determine for yourself what the key and supporting ideas are.

---

Tip: A summary or abstract of a reading passage is one-tenth to one-quarter the length of the original passage, written in your own words. The criteria for a summary are that it:

- Includes only the main points and key details
- Is valuable because it is the surest way to measure your understanding
- Helps you remember because you must attend carefully to what you read, organize your thoughts, and write them out to make it meaningful to you (This is absolutely necessary when you cannot mark a book because it belongs to someone else.)
- Challenges you to be concise in your writing while providing balanced coverage of the main points.
- Challenges you to paraphrase or use your own words and avoid using too many quotations.

Is important to remain objective because you are giving the author's views not your own.

---

In his draft, Jorge summarized research materials that presented scientists' findings about low-carbohydrate diets. Read the following passage from a trade magazine article and Jorge's summary of the article.

---

**Article: Assessing the Efficacy of Low-Carbohydrate Diets by Adrienne Howell, Ph.D. (2010)**

Over the past few years, a number of clinical studies have explored whether high-protein, low-carbohydrate diets are more effective for weight loss than other frequently recommended diet plans, such as diets that drastically curtail fat intake (Pritikin) or that emphasize consuming lean meats, grains, vegetables, and a moderate amount of unsaturated fats (the Mediterranean diet). A 2009 study found that obese teenagers who followed a low-carbohydrate diet lost an average of 15.6 kilograms over a six-month period, whereas teenagers following a low-fat diet or a Mediterranean diet lost an average of 11.1 kilograms and 9.3

kilograms respectively. Two 2010 studies that measured weight loss for obese adults following these same three diet plans found similar results. Over three months, subjects on the low-carbohydrate diet plan lost anywhere from four to six kilograms more than subjects who followed other diet plans.

**Summary**

In three recent studies, researchers compared outcomes for obese subjects who followed either a low-carbohydrate diet, a low-fat diet, or a Mediterranean diet and found that subjects following a low-carbohydrate diet lost more weight in the same time (Howell, 2010).

Tip: A summary restates ideas in your own words, but for specialized or clinical terms, you may need to use terms that appear in the original source. For instance, Jorge used the term obese in his summary because related words such as heavy or overweight have a different clinical meaning.

## Summary Paragraphs

A summary shrinks a large amount of information into only the essentials. You probably summarize events, books, and movies daily. Think about the last movie you saw or the last novel you read. Chances are, at some point in a casual conversation with a friend, co-worker, or classmate, you compressed all the action of a two-hour film or a 200-page book into a brief description of the major plot movements. You probably described the main points in just a few sentences, using your own vocabulary and manner of speaking.

Similarly, a summary paragraph condenses a long piece of writing into a smaller paragraph by extracting only the vital information. A summary uses only the writer's own words. Like the summary's purpose in daily conversation, the purpose of an academic summary paragraph is to maintain all the essential information from a longer document. Although shorter than the original piece of writing, a summary should still communicate all the key points and key support. In other words, summary paragraphs should be succinct and to the point.

The following is another example of a report on the use of alcohol by adolescents with an example of a student summary of that information.

According to the Monitoring the Future Study, almost two-thirds of 10-grade students reported having tried alcohol at least once in their lifetime, and two-fifths reported having been drunk at least once (Johnston et al, 2006x). Among 12th-grade students, these rates had risen to over three-quarters who reported having tried alcohol at least once and nearly three-fifths who reported having been dunk at

least once. In terms of current alcohol use, 33.2 percent of the Nation's 10th graders and 47.0 percent of the 12th graders reported having used alcohol at least once in the past 30 days; 17.6 percent and 30.2 percent, respectively, reported having had five or more drinks in a row in the past 2 weeks (sometimes called binge drinking); and 1.3 percent and 3.1 percent, respectively, reported daily alcohol use (Johnston et al. 2006a).

Alcohol consumption continues to escalate after high school. In fact, eighteen- to twenty-four-year-olds have the highest levels of alcohol consumption and alcohol dependence of any age group. In the first 2 years after high school, lifetime prevalence of alcohol use (based on 2005 follow-up surveys from the Monitoring the Future Study) was 81.8 percent, 30-day use prevalence was 59 percent, and binge-drinking prevalence was 36.3 percent (Johnston et al, 2006b). Of note, college students on average drink more than their noncollege peers, even though they drink less during high school than those who did not go on to college (Johnston et al, 2006a.b: Schulenberg and Maggs 2002). For example, inn 2005, the rate of binge drinking for college students (1 to 4 years beyond high school was 40.1 percent, whereas the ate for their noncollege age mates was 35.1 percent.

Alcohol use and problem drinking in late adolescence vary by sociodemographic characteristics. For example, the prevalence of alcohol use is higher for boys than for girls, higher for White and Hispanic adolescents than for African-American adolescents, and higher for those living in the north and north central United States than for those living in the South and West. Some of these relationships change with early adulthood, however. For example, although alcohol use high school tends to be higher areas with lower population density (i.e., rural areas) than in more densely populated areas, this relationship reverses during early adulthood (Johnston et al., 2006 a,b). Lower economic status (i.e., lower education level of parents) is associated with more alcohol use during early high school years; by the end of high school, and during the transition to adulthood, this relationship changes, and youth from higher socioeconomic background consume greater amounts of alcohol.

A summary of the report should present all the main points and supporting details in brief. Read the following summary of the report written by a student:

Brown et al. inform us that by tenth grade, nearly two-thirds of students have tried alcohol at least once, and by twelfth grade this figure increases to over three-quarters of students. After high school, alcohol consumption increases further, and college-aged students have the highest levels of alcohol consumption dependence of any age group. Alcohol use varies according to factors such as gender, race, geographic location, and socioeconomic status.

Some of these trends may reverse in early childhood. For example, adolescents of lower socioeconomic status are more likely to consume alcohol during high school years, whereas youth from higher socioeconomic status are more likely to consume alcohol in the years after high school.

Notice how the summary retains the key points made by the writers of the original report but omits

most of the statistical data. Summaries do not need to contain all the specific facts and figures in the original document; they provide only an overview of the essential information.

Tip: To write a summary:

1. Survey the passage, anticipating main points and checking them.

2. Read carefully, locating all controlling ideas, identifying key details, and deciding which are necessary to remember and which are not.

3. Write a paragraph in whole sentences that relate/explain only the controlling ideas and supporting details; be economical and use no more words than necessary.

4. Differentiate between your ideas and the original author's by using phrases such as "According to Marshall (2014), …." or " Marshall (2014) argues that ….

## Self-Practice Exercise 3.5

*An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=65#h5p-32 (https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=65#h5p-32)*

**H5P:** Read the following passage and use a note-taking method to identify the main points. Then, compose a summary sentence summarizing the paragraph's main points. This exercise will automatically check to make sure you've included key words.

Several factors about the environment influence our behaviour. First, temperature can influence us greatly. We seem to feel best when the temperature is in the high teens to low 20s. If it is too hot or cold, we have trouble concentrating. Lighting also influences how we function. A dark lecture hall may interfere with the lecture, or a bright nightclub might spoil romantic conversation. Finally, our behaviour is affected by colour. Some colours make us feel a peaceful while others are exciting. If you wanted a quiet room in which to study, for example, you would not paint it bright orange or red.

Passage taken from: Ueland, B. (2006). *Becoming a Master Student*. Boston, MA : Houghton Mifflin College Div., p. 121.

Self-Practice Exercise 3.6

> *An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:*
> *https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=65#h5p-33 (https://opentextbc.ca/*
> *writingforsuccessh5p/?p=65#h5p-33)*

**H5P:** Choose the correct statements to select the five main points from the following sample text. Remember to only select main points and critical information.

Most people drink orange juice and eat oranges because they are said to be rich in vitamin C. There are also other foods that are rich in vitamin C. It is found in citrus fruits and vegetables such as broccoli, spinach, cabbage, cauliflower, and carrots.

Vitamin C is important to our health. Do you really know how essential this nutrient is to our health and well-being? Our body needs to heal itself. Vitamin C can repair and prevent damage to the cells in our body and heal wounds. It also keeps our teeth and gums healthy. That is not all. It protects our body from infections such as colds and flu and also helps us to get better faster when we have these infections. That is why a lot of people drink orange juice and take vitamin C tablets every day. This wonderful vitamin is also good for our heart. It protects the linings of the arteries, which are the blood vessels that carry oxygenated blood. In other words, it offers protection against heart disease.

If we do not get enough vitamin C, which means we are not eating enough food that contains this vitamin, it can lead to serious diseases. Lack of vitamin C can lead to scurvy, which causes swollen gums, cheeks, fingers, hands, toes, and feet. In serious conditions, it can lead to bleeding from wounds, loss of teeth, and opening up of wounds. Therefore, make sure you have enough vitamin C in your diet.

1.
    A.  There are also other foods that are rich in vitamin C.

    B.  Vitamin C can repair and prevent damage to the cells in our body and heal wounds.

2.
    A.  That is why a lot of people drink orange juice and take vitamin C tablets every day.

    B.  It also keeps our teeth and gums healthy.

3.
    A.  It protects our body from infections such as colds and flu and also helps us to get better faster when we have these infections.

    B.  It is found in citrus fruits and vegetables such as broccoli, spinach, cabbage, cauliflower, and carrots.

4.
    A.  Therefore, make sure you have enough vitamin C in your diet.

    B.  In other words, it offers protection against heart disease.

5.
    A.  Do you really know how essential this nutrient is to our health and well-being?

    B.  Lack of vitamin C can lead to scurvy, which causes swollen gums, cheeks, fingers, hands, toes, and feet.

**Answer Key**

|        |        |        |
|--------|--------|--------|
| 1.  B  | 3.  A  | 5.  B  |
| 2.  B  | 4.  B  |        |

Exercise taken from: http://www.scribd.com/doc/98238709/Form-Three-Summary-Writing-Exercise

# 3.3 Paraphrasing

<div style="border:1px solid black">

**Learning Objectives**

- Identify how summarizing and paraphrasing work together
- Apply paraphrasing techniques of changing words and sentence structures

</div>

When you quote a source, you are taking the words directly from the passage: these are the original author's words. Quotes can be useful (see **Chapter 9: Citations and Referencing**), but in order to show you understand what you have read, you should paraphrase. **Paraphrasing** is putting information into your words; it is an important skill to develop because when you do it, you are not only showing you understand what you have read, but you are also processing and adapting that information to your writing purpose.

When you paraphrase, you are using the **technique** of putting a condensed version of someone else's ideas (summary) into **your own words**.

It is very important to remember when you are paraphrasing is you still need to include citations because although the words are yours, the ideas belong to the original authors, and you must give that person credit for the ideas (again, we will look at this more in **Chapter 9: Citations and Referencing**).

> Tip: If you prefer rewriting, try not to copy but use your own paraphrasing of the material. If a concept is difficult, put it in your own terms with a concrete example so you understand it. Try to put it in the vocabulary of the course.

## Paraphrasing Sources

When you paraphrase material from a source, restate the information from an entire sentence or passage in your own words, using your own original sentence structure. A paraphrased source differs from a summarized source in that you focus on restating the ideas, not condensing them. Again, it is important to check your paraphrase against the source material to make sure it is both accurate and original. Inexperienced writers sometimes use the thesaurus method of paraphrasing; that is, they simply rewrite the source material, replacing most of the words with synonyms. This constitutes a misuse of sources. A true paraphrase restates ideas using the writer's (your) own language and style.

In his draft, Jorge frequently paraphrased details from sources. At times, he needed to rewrite a sentence more than once to ensure he was paraphrasing ideas correctly. Below is a passage with examples of how he paraphrased and adapted the information to create his own paragraph. Read the passage from a website. Then read Jorge's initial attempt at paraphrasing it, followed by the final version of his paraphrase.

## Source

According to Heinz (2009), dieters nearly always get great results soon after they begin following a low-carbohydrate diet, but these results tend to taper off after the first few months, particularly because many dieters find it difficult to follow a low-carbohydrate diet plan consistently.

## Jorge's Original Summary

People usually see encouraging outcomes shortly after they go on a low-carbohydrate diet, but their progress slows down after a short while, especially because most discover that it is a challenge to adhere to the diet strictly (Heinz, 2009).

After reviewing the paraphrased sentence, Jorge realized he was following the original source too closely. He did not want to quote the full passage verbatim, so he again attempted to restate the idea in his own style.

## Jorge's Revised Summary

Because it is hard for dieters to stick to a low-carbohydrate eating plan, the initial success of these diets is short lived (Heinz, 2009).

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Self-Practice Exercise 3.7

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*https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=67#h5p-35 (https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=67#h5p-35)*

**H5P:** Paraphrase the following passage in your own words.

"The twenties were the years when drinking was against the law, and the law was a bad joke because everyone knew of a local bar where liquor could be had. They were the years when organized crime ruled the cities, and the police seemed powerless to do anything against it. Classical music was forgotten while jazz spread throughout the land, and men like Bix Beiderbecke, Louis Armstrong, and Count Basie became the heroes of the young. The flapper was born in the twenties, and with her bobbed hair and short skirts, she symbolized, perhaps more than anyone or anything else, America's break with the past." From Kathleen Yancey, English 102 Supplemental Guide (1989): 25.

**H5P:** Paraphrase the following passage in your own words.

"While the Sears Tower is arguably the greatest achievement in skyscraper engineering so far, it's unlikely that architects and engineers have abandoned the quest for the world's tallest building. The question is: Just how high can a building go? Structural engineer William LeMessurier has designed a skyscraper nearly one half mile high, twice as tall as the Sears Tower. And architect Robert Sobel claims that existing technology could produce a 500-story building." From Ron Bachman, "Reaching for the Sky." Dial (May 1990): 15.

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Self-Practice Exercise 3.8

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**H5P:** Write Your Paraphrase

- Choose an important idea or detail from your notes — for any class you like, or any research you have in process! — and jot it down here in point form.

- Restate the idea in your own words as completely as possible. Do not look it up in your notes first!

- Find the original text in the source. Now, compare your paraphrase. Do you capture the idea accurately? Is your language and sentence structure original to you? Revise and make any necessary changes here — and don't forget to add your citation!

## Assignment 2

Please follow the instructions to complete Assignment 2. Once finished, you will be able to print your completed assignment for submission.

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**H5P: Assignment 2**

**Assignment Preparation**

Read the following article and compose a summary of 100 to 150 words. Determine what the key points are and paraphrase accordingly. Make sure all the points you choose are important to the understanding and overall meaning of the essay.

Remember:

- You want to use objective language that accurately represents the original author's angle of vision: do not provide analysis or discussion.
- You should not simply substitute words.
- You should change up the sentence structure.
- The end result needs to capture all the main points but also be in your own words.

**Heroin as One of the Most Lethal Drugs**

Among prohibited narcotic substances, heroin has been classified as one of the most addictive and detrimental. In a recent research study run by the Institute of Narcotic Examination in Rollesque, Nevada, heroin ranked 2.89 out of 3 on a dependence rating scale (Perez, 2012). This result was also confirmed by scores of research held in London by the Academy of Pharmaceutical Studies (Perez, 2012). An opiate processed from morphine, heroin is delineated as a lethal drug. The common form of heroin sold in streets looks like a white or brown gummy substance with a high consistency of tar.

Heroin is injected into the human body through a hypothermic needle directly in a muscle or a particular blood vein. It can also be smoked like cigarettes. There is the possibility of it being successfully mixed with drugs or snorted as cocaine. Street heroin is often mixed with other substances like sugar, starch, quinine, poisons or even powder milk to dilute the effect. Short and long term effects of heroin use have different levels of withdrawal, reinforcements, tolerance, dependency and intoxication. Heroin reduces pain and mimics the traits of endorphins, which causes the human brain to experience pleasure (Hollow, 2011). The central neural system becomes supersaturated with endorphin like substances, and when the effect of heroin ends, individuals begin to feel the need for a new injection to prolong pleasure (Hollow, 2011).

The degree of heroin addictiveness can be measured by the severe withdrawal symptoms which it induces in individuals. Among the most common symptoms, one can enlist the following: a warm flush feeling in the skin, an ill mood and depression, vomiting, itching, nausea, and heavy pain in joints. The cardiac functions and the neural system functions slow down, though it often depends on the individual's genetic type, amount of the drug taken, and the purity of the substance (Hollow, 2011).

Heroin addiction causes numerous side effects to the physical body. Blood vein structure collapses, and a risk of receiving a heart infection, liver disease, or abscesses dramatically increases. Long term addiction to the drug takes the form of a chronic, relapsing disease. Long term use of heroin prompts users to gradually increase doses. Once a user is in the chronic stage, this implies such symptoms as restlessness, bone and muscle pain, insomnia, and intense withdrawal stages lasting for 24 to 48 hours after heroin has been taken (Lichter, 2012).

The treatment of heroin addiction includes a thorough detoxification program, which helps to minimize the severity of withdrawal symptoms. The use of medications for treatment along with therapy helps individuals cope. Methadone programs, buprenorphine, together with behavioral therapies aid to recover from addiction (Perez, 2012). These aspects are important, as both behavioral and pharmacological interventions can effectively normalize addiction levels, brain functions and social behavior. These methods are used in a varied combination to cure the withdrawal, tolerance, dependence and intoxication elements to minimize the addictive qualities of heroin.

References:

Hollow, M. (2011). Heroin: The Ultimate Drug. Chicago: Running Hill Books.
Lichter, M. (2012). The Dark Hole of Heroin. Boston: Sidetrack Books.
Perez, G. (2012). Studies of Heroin. New York: Gold Beard Press.

Essay taken and adapted from: http://academichelp.net/samples/essays/expository/heroin-lethal-drug.html

**Reviewing the Criteria**

Remember that your summary should meet the following criteria:

- 100-150 words.

- Includes all key points from the original article.

- Demonstrates good use of your own vocabulary and sentence structure.

- Uses objective language (reporting on the content, not analyzing it).

For each of the criteria listed here, click the Add Criteria button and explain how you will meet the requirements for this assignment.

**Drafting Your Summary**

- Make your first attempt at drafting your summary. Ensure you have covered all of the key points, but work towards a word count goal of 100-150 words.

- Now, go back one page and review the text of the original article. Have you missed any key details? Have you accidentally borrowed any words, phrases, or sentence strurcture? Revise your summary.

**Reviewing Criteria**

Reflect on each of the parts of your assignment as laid out in the criteria.

# 3.4 Effective Means for Writing a Paragraph

Learning Objectives

- Identify characteristics of a good topic sentence
- Identify the three parts of a developed paragraph
- Apply knowledge of topic sentences and parts of a developed paragraph in an assignment

This section addresses paragraph composition. In the next chapter, we will look at identifying common assignment purposes and how to select appropriate content for a particular audience, but here we will look at what actually makes up a paragraph. Composing an effective paragraph requires a method similar to building a house. You may have the finest content, or materials, but if you do not arrange them in the correct order, then the final product will not hold together very well.

Imagine reading one long block of text, with each idea blurring into the next. Even if you are reading a thrilling novel or an interesting news article, you will likely very quickly lose interest in what the author. During the writing process, it is helpful to position yourself as a reader. Ask yourself whether you can focus easily on each point you make. One technique that effective writers use is to begin a fresh paragraph for each new idea they introduce.

Paragraphs separate ideas into logical, manageable chunks. One paragraph focuses on only one main idea and presents coherent sentences to support that one point. Because all the sentences in one paragraph support the same point, a paragraph may stand on its own. To create longer assignments and to discuss more than one point, writers group together paragraphs.

A strong paragraph contains three distinct components:

- **Topic sentence.** The topic sentence is the main idea of the paragraph.
- **Body.** The body is composed of the supporting sentences that develop the main point.
- **Conclusion.** The conclusion is the final sentence that summarizes the main point.

The foundation of a good paragraph is the topic sentence, which expresses the main idea of the paragraph. The topic sentence relates to the thesis, or main point, of the essay and guides the reader by signposting what the paragraph is about. All the sentences in the rest of the paragraph should relate to the topic sentence.

This section covers the major components of a paragraph and examines how to develop an effective topic sentence.

- Paragraph Length

- How long should a paragraph be?

One answer to this important question may be "long enough"—long enough for you to address your points and explain your main idea. To grab attention or to present succinct supporting ideas, a paragraph can be fairly short and consist of two to three sentences. A paragraph in a complex essay about some abstract point in philosophy or archaeology can be two-thirds of a page or more in length. As long as the writer maintains close focus on the topic and does not ramble, a long paragraph is acceptable. In general, try to keep the paragraphs longer than one sentence but shorter than two-thirds of a page of double spaced text, or roughly 75 to 200 words in length.

> Tip: Journalistic style often calls for brief two- or three-sentence paragraphs because of how people read the news, both online and in print. Blogs and other online information sources often adopt this paragraphing style, too. Readers often skim the first paragraphs of a great many articles before settling on the handful of stories they want to read in detail.

You may find that a particular paragraph you write may be longer than one that will hold your audience's interest. In such cases, you should divide the paragraph into two or more shorter paragraphs, adding a topic statement or some kind of transitional word or phrase at the start of the new paragraph. Transition words or phrases show the connection between the two ideas.

In all cases, however, be guided by what your instructor wants and expects to find in your draft. Many instructors will expect you to develop a mature style as you progress through the semester's assignments.

## Developing a Topic Sentence

Pick up any newspaper or magazine and read the first sentence of an article. Are you fairly confident that you know what the rest of the article is about? If so, you have likely read the topic sentence. An effective topic sentence combines a main idea with the writer's personal attitude or opinion. It serves to orient the reader and provides an indication of what will follow in the rest of the paragraph. Read the following example.

Creating a national set of standards for math and English education will improve student learning in many provinces.

This topic sentence declares a favourable position for standardizing math and English education. After reading this sentence, a reader might reasonably expect the writer to provide supporting details and facts as to why standardizing math and English education might improve student learning in many provinces. If the purpose of the essay is actually to evaluate education in only one particular province or to discuss math or English education specifically, then the topic sentence is misleading.

Tip: When writing a draft of an essay, allow a friend or colleague to read the opening line of your first paragraph. Ask your reader to predict what your paper will be about. If he or she is unable to guess your topic accurately, you should consider revising your topic sentence so that it clearly defines your purpose in writing.

## Main Idea versus Controlling Idea

Topic sentences contain both a **main idea** (the subject, or topic that the writer is discussing) and a **controlling idea** (the writer's specific stance on that subject). Just as a thesis statement includes an idea that controls a document's focus, a topic sentence must also contain a controlling idea to direct the paragraph. Different writers may use the same main idea but can steer their paragraph in a number of different directions according to their stance on the subject. Read the following examples.

Marijuana is a destructive influence on teens and causes long-term brain damage.

The anti-nausea properties in marijuana are a lifeline for many cancer patients.

Legalizing marijuana would create a higher demand for Class A and Class B drugs.

Although the main idea—marijuana—is the same in all three topic sentences, the controlling idea differs depending on the writer's viewpoint.

Self-Practice Exercise 3.9

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**H5P:** Self-Practice 3.9

1. Mark the main idea the following topic sentence.

   Exercising three times a week is the only way to maintain good physical health.

2. Mark the controlling idea in the following topic sentence.

   Sexism and racism are still rampant in today's workplace.

3. Mark the main idea in the following topic sentence.

   Raising the legal driving age to 21 would decrease road traffic accidents.

4. Mark the controlling idea in the following topic sentence.

   Owning a business is the only way to achieve financial success.

5. Mark the main idea in the following topic sentence.

   Dog owners should be prohibited from taking their pets on public beaches.

## Characteristics of a Good Topic Sentence

Five characteristics define a good topic sentence:

- A good topic sentence provides an accurate indication of what will follow in the rest of the paragraph.
  - ◦ Weak example. People rarely give firefighters the credit they deserve for such a physically and emotionally demanding job. (The paragraph is about a specific incident that involved firefighters; therefore, this topic sentence is too general.)
  - ◦ Stronger example. During the October riots, Unit 3B went beyond the call of duty. (This topic sentence is more specific and indicates that the paragraph will contain information about a particular incident involving Unit 3B.)
- A good topic sentence contains both a topic and a controlling idea or opinion.
  - ◦ Weak example. In this paper, I am going to discuss the rising suicide rate among young professionals. (This topic sentence provides a main idea, but it does not present a controlling idea or thesis.)
  - ◦ Stronger example. The rising suicide rate among young professionals is a cause for immediate concern. (This topic sentence presents the writer's opinion on the subject of rising suicide rates among young professionals.)
- A good topic sentence is clear and easy to follow.
  - ◦ Weak example. In general, writing an essay, thesis, or other academic or nonacademic document is considerably easier and of much higher quality if you first construct an outline, of which there are many different types. (This topic sentence includes a main idea and a controlling thesis, but both are buried beneath the confusing sentence structure and unnecessary vocabulary. These obstacles make it difficult for the reader to follow.)

- ◦ Stronger example. Most forms of writing can be improved by first creating an outline. (This topic sentence cuts out unnecessary verbiage and simplifies the previous statement, making it easier for the reader to follow.)

- A good topic sentence does not include supporting details.

  - ◦ Weak example. Salaries should be capped in baseball for many reasons, most importantly so we don't allow the same team to win year after year. (This topic sentence includes a supporting detail that should be included later in the paragraph to back up the main point.)

  - ◦ Stronger example. Introducing a salary cap would improve the game of baseball for many reasons. (This topic sentence omits the additional supporting detail so that it can be expanded upon later in the paragraph.)

- A good topic sentence engages the reader by using interesting vocabulary.

  - ◦ Weak example. The military deserves better equipment. (This topic sentence includes a main idea and a controlling thesis, but the language is bland and unexciting.)

  - ◦ Stronger example. The appalling lack of resources provided to the military is outrageous and requires our immediate attention. (This topic sentence reiterates the same idea and controlling thesis, but adjectives such as appalling and immediate better engage the reader. These words also indicate the writer's tone.)

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**Self-Practice Exercise 3.10**

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**H5P:** Choose the most effective topic sentence from the following sentence pairs.

1.
   A. This paper will discuss the likelihood of the Liberals winning the next election.

   B. To boost their chances of winning the next election, the Liberals need to listen to public opinion.

2.
   A. Union workers are crippling the economy because companies are unable to remain competitive as a result of added financial pressure.

   B. The unrealistic demands of union workers are crippling the economy for three main reasons.

3.            A.   The introduction of new technology will devastate the literary world.

                       B.   Authors are losing money as a result of technological advances.

4.            A.   This essay will consider whether talent is required in the rap music industry.

                       B.   Rap music is produced by untalented individuals with oversized egos.

**Answer Key**

1.  B                    3.  B

2.  A                    4.  B

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Self-Practice Exercise 3.11

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**H5P:** Prompts

Create your own topic sentences using the following subjects. Remember to include a controlling idea (opinion) in addition to the topic.

- An endangered species.

  ◦ Create a topic sentence that expresses an opinion.

- The cost of fuel.

  ◦ Create a topic sentence that expresses an opinion.

- The legal drinking age.

  ◦ Create a topic sentence that expresses an opinion.

- A controversial film or novel.

## Writing at Work

When creating a workplace document, use the "top down" approach—keep the topic sentence at the beginning of each paragraph so that readers immediately understand the gist of the message. This

method saves busy colleagues precious time and effort trying to figure out the main points and relevant details.

Headings are another helpful tool. In a text-heavy document, break up each paragraph with individual headings. These serve as useful navigation aids, enabling colleagues to skim through the document and locate paragraphs that are relevant to them.

## Developing Paragraphs That Use Topic Sentences, Supporting Ideas, and Transitions Effectively

Learning how to develop a good topic sentence is the first step toward writing a solid paragraph. Once you have composed your topic sentence, you have a guideline for the rest of the paragraph. To complete the paragraph, a writer must support the topic sentence with additional information and summarize the main point with a concluding sentence.

This section identifies the three major structural parts of a paragraph and covers how to develop a paragraph using transitional words and phrases.

## Identifying Parts of a Paragraph

An effective paragraph contains three main parts: a topic sentence, the body, and the concluding sentence. A topic sentence is often the first sentence of a paragraph. The body of the paragraph usually follows, containing supporting details. Supporting sentences help explain, prove, or enhance the topic sentence. The concluding sentence is the last sentence in the paragraph. It reminds the reader of the main point by restating it in different words. Figure 3.4 provides a template you can use for organizing your paragraphs.

**Paragraph Stucture Graphic Organizer**

**Topic Sentence**

(main idea + personal opinion)

_____

_____

**Body**

Supporting Sentence

_____

Supporting Sentence

_____

Supporting Sentence

_____

Supporting Sentence

_____

**Conclusion**

(summary of main idea + personal opinion)

Concluding Sentence

_____

_____

*Figure 3.4 Paragraph Structure Graphic Organizer*

Read the following paragraph. The topic sentence is underlined for you.

After reading the new TV guide this week, I had just one thought—why are we still being bombarded with reality shows? This season, the plague of reality television continues to darken our airwaves. Along with the return of viewer favourites, we are to be cursed with yet another mindless creation. Prisoner follows the daily lives of eight suburban housewives who have chosen to be put in jail for the purposes of this fake psychological experiment. A preview for the first episode shows the usual tears and tantrums associated with reality television. I dread to think what producers will come up with next season, but if any of them are reading this blog—stop it! We've had enough reality television to last us a lifetime!

The first sentence of this paragraph is the topic sentence. It tells the reader that the paragraph will be

about reality television shows, and it expresses the writer's distaste for these shows through the use of the word bombarded.

Each of the following sentences in the paragraph supports the topic sentence by providing further information about a specific reality television show. The final sentence is the concluding sentence. It reiterates the main point that viewers are bored with reality television shows by using different words from the topic sentence.

Paragraphs that begin with the topic sentence move from the general to the specific. They open with a general statement about a subject (reality shows) and then discuss specific examples (the reality show Prisoner). Most academic essays contain the topic sentence at the beginning of the first paragraph.

Now take a look at another paragraph. The topic sentence is underlined for you.

Last year, a cat travelled 200 kilometres to reach its family, who had moved to another city and had left their pet behind. Even though the cat had never been to the new home, it cat was able to track down its former owners. A dog in my neighbourhood can predict when its master is about to have a seizure. It makes sure that he does not hurt himself during an epileptic fit. <u>Compared to many animals, our own senses are almost dull.</u>

The last sentence of this paragraph is the topic sentence. It draws on specific examples (a cat that tracked down its owners and a dog that can predict seizures) and then makes a general statement that draws a conclusion from these examples (animals' senses are better than humans'). In this case, the supporting sentences are placed before the topic sentence and the concluding sentence is the same as the topic sentence.

This technique is frequently used in persuasive writing. The writer produces detailed examples as evidence to back up his or her point, preparing the reader to accept the concluding topic sentence as the truth.

Sometimes, the topic sentence appears in the middle of a paragraph. Read the following example. The topic sentence is underlined for you.

For many years, I suffered from severe anxiety every time I took an exam. Hours before the exam, my heart would begin pounding, my legs would shake, and sometimes I would become physically unable to move. Last year, I was referred to a specialist and finally found a way to control my anxiety—breathing exercises. It seems so simple, but <u>by doing just a few breathing exercises a couple of hours before an exam, I gradually got my anxiety under control.</u> The exercises help slow my heart rate and make me feel less anxious. Better yet, they require no pills, no equipment, and very little time. It is amazing how just breathing correctly has helped me learn to manage my anxiety symptoms.

In this paragraph, the underlined sentence is the topic sentence. It expresses the main idea—that breathing exercises can help control anxiety. The preceding sentences enable the writer to build up to his main point (breathing exercises can help control anxiety) by using a personal anecdote (how the writer used to suffer from anxiety). The supporting sentences then expand on how breathing exercises help the writer by providing additional information. The last sentence is the concluding sentence and restates how breathing can help manage anxiety.

Placing a topic sentence in the middle of a paragraph is often used in creative writing. If you notice that you have used a topic sentence in the middle of a paragraph in an academic essay, read through the paragraph carefully to make sure that it contains only one major topic.

## Implied Topic Sentences

Some well-organized paragraphs do not contain a topic sentence at all. Instead of being directly stated, the main idea is implied in the content of the paragraph. Read the following example:

Heaving herself up the stairs, Luella had to pause for breath several times. She let out a wheeze as she sat down heavily in the wooden rocking chair. Tao approached her cautiously, as if she might crumble at the slightest touch. He studied her face, like parchment; stretched across the bones so finely he could almost see right through the skin to the decaying muscle underneath. Luella smiled a toothless grin.

Although no single sentence in this paragraph states the main idea, the entire paragraph focuses on one concept—that Luella is extremely old. The topic sentence is thus implied rather than stated. This technique is often used in descriptive or narrative writing. Implied topic sentences work well if the writer has a firm idea of what he or she intends to say in the paragraph and sticks to it. However, a paragraph loses its effectiveness if an implied topic sentence is too subtle or the writer loses focus.

Tip: Avoid using implied topic sentences in an informational document. Readers often lose patience if they are unable to quickly grasp what the writer is trying to say. The clearest and most efficient way to communicate in an informational document is to position the topic sentence at the beginning of the paragraph.

Self-Practice Exercise 3.12

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**H5P:** Identify the topic sentence, one example of a supporting sentence, and the concluding sentences.

The desert provides a harsh environment in which few mammals are able to adapt. Of these hardy creatures, the kangaroo rat is possibly the most fascinating. Able to live in some of the most arid parts of the southwest, the kangaroo rat neither sweats nor pants to keep cool. Its specialized kidneys enable it to survive on a minuscule amount of water. Unlike other desert creatures, the kangaroo rat does not store water in its body

but instead is able to convert the dry seeds it eats into moisture. Its ability to adapt to such a hostile environment makes the kangaroo rat a truly amazing creature.

**Supporting Sentences**

If you think of a paragraph as a hamburger, the supporting sentences are the meat inside the bun. They make up the body of the paragraph by explaining, proving, or enhancing the controlling idea in the topic sentence. Most paragraphs contain three to six supporting sentences depending on the audience and purpose for writing. A supporting sentence usually offers one of the following:

- Reason
    - Sentence: The refusal of the baby boom generation to retire is contributing to the current lack of available jobs.
- Fact
    - Sentence: Many families now rely on older relatives to support them financially.
- Statistic
    - Sentence: Nearly 10 percent of adults are currently unemployed in the United States.
- Quotation
    - Sentence: "We will not allow this situation to continue," stated Senator Johns.
- Example
    - Sentence: Last year, Bill was asked to retire at the age of 55.

The type of supporting sentence you choose will depend on what you are writing and why you are writing. For example, if you are attempting to persuade your audience to take a particular position, you should rely on facts, statistics, and concrete examples, rather than personal opinions. Read the following example:

There are numerous advantages to owning a hybrid car. (Topic sentence)

First, they get 20 percent to 35 percent more kilometres to the litre than a fuel-efficient gas-powered vehicle. (Supporting sentence 1: statistic)

Second, they produce very few emissions during low-speed city driving. (Supporting sentence 2: fact)

Because they do not require as much gas, hybrid cars reduce dependency on fossil fuels, which helps lower prices at the pump. (Supporting sentence 3: reason)

Alex bought a hybrid car two years ago and has been extremely impressed with its performance. (Supporting sentence 4: example)

"It's the cheapest car I've ever had," she said. "The running costs are far lower than previous gas-powered vehicles I've owned." (Supporting sentence 5: quotation)

Given the low running costs and environmental benefits of owning a hybrid car, it is likely that many more people will follow Alex's example in the near future. (Concluding sentence)

To find information for your supporting sentences, you might consider using one of the following sources:

- Reference book
- Academic journal/article
- Newspaper/magazine
- Textbook
- Encyclopedia
- Biography/autobiography
- Dictionary
- Interview
- Map
- Website
- Previous experience
- Personal research

Tip: When searching for information on the Internet, remember that some websites are more reliable than others. Websites ending in .gov or .edu are generally more reliable than websites ending in .com or .org. Wikis and blogs are not reliable sources of information because they are subject to inaccuracies and are usually very subjective and biased.

## Concluding Sentences

An effective concluding sentence draws together all the ideas you have raised in your paragraph. It reminds readers of the main point—the topic sentence—without restating it in exactly the same words. Using the hamburger example, the top bun (the topic sentence) and the bottom bun (the concluding

sentence) are very similar. They frame the "meat" or body of the paragraph. Compare the topic sentence and concluding sentence from the previous example:

Topic sentence: There are numerous advantages to owning a hybrid car.

Concluding sentence: Given the low running costs and environmental benefits of owning a hybrid car, it is likely that many more people will follow Alex's example in the near future.

Notice the use of the synonyms advantages and benefits. The concluding sentence reiterates the idea that owning a hybrid is advantageous without using the exact same words. It also summarizes two examples of the advantages covered in the supporting sentences: low running costs and environmental benefits.

You should avoid introducing any new ideas into your concluding sentence. A conclusion is intended to provide the reader with a sense of completion. Introducing a subject that is not covered in the paragraph will confuse the reader and weaken your writing.

A concluding sentence may do any of the following:

- Restate the main idea.
    - Example: Childhood obesity is a growing problem in North America.
- Summarize the key points in the paragraph.
    - Example: A lack of healthy choices, poor parenting, and an addiction to video games are among the many factors contributing to childhood obesity.
- Draw a conclusion based on the information in the paragraph.
    - Example: These statistics indicate that unless we take action, childhood obesity rates will continue to rise.
- Make a prediction, suggestion, or recommendation about the information in the paragraph.
    - Example: Based on this research, more than 60 percent of children in North American will be morbidly obese by the year 2030 unless we take evasive action.
- Offer an additional observation about the controlling idea.
    - Example: Childhood obesity is an entirely preventable tragedy.

Self-Practice Exercise 3.13

**H5P:** Self-Practice Exercise 3.13

1. The concluding sentence is a good place to introduce a new idea, because readers find that engaging.

   A. True
   B. False

2. Fill in the missing words to complete the metaphor.

   ◦ If a paragraph is a hamburger, the topic sentence is the _____ bun and the concluding sentence is the _____bun. This makes the body of the paragraph the _____(unless you prefer a veggie burger).

3. Match the type of concluding sentence to the best example.

   1. These examples from recent research show how criminalizing drugs has not protected communities or served individual drug users.
   2. The war on drugs has not resulted in a reduction in suffering.
   3. Given all we know about outcome of failed drug policy, the next step is to consider decriminalization.
   4. The war on drugs has damaged society because it has resulted in a more dangerous drug supply and a criminalized population.
   5. The traumas and violence inflicted by the war on drugs could have been prevented.

   A. Make a prediction, suggestion, or recommendation about the information in the paragraph.
   B. Draw a conclusion based on the information in the paragraph.
   C. Offer an additional observation about the controlling idea.
   D. Restate the main idea.
   E. Summarize the key points in the paragraph.

**Answer Key**

1. B

2. top, bottom, meat/patty

3.
   1. B          3. A          5. C
   2. D          4. E

**Transitions**

A strong paragraph moves seamlessly from the topic sentence into the supporting sentences and on to the concluding sentence. To help organize a paragraph and ensure that ideas logically connect to one another, writers use transitional words and phrases. A **transition** is a connecting word that describes a relationship between ideas. Take another look at the earlier example:

There are numerous advantages to owning a hybrid car. <u>First</u>, they get 20 percent to 35 percent more kilometres to the litre than a fuel-efficient gas-powered vehicle. <u>Second</u>, they produce very few emissions during low speed city driving. <u>Because</u> they require less gas, hybrid cars reduce dependency on fossil fuels, which helps lower prices at the pump. Alex bought a hybrid car two years ago and has been extremely impressed with its performance. "It's the cheapest car I've ever had," she said. "The running costs are far lower than previous gas-powered vehicles I've owned." Given the low running costs and environmental benefits of owning a hybrid car, it is likely that many more people will follow Alex's example in the near future.

Each of the underlined words is a transition word. Words such as first and second are transition words that show sequence or clarify order. They help organize the writer's ideas by showing that he or she has another point to make in support of the topic sentence. Other transition words that show order include third, also, and furthermore.

The transition word because is a transition word of consequence that continues a line of thought. It indicates that the writer will provide an explanation of a result. In this sentence, the writer explains why hybrid cars will reduce dependency on fossil fuels (because they require less gas). Other transition words of consequence include as a result, so that, since, or for this reason.

To include a summarizing transition in her concluding sentence, the writer could rewrite the final sentence as follows:

In conclusion, given the low running costs and environmental benefits of owning a hybrid car, it is likely that many more people will follow Alex's example in the near future.

**Table 3.1: Transitional Words and Phrases to Connect Sentences** provides some useful transition words to connect supporting sentences and concluding sentences. (In other chapters of this book, you will be exposed to more transitional words and phrases for other purposes.)

**Table 3.1 Transitional Words and Phrases to Connect Sentences**

| For Supporting Sentences | For Concluding Sentences |
|---|---|
| • above all<br>• but<br>• for instance<br>• in particular<br>• moreover<br>• subsequently<br>• also<br>• conversely<br>• furthermore<br>• later on<br>• nevertheless<br>• therefore<br>• aside from<br>• correspondingly<br>• however<br>• likewise<br>• on one hand<br>• to begin with<br>• at the same time<br>• for example<br>• in addition<br>• meanwhile<br>• on the contrary | • after all<br>• all things considered<br>• in brief<br>• in summary<br>• on the whole<br>• to sum up<br>• all in all<br>• finally<br>• in conclusion<br>• on balance<br>• thus |

Self-Practice Exercise 3.14

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**H5P:** Practice what you've learned about paragraphs!

**Exercise Explanation**

For this exercise, you will draft a paragraph after spending some time reflecting on the criteria for good paragraphs that you learned about in this chapter. You can choose any topic you like for your paragraph — maybe there's something you're thinking about for this or another class that would benefit from some time to do some writing about — but if you need help with a prompt, consider writing about one of the issues in this chapter or answer one of these questions:

- Can online friendships be as meaningful as offline ones?
- Is college or university always the right decision for people leaving high school?
- What can people do to manage their stress levels?

You don't need to do research to approach this exercise (though you are welcome to, if you wish!). Instead, your own personal experience will be sufficient here.

**Key Paragraph Details**

Here you will reflect on what makes a good paragraph before you take a run at it yourself. Remember, a good paragraph has the following criteria:

- A topic sentence (that makes a claim/states an opinion!).
- A concluding sentence.
- Appropriate supporting details.
- Use of transitional words/phrases.

In the exercise below, click on the "criteria" button and make notes for yourself about how you can address the key criteria for paragraphs. Try make four points: one for each key element your paragraph needs to have.

**Paragraph Composition**

Based on the criteria you outlined on the previous page, draft a paragraph.

**Review Criteria and Goals**

Rate how well you've achieved each of the criteria, and reflect on how you can strengthen the thesis statement.

- Doesn't meet criteria.
- Meets criteria partially.
- Strongly meets criteria.

## Writing at Work

Transitional words and phrases are useful tools to incorporate into workplace documents. They guide the reader through the document, clarifying relationships between sentences and paragraphs so that the reader understands why they have been written in that particular order.

For example, when writing an instructional memo, it may be helpful to consider the following transitional words and phrases: before you begin, first, next, then, finally, after you have completed.

Using these transitions as a template to write your memo will provide readers with clear, logical instructions about a particular process and the order in which steps are supposed to be completed.

## Key Takeaways

- A good paragraph contains three distinct components: a topic sentence, body, and concluding sentence.
- The topic sentence expresses the main idea of the paragraph combined with the writer's attitude or opinion about the topic.
- Good topic sentences contain both a main idea and a controlling idea, are clear and easy to follow, use engaging vocabulary, and provide an accurate indication of what will follow in the rest of the paragraph.
- Topic sentences may be placed at the beginning, middle, or end of a paragraph. In most academic essays, the topic sentence is placed at the beginning of a paragraph.
- Supporting sentences help explain, prove, or enhance the topic sentence by offering facts, reasons, statistics, quotations, or examples.
- Concluding sentences summarize the key points in a paragraph and reiterate the main idea without repeating it word for word.
- Transitional words and phrases help organize ideas in a paragraph and show how these ideas relate to one another.

## Supplemental Exercises

Select one of the following topics or choose a topic of your choice:

- Drilling for oil in Alberta
- Health care reform
- Introducing a four day work week
- Bringing pets to work
- Create a topic sentence based on the topic you chose, remembering to include both a main idea and a controlling idea. Next, write an alternative topic sentence using the same main idea but a different controlling idea.

Collaboration: Please share with a classmate and compare your answers.

Group activity. Working in a group of four or five, assign each group member the task of collecting one document each. These documents might include magazine or newspaper articles, workplace documents, academic essays, chapters from a reference book, film or book reviews, or any other type of writing. As a group, read through each document and discuss the author's purpose for writing. Use the information you

have learned in this chapter to decide whether the main purpose is to summarize, analyze, synthesize, or evaluate. Write a brief report on the purpose of each document, using supporting evidence from the text.

Group activity. Working in a small group, select a workplace document or academic essay that has a clear thesis. Examine each paragraph and identify the topic sentence, supporting sentences, and concluding sentence. Then, choose one particular paragraph and discuss the following questions:

- Is the topic sentence clearly identifiable or is it implied?
- Do all the supporting sentences relate to the topic sentence?
- Does the writer use effective transitions to link his or her ideas?
- Does the concluding sentence accurately summarize the main point of the paragraph?

As a group, identify the weakest areas of the paragraph and rewrite them. Focus on the relationship between the topic sentence, supporting sentences, and concluding sentence. Use transitions to illustrate the connection between each sentence in the paragraph.

Peer activity. Using the information you have learned in this chapter, write a paragraph about a current event. Underline the topic sentence in your paragraph. Now, rewrite the paragraph, placing the topic sentence in a different part of the paragraph. Read the two paragraphs aloud to a peer and have him or her identify the topic sentence. Discuss which paragraph is more effective and why.

**Collaboration: Please share with a classmate, compare your answers, and discuss the contrasting results.**

## Journal Entry 2

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**H5P:** Question Prompts

- Reflecting on what you read about sentence structure in this chapter, think about your writing tendencies. Which of the common sentences errors apply to your writing? How do you plan to address these?
- What challenges did you face when summarizing and paraphrasing? What will you try to focus on doing or not doing in the future when writing summaries?
- Reflect on the goals you set previously. Is there anything you would like to add or already

feel more confident with doing?

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# Chapter 4: What Are You Writing, to Whom, and How?

# 4.1 Expository Essays

- Understand the function and use of expository essays
- Identify eight types of expository essays
- Apply expository essay structure

## What Is an Expository Essay?

An essay that explains a writer's ideas by defining, explaining, informing, or elaborating on points to allow the reader to clearly understand the concept.

Many of your future academic workplace writing assignments will be expository–explaining your ideas or the significance of a concept or action. An expository essay allows the writer the opportunity to explain his or her ideas about a topic and to provide clarity for the reader by using:

- Facts
- Explanations
- Details
- Definitions

It may also include the writer outlining steps of a procedure in a way that is straightforward for the reader to follow. It is purely informative and often contains elements of summary.

Imagine you need to verbally explain a concept to your classmates, maybe a behavioural theory. What are the key elements on which you would focus? How would you organize the information? You could explain who came up with the theory, the specific area of study to which it is related, its purpose, and the significant details to explain the theory. Telling these four elements to your classmates would give them a complete, yet summarized, picture of the theory, so they could apply the theory in future discussions.

Although you did this verbally, you were still fulfilling the elements of an expository essay by providing definition, details, explanations, and maybe even facts if you have a really good memory. This is the same process that you would use when you write an expository essay. You may actually be doing this all the time; for example, when you are giving someone directions to a place or explaining

how to cook something. In the following sections of the chapter, you will practise doing this more in different expository written forms.

# The Structure of an Expository Essay

### Sections versus Paragraphs

Before looking at the general structure of an expository essay, you first need to know that in your post-secondary education, you should not consider your essay as writing being constructed with five paragraphs as you might have been used to in high school. You should instead think of your essay in terms of sections (there may be five), and each section may have multiple paragraphs.

To understand further why you need to think beyond the five-paragraph essay, imagine you have been asked to submit a six-page paper (approximately 1,500 words). You already know that each paragraph should be roughly 75 to 200 words long. If you divide the required word count by five paragraphs (1,500 by 5), you end with 300 words per paragraph, way above the number you should have in a paragraph. If your paragraphs are too long, they likely have too many ideas and your reader may become confused. Your paragraphs should be two-third of a page at most, and *never* longer than a page.

Instead, if you think of your essays being divided into sections (with possibly more than one paragraph per section), your writing will likely be more organized and allow your reader to follow your presentation of ideas without creating too much distance between your paragraph's supporting points and its topic sentence.

As you will see in Section 4.5: Classification, some essay forms may require even more than five paragraphs or sections because of how many points are necessary to address. . For the rest of this chapter, the term *paragraph* will also imply section.

### Sections of an Expository Essay

An expository essay, regardless of its purpose, should have at least five sections, which are:

- Introduction
- First body section/paragraph
- Second body section/paragraph
- Third body section/paragraph
- Conclusion

The **introduction** should state the topic of your paper: your thesis statement as well as brief signposts of what information the rest of the paper will include. That is, you only want to mention the content of the body paragraphs; you do not want to go in to a lot of detail and repeat what will be in the rest of the essay.

The **first body section** or **paragraph** should focus on one of your main points and provide evidence to

support that point. There should be two to three supporting points: reasons, facts, statistics, quotations, examples, or a mix of these. Both the **second** and **third body sections** should follow the same pattern. Providing three body sections with one point each that supports the thesis should provide the reader with enough detail to be convinced of your argument or fully understand the concept you are explaining. However, remember that some sections will require more explanation, and you may need to separate this information into multiple paragraphs.

You can order your sections in the most logical way to explain your ideas. For example, if you are describing a process, you may use chronological order to show the definite time order in which the steps need to happen. You will learn about the different ways to organize your body paragraphs in the next chapter.

The **concluding paragraph**, or conclusion, can be a little tricky to compose because you need to make sure you give a concise summary of the body paragraphs, but you must be careful not to simply repeat what you have already written. Look back at the main idea of each section/paragraph, and try to summarize the point using words different from those you have already used. Do not include any new points in your concluding paragraph.

## Consider Your Audience: How Much Do They Know?

Later in this chapter, you will work on determining and adapting to your audience when writing, but with an expository essay, since you are defining or informing your audience on a certain topic, you need to evaluate how much your audience knows about that topic (aside from having general common knowledge). You want to make sure you are giving thorough, comprehensive, and clear explanations on the topic. Never assume the reader knows everything about your topic (even if it is covered in the reader's field of study). For example, even though some of your instructors may teach criminology, they may have specialized in different areas from the one about which you are writing; they most likely have a strong understanding of the concepts but may not recall all the small details on the topic. If your instructor specialized in crime mapping and data analysis for example, he or she may not have a strong recollection of specific criminological theories related to other areas of study. Providing enough background information without being too detailed is a fine balance, but you always want to ensure you have no gaps in the information, so your reader will not have to guess your intention. Again, we will practise this more in Section 4.10: Purpose, Audience, Tone, and Content.

## What Comes Next?

In the next eight sections (4.2 through 4.9), we will look at different expository modes, or rhetorical modes, you will often be assigned.

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**H5P:** Let's take a moment to see how much you already know about types of Expository Essays. Match the type of Expository Essay to the most correct description.

**Descriptions:**

1. the art of storytelling
2. to show or demonstrate something clearly
3. writing that appeals to our senses
4. to break down broad subjects into smaller parts
5. to explain how to do something or how something works
6. establish the way in which people communicate ideas
7. analyze two subjects in relation to each other
8. to determine how various phenomena relate

**Expository Essay Type:**

A. Process analysis
B. Illustration
C. Compare and contrast
D. Description
E. Cause and effect
F. Definition
G. Narrative
H. Classification

**Answer Key:**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. G | 4. H | 7. C |
| 2. B | 5. A | 8. E |
| 3. D | 6. F | |

**Rhetorical modes** refers simply to the ways to communicate effectively through language. As you read about these modes, keep in mind that the rhetorical mode a writer chooses depends on his or her

purpose for writing. Sometimes writers incorporate a variety of modes in any one essay. In this chapter, we also emphasize the rhetorical modes as a set of tools that will allow you greater flexibility and effectiveness in communicating with your audience and expressing your ideas.

In a few weeks, you will need to submit your first essay–an expository sample–and you will be given the choice of topic: one from each of the modes. Think about which types of expository essays are easier and which are more challenging for you. As mentioned, as you progress through your studies, you will be exposed to each of these types. You may want to explore a mode you find more challenging than the others in order to ensure you have a full grasp on developing each type. However, it is up to you. As you work through the sections, think about possible topics you may like to cover in your expository essay and start brainstorming as you work through the self-practice exercises.

After we explore each of the individual modes in the eight sections that follow, we will look at outlining and drafting; it is at this point you will want to fine tune and narrow the topic you will write about, so you can focus on that when doing the exercises.

# 4.2 Narration

- Determine the purpose and structure of narrative writing
- Understand how to write a narrative essay

## The Purpose of Narrative Writing

**Narration** means the art of storytelling, and the purpose of narrative writing is to tell stories. Anytime you tell a story to a friend or family member about an event or incident in your day, you engage in a form of narration.

A narrative can be factual or fictional. A **factual story** is one that is based on, and tries to be faithful to, actual events as they unfolded. A **fictional story** is made up, or imagined; the writer of a fictional story can create characters and events as he or she sees fit. Biographies and memoirs are examples of factual stories; novels and short stories are examples of fictional stories.

> Tip: Because the line between fact and fiction can often blur, it is helpful to understand what your purpose is from the beginning. Is it important that you recount history, either your own or someone else's? Or does your interest lie in reshaping the world in your own image – either how you would like to see it or how you imagine it could be? Your answers will go a long way in shaping the stories you tell.

Ultimately, whether the story is fact or fiction, narrative writing tries to relay a series of events in an emotionally engaging way. You want your audience to be moved by your story, which could mean through humour, sympathy, fear, anger, and so on. The more clearly you tell your story, the more emotionally engaged your audience is likely to be.

Self-Practice Exercise 4.1

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**H5P:** Narrative Writing Practice

**Exercise Preamble**

For this exercise, you will be writing a rough plot summary of a narrative-style expository essay. We will use the freewriting strategy, where you set a timer (this time for five minutes) and write as freely as you can, trying not to worry too much about what is on the page but instead just working to get your ideas on paper. Don't censor yourself — you can always edit later.

Choose one of these topics, or select something else you find more interesting:

- Childhood
- School
- Adventure
- Work
- Love

- Family
- Friends
- Vacation
- Nature
- Space

Before you start, you'll need to decide if your narrative will be factual (true story) or fictional (made up). Either is fine!

Set your timer for **five minutes** and write without distraction until it goes off. (If you would prefer not to type, you can of course do your freewriting on paper.)

**Organize Freewrite**

1. Look back at your freewriting and think about whether your narrative makes sense **chronologically**. Revise your freewriting into a rough draft that uses transitions in order to show the relationship between the events and express time.
   Share your rough draft here.

2. Remember to use transitions! In fact, let's make note of the transitions you used above, and what they did for your draft (how did they help you explain the chronology of your narrative?).

## The Structure of a Narrative Essay

Major narrative events are most often conveyed in **chronological order**, the order in which events unfold from first to last. Stories typically have a beginning, a middle, and an end, and these events are

typically organized by time. Using transitional words and phrases help to keep the reader oriented in the sequencing of a story. Some of these phrases are listed below.

**Transitional Words and Phrases for Expressing Time**

- after/afterward
- as soon as
- at last
- before
- currently
- during
- eventually

- meanwhile
- next
- now
- since
- soon
- finally
- later

- still
- then
- until
- when/whenever
- while
- first, second, third

The following are the basic components of a narrative:

- **Plot.** The events as they unfold in sequence.
- **Character.** The people who inhabit the story and move it forward. Typically, there are minor characters and main characters. The minor characters generally play supporting roles to the main character, or the protagonist.
- **Conflict.** The primary problem or obstacle that unfolds in the plot that the protagonist must solve or overcome by the end of the narrative. The way in which the protagonist resolves the conflict of the plot results in the theme of the narrative.
- **Theme.** The ultimate message the narrative is trying to express; it can be either explicit or implicit.

**Writing at Work**

When interviewing candidates for jobs, employers often ask about conflicts or problems a potential employee has had to overcome. They are asking for a compelling personal narrative. To prepare for this question in a job interview, write out a scenario using the narrative mode. This will allow you to troubleshoot rough spots as well as better understand your own personal history. It will make both your story your presentation of it better.

## Writing a Narrative Essay

When writing a narrative essay, start by asking yourself if you want to write a factual or fictional story. Then freewrite about topics that are of general interest to you. You will learn more about freewriting in **Chapter 5: Putting the Pieces Together with a Thesis.**

Once you have a general idea of what you will be writing about, sketch out the major events of the story that will compose your plot. Typically, these events will be revealed chronologically and climax

at a central conflict that must be resolved by the end of the story. The use of strong details is crucial as you describe the events and characters in your narrative. You want the reader to emotionally engage with the world that you create in writing.

Tip: To create strong details, keep the human senses in mind. You want your reader to be immersed in the world that you create, so focus on details related to sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch as you describe people, places, and events in your narrative.

As always, it is important to start with a strong introduction to hook your reader into wanting to read more. Try opening the essay with an interesting event that helps to get the story going. Finally, your conclusion should help resolve the central conflict of the story and impress upon your reader the ultimate theme of the piece. See Appendix 1: Readings: Examples of Essays to read a sample narrative essay.

## Key Takeaways

- Narration is the art of storytelling.
- Narratives can be either factual or fictional. In either case, narratives should emotionally engage the reader.
- Most narratives are composed of major events sequenced in chronological order.
- Time transitional words and phrases are used to orient the reader in the sequence of a narrative.
- The four basic components to all narratives are plot, character, conflict, and theme.
- The use of sensory details is crucial to emotionally engaging the reader.
- A strong introduction is important to hook the reader. A strong conclusion should add resolution to the conflict and evoke the narrative's theme.

# 4.3 Illustration

- Determine the purpose and structure of the illustration essay
- Understand how to write an illustration essay

## The Purpose of Illustration in Writing

To **illustrate** means to show or demonstrate something clearly. An effective illustration essay clearly demonstrates and supports a point through the use of evidence.

As you learned in **Chapter 3: Putting Ideas into Your Own Words and Paragraphs**, the controlling idea of an essay is called a thesis. A writer can use different types of evidence to support his or her thesis. Using scientific studies, experts in a particular field, statistics, historical events, current events, analogies, and personal anecdotes are all ways in which a writer can illustrate a thesis. Ultimately, you want the evidence to help the reader "see" your point, as one would see a good illustration in a magazine or on a website. The stronger your evidence is, the more clearly the reader will consider your point.

Using evidence effectively can be challenging, though. The evidence you choose will usually depend on your subject and who your reader is (your audience). When writing an illustration essay, keep in mind the following:

- Use evidence that is appropriate to your topic as well as to your audience.
- Assess how much evidence you need to adequately explain your point depending on the complexity of the subject and the knowledge your audience has of the subject.

For example, if you were writing about a new kind of communication software and your audience was a group of English major undergrads, you might want to use an analogy or a personal story to illustrate how the software worked. You might also choose to add a few more pieces of evidence to make sure the audience understands your point. However, if you were writing about the same subject and your audience was information technology (IT) specialists, you would likely use more technical evidence because they would be familiar with the subject. Keeping in mind your subject in relation to your audience will increase your chances of effectively illustrating your point.

Tip: You never want to insult your readers' intelligence by over explaining concepts they may already be familiar with, but it may be necessary to clearly articulate your point. When in doubt, add an extra example to illustrate your idea.

## The Structure of an Illustration Essay

The controlling idea, or thesis, belongs at the beginning of the essay**.** Evidence is then presented in the essay's body sections/paragraphs to support the thesis. You can start supporting your main point with your strongest evidence first, or you can start with evidence of lesser importance and have the essay build to increasingly stronger evidence. You will learn about this type of organization—order of importance—in **Chapter 5: Putting the Pieces Together with a Thesis**.

The time transition words listed in Section 4.2 Narration, Transition Words and Phrases for Expressing Time are also helpful in ordering the presentation of evidence. Words like *first, second, third, currently, next,* and finally all help orient the reader and sequence evidence clearly. Because an illustration essay uses so many examples, it is also helpful to have a list of words and phrases to present each piece of evidence; see the list below.

### Phrases of Illustration

- case in point
- for example
- for instance
- in particular
- in this case
- one example
- another example
- specifically
- to illustrate

Tip: Vary the phrases of illustration you use. Do not rely on just one. Variety in choice of words and phrasing is critical when trying to keep readers engaged in your writing and your ideas.

### Writing at Work

In the workplace, it is often helpful to keep the phrases of illustration in mind and incorporate them whenever you can. Whether you are writing directives that colleagues will have to follow or requesting a new product or service from another company, making a conscious effort to incorporate a phrase of illustration will force you to provide examples of what you mean.

## Writing an Illustration Essay

First, choose a topic you are interested in. Then create an interesting introduction to engage the reader. The main point, or thesis, should be stated at the end of the introduction. Gather evidence that is appropriate to both your subject and your audience. You can order the evidence in terms of importance, either from least important to most important or from most important to least important. Be sure to fully explain all your examples using strong, clear supporting details. See Appendix 1: Readings: Examples of Essays to read a sample illustration essay.

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**Self-Practice Exercise 4.2**

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**H5P:** Illustration Writing Practice

**Thesis Statement**

Choose a topic from this list (or choose something you might prefer to write about more!) and think about what you might like to illustrate about this topic:

- Cooking
- Baseball
- Work hours
- Exercise
- Traffic

Draft a thesis for your illustration essay. A thesis for an illustration-style expository essay about raising children, for example, would need to make a claim (state an opinion) and suggest how the illustrations will help to support that claim. It might be something like, "Overly permissive or unregulated parenting is troubling for children and their caregivers, as several infamous examples can attest." The claim is clear here — our author opposes permissive parenting. This essay would then go on to illustrate examples that support the argument that permissive parenting is bad for children.

Take a run at drafting your own thesis statement.

**Supporting Details**

- What examples will you use to illustrate this claim for your reader? Try to identify at least three.
- Consider your options for organizing your illustration-style expository essay. How will you order your points?

**Key Takeaways**

- An illustration essay clearly explains a main point using evidence.

- When choosing evidence, always gauge whether the evidence is appropriate for the subject as well as the audience.

- Organize the evidence in terms of importance, either from least important to most important or from most important to least important.

- Use time transitions to order evidence.

- Use phrases of illustration to call out examples.

# 4.4 Description

- Determine the purpose and structure of the description essay
- Understand how to write a description essay

## The Purpose of Description in Writing

Writers use description in writing to make sure that their audience is fully immersed in the words on the page. This requires a concerted effort by the writer to describe his or her world through sensory details.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter**, sensory details** are descriptions that appeal to our sense of sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch. Your descriptions should try to focus on the five senses because most people rely on at least some these senses to experience the world. The use of sensory details, then, provides you the greatest possibility of relating to your audience and thus engaging them in your writing, making descriptive writing important not only during your education but also during everyday situations.

Tip: Avoid empty descriptors if possible. Empty descriptors are adjectives that can mean different things to different people. Good, beautiful, terrific, and nice are examples. The use of such words in descriptions can lead to misreads and confusion. A good day, for instance, can mean many different things depending on the reader's age, personality, or tastes.

### Writing at Work

Whether you are presenting a new product or service to a client, training new employees, or brainstorming ideas with colleagues, the use of clear, evocative detail is crucial. Make an effort to use details that express your thoughts in a way that will register with others. Sharp, concise details are always impressive.

## The Structure of a Description Essay

**Description essays** typically describe a person, a place, or an object using sensory details. The structure of a descriptive essay is more flexible than some of the other rhetorical modes. The introduction of a description essay should set up the tone and point of the essay. The thesis should convey the writer's overall impression of the person, place, or object described in the body sections or paragraphs.

The organization of the essay may best follow **spatial order**, an arrangement of ideas according to physical characteristics or appearance. Depending on what the writer describes, the organization could move from top to bottom, left to right, near to far, warm to cold, frightening to inviting, and so on. For example, if the subject is a client's kitchen in the midst of renovation, you might start at one side of the room and move slowly across to the other end, describing appliances, cabinetry, and so on. Or you might choose to start with older remnants of the kitchen and progress to the new installations. Maybe start with the floor and move up toward the ceiling.

## Writing a Description Essay

Choosing a subject is the first step in writing a description essay. Once you have chosen the person, place, or object you want to describe, your challenge is to write an effective thesis statement to guide your essay. The remainder of your essay describes your subject in a way that best expresses your thesis. Remember, you should have a strong sense of how you will organize your essay. Choose a strategy and stick to it.

Every part of your essay should use vivid sensory details. The more you can appeal to your readers' senses, the more they will be engaged in your essay. See Appendix 1: Readings: Examples of Essays to read a sample description essay.

Self-Practice Exercise 4.3

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**H5P:** Documentation tool

**Exercise Preamble**

Choose something to describe; it can be anything you like, but if you're feeling stuck, here are some suggestions:

- Train station

- Your office

- Your car

- A coffee shop

- Lobby of a movie theater

- Mystery option (Choose an object to describe but do not explicitly tell what it is. Describe it, but preserve the mystery.)

For this exercise, we will be thinking as far as the outline.

- What sensory details will you highlight in your description, and what words will you use to evoke them? Try to touch on as many of touch, taste, sight, smell, and sound as you can.

- What order will you share your details in: spatial (eg. describing details as they appear clockwise in a space) or sensory (eg. describing details in the order your senses experience them)? Give a few points to illustrate.

**Drafting**

- Determine your thesis statement. Yes, even descriptive writing has a thesis that states a claim or perspective.

- Try drafting a rough outline for this descriptive piece. Pay special attention to making sure the details are specific and that the order you reveal the details in makes sense.

Key Takeaways

- Description essays should describe something vividly to the reader using strong sensory details.

- Sensory details appeal to the five human senses: sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch.

- A description essay should start with the writer's main impression of a person, a place, or an object.

- Use spatial order to organize your descriptive writing.

# 4.5 Classification

- Determine the purpose and structure of the classification essay
- Understand how to write a classification essay

## The Purpose of Classification in Writing

The purpose of classification is to break down broad subjects into smaller, more manageable, more specific parts. We classify things in our daily lives all the time, often without thinking about it. Cell phones, for example, have now become part of a broad category. They can be classified as feature phones, media phones, and smartphones. Smaller categories, and the way in which these categories are created, help us make sense of the world. Keep both of these elements in mind when writing a classification essay.

Tip: Choose topics that you know well when writing classification essays. The more you know about a topic, the more you can break it into smaller, more interesting parts. Adding interest and insight will enhance your classification essays.

## The Structure of a Classification Essay

The classification essay opens with an introductory paragraph that introduces the broader topic. The thesis should then explain how that topic is divided into subgroups and why. Take the following introductory paragraph, for example:

When people think of British Columbia, they often think of only Vancouver. However, British Columbia is actually a diverse province with a full range of activities to do, sights to see, and cultures to explore. In order to better understand the diversity of the province of British Columbia, it is helpful to break it into seven separate regions: the Lower Mainland, Vancouver Island, the North and Central Coast, Northern British Columbia, Canyons and the Cariboo, the Thompson-Okanagan, and the Kootenays.

The underlined thesis in this example explains not only the category and subcategories but also the

rationale for breaking it into those categories. In this classification essay, the writer hopes to show readers a different way of considering the province.

Each body paragraph of a classification essay is dedicated to fully illustrating each of the subcategories. In the previous example, then, each of the seven regions of British Columbia would have its own paragraph.

The conclusion should bring all the categories and subcategories together again to show the reader the big picture. In the previous example, the conclusion might explain how the various sights and activities of each region of British Columbia add to its diversity and complexity.

> Tip: To avoid settling for an overly simplistic classification, make sure you break down any given topic at least three different ways. This will help you think "outside the box" and perhaps even learn something entirely new about a subject.

## Self-Practice Exercise 4.4

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**H5P:** Classification Writing Practice

**Exercise Preamble**

Pick one of the following categories to use for this practice exercise (or pick something else that interests you more):

- Vehicles
- Colleges and universities
- Beverages
- Fashion

Give three options for how you might classify items within this category. Consider classification strategies that think a little bit "outside the box." For example, breakfast cereals could be classified by target market, or by mascots and spokespeople, or by sugar content.

Once you've found three options, choose the one you think will make for the most interesting essay and break your category into its classifications.

Write a paragraph explaining why you chose this classification and why it helps the reader understand the

category. For example, classifying breakfast cereals by sugar content can help consumers make healthier choices. If you were developing this into a full essay, this exercise would help you develop a thesis statement.

## Writing a Classification Essay

Start with an engaging opening that will adequately introduce the general topic that you will be dividing into smaller subcategories. Your thesis should come near the end of your introduction. It should include the topic, your subtopics, and the reason you are choosing to break down the topic in the way that you are. Use the following classification thesis equation:

topic + subtopics + rationale for the subtopics = thesis.

The organizing strategy of a classification essay is dictated by the initial topic and the subsequent subtopics. Each body paragraph is dedicated to fully illustrating each of the subtopics. In a way, coming up with a strong topic pays double rewards in a classification essay. Not only do you have a good topic, but you also have a solid organizational structure within which to write.

Be sure you use strong details and explanations for each subcategory paragraph that help explain and support your thesis. Also, be sure to give examples to illustrate your points. Finally, write a conclusion that links all the subgroups together again. The conclusion should successfully wrap up your essay by connecting it to your topic initially discussed in the introduction. See Appendix 1: Readings: Examples of Essays to read a sample classification essay.

### Key Takeaways

- The purpose of classification is to break a subject into smaller, more manageable, more specific parts.
- Smaller subcategories and the way in which they are created help us make sense of the world.
- A classification essay is organized by its subcategories.

# 4.6 Process Analysis

## The Purpose of Process Analysis in Writing

The purpose of a process analysis essay is to explain how to do something or how something works. In either case, the formula for a process analysis essay is the same. The process is articulated into clear, definitive steps.

Almost everything we do involves following a step-by-step process. From riding a bike as children to learning various jobs as adults, we initially need instructions to effectively execute the task. Likewise, we have likely had to instruct others, so we know how important good directions are—and how frustrating it is when they are poorly put together.

### Writing at Work

The next time you have to explain a process to someone at work, be mindful of how clearly you articulate each step. Strong communication skills are critical for workplace satisfaction and advancement. Effective process analysis plays a critical role in developing that skill set.

## The Structure of a Process Analysis Essay

The process analysis essay opens with a discussion of the process and a thesis statement that states the goal of the process. The organization of a process analysis essay is typically chronological. That is, the steps of the process are conveyed in the order in which they usually occur. Body paragraphs will be constructed based on these steps. If a particular step is complicated and needs a lot of explaining, then it will likely take up a paragraph on its own. But if a series of simple steps is easier to understand, then the steps can be grouped into a single paragraph.

The time transitional phrases provided earlier are also helpful in organizing process analysis essays (see in 4.2 Narration, Transitional Words and Phrases for Expressing Time and in 4.3 Illustration, Phrases of

Illustration). Words such as first, second, third, next, and finally are helpful cues to orient reader and organize the content of essay.

Tip: Always have someone else read your process analysis to make sure it makes sense. When a writer becomes very close to a subject, it is difficult to determine how clearly an idea is coming across. Having a friend or co-worker read it over will help identify any confusing spots.

Self-Practice Exercise 4.5

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**H5P:** Process Analysis Practice

**Exercise Preamble**

Choose a process to write about. Remember that you will need to clearly articulate all the necessary steps, so it should be a process you know really well. If you're feeling stuck, here are some ideas:

- Tying a shoelace
- Parallel parking
- Planning a successful first date
- Being an effective communicator

Begin by listing all the steps you need to undertake to achieve this process. Be as detailed as possible and include everything at this stage. Point form is fine. Just get everything out — you can edit and revise at the next step.

Now, revise your list to put the points you have already articulate above in the order that makes the most sense for your process analysis

**Thesis Statement**

- What will the thesis statement of your process analysis be? Remember that it should articulate the goal of the process.
- Decide how many paragraphs you will need. Remember that the steps should be articulated in order, and that you can combine smaller steps, but more complex ones may need their own paragraphs. Make a note of what will be covered in each paragraph.
- What transition words will you use to show the connections between your ideas?

# Writing a Process Analysis Essay

Choose a topic that is interesting, is relatively complex, and can be explained in a series of steps. As with other rhetorical writing modes, you should choose something you know well so that you can more easily describe the finer details about each step in the process. Your thesis statement should come at the end of your introduction, and it should state the final outcome of the process you are describing.

Body paragraphs are composed of the steps in the process. Each step should be expressed using strong details and clear examples. Use time transitional phrases to help organize steps in the process and to orient readers. The conclusion should thoroughly describe the result of the process described in the body paragraphs. See Appendix 1: Readings: Examples of Essays to read an example of a process analysis essay.

> **Key Takeaways**
>
> - A process analysis essay explains how to do something, how something works, or both.
> - The process analysis essay opens with a discussion of the process and a thesis statement that states the outcome of the process.
> - The organization of a process analysis essay typically follows a chronological sequence.
> - Time transitional phrases are particularly helpful in process analysis essays to organize steps and orient reader.

# 4.7 Definition

- Determine the purpose and structure of the definition essay
- Understand how to write a definition essay

## The Purpose of Definition in Writing

The purpose of a definition essay may seem self-explanatory: to simply define something. But defining terms in writing is often more complicated than just consulting a dictionary. In fact, the way we define terms can have far-reaching consequences for individuals as well as groups.

Take, for example, a word like alcoholism. The way in which one defines alcoholism depends on its legal, moral, and medical contexts. Lawyers may define alcoholism in terms of laws governing drinking alcohol; parents may define alcoholism in terms of morality; and doctors may define alcoholism in terms of symptoms and diagnostic criteria. Think also of terms that people tend to debate in our broader culture. How we define words, such as marriage and climate change, has enormous impact on policy decisions and even on daily decisions. Think about conversations couples may have in which words like commitment, respect, or love need clarification.

Defining terms within a relationship, or any other context, can at first be difficult, but once a definition is established between two people or in a group of people, it is easier to have productive dialogues. Definitions, then, establish the way in which people communicate ideas. They set parameters for a given discourse, which is why they are so important.

Tip: When writing definition essays, avoid terms that are too simple, that lack complexity. Think in terms of concepts, such as heroism, immigration, or loyalty, rather than physical objects. Definitions of concepts, rather than objects, are often fluid and contentious, making for a more effective definition essay.

### Writing at Work

Definitions play a critical role in all workplace environments. Take the term sexual harassment, for

example. Sexual harassment is broadly defined on the federal level, but individual companies may have additional criteria that define it further for a particular work setting. Knowing how your workplace defines and treats all sexual harassment allegations is important. Think, too, about how your company defines lateness, productivity, or contributions.

## The Structure of a Definition Essay

The definition essay opens with a general discussion of the term to be defined. You then state as your thesis your definition of the term.

The rest of the essay should explain the rationale for your definition. Remember that a dictionary's definition is limiting, and you should not rely strictly on the dictionary entry. Instead, consider the context in which you are using the word. **Context** identifies the circumstances, conditions, or setting in which something exists or occurs. Often words take on different meanings depending on the context in which they are used. For example, the ideal leader in a battlefield setting could likely be very different than a leader in an elementary school setting. If context is missing from the essay, the essay may be too short or the main points could be confusing or misunderstood.

The remainder of the essay should explain different aspects of the term's definition. For example, if you were defining a good leader in an elementary classroom setting, you might define the person according to personality traits: patience, consistency, and flexibility. Each attribute would be explained in its own paragraph.

> Tip: For definition essays, try to think of concepts that you have a personal stake in. You are more likely to write a more engaging definition essay if you are writing about an idea that has personal value and importance.

### Writing at Work

It is a good idea to occasionally assess your role in the workplace. You can do this through the process of definition. Identify your role at work by defining not only the routine tasks but also those grey areas where your responsibilities might overlap with those of others. Coming up with a clear definition of roles and responsibilities can add value to your resumé and even increase productivity in the workplace.

Self-Practice Exercise 4.6

**H5P:** Definition Writing Practice

**Exercise Preamble**

In this exercise, we'll think about why definitions are important. If you've ever been in a lengthy argument only to discover everyone is actually arguing about different things, you'll understand why clear definitions are so important.

Today, you'll write about a time in your own life in which the definition of a word, or the lack of a definition, caused an argument. Your term could be something as simple as the category of an all–star in sports or how to define a good movie: for example, does everyone have the same criteria for deciding who the best actor is? Or it could be something with higher stakes and wider impact, such as a political argument: for example, does everyone mean the same thing when they use a phrase like "cancel culture"?

First, explain how the argument began.

**Drafting**

Next, explain how the argument hinged on the definition of the word.

Finally, explain how the incident was resolved.

You could develop this into a longer essay by using what you've done so far as an introduction, and then focusing on the parts of the definition. Structurally, each idea or unique component of the definition should have its own paragraph.

## Writing a Definition Essay

Choose a topic that will be complex enough to be discussed at length. Choosing a word or phrase of personal relevance often leads to a more interesting and engaging essay.

After you have chosen your word or phrase, start your essay with an introduction that establishes the relevance of the term in the chosen specific context. Your thesis comes at the end of the introduction, and it should clearly state your definition of the term in the specific context. Establishing a functional context from the beginning will orient readers and minimize misunderstandings.

The body paragraphs should each be dedicated to explaining a different facet of your definition. Make sure to use clear examples and strong details to illustrate your points. Your concluding paragraph should pull together all the different elements of your definition to ultimately reinforce your thesis. See Appendix 1: Readings: Examples of Essays to read a sample definition essay.

**Key Takeaways**

- Definitions establish the way in which people communicate ideas. They set parameters for a given discourse.
- Context affects the meaning and usage of words.
- The thesis of a definition essay should clearly state the writer's definition of the term in the specific context.
- Body paragraphs should explain the various facets of the definition stated in the thesis.
- The conclusion should pull all the elements of the definition together at the end and reinforce the thesis.

# 4.8 Comparison and Contrast

- Determine the purpose and structure of comparison and contrast in writing
- Explain organizational methods used when comparing and contrasting
- Understand how to write a compare and contrast essay

## The Purpose of Comparison and Contrast in Writing

Comparison in writing discusses elements that are similar, while contrast in writing discusses elements that are different. A compare and contrast essay, then, analyzes two subjects by comparing them, contrasting them, or doing both.

The key to a good compare and contrast essay is to choose two or more subjects that connect in a meaningful way. The purpose of conducting the comparison or contrast is not to state the obvious but rather to illuminate subtle differences or unexpected similarities. For example, if you wanted to focus on contrasting two subjects you would not pick apples and oranges; rather, you might choose to contrast two types of oranges or two types of apples to highlight subtle differences: Red Delicious apples are sweet, while Granny Smiths are tart and acidic. Drawing distinctions between elements in a similar category will increase the audience's understanding of that category, which is the purpose of the compare and contrast essay.

Similarly, to focus on comparison, choose two subjects that seem at first to be unrelated. For a comparison essay, you likely would not choose two different types of apples as in the example above because they share so many of the same properties already. Rather, you might try to compare apples and oranges. The more divergent the two subjects initially seem, the more interesting a comparison essay will be.

### Writing at Work

Comparing and contrasting is also an evaluative tool. In order to make accurate evaluations about a given topic, you must first know the critical points of similarity and difference. Comparing and contrasting is a primary tool for many workplace assessments. You have likely compared and contrasted yourself to other colleagues. Employee advancements, pay raises, hiring, and firing are typically conducted using comparison and contrast. Comparison and contrast could be used to evaluate companies, departments, or individuals.

Self-Practice Exercise 4.7

*An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=89#h5p-53 (https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=89#h5p-53)*

**H5P**:Comparison/Contrast Writing Practice

**Exercise Preamble**

Comparison and Contrast-style expository essays can be challenging. We're going to break down the steps in this exercise.

You can write about anything you like, but if you need help deciding, it's helpful to think about whether you want to focus on comparison or contrast. Remember that if you write a contrast essay, you want to pick two things that seem similar on the surface, and explore their differences. If you write a comparison essay, you want to pick two things that seem different on the surface, and explore their similarities. In this way, you're explore something your reader may not be aware of — and it prevents you from picking a topic that is too obvious.

Some ideas for a contrast essay are:

- Romantic comedies
- Internet search engines
- Cell phones

Some ideas for a comparison essay are:

- Department stores and discount retail stores
- Fast-food chains and fine-dining restaurants
- Dogs and cats

Pick your topic, set a timer for five minutes, and freewrite about the similarities and differences you already know about your topic.

**Drafting Your Ideas**

Now, try to formalize your ideas into the key points for your draft.

- **If you are writing a contrast essay**, select one similarity and three differences.
- **If you are writing a comparison essay**, select one difference and three similarities. Remember that you want to focus on what is surprising and new, or that shows insight, not what is obvious.

Let's identify the thesis statement for your draft now. Remember: The compare and contrast essay starts with a thesis that clearly states the two subjects being compared, contrasted, or both, and the reason for doing so. That reason is your claim or the stand you are taking on the topic.

How will you organize your essay? In the example of my thesis statement above, I might move **subject-by-subject** — eg. explore everything I have to say about the social/environmental impacts of SUVs and then move on to do the same for compact cars — or **point-by-point** — eg. write first about the social impacts of both types of vehicles, and then about the environmental impacts.

Decide on the organizational method and share the order you will develop your points below.

## The Structure of a Comparison and Contrast Essay

The compare and contrast essay starts with a thesis that clearly states the two subjects being compared, contrasted, or both, and the reason for doing so. The thesis could lean more toward either comparing or contrasting, or balance both. Remember, the point of comparing and contrasting is to provide useful knowledge to the reader. Take the following thesis as an example that leans more toward contrasting.

Thesis statement: Organic vegetables may cost more than those that are conventionally grown, but when put to the test, they are definitely worth every extra penny.

Here the thesis sets up the two subjects to be compared and contrasted (organic versus conventionally grown vegetables), and it makes a claim about the results that might prove useful to the reader.

You may organize compare and contrast essays in one of the following two ways:

- According to the subjects themselves, discussing one then the other
- According to individual points, discussing each subject in relation to each point

See **Figure 4.1: Planning a Comparison and Contrast Essay**, which illustrates the ways to organize the organic versus conventional vegetables thesis.

**Organize by Subject:**

(1) Thesis (Organic vegetables may cost more than those that are conventionally grown, but when put to the test, they are definitely worth every extra penny.)

(2) Subject 1: Organic Vegetables

Point 1: Chemicals/Pesticides
Point 2: Nutrition
Point 3: Taste

(3) Subject 2: Conventional Vegetables

Point 1: Chemicals/Pesticides
Point 2: Nutrition
Point 3: Taste

(4) Conclusion

**Organize by Point:**

(1) Thesis (Organic vegetables may cost more than those that are conventionally grown, but when put to the test, they are definitely worth every extra penny.)

(2) Point 1: Chemicals/Pesticides

Subject 1: Organic
Subject 2: Conventional

(3) Point 2: Nutrition

Subject 1: Organic
Subject 2: Conventional

(4) Point 3: Taste

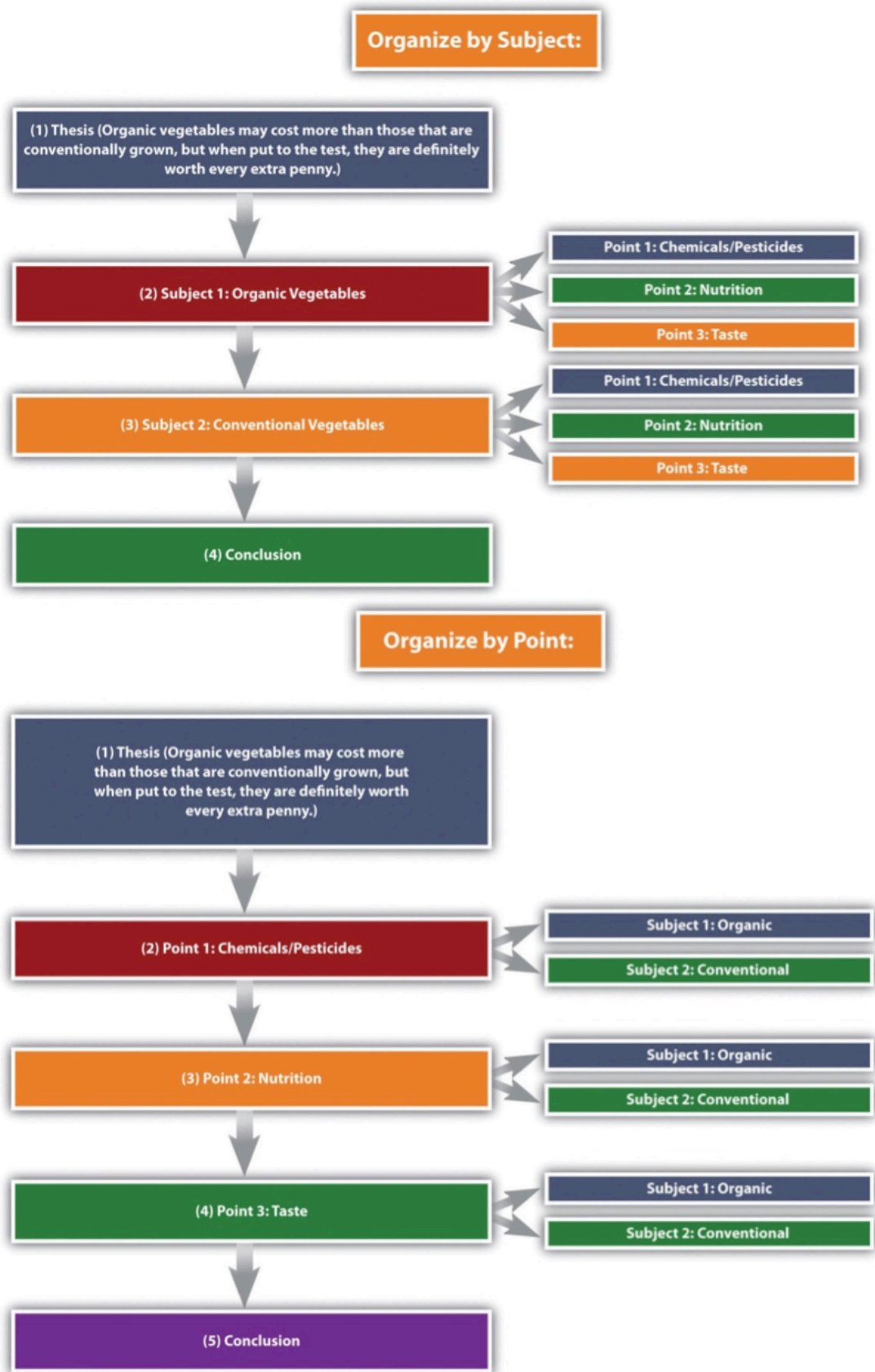Subject 1: Organic
Subject 2: Conventional

(5) Conclusion

*Figure 4.1 Planning a Comparison and Contrast Essay [Image description]*

The organizational structure you choose depends on the nature of the topic, your purpose, and your audience.

Given that compare and contrast essays analyze the relationship between two subjects, it is helpful to have some phrases on hand that will cue the reader to such analysis. See **Table 4.1: Phrases of Comparison and Contrast** for examples.

**Table 4.1 Phrases of Comparison and Contrast**

| Comparison | Contrast |
| --- | --- |
| one similarity | one difference |
| another similarity | another difference |
| both | conversely |
| like | in contrast |
| likewise | unlike |
| similarly | while |
| in a similar fashion | whereas |

## Writing a Comparison and Contrast Essay

First choose whether you want to compare seemingly disparate subjects, contrast seemingly similar subjects, or compare and contrast subjects. Once you have decided on a topic, introduce it with an engaging opening paragraph. Your thesis should come at the end of the introduction, and it should establish the subjects you will compare, contrast, or both, as well as state what can be learned from doing so.

The body of the essay can be organized in one of two ways: by subject or by individual points. The organizing strategy that you choose will depend on, as always, your audience and your purpose. You may also consider your particular approach to the subjects as well as the nature of the subjects themselves; some subjects might better lend themselves to one structure or the other. Be sure to use comparison and contrast phrases to cue the reader to the ways in which you are analyzing the relationship between the subjects.

After you finish analyzing the subjects, write a conclusion that summarizes the main points of the essay and reinforces your thesis. See Appendix 1: Readings: Examples of Essays (#back-matter-appendix-1-readings-examples-of-essays) to read a sample compare and contrast essay.

### Writing at Work

Many business presentations are conducted using comparison and contrast. The organizing strategies—by subject or individual points—could also be used for organizing a presentation. Keep this

in mind as a way of organizing your content the next time you or a colleague has to present something at work.

<div class="key-takeaways">

### Key Takeaways

- A compare and contrast essay analyzes two subjects by either comparing them, contrasting them, or both.
- The purpose of writing a comparison or contrast essay is not to state the obvious but rather to illuminate subtle differences or unexpected similarities between two subjects.
- The thesis should clearly state the subjects that are to be compared, contrasted, or both, and it should state what is to be learned from doing so.
- There are two main organizing strategies for compare and contrast essays.
- Organize by the subjects themselves, one then the other.
- Organize by individual points, in which you discuss each subject in relation to each point.
- Use phrases of comparison or phrases of contrast to signal to readers how exactly the two subjects are being analyzed.

</div>

**Image descriptions**

## Figure 4.1 Planning a Comparison and Contrast Essay

A flowchart illustrating the ways to organize by subject and organize by point about organic versus conventional vegetables.

Organize by subject:

1. Thesis (Organic vegetables may cost more than those that are conventionally grown, but when put to test, they are definitely worth every extra penny.)
2. Subject 1: Organic vegetables

   - Point 1: Chemicals/Pesticides
   - Point 2: Nutrition
   - Point 3: Taste

3. Subject 2: Conventional vegetables

   - Point 1: Chemicals/Pesticides
   - Point 2: Nutrition
   - Point 3: Taste

4. Conclusion

Organize by point:

1. Thesis (Organic vegetables may cost more than those that are conventionally grown, but when put to test, they are definitely worth every extra penny.)

2. Point 1: Chemicals/Pesticides

   ◦ Subject 1: Organic

   ◦ Subject 2: Conventional

3. Point 2: Nutrition

   ◦ Subject 1: Organic

   ◦ Subject 2: Conventional

4. Point 3: Taste

   ◦ Subject 1: Organic

   ◦ Subject 2: Conventional

5. Conclusion

Return to place in text (Figure 4.1)

# 4.9 Cause and Effect

- Determine the purpose and structure of cause and effect in writing
- Understand how to write a cause and effect essay

## The Purpose of Cause and Effect in Writing

It is often considered human nature to ask "why?" and "how?" We may want to know how our child got sick so we can better prevent it from happening in the future, or why our colleague received a pay raise because we want one as well. We want to know how much money we will save over the long term if we buy a hybrid car. These examples identify only a few of the relationships we think about in our lives, but each shows the importance of understanding cause and effect.

A **cause** is something that produces an event or condition; an **effect** is what results from an event or condition. The purpose of the cause and effect essay is to determine how various phenomena relate in terms of origins and results. Sometimes the connection between cause and effect is clear, but often determining the exact relationship between the two is very difficult. For example, the following effects of a cold may be easily identifiable: a sore throat, runny nose, and a cough. But determining the cause of the sickness can be far more difficult. A number of causes are possible, and to complicate matters, these possible causes could have combined to cause the sickness. That is, more than one cause may be responsible for any given effect. Therefore, cause and effect discussions are often complicated and frequently lead to debates and arguments.

Tip: Use the complex nature of cause and effect to your advantage. Often it is not necessary, or even possible, to find the exact cause of an event or to name the exact effect. So, when formulating a thesis, you can claim one of a number of causes or effects to be the primary, or main, cause or effect. As soon as you claim that one cause or one effect is more crucial than the others, you have developed a thesis.

# The Structure of a Cause and Effect Essay

The cause and effect essay opens with a general introduction to the topic, which then leads to a thesis that states the main cause, main effect, or various causes and effects of a condition or event.

The cause and effect essay can be organized in one of the following two primary ways:

- Start with the cause and then talk about the effects.
- Start with the effect and then talk about the causes.

For example, if your essay is on childhood obesity, you could start by talking about the effect of childhood obesity and then discuss the cause, or you could start the same essay by talking about the cause of childhood obesity and then move to the effect. Regardless of which structure you choose, be sure to explain each element of the essay completely. Explaining complex relationships requires the full use of evidence, such as scientific studies, expert testimony, statistics, and anecdotes.

Because cause and effect essays determine how phenomena are linked, they make frequent use of words and phrases that denote such linkage. See below Phrases of Causation for examples of such terms.

## Phrases of Causation

- as a result
- because
- consequently
- due to

- hence
- since
- therefore
- thus

The conclusion should wrap up the discussion and reinforce the thesis, leaving the reader with a clear understanding of the relationship that was analyzed.

> Tip: Be careful of resorting to empty speculation. In writing, speculation amounts to unsubstantiated guessing. Writers are particularly prone to this trap in cause and effect arguments due to the complex nature of finding links between phenomena. Be sure to have clear evidence to support the claims that you make.

Self-Practice Exercise 4.8

*An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=91#h5p-54 (https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=91#h5p-54)*

**H5P:** Cause and Effect Writing Practice

**Exercise Preamble**

In this exercise, we will think through the steps of a cause and effect essay. This can be tricky. We'll start by choosing a topic. You want to pick something you know enough about to make claims about the relationships between cause and effect. For this in-class exercise, there's no need to do external research, but remember that in a more formal assignment, you'll want to have good sources for all your claims and to avoid speculation.

Some areas where cause and effect thinking is common include:

- Health and nutrition
- Sports
- Media
- Politics
- History

For example, you might write a cause and effect essay about whether violent video games cause children to act out, or whether universal basic income programs cause people to live more stable lives. Choose something you can argue from a position of confidence.

Set a timer and freewrite for **five minutes** about the topic you have chosen.

Can you identify a potential thesis statement from your freewriting? Remember: The cause and effect essay opens with a general introduction to the topic, which then leads to a thesis that states the main cause, main effect, or various causes and effects of a condition or event. In other words, you don't need to claim the **only** cause or effect — we know that ideas are complex.

**Organizing Your Draft**

The cause and effect essay can be organized in one of the following two primary ways:

- Start with the cause and then talk about the effects.
- Start with the effect and then talk about the causes.

Which makes the most sense for what you are trying to argue in your thesis statement?

Using point form, sketch out the structure of your essay: how many paragraphs, what will each one focus on, and how will you support it?

## Writing a Cause and Effect Essay

Choose an event or condition that you think has an interesting cause and effect relationship. Introduce your topic in an engaging way. End your introduction with a thesis that states the main cause, the main effect, or both.

Organize your essay by starting with either the cause then effect structure, or the effect then cause structure. Within each section, you should clearly explain and support the causes and effects using a full range of evidence. If you are writing about multiple causes or multiple effects, you may choose to sequence either in order of importance. In other words, order the causes from least to most important (or vice versa), or order the effects from least important to most important (or vice versa).

Use the phrases of causation when trying to forge connections between various events or conditions. This will help organize your ideas and orient the reader. End your essay with a conclusion that summarizes your main points and reinforces your thesis. See Appendix 1: Readings: Examples of Essays to read a sample cause and effect essay.

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**Key Takeaways**

- The purpose of the cause and effect essay is to determine how various phenomena are related.
- The thesis states what the writer sees as the main cause, main effect, or various causes and effects of a condition or event.
- The cause and effect essay can be organized in one of these two primary ways:
- Start with the cause and then talk about the effect.
- Start with the effect and then talk about the cause.
- Strong evidence is particularly important in the cause and effect essay due to the complexity of determining connections between phenomena.
- Phrases of causation are helpful to signal links between various elements in the essay.

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### Essay 1: Expository essay (15%)

In week 7, you will need to submit an expository essay on one of the following topics. Consider these topics as you work through the rest of this chapter and the next. You will need to choose *one* topic from *one* of the rhetorical modes below and write a 750- to 900-word essay. You will need to produce a logically organized essay with a thesis statement, well developed and logically organized paragraphs (with topic sentences), and an introduction and conclusion. You will need to support your ideas using

one to three sources and include an APA reference list and citations as outlined in the JIBC APA Style Guide. You need to also demonstrate appropriate use of grammar and correct spelling. Remember, your essay should not just be a story; it should demonstrate logical organization and idea development.

Choose any one of the exercises you have completed for Self-Practice 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, or 4.9 and develop it into your Expository Essay. Consult with your instructor or your classmates if you are having a hard time deciding which activity to develop further.

**You need to submit this assignment to your instructor for marking**. (15%)

# 4.10 Purpose, Audience, Tone, and Content

Learning Objectives

- Identify the four common academic purposes
- Identify audience, tone, and content
- Apply purpose, audience, tone, and content to a specific assignment

We have examined different types or modes of composing expository essays. As each essay has a different purpose, we now need to look further at how to construct paragraphs according to the purpose, audience, and tone of writing. It is important keep the big picture thesis in mind when writing, and to question whether the information supports that thesis. As well, while thinking of how each supporting idea links back to that thesis, it is necessary to consider the purpose of the paragraphs. Should a paragraph be summary, analysis, synthesis, or evaluation to best support the thesis and essay mode? How will that purpose affect paragraph construction?

Three elements shape the content of each paragraph:

- **Purpose**. The reason the writer composes the paragraph.
- **Tone**. The attitude the writer conveys about the paragraph's subject.
- **Audience**. The individual or group whom the writer intends to address.

**Figure 4.2: Purpose, Audience, Tone, and Content Triangle** illustrates this concept.
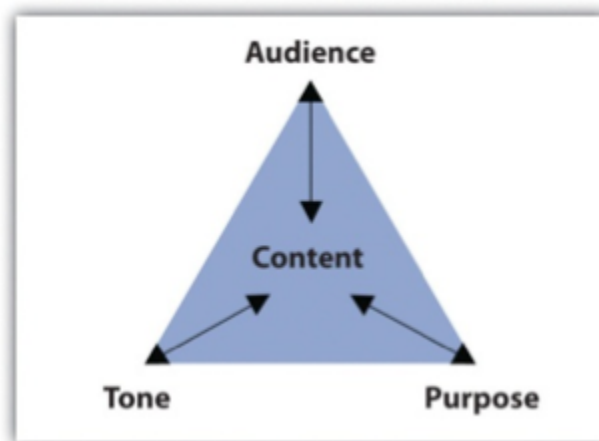


*Figure 4.2 Purpose, Audience, Tone, and Content Triangle*

The assignment's purpose, audience, and tone dictate what the paragraph covers and how it will support one main point. This section covers how purpose, audience, and tone affect reading and writing paragraphs.

## Identifying Common Academic Purposes

The purpose is simply the reason you are writing a particular document. Basically, the purpose of a piece of writing answers the question "why?" For example, why write a play? To entertain a packed theatre. Why write instructions to the babysitter? To inform him or her of your schedule and rules. Why write a letter to your Member of Parliament? To persuade him or her to address your community's needs.

In academic settings, the reasons for writing fulfill four main purposes: to summarize, to analyze, to synthesize, and to evaluate. You will encounter these four purposes not only as you read for your classes but also as you read for work or pleasure. Because reading and writing work together, your writing skills will improve as you read.

Eventually, your instructors will ask you to complete assignments specifically designed to meet one of the four purposes. As you will see, the purpose for writing will guide you through each part of the paper, helping you make decisions about content and style. For now, identifying these purposes by reading paragraphs will prepare you to write individual paragraphs and to build longer assignments.

## Summary Paragraphs

We have already seen a sample of a summary paragraph in Section 3.2: Summarizing. Take a look back at the summary paragraph in that section to refresh your memory on what this type of paragraph should contain.

## Analysis Paragraphs

An **analysis** separates complex materials into their different parts and studies how the parts relate to one another. The analysis of simple table salt, for example, would require a deconstruction of its parts—the elements sodium (Na) and chloride (Cl). Then, scientists would study how the two elements interact to create the compound NaCl, or sodium chloride, which is also called simple table salt.

Analysis is not limited to the sciences, of course. An analysis paragraph in academic writing fulfills the same purpose. Instead of deconstructing chemical compounds, academic analysis paragraphs typically deconstruct documents. An analysis takes apart a primary source (an essay, a book, an article, etc.) point by point. It communicates the main points of the document by examining individual points and identifying how they relate to one another.

Take a look at a student's analysis of the journal report.

At the beginning of their report, Brown et al. use specific data regarding the use of alcohol by high school students and college-age students, which is supported by several studies. Later in the report, they consider how various socioeconomic factors influence problem drinking in adolescence. The latter part of the report is for less specific and does not provide statistics or examples.

The lack of specific information in the second part of the report raises several important questions. Why are teenagers in rural high schools more likely to deink than teenagers in urban areas? Where do they obtain alcohol? How do parental attitudes influence this trend? A follow-up study could compare several high schools in rural and urban areas to consider these issues and potentially find ways to reduce teenage alcohol consumption.

Notice how the analysis does not simply repeat information from the original report, but considers how the points within the report relate to one another. By doing this, the student uncovers a discrepancy between the points that are backed up by statistics and those that require additional information. Analyzing a document involves a close examination of each of the individual parts and how they work together.

## Synthesis Paragraphs

A **synthesis** combines two or more items to create an entirely new item. Consider the electronic musical instrument aptly named the synthesizer. It looks like a simple keyboard but displays a dashboard of switches, buttons, and levers. With the flip of a few switches, a musician may combine the distinct sounds of a piano, a flute, or a guitar—or any other combination of instruments—to create a new sound. The purpose of the synthesizer is to blend together the notes from individual instruments to form new, unique notes.

The purpose of an academic synthesis is to blend individual documents into a new document. An academic synthesis paragraph considers the main points from one or more pieces of writing and links the main points together to create a new point, one not replicated in either document.

Take a look at a student's synthesis of several sources about underage drinking.

In their 2009 report, Brown et al. consider the rates of alcohol consumption among high school and college-ages students and various sociodemographic factors that affect these rates. However, this report is limited to assessing the rates of underage drinking, rather than considering methods of decreasing these rates. Several other studies, as well as original research among college students, provide insight into how these rates may be reduced.

One study, by Spoth, Greenberg, and Thurrisi (2009) considers the impact of various types of

interventions as a method for reducing alcohol consumption among minors. They conclude that although family-focused interventions for adolescents aged ten to fifteen have shown promise, there is a serious lack of interventions available for college-aged students who do not attend college. These students are among the highest risk level of alcohol abuse, a fact supported by Brown et al.

I did my own research and interviewed eight college students, four men and four women. I asked them when they first tried alcohol and what factors encouraged them to drink. All four men had tried alcohol by the age of thirteen. Three of the women had also tried alcohol by thirteen and the fourth had tried alcohol by fifteen. All eight students said that peer pressure, boredom, and the thrill of trying something illegal were motivating factors. These results support the research of Brown at al. However, they also raise an interesting point. If boredom is a motivating factor for underage drinking, maybe additional after school programs or other community measures could be introduced to dissuade teenagers from underage drinking. Based on my sources, further research is needed to show true preventative measures for teenage alcohol consumption.

Notice how the synthesis paragraphs consider each source and use information from each to create a new thesis. A good synthesis does not repeat information; the writer uses a variety of sources to create a new idea.

## Evaluation Paragraphs

An **evaluation** judges the value of something and determines its worth. Evaluations in everyday experiences are often not only dictated by set standards but are also influenced by opinion and prior knowledge. For example, at work, a supervisor may complete an employee evaluation by judging his subordinate's performance based on the company's goals. If the company focuses on improving communication, the supervisor will rate the employee's customer service according to a standard scale. However, the evaluation still depends on the supervisor's opinion and prior experience with the employee. The purpose of the evaluation is to determine how well the employee performs on the job.

Throughout their report, Brown at al. provided valuable statistics that highlight the frequency of alcohol use among high school and college students. They use several reputable sources to support their points. However, the report focuses solely on the frequency of alcohol use and how it varies according to certain sociodemographic factors. Other sources, such as Spoth, Greenberg, and Turrisi's study (2009) and the survey I conducted among college students, examine the reasons for alcohol use among young people and offer suggestions as to how to reduce the rates. Nonetheless, I think that Brown et al. offer a useful set of statistics from which to base further research into alcohol use among high school and college students.

An academic evaluation communicates your opinion, and its justifications, about a document or a topic of discussion. Evaluations are influenced by your reading of the

document, your prior knowledge, and your prior experience with the topic or issue. Because an evaluation incorporates your point of view and the reasons for your point of view, it typically requires more critical thinking and a combination of summary, analysis, and synthesis skills. Thus evaluation paragraphs often follow summary, analysis, and synthesis paragraphs. Read a student's evaluation paragraph.

Notice how the paragraph incorporates the student's personal judgment within the evaluation. Evaluating a document requires prior knowledge that is often based on additional research.

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Tip: When reviewing directions for assignments, look for the verbs summarize, analyze, synthesize, or *evaluate*. Instructors often use these words to clearly indicate the assignment's purpose. These words will cue you on how to complete the assignment because you will know its exact purpose.

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## Self-Practice Exercise 4.9

*An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=94#h5p-55 (https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=94#h5p-55)*

**H5P:** Identify which paragraph is the best example of each paragraph purpose (summarize, synthesize, analyze, evaluate).

**Paragraphs:**

1. During the opening scene, we learn that the character Laura is adopted and that she has spent the past three years desperately trying to track down her real parents. Having exhausted all the usual options—adoption agencies, online searches, family trees, and so on—she is on the verge of giving up when she meets a stranger on a bus. The chance encounter leads to a complicated chain of events that ultimately result in Laura getting her lifelong wish. But is it really what she wants? Throughout the rest of the film, Laura discovers that sometimes the past is best left where it belongs.

2. The scene in which Campbell and his fellow prisoners assist the guards in shutting down the riot immediately strikes the viewer as unrealistic. Based on the recent reports on prison riots in both Detroit and California, it seems highly unlikely that a posse of hardened criminals would intentionally help their captors at the risk of inciting future revenge from other inmates. Instead, both news reports and psychological studies indicate that prisoners who do not actively participate in a riot will go back to their cells and avoid conflict altogether. Examples of this lack of attention to detail occur throughout the film, making it almost unbearable to watch.

3. To create the feeling of being gripped in a vise, the director, May Lee, uses a variety of elements

to gradually increase the tension. The creepy, haunting melody that subtly enhances the earlier scenes becomes ever more insistent, rising to a disturbing crescendo toward the end of the movie. The desperation of the actors, combined with the claustrophobic atmosphere and tight camera angles create a realistic firestorm, from which there is little hope of escape. Walking out of the theatre at the end feels like staggering out of a Roman dungeon.

4. This film could easily have been cut down to less than two hours. By the final scene, I noticed that most of my fellow moviegoers were snoozing in their seats and were barely paying attention to what was happening on screen. Although the director sticks diligently to the book, he tries too hard to cram in all the action, which is just too ambitious for such a detail-oriented story. If you want my advice, read the book and give the movie a miss.

**Paragraph Purposes:**

A. Synthesize                          C. Analyze

B. Summarize                           D. Evaluate

**Answer Keys**

1. B                                   3. A

2. C                                   4. D

## Writing at Work

Thinking about the purpose of writing a report in the workplace can help focus and structure the document. A summary should provide colleagues with a factual overview of your findings without going into too much detail. In contrast, an evaluation should include your personal opinion, along with supporting evidence, research, or examples to back it up. Listen for words such as *summarize, analyze, synthesize,* or *evaluate* when your boss asks you to complete a report to help determine a purpose for writing.

Self-Practice Exercise 4.10

Consider the expository essay you will soon have to write. Decide which of your Self-Practice Exercises you will use as your jumping-off point or, if you're not satisfied with any of them, repeat one instead.

When you have decided, make a note of your essay topic and the type of expository writing you will be doing.

## Identifying the Audience

Imagine you must give a presentation to a group of executives in an office. Weeks before the big day,

you spend time creating and rehearsing the presentation. You must make important, careful decisions not only about the content but also about your delivery. Will the presentation require technology to project figures and charts? Should the presentation define important words, or will the executives already know the terms? Should you wear your suit and dress shirt? The answers to these questions will help you develop an appropriate relationship with your audience, making them more receptive to your message.

Now imagine you must explain the same business concepts from your presentation to a group of high school students. Those important questions you previously answered may now require different answers. The figures and charts may be too sophisticated, and the terms will certainly require definitions. You may even reconsider your outfit and sport a more casual look. Because the audience has shifted, your presentation and delivery will shift as well to create a new relationship with the new audience.

In these two situations, the audience—the individuals who will watch and listen to the presentation—plays a role in the development of presentation. As you prepare the presentation, you visualize the audience to anticipate their expectations and reactions. What you imagine affects the information you choose to present and how you will present it. Then, during the presentation, you meet the audience in person and discover immediately how well you perform.

Although the audience for writing assignments—your readers—may not appear in person, they play an equally vital role. Even in everyday writing activities, you identify your readers' characteristics, interests, and expectations before making decisions about what you write. In fact, thinking about audience has become so common that you may not even detect the audience driven decisions.

For example, you update your status on a social networking site with the awareness of who will digitally follow the post. If you want to brag about a good grade, you may write the post to please family members. If you want to describe a funny moment, you may write with your friends' sense of humour in mind. Even at work, you send emails with an awareness of an unintended receiver who could intercept the message.

In other words, being aware of "invisible" readers is a skill you most likely already possess and one you rely on every day. Consider the following paragraphs. Which one would the author send to her parents? Which one would she send to her best friend?

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**Example A**

Last Saturday, I volunteered at a local hospital. The visit was fun and rewarding. I even learned how to do cardiopulmonary resuscitation, or CPR. Unfortunately, I think caught a cold from one of the patients. This week, I will rest in bed and drink plenty of clear fluids. I hope I am well by next Saturday to volunteer again.

**Example B**

OMG! You won't believe this! My advisor forced me to do my community service hours at this

> hospital all weekend! We learned CPR but we did it on dummies, not even real peeps. And some kid sneezed on me and got me sick! I was so bored and sniffling all weekend; I hope I don't have to go back next week. I def do NOT want to miss the basketball tournament!

Most likely, you matched each paragraph to its intended audience with little hesitation. Because each paragraph reveals the author's relationship with her intended readers, you can identify the audience fairly quickly. When writing your own paragraphs, you must engage with your audience to build an appropriate relationship given your subject. Imagining your readers during each stage of the writing process will help you make decisions about your writing. Ultimately, the people you visualize will affect what and how you write.

> Tip: While giving a speech, you may articulate an inspiring or critical message, but if you left your hair a mess and laced up mismatched shoes, your audience would not take you seriously. They may be too distracted by your appearance to listen to your words.

Similarly, grammar and sentence structure serve as the appearance of a piece of writing. Polishing your work using correct grammar will impress your readers and allow them to focus on what you have to say.

Because focusing on audience will enhance your writing, your process, and your finished product, you must consider the specific traits of your audience members. Use your imagination to anticipate the readers' demographics, education, prior knowledge, and expectations.

Demographics: These measure important data about a group of people, such as their age range, ethnicity, religious beliefs, or gender. Certain topics and assignments will require you to consider these factors as they relate to your audience. For other topics and assignments, these measurements may not influence your writing. Regardless, it is important to consider demographics when you begin to think about your purpose for writing.

Education: Education considers the audience's level of schooling. If audience members have earned a doctorate degree, for example, you may need to elevate your style and use more formal language. Or, if audience members are still in college, you could write in a more relaxed style. An audience member's major or emphasis may also dictate your writing.

Prior knowledge: Prior knowledge is what the audience already knows about your topic. If your readers have studied certain topics, they may already know some terms and concepts related to the topic. You may decide whether to define terms and explain concepts based on your audience's prior knowledge. Although you cannot peer inside the brains of your readers to discover their knowledge, you can make reasonable assumptions. For instance, a nursing major would presumably know more about health-related topics than a business major would.

Expectations: These indicate what readers will look for while reading your assignment. Readers may expect consistencies in the assignment's appearance, such as correct grammar and traditional formatting like double-spaced lines and a legible font. Readers may also have content-based expectations given the assignment's purpose and organization. In an essay titled "The Economics of Enlightenment: The Effects of Rising Tuition," for example, audience members may expect to read about the economic repercussions of post-secondary tuition costs.

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**Self-Practice Exercise 4.11**

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**H5P:** Identifying Your Audience

In this exercise, you will have a chance to imagine three difference audiences for your Expository Essay. The goal here is to consider all the concepts of audience outlined in this chapter: demographics, education, prior knowledge, and expectations. You will do this twice so that you can consider both your classmates and your instructor as your potential audiences for this assignment.

- Imagine your classmates are reading your essay for a peer review exercise. What will you need to know about them as an audience in order to write for their needs?

- Now we will repeat the task, this time thinking about your instructor as the audience.

---

Keep in mind that as your topic shifts in the writing process, your audience may also shift. Also, remember that decisions about style depend on audience, purpose, and content. Identifying your audience's demographics, education, prior knowledge, and expectations will affect how you write, but purpose and content play an equally important role. The next subsection covers how to select an appropriate tone to match the audience and purpose.

## Selecting an Appropriate Tone

**Tone** identifies a speaker's attitude toward a subject or another person. You may pick up a person's tone of voice fairly easily in conversation. A friend who tells you about her weekend may speak excitedly about a fun skiing trip. An instructor who means business may speak in a low, slow voice to emphasize her serious mood. Or, a co-worker who needs to let off some steam after a long meeting may crack a sarcastic joke.

Just as speakers transmit emotion through voice, writers can transmit through writing a range of attitudes, from excited and humorous to somber and critical. These emotions create connections among

the audience, the author, and the subject, ultimately building a relationship between the audience and the text. To stimulate these connections, writers intimate their attitudes and feelings with useful devices, such as sentence structure, word choice, punctuation, and formal or informal language. Keep in mind that the writer's attitude should always appropriately match the audience and the purpose.

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**Self-Practice Exercise 4.12**

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**H5P:** Read the following paragraph and consider the writer's tone. How would you describe the writer's attitude toward wildlife conservation? There is more than one right answer.

Many species of plants and animals are disappearing right before our eyes. If we do not act fast, it might be too late to save them. Human activities, including pollution, deforestation, hunting, and overpopulation, are devastating the natural environment. Without our help, many species will not survive long enough for our children to see them in the wild. Take the tiger, for example. Today, tigers occupy just 7 percent of their historical range, and many local populations are already extinct. Hunted for their beautiful pelt and other body parts, the tiger population has plummeted from 100,000 in 1920 to just a few thousand (Smith, 2013). Contact your local wildlife conservation society today to find out how you can stop this terrible destruction.

    A. relaxed
    B. funny
    C. bored
    D. impassioned
    E. well-informed
    F. urgent

**Answer Key**

D, E, F

---

## Choosing Appropriate, Interesting Content

**Content** refers to all the written substance in a document. After selecting an audience and a purpose, you must choose what information will make it to the page. Content may consist of examples, statistics, facts, anecdotes, testimonies, and observations, but no matter the type, the information must be appropriate and interesting for the audience and purpose. An essay written for grade 3 students that summarizes the legislative process, for example, would have to contain succinct and simple content.

Content is also shaped by tone. When the tone matches the content, the audience will be more engaged, and you will build a stronger relationship with your readers. Consider that audience of grade 3 students. You would choose simple content that the audience will easily understand, and you would express that content through an enthusiastic tone. The same considerations apply to all audiences and purposes.

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### Self-Practice Exercise 4.13

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**H5P:** Choosing Appropriate, Interesting Content

**Freewriting Practice**

For this activity, you'll need to keep handy the Self-Practice Exercise that you will be basing your Expository Essay on. You'll also need a timer (your phone or an app on your computer are find choices).

Freewrite for ten minutes about the content you will use for your essay. Remember, content includes examples, statistics, facts, anecdotes, testimonies, and observations and keeps in mind the audience you are writing for and the tone you wish to achieve. At this point, though, just get your ideas down on the page, and don't worry if you have all the facts right yet. We'll make a to-do list for research next.

**To-Do List Time!**

Reread your freewriting and make note of what you are missing and where you need to spend your research energies next. Identify a minimum of five concrete tasks you need to do and when you need to accomplish them by.

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In the next two chapters, you will complete more exercises to further develop your expository essays.

### Key Takeaways

- Paragraphs separate ideas into logical, manageable chunks of information.
- The content of each paragraph and document is shaped by purpose, audience, and tone.
- The four common academic purposes are to summarize, to analyze, to synthesize, and to evaluate.
- Identifying the audience's demographics, education, prior knowledge, and expectations will affect how and what you write.
- Devices such as sentence structure, word choice, punctuation, and formal or informal language communicate tone and create a relationship between the writer and his or her audience.

- Content may consist of examples, statistics, facts, anecdotes, testimonies, and observations. All content must be appropriate and interesting for the audience, purpose and tone.

## Journal Entry 3

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**H5P:** Question Prompts

Thinking back to each of the expository essay modes you learned this week, which did you find easier and which did you find more difficult? Why?

What challenges did you face when assessing your purpose, audience, and tone? How do you think you can address these challenges?

Reflect on the goals you set previously. Is there anything you would like to add or already feel more confident with doing?

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# Chapter 5: Putting the Pieces Together with a Thesis Statement

# 5.1 Apply Prewriting Models

<div style="background:#000;color:#fff;padding:10px">Learning Objectives</div>

- Use prewriting strategies to choose a topic and narrow the focus

If you think that a blank sheet of paper or a blinking cursor on the computer screen is a scary sight, you are not alone. Many writers, students, and employees find that beginning to write can be intimidating. When faced with a blank page, however, experienced writers remind themselves that writing, like other everyday activities, is a process. Every process, from writing to cooking to bike riding to learning to use a new cell phone will get significantly easier with practice.

Just as you need a recipe, ingredients, and proper tools to cook a delicious meal, you also need a plan, resources, and adequate time to create a good written composition. In other words, writing is a process that requires steps and strategies to accomplish your goals.

These are the five steps in the writing process:

- Prewriting
- Outlining the structure of ideas
- Writing a rough draft
- Revising
- Editing

Effective writing can be simply described as good ideas that are expressed well and arranged in the proper order. This chapter will give you the chance to work on all these important aspects of writing. Although many more prewriting strategies exist, this chapter covers six: using experience and observations, freewriting, asking questions, brainstorming, mapping, and searching the Internet. Using the strategies in this chapter can help you overcome the fear of the blank page and confidently begin the writing process.

## Prewriting

Prewriting is the stage of the writing process during which you transfer your abstract thoughts into more concrete ideas in ink on paper (or in type on a computer screen). Although prewriting techniques can be helpful in all stages of the writing process, the following four strategies are best used when initially deciding on a topic:

- Using experience and observations
- Reading
- Freewriting
- Asking questions

At this stage in the writing process, it is okay if you choose a general topic. Later you will learn more prewriting strategies that will narrow the focus of the topic.

## Choosing a Topic

In addition to understanding that writing is a process, writers also understand that choosing a good general topic for an assignment is an essential step. Sometimes your instructor will give you an idea to begin an assignment, and other times your instructor will ask you to come up with a topic on your own. A good topic not only covers what an assignment will be about but also fits the assignment's purpose and its audience.

In this chapter, you will follow a writer named Mariah as she prepares a piece of writing. You will also be planning one of your own. The first important step is for you to tell yourself why you are writing (to inform, to explain, or some other purpose) and for whom you are writing.

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**H5P:** Review Prewriting

Review Your Work to this Point

In this exercise, we'll review all the work you did in Chapter 4 as you get ready to start drafting your Expository Essay in earnest. Make sure you have all the work you did in Chapter 4 downloaded and handy for you refer back to as we work.

- What purpose did you select (eg. what type of expository essay do you intend to write)? What draws you to this purpose?
- What is the topic you have settled on for this essay, and what do you want to say about it?
- And who is the audience for this essay, and what do you know about them (reflect back on Self-Practice Exercise 4.11 for help with this)?

## Using Experience and Observations

When selecting a topic, you may want to consider something that interests you or something based on your own life and personal experiences. Even everyday observations can lead to interesting topics. After writers think about their experiences and observations, they often take notes on paper to better develop their thoughts. These notes help writers discover what they have to say about their topic.

> Tip: Have you seen an attention-grabbing story on your local news channel? Many current issues appear on television, in magazines, and on the Internet. These can all provide inspiration for your writing.

## Reading

Reading plays a vital role in all the stages of the writing process, but it first figures in the development of ideas and topics. Different kinds of documents can help you choose a topic and also develop that topic. For example, a magazine advertising the latest research on the threat of global warming may catch your eye in the supermarket. The cover may interest you, and you may consider global warming as a topic. Or maybe a novel's courtroom drama sparks your curiosity of a particular lawsuit or legal controversy.

After you choose a topic, critical reading is essential to the development of a topic. While reading almost any document, you evaluate the author's point of view by thinking about the main idea and the support. When you judge the author's argument, you discover more about not only the author's opinion but also your own. If this step already seems daunting, remember that even the best writers need to use prewriting strategies to generate ideas.

> Tip: The steps in the writing process may seem time consuming at first, but following these steps will save you time in the future. The more you plan in the beginning by reading and using prewriting strategies, the less time you may spend writing and editing later because your ideas will develop more swiftly.

Prewriting strategies depend on your critical reading skills. Reading prewriting exercises (and outlines and drafts later in the writing process) will further develop your topic and ideas. As you continue to follow the writing process, you will see how Mariah uses critical reading skills to assess her own prewriting exercises.

## Freewriting

**Freewriting** is an exercise in which you write freely about any topic for a set amount of time (usually three to five minutes). During the time limit, you may jot down any thoughts that come to mind. Try not to worry about grammar, spelling, or punctuation. Instead, write as quickly as you can without stopping. If you get stuck, just copy the same word or phrase over and over until you come up with a new thought.

Writing often comes easier when you have a personal connection with the topic you have chosen. Remember, to generate ideas in your freewriting, you may also think about readings that you have enjoyed or that have challenged your thinking. Doing this may lead your thoughts in interesting directions.

Quickly recording your thoughts on paper will help you discover what you have to say about a topic. When writing quickly, try not to doubt or question your ideas. Allow yourself to write freely and unselfconsciously. Once you start writing with few limitations, you may find you have more to say than you first realized. Your flow of thoughts can lead you to discover even more ideas about the topic. Freewriting may even lead you to discover another topic that excites you even more.

Look at Mariah's example. The instructor allowed the members of the class to choose their own topics, and Mariah thought about her experiences as a communications major. She used this freewriting exercise to help her generate more concrete ideas from her own experience.

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Tip: Some prewriting strategies can be used together. For example, you could use experience and observations to come up with a topic related to your course studies. Then you could use freewriting to describe your topic in more detail and figure out what you have to say about it.

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Last semester my favourite class was about mass media. We got to study radio and television. People say we watch too much television, and even though I tried not to, I end up watching a few reality shows just to relax. Everyone has to relax! It's too hard to relax when something like the news (my husband watches all the time) is on because it's too scary now. Too much bad news, not enough good news. News. Newspapers I don't read as much anymore. I can get the headlines on my homepage when I check my e-mail. E-mail could be considered mass media too these days. I used to go to the video store a few times a week before I started school, but now the only way I know what movies are current is to listen for the Oscar nominations. We have cable but we can't afford the movie channels, so I sometimes look at older movies late at night. UGH. A few of them get played again and again until you're sick of them. My husband thinks I'm crazy, but sometimes there are old black-and-whites from the 1930s and '40s. I could never live my life in black-and-white. I like the home decorating shows and love how people use colours on their walls. Makes rooms look so bright. When we buy a home, if we ever can, I'll use lots of colour. Some of those shows even show you how to do major renovations by yourself. Knock down walls and everything. Not for me – or my husband. I'm handier

than he is. I wonder if they could make a reality show about us.

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Self-Practice Exercise 5.1

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> *writingforsuccessh5p/?p=101#h5p-62)*

**H5P:** Freewriting Practice

We are going to revisit the art of freewriting now. You're right to note that we already did this at the end of Chapter 4. The more frequently you engage in freewriting about your topic at the early writing stages, the more interesting ideas and arguments you will uncover. Good writing does take time and attention — but this time and attention will make the final draft of your essay come much more easily. So try to stick with it for now.

In this chapter, you will explore a number of prewriting strategies. Some may work for you so well that you use them for every essay assignment you have into the future. Others might not feel like they fit your writing style at all. The purpose of this chapter is to expose you to a range of options as you learn more about your own writing style. So try them all, and keep what fits.

Hopefully, you've completed your to-do list from Self-Practice Exercise 4.13. You can use those notes as you work away, so keep them handy, too.

Set a timer for ten minutes and freewrite about your prospective essay topic. If it helps, you can think about things like:

- What draws you to this topic?
- What experience do you have with this topic?
- What are you still wondering about related to your topic?

## Asking Questions

Who? What? Where? When? Why? How? In everyday situations, you pose these kinds of questions to get information. Who will be my partner for the project? When is the next meeting? Why is my car making that odd noise?

You seek the answers to these questions to gain knowledge, to better understand your daily experiences, and to plan for the future. Asking these types of questions will also help you with the

writing process. As you choose your topic, answering these questions can help you revisit the ideas you already have and generate new ways to think about your topic. You may also discover aspects of the topic that are unfamiliar to you and that you would like to learn more about. All these idea-gathering techniques will help you plan for future work on your assignment.

When Mariah reread her freewriting notes, she found she had rambled and her thoughts were disjointed. She realized that the topic that interested her most was the one she started with: the media. She then decided to explore that topic by asking herself questions about it. Her purpose was to refine media into a topic she felt comfortable writing about. To see how asking questions can help you choose a topic, take a look at the following chart in **Figure 5.1: Asking Questions** that Mariah completed to record her questions and answers. She asked herself the questions that reporters and journalists use to gather information for their stories. The questions are often called the 5WH questions, after their initial letters.

**Figure 5.1 Asking Questions**

| Questions | Answers |
|---|---|
| Who? | I use media. Students, teachers, parents, employers and employees-almost everyone uses media. |
| What? | The media can be a lot of things. Television, radio, e-mail (I think), newspapers, magazines, books. |
| Where? | The media is almost everywhere now. It's in homes, at work, in cars, even on cell phones! |
| When? | Media has been around for a long time, but seems a lot more important now. |
| When? | Hmm. This is a good question. I don't know why there is mass media. Maybe we have it because we have the technology now. Or people live far away from their families and they have to stay in touch. |
| How? | Well, edia is possible because of the technology inventions, but I don't know how they all work! |

Tip: Prewriting is very purpose driven; it does not follow a set of hard and fast rules. The purpose of prewriting is to find and explore ideas so that you will be prepared to write. A prewriting technique like asking questions can help you both find a topic and explore it. The key to effective prewriting is to use the techniques that work best for your thinking process. Freewriting may not seem to fit your thinking process, but keep an open mind. It may work better than you think. Perhaps brainstorming a list of topics might better fit your personal style. Mariah found freewriting and asking questions to be fruitful strategies to use. In your own prewriting, use the 5WH questions in any way that benefits your planning.

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**H5P:** The 5WHsUsing the freewriting you did for Self-Practice Exercise 5.1 as the basis, we're going to try another pre-writing strategy. Ask yourself the 5WHs: who, what, where, when, why, and how. This can help you address more of the issues worth talking about in your paper, and also help you to identify any gaps for further research.

- **WHO** is impacted or effected by the topic you have chosen?
- **WHAT** is your topic — what ideas or concept might be encompassed by it, and what isn't it?
- **WHERE** does your topic exist or not exist? What spaces does it occupy? Will geography matter to your argument — either in writing it or in understanding it?
- **WHEN** is your topic most relevant, and has that changed over time?
- **HOW** does your topic work? It's okay if you still have questions — make note of those, too.

Now that you have completed some of the prewriting exercises, you may feel less anxious about starting a paper from scratch. With some ideas down on paper (or saved on a computer), writers are often more comfortable continuing the writing process. After identifying a good general topic, you, too, are ready to continue the process.

Tip: You may find that you need to adjust your topic as you move through the writing stages (and as you complete the exercises in this chapter). If the topic you have chosen is not working, you can repeat the prewriting activities until you find a better one.

## More Prewriting Techniques: Narrowing the Focus

The prewriting techniques of freewriting and asking questions helped Mariah think more about her topic. The following additional prewriting strategies would help her (and you) narrow the focus of the topic:

- Brainstorming
- Idea mapping

- Searching the Internet

Narrowing the focus means breaking up the topic into subtopics, or more specific points. Generating a lot of subtopics helps in selecting the ones that fit the assignment and appeal to the writer and the audience.

After rereading her syllabus, Mariah realized her general topic, mass media, was too broad for her class's short paper requirement. Three pages would not be enough to cover all the concerns in mass media today. Mariah also realized that although her readers are other communications majors who are interested in the topic, they may want to read a paper about a particular issue in mass media.

## Brainstorming

**Brainstorming** is similar to list making. You can make a list on your own or in a group with your classmates. Start with a blank sheet of paper (or a blank computer document) and write your general topic across the top. Underneath your topic, make a list of more specific ideas. Think of your general topic as a broad category and the list items as things that fit into that category. Often you will find that one item can lead to the next, creating a flow of ideas that can help you narrow your focus to a more specific paper topic.

The following is Mariah's brainstorming list:

Mass Media

Magazines
Newspapers
Broadcasting
Radio
Television
DVD
Gaming/video games
Internet
Cell phones
Smartphones
Text messages
Tiny cameras
GPS

From this list, Mariah could narrow her focus to a particular technology under the broad category of mass media.

## Writing at Work

Imagine you have to write an email to your current boss explaining your prior work experience, but you do not know where to start. Before you begin the email, you can use the brainstorming technique to generate a list of employers, duties, and responsibilities that fall under the general topic of work experience.

## Idea Mapping

**Idea mapping** allows you to visualize your ideas on paper using circles, lines, and arrows. This technique is also known as **clustering** because ideas are broken down and clustered, or grouped together. Many writers like this method because the shapes show how the ideas relate or connect, and writers can find a focused topic from the connections mapped. Using idea mapping, you might discover interesting connections between topics that you had not thought of before.

To create an idea map, start with your general topic in a circle in the centre of a blank sheet of paper. Then write specific ideas around it and use lines or arrows to connect them together. Add and cluster as many ideas as you can think of.

Mariah tried idea mapping in addition to brainstorming. **Figure 5.2: Idea Map** shows what she created.



*Figure 5.2: Idea Map*

Notice Mariah's largest circle contains her general topic: mass media. Then, the general topic branches

into two subtopics written in two smaller circles: television and radio. The subtopic television branches into even more specific topics: cable and DVDs. From there, Mariah drew more circles and wrote more specific ideas: high definition and digital recording from cable and Blu-ray from DVDs. The radio topic led Mariah to draw connections between music, downloads versus CDs, and, finally, piracy.

From this idea map, Mariah saw she could consider narrowing the focus of her mass media topic to the more specific topic of music piracy.

## Searching the Internet

Using search engines on the Internet is a good way to see what kinds of websites are available on your topic. Writers use search engines not only to understand more about the topic's specific issues but also to get better acquainted with their audience.

> Tip: Look back at the chart you completed in **Self Practice Exercise 5.2**. Did you guess at any of the answers? Searching the Internet may help you find answers to your questions and confirm your guesses. Be choosy about the websites you use. Make sure they are reliable sources for the kind of information you seek.

When you search the Internet, type some key words from your broad topic or words from your narrowed focus into your browser's search engine (many good general and specialized search engines are available for you to try). Then look over the results for relevant and interesting articles.

Results from an Internet search show writers the following information:

- Who is talking about the topic
- How the topic is being discussed
- What specific points are currently being discussed about the topic

> Tip: If the search engine results are not what you are looking for, revise your key words and search again. Some search engines also offer suggestions for related searches that may give you better results.

Mariah typed the words music piracy from her idea map into the search engine Google (see **Figure 5.3 Useful Search Engine Results**).
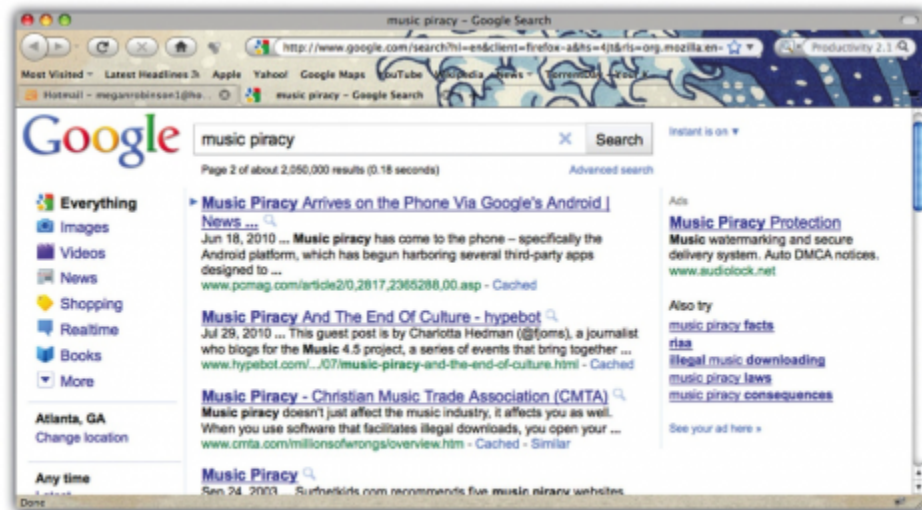
*Figure 5.3 Useful Search Engine Results*

**Note:** Not all the results online search engines return will be useful or reliable. Carefully consider the reliability of an online source before selecting a topic based on it. Remember that factual information can be verified in other sources, both online and in print. If you have doubts about any information you find, either do not use it or identify it as potentially unreliable.

The results from Mariah's search included websites from university publications, personal blogs, online news sources, and a lot of legal cases sponsored by the recording industry. Reading legal jargon made Mariah uncomfortable with the results, so she decided to look further. Reviewing her map, she realized that she was more interested in consumer aspects of mass media, so she refocused her search to media technology and the sometimes confusing array of expensive products that fill electronics stores. Now, Mariah considers a topic on the products that have fed the mass media boom in everyday lives.

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Self-Practice Exercise 5.3

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**H5P:** More Pre-Writing Strategies

**Pre-Writing Strategies**

In this chapter, you've leaned about pre-writing strategies like brainstorming, idea mapping, and internet searching. Choose any two of those strategies to use.

If you choose to brainstorm, set your timer for ten minutes and dedicate that time to brainstorming about your topic. Write your general topic first, and then follow with all your ideas about potential related ideas for you to focus on in your essay.

If you choose to idea map, set your timer for ten minutes and dedicate that time to idea mapping about your topic. You'll need to do this on paper instead of in this space. Write your general topic first, and then follow by visually representing the connections to the potential related ideas for you to focus on in your essay.

If you're new to idea mapping, please consider using Figure 5.2 as an example for your thinking.

If you choose to internet search, set your timer for ten minutes and dedicate that time to internet searching about your topic. It's super easy to get distracted here, so consider closing any unrelated tabs or window or applications on your computer. This is a good time to look up any gaps you still have in your thinking. Take notes below about:

- Who is talking about the topic
- How the topic is being discussed
- What specific points are currently being discussed about the topic

And save all your links!

**Narrowing the Topic**

Let's take all you've learned about your topic and get it narrowed down.

Freewrite for ten minutes about what interests you most about your topic, and think particularly about how you might focus your thinking and argument.

What will you focus on for the topic of this paper? Try to articulate it in one or two sentences.

Prewriting strategies are a vital first step in the writing process. First they help you first choose a broad topic, and then they help you narrow the focus of the topic to a more specific idea. Use **Checklist 5.1: Topic Checklist** to help you with this step.

### Checklist 5.1: Developing a Good Topic

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**H5P:** Pre-Writing Checklist

1. Am I interested in this topic?

2. Would my audience be interested?

3. Do I have prior knowledge or experience with this topic? If so, would I be comfortable exploring this topic and sharing my experiences?

4. Do I want to learn more about this topic?

5. Is this topic specific?

6. Does it fit the length of the assignment?

If you answered no to any of the questions, you need to reframe your topic. Consider re-doing the prewriting exercises or making an appointment with your instructor.

An effective topic ensures that you are ready for the next step. With your narrowed focus in mind, answer the bulleted questions in the checklist for developing a good topic. If you can answer "yes" to all the questions, write your topic on the line below. If you answer "no" to any of the questions, think about another topic or adjust the one you have and try the prewriting strategies again.

## Key Takeaways

- All writers rely on steps and strategies to begin the writing process.

- The steps in the writing process are prewriting, outlining, writing a rough draft, revising, and editing.

- Prewriting is the transfer of ideas from abstract thoughts into words, phrases, and sentences on paper.

- A good topic interests the writer, appeals to the audience, and fits the purpose of the assignment.

- Writers often choose a general topic first and then narrow the focus to a more specific topic.

# 5.2 Developing a Strong, Clear Thesis Statement

Learning Objectives

- Develop a strong, clear thesis statement with the proper elements
- Revise your thesis statement

Have you ever known someone who was not very good at telling stories? You probably had trouble following the train of thought as the storyteller jumped from point to point, either being too brief in places that needed further explanation or providing too many details on a meaningless element. Maybe the person told the end of the story first, then moved to the beginning and later added details to the middle. The ideas were probably scattered, and the story did not flow very well. When the story was over, you probably had many questions.

Just as a personal anecdote can be a disorganized mess, an essay can fall into the same trap of being out of order and confusing. That is why writers need a **thesis statement** to provide a specific focus for their essay and to organize what they are about to discuss in the body.

Just like a topic sentence summarizes a single paragraph, the thesis statement summarizes an entire essay. It tells the reader the point you want to make in your essay, while the essay itself supports that point. It is like a signpost that signals the essay's destination. You should form your thesis before you begin to organize an essay, but you may find that it needs revision as the essay develops.

## Elements of a Thesis Statement

For every essay you write, you must focus on a central idea. This idea stems from a topic you have chosen or been assigned or from a question your teacher has asked. It is not enough merely to discuss a general topic or simply answer a question with a yes or no. You have to form a specific opinion, and then articulate that into a **controlling idea**—the main idea upon which you build your thesis.

Remember that a thesis is not the topic itself, but rather your interpretation of the question or subject. For whatever topic your instructor gives you, you must ask yourself, "What do I want to say about it?" Asking and then answering this question is vital to forming a thesis that is precise, forceful, and confident.

A thesis is one sentence long and appears toward the end of your introduction. It is specific and focuses on one to three points of a single idea—points that are able to be demonstrated in the body. It forecasts

the content of the essay and suggests how you will organize your information. Remember that a thesis statement does not summarize an issue but rather dissects it.

## A Strong Thesis Statement

A **strong thesis** statement contains the following qualities:

Specificity: A thesis statement must concentrate on a specific area of a general topic. As you may recall, the creation of a thesis statement begins when you choose a broad subject and then narrow down its parts until you pinpoint a specific aspect of that topic. For example, health care is a broad topic, but a proper thesis statement would focus on a specific area of that topic, such as options for individuals without health care coverage.

Precision: A strong thesis statement must be precise enough to allow for a coherent argument and to remain focused on the topic. If the specific topic is options for individuals without health care coverage, then your precise thesis statement must make an exact claim about it, such as that limited options exist for those who are uninsured by their employers. You must further pinpoint what you are going to discuss regarding these limited effects, such as whom they affect and what the cause is.

Arguability: A thesis statement must present a relevant and specific argument. A factual statement often is not considered arguable. Be sure your thesis statement contains a point of view that can be supported with evidence.

Demonstrability: For any claim you make in your thesis, you must be able to provide reasons and examples for your opinion. You can rely on personal observations in order to do this, or you can consult outside sources to demonstrate that what you assert is valid. A worthy argument is backed by examples and details.

Forcefulness/Assertiveness: A thesis statement that is forceful shows readers that you are, in fact, making an argument. The tone is assertive and takes a stance that others might oppose.

Confidence: In addition to using force in your thesis statement, you must also use confidence in your claim. Phrases such as I feel or I believe actually weaken the readers' sense of your confidence because these phrases imply that you are the only person who feels the way you do. In other words, your stance has insufficient backing. Taking an authoritative stance on the matter persuades your readers to have faith in your argument and open their minds to what you have to say.

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Tip: Even in a personal essay that allows the use of first person, your thesis should not contain phrases such as in my opinion or I believe. These statements reduce your credibility and weaken your argument. Your opinion is more convincing when you use a firm attitude.

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Self-Practice Exercise 5.4

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**H5P:** Drafting Thesis StatementsWrite a clear, confident thesis statement for an essay on the following topic:

- Texting while driving.
- The legal drinking age in different provinces of Canada.
- Steroid use among professional athletes.
- Abortion.
- Racism.

## Examples of Appropriate Thesis Statements

Each of the following thesis statements meets several of the qualities discussed above: specificity, precision, arguability, demonstrability, forcefulness/assertiveness, and confidence.

- The societal and personal struggles of Floyd in the play Where the Blood Mixes, *by Kevin Loring,* symbolize the challenge of First Nations people of Canada who lived through segregation and placement into residential schools.
- Closing all American borders for a period of five years is one solution that will tackle illegal immigration.
- Shakespeare's use of dramatic irony in Romeo and Juliet spoils the outcome for the audience and weakens the plot.
- J. D. Salinger's character in Catcher in the Rye, Holden Caulfield, is a confused rebel who voices his disgust with phonies, yet in an effort to protect himself, he acts like a phony on many occasions.
- Compared to an absolute divorce, no-fault divorce is less expensive, promotes fairer settlements, and reflects a more realistic view of the causes for marital breakdown.
- Exposing children from an early age to the dangers of drug abuse is a sure method of preventing future drug addicts.
- In today's crumbling job market, a high school diploma is not significant enough education to land a stable, lucrative job.

Tip: You can find thesis statements in many places, such as in the news; in the opinions of friends, co-workers or teachers; and even in songs you hear on the radio. Become aware of thesis statements in everyday life by paying attention to people's opinions and their reasons for those opinions. Pay attention to your own everyday thesis statements as well, as these can become material for future essays.

Now that you have read about the contents of a good thesis statement and have seen examples, take a look four pitfalls to avoid when composing your own thesis.

- A thesis is weak when it is simply a declaration of your subject or a description of what you will discuss in your essay. Weak thesis statement: My paper will explain why imagination is more important than knowledge.

- A thesis is weak when it makes an unreasonable or outrageous claim or insults the opposing side. Weak thesis statement: Religious radicals across the country are trying to legislate their puritanical beliefs by banning required high school books.

- A thesis is weak when it contains an obvious fact or something that no one can disagree with or provides a dead end. Weak thesis statement: Advertising companies use sex to sell their products.

- A thesis is weak when the statement is too broad. Weak thesis statement: The life of Pierre Trudeau was long and accomplished.

## Self-Practice Exercise 5.5

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**H5P:** Read the following thesis statements and identify each as weak or strong.

1. "The subject of this paper is my experience with ferrets as pets."

2. "The government must expand its funding for research on renewable energy resources in order to prepare for the impending end of oil."

3. "Edgar Allan Poe was a poet who lived in Baltimore during the 19th century."

4. "In this essay, I will give you a lot of reasons why marijuana should not be legalized in British Columbia."

5. "Because many children's toys have potential safety hazards that could lead to injury, it is clear that not all children's toys are safe."

6. "My experience with young children has taught me that I want to be a disciplinary parent because I believe that a child without discipline can be a parent's worst nightmare."

**Answer Key**

1. Weak
2. Strong
3. Weak
4. Weak
5. Strong
6. Weak

**Writing at Work**

Often in your career, you will need to ask your boss for something through an email. Just as a thesis statement organizes an essay, it can also organize your email request. While your email will be shorter than an essay, using a thesis statement in your first paragraph quickly lets your boss know what you are asking for, why it is necessary, and what the benefits are. In short body paragraphs, you can provide the essential information needed to expand upon your request.

## Writing a Thesis Statement

One legitimate question readers always ask about a piece of writing is "What is the big idea?" (You may even ask this question when you are the reader, critically reading an assignment or another document.) Every nonfiction writing task—from the short essay to the 10-page term paper to the lengthy senior thesis—needs a big idea, or a controlling idea, as the "spine" for the work. The controlling idea is the main idea that you want to present and develop.

> Tip: For a longer piece of writing, the main idea should be broader than the main idea for a shorter piece of writing. Be sure to frame a main idea that is appropriate for the length of the assignment. Ask yourself how many pages it will take to explain and explore the main idea in detail? Be reasonable with your estimate. Then expand or trim it to fit the required length.

The big idea, or controlling idea, you want to present in an essay is expressed in your thesis statement. Remember that a thesis statement is often one sentence long, and it states your point of view. The thesis statement is not the topic of the piece of writing but rather what you have to say about that topic and what is important to tell readers.

Look at **Table 5.1: Topics and Thesis Statements** for a comparison of topics and thesis statements.

**Table 5.1 Topics and Thesis Statements: A Comparison**

| Topic | Thesis Statement |
|---|---|
| Music piracy | The recording industry fears that so-called music piracy will diminish profits and destroy markets, but it cannot be more wrong. |
| The number of consumer choices available in media gear | Everyone wants the newest and the best digital technology, but the choices are extensive, and the specifications are often confusing. |
| E-books and online newspapers increasing their share of the market | E-books and online newspapers will bring an end to print media as we know it. |
| Online education and the new media | Someday, students and teachers will send avatars to their online classrooms. |

The first thesis statement you write will be a **preliminary thesis statement**, or a **working thesis statement**. You will need it when you begin to outline your assignment as a way to organize it. As you continue to develop the arrangement, you can limit your working thesis statement if it is too broad or expand it if it proves too narrow for what you want to say.

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Self-Practice Exercise 5.6

*An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=103#h5p-68 (https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=103#h5p-68)*

**H5P:** Working Toward a Working Thesis

We're going to use that free writing strategy again. This time, try to write for ten minutes, and write down anything you know right now about your newly narrowed thesis statement. Don't worry about looking material up or whether you're getting everything exactly right. Instead, just focus on getting words on the screen. This is rough work to help you approach an answer to a question, not the final essay. So just keep writing.

Can you find something in your freewriting that looks like a "controlling idea"? Something that might centre your argument, something you can structure your argument around? We'll call that your working thesis. Draft a working thesis below.

Collaboration: Please share with a classmate and compare your answers.

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Tip: You will make several attempts before you devise a working thesis statement that you think is

effective. Each draft of the thesis statement will bring you closer to the wording that expresses your meaning exactly.

## Revising a Thesis Statement

Your thesis will probably change as you write, so you will need to modify it to reflect exactly what you have discussed in your essay. Remember, you begin with a working thesis statement, an indefinite statement that you make about your topic early in the writing process for the purpose of planning and guiding your writing.

Working thesis statements often become stronger as you gather information and form new opinions and reasons for those opinions. Revision helps you strengthen your thesis so that it matches what you have expressed in the body of the paper.

Tip: The best way to revise your thesis statement is to ask questions about it and then examine the answers to those questions. By challenging your own ideas and forming definite reasons for those ideas, you grow closer to a more precise point of view, which you can then incorporate into your thesis statement.

You can cut down on irrelevant aspects and revise your thesis by taking the following steps:

1. Pinpoint and replace all nonspecific words, such as people, everything, society, or life, with more precise words in order to reduce any vagueness.

   - Working thesis: Young people have to work hard to succeed in life.
   - Revised thesis: Recent college graduates must have discipline and persistence in order to find and maintain a stable job in which they can use and be appreciated for their talents.

   The revised thesis makes a more specific statement about success and what it means to work hard. The original includes too broad a range of people and does not define exactly what success entails. By replacing the general words like people and work hard, the writer can better focus his or her research and gain more direction in his or her writing.

2. Clarify ideas that need explanation by asking yourself questions that narrow your thesis.

   - Working thesis: The welfare system is a joke.
   - Revised thesis: The welfare system keeps a socioeconomic class from gaining employment by alluring members of that class with unearned income, instead of programs to improve their education and skill sets.

Joke means many things to many people. Readers bring all sorts of backgrounds and perspectives to the reading process and would need clarification for a word so vague. This expression may also be too informal for the selected audience. By asking questions, the writer can devise a more precise and appropriate explanation for joke. The writer should ask questions similar to the 5WH questions. By incorporating the answers to these questions into a thesis statement, the writer more accurately defines his or her stance, which will better guide the writing of the essay.

3. Replace any linking verbs with action verbs. Linking verbs gives information about the subject, such as a condition or relationship (is, appear, smell, sound), but they do not show any action. The most common linking verb is any forms of the verb to be, a verb that simply states that a situation exists.

   ◦ Working thesis: British Columbian schoolteachers are not paid enough.

   ◦ Revised thesis: The legislature of British Columbia cannot afford to pay its educators, resulting in job cuts and resignations in a district that sorely needs highly qualified and dedicated teachers.

The linking verb in this working thesis statement is the word are. Linking verbs often make thesis statements weak because they do not express action. Reading the original thesis statement above, readers might wonder why teachers are not paid enough, but the statement does not compel them to ask many more questions. The writer should ask him- or herself questions in order to replace the linking verb with an action verb, thus forming a stronger thesis statement, one that takes a more definitive stance on the issue. For example, the writer could ask:

1. Who is not paying the teachers enough?

2. What is considered "enough"?

3. What is the problem?

4. What are the results

4. Omit any general claims that are hard to support.

   ◦ Working thesis: Today's teenage girls are too sexualized.

   ◦ Revised thesis: Teenage girls who are captivated by the sexual images on MTV are conditioned to believe that a woman's worth depends on her sensuality, a feeling that harms their self-esteem and behaviour.
     It is true that some young women in today's society are more sexualized than in the past, but that is not true for all girls. Many girls have strict parents, dress appropriately, and do not engage in sexual activity while in middle school and high school. The writer of this thesis should ask the following questions:

     ▪ Which teenage girls?

     ▪ What constitutes "too" sexualized?

     ▪ Why are they behaving that way?

     ▪ Where does this behaviour show up?

▪ What are the repercussions?

Self-practice exercise  5.7

*An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:*
*https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=103#h5p-69 (https://opentextbc.ca/*
*writingforsuccessh5p/?p=103#h5p-69)*

**H5P:** Polishing the Thesis Statement

A working thesis statement is always a work in progress, and we make it stronger by asking questions of it and challenging the first draft. That's the next job you have! It takes many revisions to make your work the best it can be, so try not to get frustrated by the process.

- Copy your working thesis statement for reference here.
- Pinpoint and replace all nonspecific words, such as people, everything, society, or life, with more precise words in order to reduce any vagueness. Recopy the newly revised thesis below.
- Replace any linking verbs with action verbs. Linking verbs gives information about the subject, such as a condition or relationship (is, appear, smell, sound), but they do not show any action. The most common linking verb is any forms of the verb to be, a verb that simply states that a situation exists. Recopy the newly revised thesis below.
- Omit any general claims that are hard to support. Recopy the newly revised thesis below.

**Just Asking Questions**

Clarify ideas that need explanation by asking yourself questions that narrow your thesis. The most straightforward way to do this is to ask yourself the 5WHs again — who, what, where, when, why, and how — and see were you can make your thesis statement more specific. List the questions you have about your own thesis below.

Now do your best to answer those questions.

And finally, revise your thesis in relation to these points and share it below.

## Writing at Work

In your career you may have to write a project proposal that focuses on a particular problem in your company, such as reinforcing the tardiness policy. The proposal would aim to fix the problem; using a thesis statement would clearly state the boundaries of the problem and the goals of the project. After writing the proposal, you may find that the thesis needs revising to reflect exactly what is expressed in the body. The techniques from this chapter would apply to revising that thesis.

## Key Takeaways

- Proper essays require a thesis statement to provide a specific focus and suggest how the essay will be organized.

- A thesis statement is your interpretation of the subject, not the topic itself.

- A strong thesis is specific, precise, forceful, confident, and is able to be demonstrated.

- A strong thesis challenges readers with a point of view that can be debated and supported with evidence.

- A weak thesis is simply a declaration of your topic or contains an obvious fact that cannot be argued.

- Depending on your topic, it may or may not be appropriate to use first person point of view.

- Revise your thesis by ensuring all words are specific, all ideas are exact, and all verbs express action.

# 5.3 Outlining

- Identify the steps in constructing an outline
- Construct a topic outline and a sentence outline

Your prewriting activities and readings have helped you gather information for your assignment. The more you sort through the pieces of information you found, the more you will begin to see the connections between them. Patterns and gaps may begin to stand out. But only when you start to organize your ideas will you be able to translate your raw insights into a form that will communicate meaning to your audience.

Tip: Longer papers require more reading and planning than shorter papers do. Most writers discover that the more they know about a topic, the more they can write about it with intelligence and interest.

## Organizing Ideas

When you write, you need to organize your ideas in an order that makes sense. The writing you complete in all your courses exposes how analytically and critically your mind works. In some courses, the only direct contact you may have with your instructor is through the assignments you write for the course. You can make a good impression by spending time ordering your ideas.

Order refers to your choice of what to present first, second, third, and so on in your writing. The order you pick closely relates to your purpose for writing that particular assignment. For example, when telling a story, it may be important to first describe the background for the action. Or you may need to first describe a 3-D movie projector or a television studio to help readers visualize the setting and scene. You may want to group your supporting ideas effectively to convince readers that your point of view on an issue is well reasoned and worthy of belief.

In longer pieces of writing, you may organize different parts in different ways so that your purpose stands out clearly and all parts of the essay work together to consistently develop your main point.

## Methods of Organizing Writing

The three common methods of organizing writing are chronological order, spatial order, and order of importance, which you learned about in **Chapter 4: What Are You Writing, to Whom, and How?** You need to keep these methods of organization in mind as you plan how to arrange the information you have gathered in an outline. An outline is a written plan that serves as a skeleton for the paragraphs you write. Later, when you draft paragraphs in the next stage of the writing process, you will add support to create "flesh" and "muscle" for your assignment.

When you write, your goal is not only to complete an assignment but also to write for a specific purpose—perhaps to inform, to explain, to persuade, or a combination of these purposes. Your purpose for writing should always be in the back of your mind, because it will help you decide which pieces of information belong together and how you will order them. In other words, choose the order that will most effectively fit your purpose and support your main point.

**Table 5.2: Order versus Purpose** shows the connection between order and purpose.

**Table 5.2 Order versus Purpose**

| Order | Purpose |
|---|---|
| Chronological Order | <ul><li>To explain the history of an event or a topic</li><li>To tell a story or relate an experience</li><li>To explain how to do or make something</li><li>To explain the steps in a process</li></ul> |
| Spatial Order | <ul><li>To help readers visualize something as you want them to see it</li><li>To create a main impression using the senses (sight, touch, taste, smell, and sound)</li></ul> |
| Order of Importance | <ul><li>To persuade or convince</li><li>To rank items by their importance, benefit, or significance</li></ul> |

## Writing an Outline

For an essay question on a test or a brief oral presentation in class, all you may need to prepare is a short, informal outline in which you jot down key ideas in the order you will present them. This kind of outline reminds you to stay focused in a stressful situation and to include all the good ideas that help you explain or prove your point. For a longer assignment, like an essay or a research paper, many instructors will require you to submit a formal outline before writing a major paper as a way of making

sure you are on the right track and are working in an organized manner. The expectation is you will build your paper based on the framework created by the outline.

When creating outlines, writers generally go through three stages: a **scratch outline**, an **informal** or **topic outline**, and a **formal** or **sentence outline.** The scratch outline is basically generated by taking what you have come up with in your freewriting process and organizing the information into a structure that is easy for you to understand and follow (for example, a mind map or hierarchical outline). An informal outline goes a step further and adds topic sentences, a thesis, and some preliminary information you have found through research. A formal outline is a detailed guide that shows how all your supporting ideas relate to each other. It helps you distinguish between ideas that are of equal importance and ones that are of lesser importance. If your instructor asks you to submit an outline for approval, you will want to hand in one that is more formal and structured. The more information you provide for your instructor, the better he or she will be able to see the direction in which you plan to go for your discussion and give you better feedback.

> Tip: Instructors may also require you to submit an outline with your final draft to check the direction and logic of the assignment. If you are required to submit an outline with the final draft of a paper, remember to revise it to reflect any changes you made while writing the paper.

There are two types of formal outlines: the **topic outline** and the **sentence outline**. You format both types of formal outlines in the same way.

- Place your introduction and thesis statement at the beginning, under Roman numeral I.
- Use Roman numerals (II, III, IV, V, etc.) to identify main points that develop the thesis statement.
- Use capital letters (A, B, C, D, etc.) to divide your main points into parts.
- Use Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, etc.) if you need to subdivide any As, Bs, or Cs into smaller parts.
- End with the final Roman numeral expressing your idea for your conclusion.

Here is what the skeleton of a traditional formal outline looks like. The indention helps clarify how the ideas are related.

1. **Introduction** → Thesis statement
2. **Main point 1** → *becomes the topic sentence of body paragraph 1*

   - Supporting detail → *becomes a support sentence of body paragraph 1*
     - Subpoint
     - Subpoint
   - Supporting detail

- ▪ Subpoint

- ▪ Subpoint

- ◦ Supporting detail

- ▪ Subpoint

- ▪ Subpoint

3. **Main point 2** → *becomes the topic sentence of body paragraph 2 [same use of subpoints as with Main point 1]*

- ◦ Supporting detail

- ◦ Supporting detail

- ◦ Supporting detail

4. **Main point 3** → *becomes the topic sentence of body paragraph 3[same use of subpoints as with Main points 1&2]*

- ◦ Supporting detail

- ◦ Supporting detail

- ◦ Supporting detail

5. **Conclusion**

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Tip: In an outline, any supporting detail can be developed with subpoints. For simplicity, the model shows subpoints only under the first main point.

---

Tip: Formal outlines are often quite rigid in their organization. As many instructors will specify, you cannot subdivide one point if it is only one part. For example, for every Roman numeral I, there needs to be an A. For every A, there must be a B. For every Arabic numeral 1, there must be a 2. See for yourself on the sample outlines that follow.

---

**Constructing Informal or Topic Outlines** An informal topic outline is the same as a sentence outline except you use words or phrases instead of complete sentences. Words and phrases keep the outline short and easier to comprehend. All the headings, however, must be written in parallel structure.

Here is the informal topic outline that Mariah constructed for the essay she is developing. Her purpose is to inform, and her audience is a general audience of her fellow college students. Notice how Mariah begins with her thesis statement. She then arranges her main points and supporting details in outline form using short phrases in parallel grammatical structure.

  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 centres

  V.  Conclusion

      ◦ How to be a wise consumer

## Writing at Work

Word processing programs generally have an automatic numbering feature that can be used to prepare

outlines. This feature automatically sets indents and lets you use the tab key to arrange information just as you would in an outline. Although in business this style might be acceptable, in college or university your instructor might have different requirements. Teach yourself how to customize the levels of outline numbering in your word processing program to fit your instructor's preferences.

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**Self-Practice Exercise 5.8**

*An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=105#h5p-70 (https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=105#h5p-70)*

**H5P:** Creating a Topic Outline

The purpose of an outline for your essay is to collect your ideas and organize them in a logical order. For many people, this doesn't need to be a formal process to be helpful. However, some instructors will require a more traditionally structured outline, so we will practice that skill today.

Take a moment to review the structure outlined in Mariah's outline so that you can understand the structure that is expected. Feel free to use her outline as a model for your own work.

The first thing to consider is how you will organize your essay. Chronological order — where points follow the passage of time — is best for explaining how to undertake something. Spatial order — where points follow movement through space — is best for descriptive, sensory writing. And order of importance — where you decide the order based on significance — is good for persuasive writing. Which type of structure makes the most sense for your essay?

Following the model above, take a first run at outlining your essay. We will have lots of time to revise this work over the next few exercises, so just do your best to be clear and logical in the development of your ideas.

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## Checklist 5.2: Writing an Effective Topic Outline

This checklist can help you write an effective topic outline for your assignment. It will also help you discover where you may need to do additional reading or prewriting.

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**H5P:** Outlining Checklist

1. Do I have a controlling idea that guides the development of the entire piece of writing?

2. 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?

3. 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?

4. Do I have supporting details that will help me inform, explain, or prove my main points?

5. Do I need to add more support? If so, where?

6. Do I need to make any adjustments in my working thesis statement before I consider it the final version?

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Self-Practice Exercise 5.9

*An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=105#h5p-72 (https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=105#h5p-72)*

**H5P:** Supporting Details

Review your outline and decide what your three strongest points are. They should be specific and directly, clearly related to the thesis statement. Make note of those points below.

These points will become topic sentences for the body paragraphs of your essay. Take a run at writing those topic sentences now. Remember that nothing is set in stone, and you will be able to revise your work again in the next exercise.

## Constructing Formal or Sentence Outlines

A sentence outline is the same as a topic outline except you use complete sentences instead of words or phrases. Complete sentences create clarity and can advance you one step closer to a draft in the writing process.

Here is the formal sentence outline that Mariah constructed for the essay she is developing.

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. E-book readers make books easy to access and to carry

1. Books can be downloaded electronically.

2. Devices can store hundreds of books in memory.

B. The market expands as a variety of companies enter it.

1. Booksellers sell their own e-book readers.

2. Electronics and computer companies also sell e-book readers.

C. Current e-book readers have significant limitations.

1. The devices are owned by different brands and may not be compatible.

2. Few programs have been made to fit the other way Americans read: by borrowing books from libraries.

III. Digital cameras have almost totally replaced by film cameras.

A. The first major choice is the type of digital camera.

1. Compactible digital cameras are light by have fewer megapixels.

2. Single lens reflex cameras, or SLRs, may be large and heavy but can be sued for many functions.

3. Some cameras combine the best features of compacts an SLRs.

B. Choosing the camera type involves the confusing "megapixel wars."

C. The zoom lens battle also determines the camera you will buy.

IV. Nothing is more confusing to me than choosing among televisions

A. In the resolution wars, what are the benefits of 1080p and 768p?

B. In the screen-size war, what do plasma screens and LCD screens offer?

C. Does every home really need a media centre?

V. Conclusion

- The solution for many people should be to avoid buying on impulse. Consumers should think about what they really need, not what is advertised.

Tip: The information compiled under each Roman numeral will become a paragraph in your final paper. Mariah's outline follows the standard five-paragraph essay arrangement, but longer essays will require more paragraphs and thus more Roman numerals. If you think that a paragraph might become too long, add an additional paragraph to your outline, renumbering the main points appropriately.

Tip: As you are building on your previously created outlines, avoid saving over the previous version; instead, save the revised outline under a new file name. This way you will still have a copy of the original and any earlier versions in case you want to look back at them.

## Writing at Work

PowerPoint presentations, used both in schools and in the workplace, are organized in a way very similar to formal outlines. PowerPoint presentations often contain information in the form of talking points that the presenter develops with more details and examples than are contained on the PowerPoint slide.

Self-Practice Exercise 5.10

*An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=105#h5p-73 (https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=105#h5p-73)*

**H5P:** Creating a Sentence Outline

Continuing with practicing skills you may need in other classes, we will now flesh out your Topic Outline to become a Sentence Outline.

Once again, it's a good idea to take a moment to review the structure outlined in Mariah's outline so that you can understand the structure that is expected. Feel free to use her outline as a model for your own work.

Using your Topic Outline as a basis, work to flesh out that outline to create the more formal Sentence Outline. Students sometimes feel that this step is busy work, but if you take your time with it, you will be most of the way to your formal essay draft.

## 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 you want to develop in the entire piece of writing. It can be modified as you continue the writing process.

- Effective writers prepare a formal outline to organize their main ideas and supporting details in the order they will be presented.

- A topic outline uses words and phrases to express the ideas.

- A sentence outline uses complete sentences to express the ideas.

- The writer's thesis statement begins the outline, and the outline ends with suggestions for the concluding paragraph.

# 5.4 Organizing Your Writing

The method of organization you choose for your essay is just as important as its content. Without a clear organizational pattern, your reader could become confused and lose interest. The way you structure your essay helps your readers draw connections between the body and the thesis, and the structure also keeps you focused as you plan and write the essay. Choosing your organizational pattern before you outline ensures that each body paragraph works to support and develop your thesis.

This section covers three ways to organize body paragraphs:

- Chronological order
- Order of importance
- Spatial order

When you begin to draft your essay, your ideas may seem to flow from your mind in a seemingly random manner. Your readers, who bring to the table different backgrounds, viewpoints, and ideas, need you to clearly organize these ideas in order to help process and accept them.

A solid organizational pattern gives your ideas a path that you can follow as you develop your draft. Knowing how you will organize your paragraphs allows you to better express and analyze your thoughts. Planning the structure of your essay before you choose supporting evidence helps you conduct more effective and targeted research.

## Chronological Order

In **Chapter 4: What Are You Writing, to Whom, and How?**, you learned that chronological arrangement has the following purposes:

- To explain the history of an event or a topic

- To tell a story or relate an experience
- To explain how to do or to make something
- To explain the steps in a process.

Chronological order is mostly used in **expository writing**, which is a form of writing that narrates, describes, informs, or explains a process. When using chronological order, arrange the events in the order that they actually happened, or will happen if you are giving instructions. This method requires you to use words such as first, second, then, after that, later, and finally. These transitional words guide you and your reader through the paper as you expand your thesis.

For example, if you are writing an essay about the history of the airline industry, you would begin with its conception and detail the essential timeline events up until present day. You would follow the chain of events using words such as first, then, next, and so on.

## Writing at Work

At some point in your career you may have to file a complaint with your human resources department. Using chronological order is a useful tool in describing the events that led up to your filing the grievance. You would logically lay out the events in the order that they occurred using the key transitional words. The more logical your complaint, the more likely you will be well received and helped.

Keep in mind that chronological order is most appropriate for the following purposes:

- Writing essays containing heavy research
- Writing essays with the aim of listing, explaining, or narrating
- Writing essays that analyze literary works such as poems, plays, or books

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Tip: When using chronological order, your introduction should indicate the information you will cover and in what order, and establish the relevance of the information. Your body paragraphs should then provide clear divisions or steps in chronology. You can divide your paragraphs by time (such as decades, wars, or other historical events) or by the same structure of the work you are examining (such as a line-by-line explication of a poem).

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Self-Practice Exercise 5.11

*An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:*
*https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=107#h5p-74 (https://opentextbc.ca/*
*writingforsuccessh5p/?p=107#h5p-74)*

**H5P:** Chronological Order

Put the statements in the correct chronological order. Remember: when using chronological order, arrange the events in the order that they actually happened, or will happen if you are giving instructions. This method requires you to use words such as first, second, then, after that, later, and finally. These transitional words guide you and your reader through the paper as you expand your thesis.

- A. Every morning I make my coffee in the same way for maximum flavour.
- B. When I have the shot pulled, I use a milk steamer to steam one cup of milk.
- C. Finally, I slowly pour the steamed milk into my espresso.
- D. Next, I use an espresso machine to pull an espresso shot directly into my coffee cup.
- E. First, I freshly grind my espresso beans.
- F. And that's how I start my day with my perfect latte!

**Answer Key**

A, E, D, B, C, F

## Order of Importance

Recall from **Chapter 4: What Are You Writing, to Whom, and How?** that order of importance is best used for the following purposes:

- Persuading and convincing
- Ranking items by their importance, benefit, or significance
- Illustrating a situation, problem, or solution

Most essays move from the least to the most important point, and the paragraphs are arranged in an effort to build the essay's strength. Sometimes, however, it is necessary to begin with your most important supporting point, such as in an essay that contains a thesis that is highly debatable. When writing a persuasive essay, it is best to begin with the most important point because it immediately captivates your readers and compels them to continue reading.

For example, if you were supporting your thesis that homework is detrimental to the education of high

school students, you would want to present your most convincing argument first, and then move on to the less important points for your case.

Some key transitional words you should use with this method of organization are most importantly, almost as importantly, just as importantly, and finally.

### Writing at Work

During your career, you may be required to work on a team that devises a strategy for a specific goal of your company, such as increasing profits. When planning your strategy you should organize your steps in order of importance. This demonstrates the ability to prioritize and plan. Using the order of importance technique also shows that you can create a resolution with logical steps for accomplishing a common goal.

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Self-Practice Exercise 5.12

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**H5P:** Order of Importance

Put the statements in the correct order of importance. Some key transitional words that offer clues to this method of organization are most importantly, almost as importantly, just as importantly, and finally.

A. Most importantly, it prevents unexpected harm from coming to the dog or to the people and animals he encounters.

B. And finally, dogs love the sense of achievement they feel when they master simple tasks.

C. Adequate training is critical to the success of a relationship between a person and their dog.

D. Almost as important, though, is the bond that it helps create between the dog and his caretaker.

E. For all of these reasons, proper dog training is important and should not be overlooked.

**Answer Key**

C, A, D, B, E

---

## Spatial Order

As stated in **Chapter 4: What Are You Writing, to Whom, and How?**, spatial order is best used for the following purposes:

- Helping readers visualize something as you want them to see it

- Evoking a scene using the senses (sight, touch, taste, smell, and sound)

- Writing a descriptive essay

Spatial order means that you explain or describe objects as they are arranged around you in your space, for example in a bedroom. As the writer, you create a picture for your reader, whose perspective is the viewpoint from which you describe what is around you.

The view must move in an orderly, logical progression, giving the reader clear directional signals to follow from place to place. The key to using this method is to choose a specific starting point and then guide the reader to follow your eye as it moves in an orderly trajectory from your starting point.

Pay attention to the following student's description of her bedroom and how she guides the reader through the viewing process, foot by foot.

> Attached to my bedroom wall is a small wooden rack dangling with red and turquoise necklaces that shimmer as you enter. Just to the right of the rack is my window, framed by billowy white curtains. The peace of such an image is a stark contrast to my desk, which sits to the right of the window, layered in textbooks, crumpled papers, coffee cups, and an overflowing ashtray. Turning my head to the right, I see a set of two bare windows that frame the trees outside the glass like a 3D painting. Below the windows is an oak chest from which blankets and scarves are protruding. Against the wall opposite the billowy curtains is an antique dresser, on top of which sits a jewelry box and a few picture frames. A tall mirror attached to the dresser takes up most of the wall, which is the colour of lavender.

The paragraph incorporates two objectives you have learned in this chapter: using an implied topic sentence and applying spatial order. Often in a descriptive essay, the two work together.

The following are possible transitional words and phrases to include when using spatial order:

- Just to the left or just to the right

- Behind

- Between

- On the left or on the right

- Across from

- A little further down

- To the south, to the east, and so on

- A few yards away

- Turning left or turning right

Self-Practice Exercise  5.13

*An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=107#h5p-76 (https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=107#h5p-76)*

**H5P:** Spatial Order

Put the statements in the correct spatial order. The view must move in an orderly, logical progression, giving the reader clear directional signals to follow from place to place. The key to using this method is to choose a specific starting point and then guide the reader to follow your eye as it moves in an orderly trajectory from your starting point.

    A.  When you first enter the property through the farm gate, there is a red barn to the right.

    B.  To the immediate left of the red barn is a pig pen and a chicken coup.

    C.  The rest of the area within the gate is a meadow of clover and flowers.

    D.  Reflecting on this space reminds me that nice to have somewhere to go that is so calm and soothing.

    E.  The farmyard is a peaceful and familiar space.

    F.  Across the farmyard from the animals is the farm house, which has a duck pond in the backyard.

**Answer Key**

E, A, B, F, C, D

Self-Practice Exercise  5.14

Look back at your outline from Self-Practice Exercise 5.9. Please share your formal sentence outline with a classmate and together evaluate whether you have organized your points chronologically, by order of importance, or spatially. Discuss if you have organized your paragraphs in the most appropriate and logical way.

In the next chapter, you will build on this formal sentence outline to create a draft and develop your ideas further. Do not worry; you are not expected to have a completed paper at this point. You will be expanding on your sentences to form paragraphs and complete, well-developed ideas.

Key Takeaways

- The way you organize your body paragraphs ensures you and your readers stay focused on and draw connections to your thesis statement.

- A strong organizational pattern allows you to articulate, analyze, and clarify your thoughts.

- Planning the organizational structure for your essay before you begin to search for supporting evidence helps you conduct more effective and directed research.

- Chronological order is most commonly used in expository writing. It is useful for explaining the history of your subject, for telling a story, or for explaining a process.

- Order of importance is most appropriate in a persuasion paper as well as for essays in which you rank things, people, or events by their significance.

- Spatial order describes things as they are arranged in space and is best for helping readers visualize something as you want them to see it; it creates a dominant impression.

## Supplemental Exercises

On a separate sheet of paper, choose one of the examples of a proper thesis statement from this chapter (one that interests you) and form three supporting points for that statement. After you have formed your three points, write a topic sentence for each body paragraph. Make sure that your topic sentences can be backed up with examples and details.

Group activity. Choose one of the topics from Self-Practice Exercise 5.4 and form a yes/no question about that topic. Then, take a survey of the people in your class to find out how they feel about the subject. Using the majority vote, ask those people to write on slips of paper the reasons for their opinion. Using the data you collect, form a thesis statement based on your classmates' perspectives on the topic and their reasons.

On a separate sheet of a paper, write an introduction for an essay based on the thesis statement from the group activity using the techniques for introductory paragraphs that you learned in this chapter.

Start a journal in which you record "spoken" thesis statements. Start listening closely to the opinions expressed by your teachers, classmates, friends, and family members. Ask them to provide at least three reasons for their opinion and record them in the journal. Use this as material for future essays.

Open a magazine and read a lengthy article. See if you can pinpoint the thesis statement as well as the topic sentence for each paragraph and its supporting details.

## Journal Entry 4

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**H5P:** Question Prompts

Think back to times when you had to write a paper and perhaps struggled to get started. What did you learn this week that you will apply in future assignments to get the ideas flowing?

Reflect on all of the content you have learned so far. What did you find challenging but are now more confident with? What, if anything, still confuses you or you know you need to practice more? How have your study skills, time management, and overall writing improved over the past month?

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# Chapter 6: Working Toward the End Product: Composing a Draft

# 6.1 Writing Body Paragraphs

Learning Objectives

- Select primary support related to your thesis
- Support your topic sentences

Once you have completed your formal sentence outline, you will need to expand on that framework to create your expository essay. As much as you may be wanting to just get your ideas down and submit your paper, in order to make sure you are submitting a well-developed and strong essay, you need to make sure you are providing strong supporting ideas, developing paragraphs so they will fit together logically to best convince your reader, creating a strong introduction and conclusion, and revising your paper to catch issues you may have missed or not been aware of when writing. In this chapter, we will look at putting the pieces together to form a complete, revised, and supported expository essay, which you will need to submit next week.

If your thesis gives the reader a road map to your essay, then body paragraphs should closely follow that map. The reader should be able to predict what follows your introductory paragraph by simply reading the thesis statement.

The body paragraphs present the evidence you have gathered to confirm your thesis. Before you begin to support your thesis in the body, you must find information from a variety of sources that support and give credit to what you are trying to prove.

## Select Primary Support for Your Thesis

Without primary support, your argument is not likely to be convincing. **Primary support** can be described as the major points you choose to expand on your thesis. It is the most important information you select to argue for your point of view. Each point you choose will be incorporated into the topic sentence for each body paragraph you write. Your primary supporting points are further supported by supporting details within the paragraphs.

Tip: Remember that a worthy argument is backed by examples. In order to construct a valid argument, good writers conduct a lot of background research and take careful notes. They also talk to people knowledgeable about a topic in order to understand its implications before writing about it.

## Identify the Characteristics of Good Primary Support

In order to fulfill the requirements of good primary support, the information you choose must meet the following standards:

Be specific. The main points you make about your thesis and the examples you use to expand on those points need to be specific. Use specific examples to provide the evidence and to build upon your general ideas. These types of examples give your reader something narrow to focus on, and if used properly, they leave little doubt about your claim. General examples, while they convey the necessary information, are not nearly as compelling or useful in writing because they are too obvious and typical.

Be relevant to the thesis. Primary support is considered strong when it relates directly to the thesis. Primary support should show, explain, or prove your main argument without delving into irrelevant details. When faced with a lot of information that could be used to prove your thesis, you may think you need to include it all in your body paragraphs. But effective writers resist the temptation to lose focus. Choose your examples wisely by making sure they directly connect to your thesis.

Be detailed. Remember that your thesis, while specific, should not be very detailed. The body paragraphs are where you develop the discussion that a thorough essay requires. Using detailed support shows readers that you have considered all the facts and chosen only the most precise details to enhance your point of view.

## Prewrite to Identify Primary Supporting Points for a Thesis Statement

Recall that when you prewrite you essentially make a list of examples or reasons why you support your stance. Stemming from each point, you further provide details to support those reasons. After prewriting, you are then able to look back at the information and choose the most compelling pieces you will use in your body paragraphs.

## Select the Most Effective Primary Supporting Points for a Thesis Statement

After you have prewritten about your working thesis statement, you may have generated a lot of information, which may be edited out later. Remember that your primary support must be relevant to your thesis. Remind yourself of your main argument, and delete any ideas that do not directly relate to it. Omitting unrelated ideas ensures that you will use only the most convincing information in your body paragraphs. Choose at least three of the most compelling points. These will serve as the topic sentences for your body paragraphs.

When you support your thesis, you are revealing evidence. Evidence includes anything that can help support your stance. The following are the kinds of evidence you will encounter as you conduct your research:

Facts: Facts are the best kind of evidence to use because they often cannot be disputed. They can support your stance by providing background information on or a solid foundation for your point of view. However, some facts may still need explanation. For example, the sentence "The most populated

province in Canada is Ontario" is a pure fact, but it may require some explanation to make it relevant to your specific argument.

Judgments: Judgments are conclusions drawn from the given facts. Judgments are more credible than opinions because they are founded upon careful reasoning and examination of a topic.

Testimony: Testimony consists of direct quotations from either an eyewitness or an expert witness. An eyewitness is someone who has direct experience with a subject; the witness adds authenticity to an argument based on facts. An expert witness is a person who has extensive experience with a topic. This person studies the facts and provides commentary based on either facts or judgments, or both. An expert witness adds authority and credibility to an argument.

Personal observation: Personal observation is similar to testimony, but personal observation consists of *your* testimony. It reflects what you know to be true because you have experiences and have formed either opinions or judgments about them. For instance, if you are one of five children and your thesis states that being part of a large family is beneficial to a child's social development, you could use your own experience to support your thesis.

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**H5P**: Pre-Chapter Review

Determine whether the supporting points are facts, judgements, personal observation, or testimony.

1. The most populated province in Canada is Ontario.
2. I don't think Mr. John will be able to complete the marathon.
3. Mrs. Marshall saw Mike eating the last piece of cake.
4. My dad loves to eat his steak well done.

**Answer Key**

1. Fact
2. Judgement
3. Testimony
4. Personal observation

---

## Writing at Work

In any job where you devise a plan, you will need to support the steps that you lay out. This is an area

in which you would incorporate primary support into your writing. Choosing only the most specific and relevant information to expand upon the steps will ensure that your plan appears well thought out and precise.

Tip: You can consult a vast pool of resources to gather support for your stance. Citing relevant information from reliable sources ensures that your reader will take you seriously and consider your assertions. Use any of the following sources for your essay: newspapers or news organization websites, magazines, encyclopedias, and scholarly journals, which are periodicals that address topics in a specialized field.

## Choose Supporting Topic Sentences

Each body paragraph contains a topic sentence that states one aspect of your thesis and then expands upon it. Like the thesis statement, each topic sentence should be specific and supported by concrete details, facts, or explanations.

Each body paragraph should comprise the following elements.

**topic sentence + supporting details (examples, reasons, or arguments)**

As you read in **Chapter 5: Putting Your Ideas into Your Own Words and Paragraphs**, topic sentences indicate the location and main points of the basic arguments of your essay. These sentences are vital to writing your body paragraphs because they always refer back to and support your thesis statement. Topic sentences are linked to the ideas you have introduced in your thesis, thus reminding readers what your essay is about. A paragraph without a clearly identified topic sentence may be unclear and scattered, just like an essay without a thesis statement.

Tip: Unless your teacher instructs otherwise, you should include at least three body paragraphs in your essay. A five-paragraph/section essay, including the introduction and conclusion, is commonly the standard for exams and essay assignments.

Consider the following the thesis statement:

Author J. D. Salinger relied primarily on his personal life and belief system as the foundation for the themes in the majority of his works.

The following topic sentence is a primary support point for the thesis. The topic

sentence states exactly what the controlling idea of the paragraph is. Later, you will see the writer immediately provide support for the sentence.

Salinger, a World War II veteran, suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder, a disorder that influenced themes in many of his works,

## Self-Practice Exercise 6.1

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**H5P:** Topic Sentences

**Revising 5.9**

For this exercise, you'll need to refer to the first attempt you made at topic sentences for your work on Supporting Details (Self-Practice Exercise 5.9). This is your chance to implement what you've learned about so far in this chapter regarding topic sentences.

Recopy your main supporting details (or revise them, if you've had a change of heart!), and then revise your expected topic sentences. These will help you frame your paragraphs.

Remember! Each body paragraph contains a topic sentence that states one aspect of your thesis and then expands upon it. Like the thesis statement, each topic sentence should be specific and supported by concrete details, facts, or explanations.

- Supporting Point #1:
- Proposed Topic Sentence:
- Supporting Point #2:
- Proposed Topic Sentence:
- Supporting Point #3:
- Proposed Topic Sentence:

## Draft Supporting Detail Sentences for Each Primary Support Sentence

After deciding which primary support points you will use as your topic sentences, you must add details

to clarify and demonstrate each of those points. These supporting details provide examples, facts, or evidence that support the topic sentence.

The writer drafts possible supporting detail sentences for each primary support sentence based on the thesis statement:

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Thesis statement: Unleashed dogs on city streets are a dangerous nuisance.

Supporting point 1: Dogs can scare cyclists and pedestrians.

Supporting details:

1. Cyclists are forced to zigzag on the road.
2. School children panic and turn wildly on their bikes.
3. People who are walking at night freeze in fear.

Supporting point 2:

Loose dogs are traffic hazards.

Supporting details:

1. Dogs in the street make people swerve their cars.
2. To avoid dogs, drivers run into other cars or pedestrians.
3. Children coaxing dogs across busy streets create danger.

Supporting point 3: Unleashed dogs damage gardens.

Supporting details:

1. They step on flowers and vegetables.
2. They destroy hedges by urinating on them.
3. They mess up lawns by digging holes.

---

The following paragraph contains supporting detail sentences for the primary support sentence (the topic sentence), which is underlined.

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Salinger, a World War II veteran, suffered from posttraumatic stress disorder, a disorder that influenced the themes in many of his works. He did not hide his mental anguish over the horrors of war and once told his daughter, "You never really get the smell of burning flesh out of your nose, no matter how long you live." His short story "A Perfect Day for a Bananafish" details a day in the life of a WWII veteran who was recently released from an army hospital for psychiatric problems. The man acts questionably with a little girl he meets on the beach before he returns to his hotel room and

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commits suicide. Another short story, "For Esmé – with Love and Squalor," is narrated by a traumatized soldier who sparks an unusual relationship with a young girl he meets before he departs to partake in D-Day. Finally, in Salinger's only novel, <u>The Catcher in the Rye</u>, he continues with the theme of posttraumatic stress, though not directly related to war. From a rest home for the mentally ill, sixteen-year-old Holden Caulfield narrates the story of his nervous breakdown following the death of his younger brother.

## Self-Practice Exercise 6.2

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**H5P:** Drafting Supporting Details

For this exercise, we'll be using the outline work you've done so far to flesh out our body paragraphs a little more. This will feel similar to the Sentence Outline you created for Self-Practice 5.10, and you can use that as a resource for this activity, but you can also use this opportunity to begin the process of polishing and revising those ideas further.

Start by drawing on the Supporting Points you highlighted for Self-Practice 6.1, and drawing on your working thesis statement.

- Thesis Statement:
- Supporting Point #1:
- Supporting Details:
- Supporting Point #2:
- Supporting Details:
- Supporting Point #3:
- Supporting Details:

Tip: You have the option of writing your topic sentences in one of three ways. You can state it at the beginning of the body paragraph, or at the end of the paragraph, or you do not have to write it at all. One that is not written at all is called an implied topic sentence. An implied topic sentence lets readers

form the main idea for themselves. For beginning writers, it is best to not use implied topic sentences because it makes it harder to focus your writing. Your instructor may also want to clearly identify the sentences that support your thesis.

Tip: Print out the first draft of your essay and use a highlighter to mark your topic sentences in the body paragraphs. Make sure they are clearly stated and accurately present your paragraphs, as well as accurately reflect your thesis. If your topic sentence contains information that does not exist in the rest of the paragraph, rewrite it to more accurately match the rest of the paragraph.

## Key Takeaways

- Your body paragraphs should closely follow the path set forth by your thesis statement.
- Strong body paragraphs contain evidence that supports your thesis.
- Primary support comprises the most important points you use to support your thesis.
- Strong primary support is specific, detailed, and relevant to the thesis.
- Prewriting helps you determine your most compelling primary support.
- Evidence includes facts, judgments, testimony, and personal observation.
- Reliable sources may include newspapers, magazines, academic journals, books, encyclopedias, and firsthand testimony.
- A topic sentence presents one point of your thesis statement while the information in the rest of the paragraph supports that point.
- A body paragraph comprises a topic sentence plus supporting details.

# 6.2 Writing Introductory and Concluding Paragraphs

Picture your introduction as a storefront window: you have a certain amount of space to attract your customers (readers) to your goods (subject) and bring them inside your store (discussion). Once you have enticed them with something intriguing, you then point them in a specific direction and try to make the sale (convince them to accept your thesis).

Your introduction is an invitation to your readers to consider what you have to say and then to follow your train of thought as you expand upon your thesis statement.

**An introduction serves the following purposes:**

- Establishes your voice and tone, or your attitude, toward the subject
- Introduces the general topic of the essay
- States the thesis that will be supported in the body paragraphs
- Provides signposts of what you will discuss in your essay

First impressions are crucial and can leave lasting effects in your reader's mind, which is why the introduction is so important to your essay. If your introductory paragraph is dull or disjointed, your reader probably will not have much interest in continuing with the essay.

## Attracting Interest in Your Introductory Paragraph

Your introduction should begin with an engaging statement devised to provoke your readers' interest. In the next few sentences, introduce them to your topic by stating general facts or ideas about the subject. As you move deeper into your introduction, you gradually narrow the focus, moving closer to your thesis. Moving smoothly and logically from your introductory remarks to your thesis statement can be achieved using a **funnel technique**, as illustrated in **Figure 6.1: Funnel Technique**.
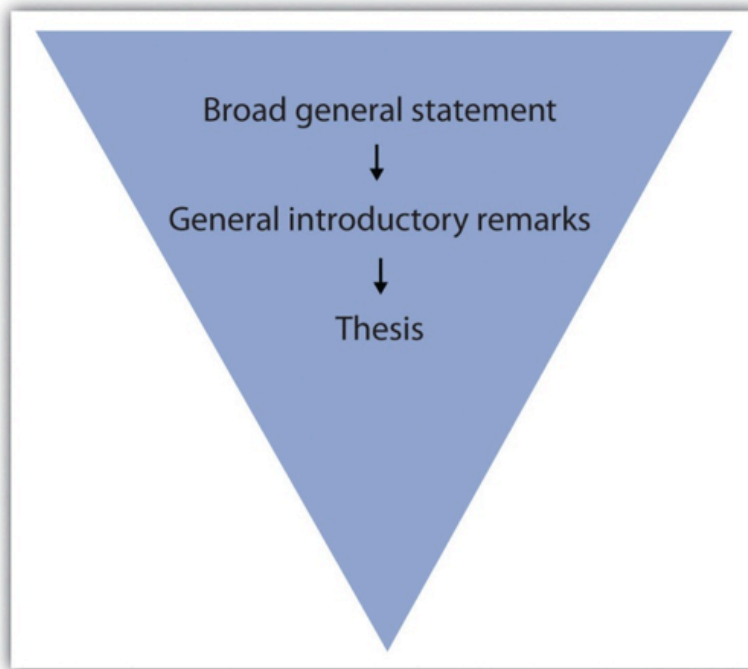
(http://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccess/wp-content/uploads/
sites/107/2015/08/chap6_5.png)

*Figure 6.1 Funnel Technique*

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Self-Practice Exercise 6.3

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*writingforsuccessh5p/?p=114#h5p-82)*

**H5P:** Capturing Attention

Imagine you are writing an essay arguing for domesticated cats to be kept indoors. What follows are a list of potentially attention-grabbing first sentences for the introductory paragraph. Match the kind of appeal to the best example of it in the list.

**Examples:**

1. A little girl weeps at the untimely death of her beloved cat; an elderly neighbour misses the company of the neighbourhood songbirds.

2. Most people love neighbourhood wildlife and most pet owners love their pets; a mutually beneficial strategy for keeping both safe is to keep cats indoors.

3. Cats are cute, but they are also murderous killing machines bent on destroying your

neighbourhood.

4. Every year, cats kill between 100 million and 350 million birds in Canada alone; 38% of those birds are killed by domesticated cats.

5. If you knew there was one single behavioural change that would improve your neighbourhood for generations, would you do it?

6. The purpose of this essay is to protect neighbourhood wildlife from cats, and to protect cats from the hazards of this neighbourhood.

7. "Curiosity killed the cat," goes the famous adage.

8. Imagine the sight of a beloved family cat who has been struck by a car on the highway.

9. When I was a child, our family cat loved to roam free in the neighbourhood. I never wondered why there were no birds in our backyard, like my friends enjoyed and experienced.

**Appeal:**

A. Beginning with a provocative question or opinion

B. Opening with a striking image

C. Presenting an explanation or rationalization for your essay

D. Opening with a startling statistic or surprising fact

E. Including a personal anecdote

F. Raising a question or series of questions

G. Appealing to their emotions

H. Opening with a relevant quotation or incident

I. Using logic

**Answer Key**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. G | 4. D | 7. H |
| 2. I | 5. F | 8. B |
| 3. A | 6. C | 9. E |

Tip: Remember that your diction, or word choice, while always important, is most crucial in your introductory paragraph. Boring diction could extinguish any desire a person might have to read through your discussion. Choose words that create images or express action.

In **Chapter 5: Putting the Pieces Together with a Thesis Statement**, you followed Mariah as she moved through the writing process. In this chapter, Mariah writes her introduction and conclusion for the same essay. Mariah incorporates some of the introductory elements into her introductory paragraph, which she previously outlined. Her thesis statement is underlined.

Play Atari on a General Electric brand television set? Maybe watch Dynasty? Or read old newspaper articles on microfiche at the library? Twenty-five years ago, the average college student did not have many options when it came to entertainment in the form of technology. Fast-forward to the twenty-first century, and the digital age has digital technology, consumers are bombarded with endless options for how they do most everything-from buying and reading books to taking and developing photographs. In a society that is obsessed with digital means of entertainment, it is easy for the average person to become baffled. <u>Everyone wants the newest and best digital technology, but the choices are many and the specifications are often confusing.</u>

Tip: If you have trouble coming up with a provocative statement for your opening, it is a good idea to use a relevant, attention-grabbing quote about your topic. Use a search engine to find statements made by historical or significant figures about your subject.

## Writing at Work

In your job field, you may be required to write a speech for an event, such as an awards banquet or a dedication ceremony. The introduction of a speech is similar to an essay because you have a limited amount of space to attract your audience's attention. Using the same techniques, such as a provocative quote or an interesting statistic, is an effective way to engage your listeners. Using the funnel approach also introduces your audience to your topic and then presents your main idea in a logical manner.

### Self-Practice Exercise 6.4

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**H5P:** Identify Strategies to Capture Attention

Below you will see the text of Mariah's introduction. Put the appropriate phrase to describe the attention-capturing strategy into the blank after the relevant sentence.

Play Atari on a General Electric brand television set? Maybe watch Dynasty? Or read old newspaper articles on microfiche at the library? (1) _____ Twenty-five years ago, the average college student did not have many options when it came to entertainment in the form of technology. Fast-forward to the twenty-first century, and

the digital age has revolutionized the way people entertain themselves. (2) _____ In today's rapidly-evolving world of digital technology consumers are bombarded with endless options of how they do most everything — from buying and reading books to taking and developing photographs. In a society that is obsessed with digital means of entertainment, it is easy for the average person to become baffled. (3) _____ Everyone wants the newest and best digital technology, but the choices are many and the specifications are often confusion. (4)_____

    A. Using logic

    B. Presenting an explanation or rationalization for your essay

    C. Opening with a startling statistic or surprising fact

    D. Raising a question or series of questions

**Answer Key**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | D | 3. | A |
| 2. | C | 4. | B |

# Writing a Conclusion

It is not unusual to want to rush when you approach your conclusion, and even experienced writers may fade by the time they get to the end. But what good writers remember is that it is vital to put just as much attention into the conclusion as the rest of the essay. After all, a hasty ending can undermine an otherwise strong essay.

A conclusion that does not correspond to the rest of your essay, has loose ends, or is unorganized can unsettle your readers and raise doubts about the entire essay. However, if you have worked hard to write the introduction and body, your conclusion can often be the most logical part to compose.

### The Anatomy of a Strong Conclusion

Keep in mind that the ideas in your conclusion must conform to the rest of your essay. In order to tie these components together, restate your thesis at the beginning of your conclusion. This helps you assemble, in an orderly fashion, all the information you have explained in the body. Repeating your thesis reminds your readers of the major arguments you have been trying to prove and also indicates that your essay is drawing to a close. A strong conclusion also reviews your main points and emphasizes the importance of the topic.

The construction of the conclusion is similar to the introduction, in which you make general introductory statements and then present your thesis. The difference is that in the conclusion you first **paraphrase**, or state in different words, your thesis and then follow up with general concluding remarks. These sentences should progressively broaden the focus of your thesis and manoeuvre your readers out of the essay.

Many writers like to end their essays with a final emphatic statement. This strong closing statement

will cause your readers to continue thinking about the implications of your essay; it will make your conclusion, and thus your essay, more memorable. Another powerful technique is to challenge your readers to make a change in either their thoughts or their actions. Challenging your readers to see the subject through new eyes is a powerful way to ease yourself and your readers out of the essay.

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Tip: When closing your essay, do not expressly state that you are drawing to a close. Relying on statements such as in conclusion, it is clear that, as you can see, or in summation is unnecessary and can be considered trite.

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Tip: Avoid doing any of the following in your conclusion:

- Introducing new material
- Contradicting your thesis
- Changing your thesis
- Using apologies or disclaimers

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Introducing new material in your conclusion has an unsettling effect on your reader. When you raise new points, you make your reader want more information, which you could not possibly provide in the limited space of your final paragraph.

Contradicting or changing your thesis statement causes your readers to think that you do not actually have a conviction about your topic. After all, you have spent several paragraphs adhering to a singular point of view. When you change sides or open up your point of view in the conclusion, your reader becomes less inclined to believe your original argument.

By apologizing for your opinion or stating that you know it is tough to digest, you are in fact admitting that even you know what you have discussed is irrelevant or unconvincing. You do not want your readers to feel this way. Effective writers stand by their thesis statement and do not stray from it.

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Self-Practice Exercise 6.5

*An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=114#h5p-84 (https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=114#h5p-84)*

**H5P:** Drafting Introduction and Conclusion

**Introduction**

In this exercise, we will apply what we have learned about Introductions and Conclusions in order to draft both for your essay. It's okay if you don't think this will be the final, perfect version of either — you have lots of time to revise. The goal here is to practice your skills and understanding while it's fresh in your mind.

- Identify one or two strategies for attracting attention to your essay, and draft sentences using them.
- The other job of an introduction is to make sure your reader has a sense of how they essay will develop. Draft a sentence of two that gestures to how you will prove your thesis statement.
- Restate your thesis statement.
- Combine all of what you've done so far into an introductory paragraph.

**Conclusion**

1. Start by restating your thesis in different words using your paraphrasing skills.
2. Make note of any concluding remarks you would like to include. Remember: these sentences should progressively broaden the focus of your thesis and manoeuvre your readers out of the essay. Look at Mariah's example again if you want guidance.
3. Come up with a final, emphatic statement for your essay. A good way to structure this is to articulate in one sentence why the topic of your essay matters, and why you care about it.
4. Combine all of what you've done so far into a concluding paragraph.

Mariah incorporates some of these pointers into her conclusion. She has paraphrased her thesis statement in the first sentence.

In a society fixated on the latest and smartest digital technology, a consumer can easily become confused by the countless options and specifications. The ever-changing state of digital technology challenges consumers with its updates and add-ons and expanding markets and incompatible formats and restrictions–a fact that is complicated by salesmen who want to sell them anything. In a world that is increasingly driven by instant gratification, it's easy for people to buy the first thing they see. The solution for many people should be to avoid buying on impulse. Consumers should think about what they really need, not what is advertised.

Tip: Make sure your essay is balanced by not having an excessively long or short introduction or conclusion. Check that they match each other in length as closely as possible, and try to mirror the formula you used in each. Parallelism strengthens the message of your essay.

## Writing at Work

On the job you will sometimes give oral presentations based on research you have conducted. A concluding statement to an oral report contains the same elements as a written conclusion. You should wrap up your presentation by restating the purpose, reviewing the main points, and emphasizing the importance of the material you presented. A strong conclusion will leave a lasting impression on your audience.

### Key Takeaways

- A strong opening captures your readers' interest and introduces them to your topic before you present your thesis statement.

- An introduction should restate your thesis, review your main points, and emphasize the importance of the topic.

- The funnel technique to writing the introduction begins with generalities and gradually narrows your focus until you present your thesis.

- A good introduction engages people's emotions or logic, questions or explains the subject, or provides a striking image or quotation.

- Carefully chosen diction in both the introduction and conclusion prevents any confusing or boring ideas.

- A conclusion that does not connect to the rest of the essay can diminish the effect of your paper.

- The conclusion should remain true to your thesis statement. It is best to avoid changing your tone or your main idea and avoid introducing any new material.

- Closing with a final emphatic statement provides closure for your readers and makes your essay more memorable.

# 6.3 Drafting

**Drafting** is the stage of the writing process in which you develop a complete first version of a piece of writing.

Even professional writers admit that an empty page scares them because they feel they need to come up with something fresh and original every time they open a blank document on their computers. Because you have completed the first two steps in the writing process, you have already recovered from empty-page syndrome. You have hours of prewriting and planning already done. You know what will go on that blank page: what you wrote in your outline.

## Getting Started: Strategies for Drafting

Your objective for this portion is to draft the body paragraphs of a standard five-paragraph essay. A five-paragraph essay contains an introduction, three body paragraphs, and a conclusion. If you are more comfortable starting on paper than on the computer, you can begin that way and then later type it before you revise. You can also use a voice recorder to get yourself started, dictating a paragraph or two to get you thinking. In this lesson, Mariah does all her work on the computer, but you may use pen and paper or the computer to write a rough draft.

## Making the Writing Process Work for You

What makes the writing process so beneficial to writers is that it encourages alternatives to standard practices while motivating you to develop your best ideas. For instance, the following approaches, done alone or in combination with others, may improve your writing and help you move forward in the writing process:

Begin writing with the part you know the most about. You can start with the third paragraph in your outline if ideas come easily to mind. You can start with the second paragraph or the first paragraph, too. Although paragraphs may vary in length, keep in mind that short paragraphs may contain insufficient support. Readers may also think the writing is abrupt. Long paragraphs may be wordy and may lose

your reader's interest. As a guideline, try to write paragraphs longer than one sentence but shorter than the length of an entire double-spaced page.

Write one paragraph at a time and then stop. As long as you complete the assignment on time, you may choose how many paragraphs you complete in one sitting. Pace yourself. On the other hand, try not to procrastinate. Writers should always meet their deadlines.

Take short breaks to refresh your mind. This tip might be most useful if you are writing a multi-page report or essay. Still, if you are impatient or cannot concentrate, take a break to let your mind rest. But do not let breaks extend too long. If you spend too much time away from your essay, you may have trouble starting again. You may forget key points or lose momentum. Try setting an alarm to limit your break, and when the time is up, return to your desk to write.

Be reasonable with your goals. If you decide to limit your breaks to 10 minutes, try to stick to that goal. If you told yourself that you need more facts, then commit to finding them. Holding yourself to your own goals will create successful writing assignments.

Keep your audience and purpose in mind as you write. These aspects of writing are just as important when you are writing a single paragraph for your essay as when you are considering the direction of the entire essay.

Of all of these considerations, keeping your purpose and your audience at the front of your mind is the most important to writing success. If your purpose is to persuade, for example, you will present your facts and details in the most logical and convincing way you can.

Your purpose will guide your mind as you compose your sentences. Your audience will guide word choice. Are you writing for experts, for a general audience, for other students, or for people who know very little about your topic? Keep asking yourself what your readers, with their background and experience, need to be told in order to understand your ideas. How can you best express your ideas so they are totally clear and your communication is effective?

> Tip: You may want to identify your purpose and audience on an index card that you clip to your paper (or keep next to your computer). On that card, you may want to write notes to yourself—perhaps about what that audience might not know or what it needs to know—so that you will be sure to address those issues when you write. It may be a good idea to also state exactly what you want to explain to that audience, or to inform them of, or to persuade them about.

## Writing at Work

Many of the documents you produce at work target a particular audience for a particular purpose. You may find that it is highly advantageous to know as much as you can about your target audience and to prepare your message to reach that audience, even if the audience is a co-worker or your boss. Menu language is a common example. Descriptions like "organic romaine" and "free-range chicken" are intended to appeal to a certain type of customer though perhaps not to the same customer who craves a

thick steak. Similarly, mail-order companies research the demographics of the people who buy their merchandise. Successful vendors customize product descriptions in catalogues to appeal to their buyers' tastes. For example, the product descriptions in a skateboarder catalogue will differ from the descriptions in a clothing catalogue for mature adults.

## Setting Goals for Your First Draft

A draft is a complete version of a piece of writing, but it is not the final version. The step in the writing process after drafting, as you may remember, is revising. During revising, you will have the opportunity to make changes to your first draft before you put the finishing touches on it during the editing and proofreading stages. A first draft gives you a working version that you can later improve.

Self-Practice Exercise 6.6

*An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=116#h5p-85 (https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=116#h5p-85)*

**H5P:** Goal Setting

As we work towards a full essay draft, it is critical to keep track of why we are doing what we are doing. Yes, you're writing an essay for marks and to learn how to write an essay, but you can't do that well unless you have an over-arching purpose. So for this exercise, let's review the work you did in Pre-Chapter Review for Chapter 5 and dig deeper.

What is the **purpose** of your essay? Be as specific and concrete as possible, and consider your answers to the following questions.

- Why are you writing it?
- What type of expository essay have you selected?
- Why is this the best type for what you want to achieve?
- What is the controlling idea or claim of your essay?

Who is the **audience** for this essay? Be as specific as you can be and think about why you know about this audience. Remember the concepts you learned previously, like thinking through the expectations and prior experience of your audience.

## Writing at Work

Workplace writing in certain environments is done by teams of writers who collaborate on the planning, writing, and revising of documents, such as long reports, technical manuals, and the results of

scientific research. Collaborators do not need to be in the same room, the same building, or even the same city. Many collaborations are conducted over the Internet.

In a perfect collaboration, each contributor has the right to add, edit, and delete text. Strong communication skills, in addition to strong writing skills, are important in this kind of writing situation because disagreements over style, content, process, emphasis, and other issues may arise.

The collaborative software, or document management systems, that groups use to work on common projects is sometimes called *groupware* or *workgroup support systems*.

The reviewing tool on some word processing programs also gives you access to a collaborative tool that many smaller work groups use when they exchange documents. You can also use it to leave comments to yourself.

Tip: If you invest some time now to investigate how the reviewing tool in your word processor works, you will be able to use it with confidence during the revision stage of the writing process. Then, when you start to revise, set your reviewing tool to track any changes you make, so you will be able to tinker with text and commit to only those final changes you want to keep.

## Discovering the Basic Elements of a First Draft

If you have been using the information in this chapter step by step to help you develop an assignment, you already have both a formal topic outline and a formal sentence outline to direct your writing. Knowing what a first draft looks like will help you make the creative leap from the outline to the first draft.

*An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=116#h5p-86 (https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=116#h5p-86)*

**H5P:** Elements of a Draft (Pre-Test 6)

You've already seen these terms in context elsewhere in your textbook. Can you identify the correct definition for each of the following words?

    A.   thesis statement

B.  supporting sentences

C.  introduction

D.  conclusion

E.  topic sentence

**Definitions:**

1.  An _____ piques the audience's interest, tells what the essay is about, and motivates readers to keep reading.

2.  A _____ presents the main point, or controlling idea, of the entire piece of writing.

3.  A _____ in each paragraph states the main idea of the paragraph and implies how that main idea connects to the thesis statement.

4.  The _____ in each paragraph develop or explain the topic sentence. These can be specific facts, examples, anecdotes, or other details that elaborate on the topic sentence.

5.  A _____ that reinforces the thesis statement and leaves the audience with a feeling of completion.

**Answer Key**

1.  C                          4.  B

2.  A                          5.  D

3.  E

These elements follow the standard five-paragraph essay format, which you probably first encountered in high school. In Section 4.1: Expository Essays, you read that you should consider these as sections instead of just paragraphs because you will, at times, have to write a paper that needs to have more than five paragraphs because some ideas need more development or support. For now, however, Mariah focuses on writing the three body paragraphs from her outline.

## The Role of Topic Sentences

Topic sentences make the structure of a text and the writer's basic arguments easy to locate and comprehend. In post-secondary writing, using a topic sentence in each paragraph of the essay is the standard rule. However, the topic sentence does not always have to be the first sentence in your paragraph even if it the first item in your formal outline.

Tip: When you begin to draft your paragraphs, you should follow your outline fairly closely. After all,

you spent valuable time developing those ideas. However, as you begin to express your ideas in complete sentences, it might strike you that the topic sentence might work better at the end of the paragraph or in the middle. Try it. Writing a draft, by its nature, is a good time for experimentation.

The topic sentence can be the first, middle, or final sentence in a paragraph. The assignment's audience and purpose will often determine where a topic sentence belongs. When the purpose of the assignment is to persuade, for example, the topic sentence should be the first sentence in a paragraph. In a persuasive essay, the writer's point of view should be clearly expressed at the beginning of each paragraph.

Choosing where to position the topic sentence depends not only on your audience and purpose but also on the essay's arrangement, or order. When you organize information according to order of importance, the topic sentence may be the final sentence in a paragraph. All the supporting sentences build up to the topic sentence. Chronological order may also position the topic sentence as the final sentence because the controlling idea of the paragraph may make the most sense at the end of a sequence.

When you organize information according to spatial order, a topic sentence may appear as the middle sentence in a paragraph. An essay arranged by spatial order often contains paragraphs that begin with descriptions. A reader may first need a visual in mind before understanding the development of the paragraph. When the topic sentence is in the middle, it unites the details that come before it with the ones that come after it.

Tip: As you read critically throughout the writing process, keep topic sentences in mind. You may discover topic sentences that are not always located at the beginning of a paragraph. For example, fiction writers customarily use topic ideas, either expressed or implied, to move readers through their text. In nonfiction writing, such as the kind you read in popular magazines, topic sentences are often used when the author thinks it is appropriate (based on the audience and the purpose, of course). A single topic sentence might even control the development of a number of paragraphs.

Developing topic sentences and thinking about their placement in a paragraph will prepare you to write the rest of the paragraph.

## Paragraphs

The paragraph is the main structural component of an essay as well as other forms of writing. Each paragraph of an essay adds another related main idea to support the writer's thesis, or controlling idea. Each related main idea is supported and developed with facts, examples, and other details that explain it. By exploring and refining one main idea at a time, writers build a strong case for their thesis.

# Starting Your First Draft

Now we are finally ready to look over Mariah's shoulder as she begins to write her essay about digital technology and the confusing choices that consumers face. As she does, you should have in front of you your outline, with its thesis statement and topic sentences, and the notes you wrote earlier in this lesson on your purpose and audience. Reviewing these will put both you, like Mariah, in the proper mindset to start.

The following is Mariah's thesis statement.

> Everyone wants the newest and the best digital technology, but the choices are may, and the specification are often confusing.

Here are the notes that Mariah wrote to herself to characterize her purpose and audience.

> **Purpose:** My purpose is to inform readers about the wide variety of consumer digital technology available in stores and to explain why the specification for these products, expressed in number that average consumers don't understand, often cause bad of misinformed buying decisions.
>
> **Audience:** My audience is my instructor and members of this class. Most of them are not heavy into technology except for the usual laptops, cell phones, and MP3 players, which are not topics I'm writing about. I'll have to be as exact and precise as I can be when I explain possible unfamiliar product specifications. At the same time, they're more with it electronically than my grandparents' VCR-flummoxed generation, so I won't have to explain every last detail.

Mariah chose to begin by writing a quick introduction based on her thesis statement. She knew that she would want to improve her introduction significantly when she revised. Right now, she just wanted to give herself a starting point.

> Tip: Remember Mariah's other options. She could have started directly with any of the body paragraphs.

You learned more about writing attention-getting introductions and effective conclusions in Section 6.2: Writing Introductory and Concluding Paragraphs.

With her thesis statement and her purpose and audience notes in front of her, Mariah then looked at her sentence outline. She chose to use that outline because it includes the topic sentences. The following is the portion of her outline for the first body paragraph. The Roman numeral II identifies the topic sentence for the paragraph, capital letters indicate supporting details, and Arabic numerals label subpoints.

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II. E-book readers and the way that people read.

    A.  E-book readers make books easy to access and to carry

        1.  Books can be downloaded electronically.

        2.  Devices can store hundreds of books in memory.

    B.  The market expands as a variety of companies enter it.

        1.  Booksellers sell their own e-book readers.

        2.  Electronics and computer companies also sell e-book readers.

    C.  Current e-book readers have significant limitations.

        1.  The devices are owned by different brands and may not be compatible.

        2.  Few programs have been made to fit the other way Americans read: by borrowing books from libraries.

---

Mariah then began to expand the ideas in her outline into a paragraph. Notice how the outline helped her guarantee that all her sentences in the body of the paragraph develop the topic sentence.

---

E-book readers are changing the way people read, or so e-book developers hope. The main selling point for these handheld devices, which are sort of the size of a paperback book, is that they make books easy to access and carry. Electronic versions of printed books can be downloaded online for a few bucks or directly from your cell phone. These devices can store hundreds of books in memory and, with text-to-speech features, can even read the texts. The market for e-books and e-book readers keep expanding as a lot of companies enter it. Online and traditional booksellers have been the first to market e-book readers to the public, but computer companies, especially the ones already involved in cell phone, online music, and notepad computer technology, will also enter the market. The problem for consumers, however, is which device to choose.

Incompatibility is the norm. E-books can be read only on the devices they were intended for. Furthermore, use is restricted by the same kind of DRM systems that restricts the copying of music and videos. So, book buyers are often unable to lend books to other readers, as they can with a real

book. Few accommodations have been made to fit the other way Americans read: by borrowing books from libraries. What is a buyer to do?

Tip: If you write your first draft on the computer, consider creating a new file folder for each course with a set of subfolders inside the course folders for each assignment you are given. Label the folders clearly with the course names, and label each assignment folder and word processing document with a title that you will easily recognize. The assignment name is a good choice for the document. Then use that subfolder to store all the drafts you create. When you start each new draft, do not just write over the last one. Instead, save the draft with a new tag after the title—draft 1, draft 2, and so on—so that you will have a complete history of drafts in case your instructor wishes you to submit them.

In your documents, observe any formatting requirements—for margins, headers, placement of page numbers, and other layout matters—that your instructor requires.

## Self-Practice Exercise 6.7

*An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=116#h5p-87 (https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=116#h5p-87)*

**H5P:** Comparing Outlines and Drafts

Below, you'll see the text of Mariah's draft paragraph. Find all the words in sentences and phrases that Mariah has taken directly from her outline to use in her draft. You'll need to have Mariah's outline handy to successfully complete this exercise.

Ebook readers are changing the way people read, or so ebook developers hope. The main selling point for these handheld devices, which are sort of the size of a paperback book, is that they make books easy to access and carry. Electronic versions of printed books can be downloaded online for a few bucks or directly from your cell phone. These devices can store hundreds of books in memory and, with text-to-speech features, can even read the texts. The market for ebooks and ebook readers keeps expanding as a lot of companies enter it. Online and traditional booksellers have been the first to market ebook readers to the public, but computer companies, especially the ones already involved in cell phone, online music, and notepad computer technology, will also enter the market. The problem for consumers, however, is which device to choose. Incompatibility is the norm. Ebooks can be read only on the devices they were intended for. Furthermore, use is restricted by the same kind of DRM systems that restrict the copying of music and videos. So, book buyers

are often unable to lend books to other readers, as they can with a read book. Few accommodations have been made to fit the other way Americans read: by borrowing books from libraries. What is a buyer to do?

## Continuing the First Draft

Mariah continued writing her essay, moving to the second and third body paragraphs. She had supporting details but no numbered subpoints in her outline, so she had to consult her prewriting notes for specific information to include.

> Tip: If you decide to take a break between finishing your first body paragraph and starting the next one, do not start writing immediately when you return to your work. Put yourself back in context and in the mood by rereading what you have already written. This is what Mariah did. If she had stopped writing in the middle of writing the paragraph, she could have jotted down some quick notes to herself about what she would write next.

Preceding each body paragraph that Mariah wrote is the appropriate section of her sentence outline. Notice how she expanded Roman numeral III from her outline into a first draft of the second body paragraph. As you read, ask yourself how closely she stayed on purpose and how well she paid attention to the needs of her audience.

> III. Digital cameras have almost totally replaced by film cameras.
>
>   A. The first major choice is the type of digital camera.
>
>      1. Compactible digital cameras are light by have fewer megapixels.
>      2. Single lens reflex cameras, or SLRs, may be large and heavy but can be sued for many functions.
>      3. Some cameras combine the best features of compacts an SLRs.
>
>   B. Choosing the camera type involves the confusing "megapixel wars."
>   C. The zoom lens battle also determines the camera you will buy.

> Digital cameras have almost totally replaced film cameras in amateur photographers' gadget bags. My

father took hundreds of slides when his children were growing up, but he had more and more trouble getting them developed. So, he decided to go modern. But, what kind of camera should he buy? The small compact digital cameras could slip right in his pocket, but if he tried to print a photograph larger than an 8 × 10, the quality would be poor. When he investigated buying a single lens reflex camera, or SLR, he discovered that they were versatile as his old film camera, also an SLR, but they were big and bulky. Then he discovered yet a third type, which combined the smaller size of the compact digital cameras with the zoom lenses available for SLRs. His first though was to buy one of those, but then he realized he had a lot of decisions to make. How many megapixels should the camera be? Five? Ten? What is the advantage of each? Then came the size of the zoom lens. He knew that 3× was too small, but what about 25×? Could he hold a lens that long without causing camera shake? He read hundreds of photography magazines and buying guides, and he still wasn't sure he was right.

Mariah then began her third and final body paragraph using Roman numeral IV from her outline.

IV. Nothing is more confusing to me than choosing among televisions

    A.   In the resolution wars, what are the benefits of 1080p and 768p?

    B.   In the screen-size war, what do plasma screens and LCD screens offer?

    C.   Does every home really need a media centre?

Nothing is more confusing to me than choosing among televisions. It confuses lots of people who want a new high-definition digital television (HDTV) with a large screen to watch sports and DVDs on. You could listen to the guys in the electronics store, but word has it they know little more than you do. They want to sell you what they have in stock, not what best fits your needs. You face decisions you never had to make with the old, bulky picture-tube televisions. Screen resolution means the number of horizontal scan lines the screen can show. This resolution is often 1080p, or full HD, or 768p. The trouble is that if you have a smaller screen, 32 inches or 37 inches diagonal, you won't be able to tell the difference with the naked eye. The 1080p televisions cost more, though, so those are what the salespeople want you to buy. They get bigger commissions. The other important decision you face as you walk around the sales floor is whether to get a plasma screen or an LCD screen. Now here the salespeople may finally give you decent info. Plasma flat-panel television screens can be much larger in diameter than their LCD rivals. Plasma flat-panel television screens show decent blacks and can be viewed at a wider angle than current LCD screens. But be careful and tell the salesperson you have budget constraints. Large flat-panel plasma screens are much more expensive than flat-screen LCD models. Don't buy more television than you need.

Self-Practice Exercise 6.8

> *An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=116#h5p-88 (https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=116#h5p-88)*

**H5P:** Reviewing Mariah's Work

A critical skill you will develop in this course is the skill of reading critically and offering peer feedback. It can be a bit scary to give feedback like this; sometimes, we don't think we are qualified or we worry we're hurting someone's feelings. So let's practice on someone who can't get upset: Mariah (because she's fictional). We should still strive to give feedback that is concrete, specific, honest, and framed constructively. Let's try!

- In body paragraph two, Mariah decided to develop her paragraph as a nonfiction narrative. Do you agree with her decision? Explain. How else could she have chosen to develop the paragraph? Why is that better?

- Compare the writing styles of paragraphs two and three. What evidence do you have that Mariah was getting tired or running out of steam? What advice would you give her? Why?

- Choose one of Mariah's two paragraphs. Give three concrete, constructive suggestions that would make her paragraph better.

## Writing a Title

A writer's best choice for a title is one that alludes to the main point of the entire essay. Like the headline in a newspaper or the big, bold title in a magazine, an essay's title gives the audience a first peek at the content. If readers like the title, they are likely to keep reading.

Following her outline carefully, Mariah crafted each paragraph of her essay. Moving step by step in the writing process, Mariah finished the draft and even included a brief concluding paragraph. She then decided, as the final touch for her writing session, to add an engaging title.

> **Thesis Statement:** Everyone wants the newest and the best digital technology, but the choices are many, and the specification are often confusing.
>
> **Working Title:** Digital Technology: The Newest and the Best at What Price?

## Writing Your Own First Draft

Now you may begin your own first draft. Follow the suggestions and the guidelines presented in this section. Follow the steps below and work through the process just as Mariah did to develop her essay.

Also, your expository essay will be due next week, so focus on the first draft by the end of this week then take the next week to look it over. In Chapter 12, you will learn more about final revisions and peer review, so for your later papers, you will be expected to complete a more thorough revision; for the expository essay, you will be expected to work through your first draft, and once you are finished that, you will need to do a basic revision and editing, looking for errors with spelling, homonyms, sentence construction—all of the grammar content we have covered so far. For now, work through the following steps:

- Ensure your supporting ideas actually support your thesis.
- Revise your thesis as required (make sure it still addresses the initial topic you have chosen).
- Compose your paragraphs/sections following your formal sentence outline—one section at a time–then double check you have included all information from your outline in your paragraph/section.
- Check that your topic sentences support your thesis.
- Make sure the information in your paragraphs support your topic sentences.
- Insert transitional words (if you have not done so already when composing your draft) into paragraphs AND to link paragraphs.
- When writing, be conscious of your tone and how it relates to your audience.
- Be careful when considering which words to use.
- Create an introduction that engages the reader.
- Create a conclusion that leaves your reader convinced and is memorable.
- Make sure all of your sentences are complete.
- Proofread for spelling mistakes (remember to not depend too much on spelling and grammar checkers).

Try to compile a references section using the JIBC APA Style Guide (http://libguides.jibc.ca/apa); you will practise this later in this course, but for now refer to the guide to see how to compose a complete reference page, and be sure to include all of the sources you used.

Include citations within your essay to show where and when you have taken information from an external source. Again, follow the JIBC APA Style Guide (http://libguides.jibc.ca/apa). You will learn more about this is a few weeks, but refer to the guide to see how to format your citations. You need to include a citation after each piece of information taken from a source, and you may use the same citation multiple times in a row. (Try and get into the practice of doing this now because you will be expected to have these in all future papers to avoid plagiarism.)

Create a title page with interesting title, your name, your course name and number, your instructor's name, the date the paper is due.

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### Key Takeaways

- Make the writing process work for you. Use any and all of the strategies that help you move forward in the writing process.

- Always be aware of your purpose for writing and the needs of your audience. Cater to those needs in every sensible way.

- Remember to include all the key structural parts of an essay: a thesis statement that is part of your introductory paragraph, three or more body paragraphs as described in your outline, and a concluding paragraph. Then add an engaging title to draw in readers.

- Write paragraphs of an appropriate length for your writing assignment. Paragraphs at this level of writing can be a page long, as long as they cover the main topics in your outline.

- Use your topic outline or your sentence outline to guide the development of your paragraphs and the elaboration of your ideas. Each main idea, indicated by a Roman numeral in your outline, becomes the topic of a new paragraph. Develop it with the supporting details and the subpoints of those details that you included in your outline.

- Generally speaking, write your introduction and conclusion last, after you have fleshed out the body paragraphs.

# 6.4 The Writing Process: End-of-Chapter Exercises

> **Learning Objectives**
>
> - Use the skills you have learned in the chapter
> - Work collaboratively with other students
> - Work with a variety of academic and on the job, real-world examples

## Supplemental Exercises

In this chapter, you have thought and read about the topic of mass media. Starting with the title "The Future of Information: How It Will Be Created, Transmitted, and Consumed," narrow the focus of the topic until it is suitable for a two- to three-page paper. Then narrow your topic with the help of brainstorming, idea mapping, and searching the Internet until you select a final topic to explore. Keep a journal or diary in which you record and comment on everything you did to choose a final topic. Then record what you will do next to explore the idea and create a thesis statement.

Write a thesis statement and a formal sentence outline for an essay about the writing process. Include separate paragraphs for prewriting, drafting, and revising and editing. Your audience will be a general audience of educated adults who are unfamiliar with how writing is taught at the post-secondary level. Your purpose is to explain the stages of the writing process so that readers will understand its benefits.

**Collaboration: Please share with a classmate and compare your answers.**

Pieces of writing in a variety of real-life and work-related situations would benefit from revising and editing. Consider the following list of real-life and work-related pieces of writing: emails, greeting card messages, junk mail, late night television commercials, social networking pages, local newspapers, bulletin board postings, and public notices. Find and submit at least two examples of writing that needs revision. Explain what changes you would make. Replace any recognizable names with pseudonyms.

> **Group Activity**
>
> At work, an employer might someday ask you to contribute to the research base for an essay such as the one Mariah wrote or the one you wrote while working through this chapter. Choosing either her topic or your

own, compile a list of at least five sources. Then, working in a group of four students, bring in printouts or PDF files of Internet sources or paper copies of non-Internet sources for the other group members to examine. In a group report, rate the reliability of each other's sources.

## Group Activity

Working in a peer review group of four, go to Section 6.3: Drafting (#chapter-drafting) and reread the draft of the first two body paragraphs of Mariah's essay, "Digital Technology: The Newest and the Best at What Price?" Review those two paragraphs and suggest and agree on changes to improve unity and coherence, eliminate unneeded words, and refine word choice. Your purpose is to help Mariah produce two effective paragraphs for a formal post-secondary-level essay about her topic.

## Journal Entry 5

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**H5P:** Question Prompts

How do you feel about beginning your expository essay draft? Which, if any, of the steps do you find intimidating? OR Which steps do you find straightforward?

How did breaking the writing process down into smaller stages work for you? What effect did this process have on the end result? What would have been different if you had just tackled your paper in one sitting?

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# Chapter 7: Sources: Choosing the Right Ones

Before now, we have looked at using expository essay forms as ways to construct essays. In this chapter, we will begin to l0ok at being more critical: not only with the sources we choose but also in how we compose our ideas. Also, this chapter will help you finalize the selection of your article for your critique. In the next chapter, you will have the opportunity to expand on the examples given and apply your own information and ideas to develop your critical essay. Before we begin that, we need to further examine how important it is to choose correct sources as supporting evidence for ideas. You will also explore different resources available to you where you can search to find supporting evidence because you cannot always rely on basic Internet searches to help you find the best support available. You have already explored different topics you find interesting when coming up with a topic for your expository essay, and while the content of this chapter is relevant to conducting any type of research, consider the connection to finding a suitable academic article for your critique. You may have already come across an academic journal article you would like to be the basis for your critique. If you have, you still should apply the material in this chapter as you may discover an article you would prefer to use. Also, you will need to apply the information in Section 7.1: Choosing a Source to confirm whether the source you have chosen is appropriate. If you have not found an article yet or discover the one you chose does not fit the parameters, the content below will help you find one that is both interesting and fits the parameters for your next essay.

# 7.1 Choosing a Source

Learning Objectives

- Identify and apply the criteria for finding an academic journal article to critique
- Identify key terminology on your topic to guide your article search

In the next chapter, you will learn more about the details of what makes a critique and how to write one. For a description of the critique requirements, refer to the Assessment Descriptions as part of the course overview in your syllabus.

## How Choosing a Source for a Critique is Different

Most essays focus on a topic–one you have narrowed down–and require a number of sources to back up the points or ideas. A critique, on the other hand, focuses on *one source* of information. Soon you will learn more about critiquing, but at this stage, it is important to know this is the key difference between a critique and a research paper because it will have an impact your choice of base and supplemental sources. However, you first need to choose a topic that you will then narrow in your search for an appropriate academic article to critique. Simply stated, then, a critique is typically a discussion centred around one **primary source**. However, just as with any other essay, you may need to bring in supplemental sources to support the ideas you present in your discussion. While your next assignment stems around the one source you choose, you will need to look for other sources on the same topic in case you need them for background or supporting information or to even present opposing points of view.

For the critique you are required to write for your next assignment, the original source you will base your critical response on needs to meet the criteria outlined in **Table 7.1: Source Selection Criteria.**

**Table 7.1 Source Selection Criteria**

| It should: | It should NOT: |
|---|---|
| Be on a topic interesting to you. It is better if it is something you react to strongly (positively or negatively) because it is easier to generate ideas of what to critique when you have more of an emotional response. | Be on a topic on which you have no opinion or background information. |
| Be from an academic source/journal–even though you may use an academic database to find your article, you may come across non-academic sources. | Be from a website because this makes it difficult for citations and referencing.<br><br>Be from a newspaper (print or online) because these are often biased. |
| Contain language that is relatively straightforward–some challenging vocabulary would be all right because you can critique this. | Have a lot of challenging vocabulary forcing you to constantly refer to a dictionary–you may get bogged down in doing that and miss the main points the author is presenting. |
| Be 5 to 10 pages in length, giving you enough content to choose a few points to discuss in depth. | Be closer to 3 or as high as 20 pages–this will either provide you with too little content, and you will be stuck for ideas, or it will give you too much and you will only cover the points superficially. |

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**H5P:** Choosing a Good Source for Critique

1. Would an academic journal article be a good source for this assignment?

    A.  Yes, if it's 20 pages long.

    B.  Yes, if it's 5-10 pages long.

    C.  No, we should not use academic journal articles for this assignment.

2. Can we use newspaper and website sources for this assignment?

    A.  No, because newspapers and websites are badly written.

    B.  Yes, if it seems well-researched.

    C.  No, to avoid bias and difficulties citing.

3. How should I choose my topic for this essay?

      A. Choose something my instructor seems interested in.

      B. Choose something boring that sounds really smart.

      C. Choose something I genuinely care about and want to discuss.

**Answer Key**

1. B              2. C              3. C

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Self-Practice Exercise 7.1

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**H5P:** Critique Topic Brainstorm

In this exercise, we'll start thinking about what you might like to address in you Critique essay. You can use the topic of your Expository essay as a place to start, or you can head off in a brand new direction. What are you interested in writing about today?

- Set your timer for **ten minutes** and brainstorm about your essay topic.
- Is there anything in your brainstorm that seems particularly promising? Make note of it below.

---

Table 7.1 gives you an idea of the technical criteria you need to meet when choosing a source for your next assignment. The next section will help you ensure you find a credible source, and one that meets the requirement to use an appropriate academic source.

# 7.2 Strategies for Gathering Reliable Information

Learning Objectives

- Distinguish between primary and secondary sources
- Identify strategies for locating relevant print and electronic resources efficiently
- Identify instances when it is appropriate to use human sources, such as interviews or eyewitness testimony
- Identify criteria for evaluating research resources
- Understand why many electronic resources are not reliable

Now that you have chosen your topic, you are ready to begin the research. This phase can be both exciting and challenging. As you read this section, you will learn ways to locate sources efficiently, so you have enough time to read the sources, take notes, and think about how to use the information.

Of course, the technological advances of the past few decades—particularly the rise of online media—mean that, as a 21st century student, you have countless sources of information available at your fingertips. However, how can you tell whether a source is reliable? This section will discuss strategies for evaluating sources critically so that you can be a media savvy researcher.

## Locating Useful Resources

When you chose a topic and determined your research questions, you conducted preliminary research to stimulate your thinking. Your proposal included some general ideas for how to go about your research—for instance, interviewing an expert in the field or analyzing the content of popular magazines. You may even have identified a few potential sources. Now it is time to conduct a more focused, systematic search for informative primary and secondary sources.

## Using Primary and Secondary Sources

Writers classify research resources in two categories: primary sources and secondary sources. **Primary sources** are direct, firsthand sources of information or data. For example, if you were writing a paper about freedom of religion, the text of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms would be a primary source.

- Other primary sources include the following:

- Research articles
- Literary texts
- Historical documents such as diaries or letters
- Autobiographies or other personal accounts

**Secondary sources** discuss, interpret, analyze, consolidate, or otherwise rework information from primary sources. In researching a paper about freedom of religion, you might read articles about legal cases that involved freedom of religion, or editorials expressing commentary on freedom of religion. These would be considered secondary sources because they are one step removed from the primary source of information.

The following are examples of secondary sources:

- Magazine articles
- Biographical books
- Literary and scientific reviews
- Television documentaries

Your topic and purpose determine whether you must cite both primary and secondary sources in your paper. Ask yourself which sources are most likely to provide the information that will answer your research questions. If you are writing a research paper about reality television shows, you will need to use some reality shows as a primary source, but secondary sources, such as a reviewer's critique, are also important. If you are writing about the health effects of nicotine, you will probably want to read the published results of scientific studies, but secondary sources, such as magazine articles discussing the outcome of a recent study, may also be helpful.

Once you have thought about what kinds of sources are most likely to help you answer your research questions, you may begin your search for print and electronic resources. The challenge is to conduct your search efficiently. Writers use strategies to help them find the sources that are most relevant and reliable while steering clear of sources that will not be useful.

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**H5P:** Review Primary/Secondary

For each type of source listed, determine whether they are primary or secondary sources.

1. Research articles.

2. Autobiographies or other personal accounts.

3. Biographical books.

4. Literary and scientific reviews.

5. Historical documents such as diaries or letters

6. Television documentaries.

**Answer Key**

1. Primary

2. Primary

3. Secondary

4. Secondary

5. Primary

6. Secondary

# Finding Print Resources

Print resources include a vast array of documents and publications. Regardless of your topic, you will consult some print resources as part of your research. (You will use electronic sources as well, but it is not wise to limit yourself to electronic sources only because some potentially useful sources may be available only in print form.) **Table 7.2: Library Print Resources** lists different types of print resources available at public and university libraries.

**Table 7.2 Library Print Resources**

| Resource Type | Description | Examples |
|---|---|---|
| Reference works | Reference works provide a summary of information about a particular topic. Almanacs, encyclopedias, atlases, medical reference books, and scientific abstracts are examples of reference works. In some cases, reference books may not be checked out of a library. Note that reference works are many steps removed from original primary sources and are often brief, so they should be used only as a starting point when you gather information. | • The World Almanac and Book of Facts 2015<br><br>• Diagnostic and Statistical Manual published by the American Psychiatric Association |
| Nonfiction books | Nonfiction books provide in-depth coverage of a topic. Trade books, biographies, and how-to guides are usually written for a general audience. Scholarly books and scientific studies are usually written for an audience that has specialized knowledge of a topic. | • The 30-Day Low-Carb Diet Solution<br><br>• Fundamentals of Nutrition |
| Periodicals and news sources | These sources are published at regular intervals—daily, weekly, monthly, or quarterly. Newspapers, magazines, and academic journals are examples. Some periodicals provide articles on subjects of general interest, while others are more specialized. | • The Globe and Mail<br><br>• Maclean's magazine<br><br>• CMAJ, Canadian Medical Association Journal |
| Government publications | Federal, provincial, and local government agencies publish information on a variety of topics. Government publications include reports, legislation, court documents, public records, statistics, studies, guides, programs, and forms. | • Statistics Canada<br><br>• Juristat |
| Business and nonprofit publications | Businesses and nonprofit organizations produce publications designed to market a product, provide background about the organization, provide information on topics connected to the organization, or promote a cause. These publications include reports, newsletters, advertisements, manuals, brochures, and other print documents. | • A company's instruction manual explaining how to use a specific software program<br><br>• A news release published by UNICEF Canada |

Some of these resources are also widely available in electronic format. In addition to the resources noted in the table, library holdings may include primary texts such as historical documents, letters, and diaries.

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## Writing at Work

Businesses, government organizations, and nonprofit organizations produce published materials that range from brief advertisements and brochures to lengthy, detailed reports. In many cases, producing these publications requires research. A corporation's annual report may include research about economic or industry trends. A charitable organization may use information from research in materials sent to potential donors.

Regardless of the industry you work in, you may be asked to assist in developing materials for publication. Often, incorporating research in these documents can make them more effective in informing or persuading readers.

Tip: As you gather information, strive for a balance of accessible, easy-to-read sources and more specialized, challenging sources. Relying solely on lightweight books and articles written for a general audience will drastically limit the range of useful, substantial information. On the other hand, restricting oneself to dense, scholarly works could make the process of researching extremely time consuming and frustrating.

### Self-Practice Exercise 7.2

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**H5P:** Understanding Print Resources

For each example of a source you might find in the library, decide what Resource Type it is.

1. Scientific abstracts
2. Trade books
3. Public records
4. Newsletters

> 5. Magazines
>
> **Answer Key**
>
> 1. Reference works                    4. Business and nonprofit publications
> 2. Nonfiction books                   5. Periodicals and news sources
> 3. Government publications

To find print resources efficiently, first identify the major concepts and terms you will use to conduct your search—that is, your **keywords**. These will help you find sources using any of the following methods:

- Using the library's online catalogue

- Using periodicals indexes and databases

- Consulting a reference librarian

After completing **Self-Practice Exercise 7.1**, you already have some keywords in mind based on your preliminary research and writing. Another way to identify useful keywords is to visit the Library of Congress's website (http://id.loc.gov/authorities) (used as a point of reference throughout North America). This site allows you to search for a topic and see the related subject headings used by the Library of Congress, including broader terms, narrower terms, and related terms. Other libraries use these terms to classify materials. Knowing the most-used terms will help you speed up your keyword search.

At this point, you should have selected the academic article you would like to give to your instructor for approval; before submitting it, however, you do want to skim the article and come up with some ideas you could use for your critique.

Jorge, who you first met in **Chapter 3**, used the Library of Congress site to identify general terms he could use to find resources about low-carb dieting. His search helped him identify potentially useful keywords and related topics, such as *carbohydrates in human nutrition, glycemic index,* and *carbohydrates—metabolism*. These terms helped Jorge refine his search.

> Tip: Knowing the right keywords can sometimes make all the difference in conducting a successful search. If you have trouble finding sources on a topic, consult a librarian to see whether you need to modify your search terms.

Self-Practice Exercise 7.3

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**H5P:** Online Research

Now it's time to get started on our research. You'll need your list of terms to search for from Self-Practice 7.1.

Visit the Library of Congress's website and conduct searches on a few terms related to your topic.

- Review the search terms you used and use the subject heading suggestions to come up with 6-8 additional search terms. Make note of them here.

- If you ended up following any useful links in your searching, make note of those here too so you don't lose track of them.

## Using Periodicals, Indexes, and Databases

Library catalogues can help you locate book length sources, as well as some types of nonprint holdings, such as CDs, DVDs, and audiobooks. To locate shorter sources, such as magazine and journal articles, you will need to use a **periodical index** or an **online periodical database**. These tools index the articles that appear in newspapers, magazines, and journals. Like catalogues, they provide publication information about an article and often allow users to access a summary or even the full text of the article.

Print indexes may be available in the periodicals section of your library. Increasingly, libraries use online databases that users can access through the library website. A single library may provide access to multiple periodical databases. These can range from general news databases to specialized databases. **Table 7.3: Commonly Used Databases** describes some indexes and databases that are frequently used.

**Table 7.3 Commonly Used Databases**

| Resource | Format | Contents |
|---|---|---|
| Academic Search (EBSCOhost) | Online | General content from magazines, journals, and books |
| Canadian Newsstand (ProQuest) | Online | News and current event-related content from magazines and newspapers |
| Business Source Complete (EBSCOhost) | Online | Business-related content from magazines and journals |
| Criminal Justice (ProQuest) | Online | Content from journals in criminology and law |
| MEDLINE (EBSCOhost) PubMed (OPEN ACCESS) | Online | Articles in medicine and health |
| PsycINFO (EBSCOhost) | Online | Content from journals in psychology and psychiatry |
| SocINDEX (EBSCOhost) | Online | General content from magazines, journals, and books |

## Reading Popular and Scholarly Periodicals

When you search for periodicals, be sure to distinguish among different types. Mass market publications, such as newspapers and popular magazines, differ from scholarly publications in their accessibility, audience, and purpose.

Newspapers and magazines are written for a broader audience than scholarly journals. Their content is usually quite accessible and easy to read. **Trade magazines** that target readers within a particular industry may presume the reader has background knowledge, but these publications are still reader friendly for a broader audience. Their purpose is to inform and, often, to entertain or persuade readers as well.

**Scholarly** or **academic journals** are written for a much smaller and more expert audience. The creators of these publications assume that most of their readers are already familiar with the main topic of the journal. The target audience is also highly educated. Informing is the primary purpose of a scholarly journal. While a journal article may advance an agenda or advocate a position, the content will still be presented in an objective style and formal tone (which is why you have been asked to find an academic journal article). Entertaining readers with breezy comments and splashy graphics is not a priority with this type of source.

Because of these differences, scholarly journals are more challenging to read. That does not mean you should avoid them. On the contrary, they can provide in-depth information that is unavailable elsewhere. Because knowledgeable professionals carefully review the content before publication, scholarly journals are far more reliable than much of the information available in popular media. Seek out academic journals along with other resources. Just be prepared to spend a little more time processing the information.

**Writing at Work**

Periodicals databases are not just for students writing research papers. They also provide a valuable service to workers in various fields. The owner of a small business might use a database such as Business Source Complete to find articles on management, finance, or trends within a particular industry. Health care professionals might consult databases such as MEDLINE to research a particular disease or medication. Regardless of what career path you plan to pursue, periodicals databases can be a useful tool for researching specific topics and identifying periodicals that will help you keep up with the latest news in your industry.

## Consulting a Reference Librarian

Sifting through library stacks and database search results to find the information you need can be like trying to find a needle in a haystack. If you are not sure how you should begin your search, or if it is yielding too many or too few results, you are not alone. Many students find this process challenging, although it does get easier with experience. One way to learn better search strategies is to consult a reference librarian.

Reference librarians are intimately familiar with the systems libraries use to organize and classify information. They can help you locate a particular book in the library stacks, steer you toward useful reference works, and provide tips on how to use databases and other electronic research tools. Take the time to see what resources you can find on your own, but if you encounter difficulties, ask for help. Many university librarians hold virtual office hours and are available for online chatting.

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Self-Practice Exercise 7.4

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**H5P:** Connecting With Your Library

Visit your library's website or consult with a reference librarian to determine what periodicals indexes or databases would be useful for your research. Depending on your topic, you may rely on a general news index, a specialized index for a particular subject area, or both. Search the catalogue for your topic and related keywords. Print out or bookmark your search results.

- Identify at least one to two relevant periodicals, indexes, or databases.

- Conduct a keyword search to find potentially relevant articles on your topic.

- Save your search results. If the index you are using provides article summaries, read these to

determine how useful the articles are likely to be.

- Identify at least three to five articles to review more closely. If the full article is available online, set aside time to read it. If not, plan to visit our library within the next few days to locate the articles you need.

It's really important to keep detailed notes of everything you find, both so you can find them later and so you can accurately cite your sources (and avoid accusations of plagiarism!). Make notes about anything relevant to your library time here.

Tip: One way to refine your keyword search is to use Boolean operators. These allow you to combine keywords, find variations on a word, and otherwise expand or limit your results. Here are some of the ways you can use Boolean operators:

- Combine keywords with and or + to limit results to citations that include both keywords—for example, diet + nutrition.

- Combine keywords with **or** to find synonyms. For example, **prison or jail**. The phrase "Or is more" may help you remember that using this will show you more results.

- Combine keywords with not or – to search for the first word without the second. This can help you eliminate irrelevant results based on words that are similar to your search term. For example, searching for stress fractures not geological locates materials on fractures of *bones* but excludes materials on fractures of *stones*. Use this one cautiously because it may exclude useful sources.

- Enclose a phrase in **quotation marks** to search for an exact phrase, such as "morbid obesity," "**use of force**," or "**law enforcement**."

- Use **parentheses** to direct the order of operations in a search string. For example, since Type II diabetes is also known as adult onset diabetes, you could search (Type II or adult onset or Type 2) and diabetes to limit your search results to articles on this form of the disease.

- Use a wildcard symbol such as **\***, #, ?, or $ after a word to search for variations on a term. For instance, you might type gang* to search for information on gang, gangs, and gangland. The specific symbol used varies with different databases.

## Finding and Using Electronic Resources

With the expansion of technology and media over the past few decades, a wealth of information is available to you in electronic format. Some types of resources, such as television documentaries, may only be available electronically. Other resources—for instance, many newspapers and magazines—may be available in both print and electronic form. The following are some of the electronic sources you might consult:

- Online databases

- CD-ROMs

- Popular web search engines

- Websites maintained by businesses, universities, nonprofit organizations, or government agencies

- Newspapers, magazines, and journals published on the web

- E-books

- Audiobooks

- Industry blogs

- Radio and television programs and other audio and video recordings

- Online discussion groups

The techniques you use to locate print resources can also help you find electronic resources efficiently. Libraries usually include CD-ROMs, audiobooks, and audio and video recordings among their holdings. You can locate these materials in the catalogue using a keyword search. The same Boolean operators used to refine database searches can help you filter your results in popular search engines.

## Using Internet Search Engines Efficiently

When faced with the challenge of writing a research paper, some students rely on popular search engines as their first source of information. Typing a keyword or phrase into a search engine instantly pulls up links to dozens, hundreds, or even thousands of related websites—what could be easier? Unfortunately, despite its apparent convenience, this research strategy has the following drawbacks:

Results do not always appear in order of reliability. The first few hits that appear in search results may include sites with unreliable content, such as online encyclopedias that can be edited by any user. Because websites are created by third parties, the search engine cannot tell you which sites have accurate information.

Results may be too numerous for you to use. The amount of information available on the web is far greater than the amount of information housed within a particular library or database. Realistically, if your web search pulls up thousands of hits, you will not be able to visit every site—and the most useful sites may be buried deep within your search results.

Search engines are not connected to the results of the search. Search engines find websites that people visit often and list the results in order of popularity. The search engine, then, is not connected to any of the results. When you cite a source found through a search engine, you do not need to cite the search engine. Only cite the source.

A general web search can provide a helpful overview of a topic and may pull up genuinely useful resources. To get the most out of a search engine like Google Scholar (http://scholar.google.ca/), however, use strategies to make your search more efficient. Use multiple keywords and Boolean

operators to limit your results. Click on the advanced search link on the homepage to find additional options for streamlining your search. Depending on the specific search engine you use, the following options may be available:

- Limit results to websites that have been updated within a particular time frame

- Limit results by language or country

- Limit results to scholarly works available online

- Limit results by file type

- Limit results to a particular domain type, such as .edu (school and university sites) or .gov (government sites). This is a quick way to filter out commercial sites, which can often lead to more objective results.

- Use the "bookmarks" or "favourites" feature of your web browser to save and organize sites that look promising.

## Using Other Information Sources: Interviews

With so many print and electronic media readily available, it is easy to overlook another valuable information resource: other people. Consider whether you could use a person or group as a primary source. For instance, you might interview a professor who has expertise in a particular subject, a worker within a particular industry, or a representative from a political organization. Interviews can be a great way to get firsthand information.

To get the most out of an interview, you will need to plan ahead. Contact your subject early in the research process and explain your purpose for requesting an interview. Prepare detailed questions. Open-ended questions, rather than questions with simple yes or no answers, are more likely to lead to an in-depth discussion. Schedule a time to meet, and be sure to obtain your subject's permission to record the interview. Take careful notes and be ready to ask follow-up questions based on what you learn.

> Tip: If scheduling an in-person meeting is difficult, consider arranging a telephone interview or asking your subject to respond to your questions via email. Recognize that any of these formats takes time and effort. Be prompt and courteous, avoid going over the allotted interview time, and be flexible if your subject needs to reschedule.

## Evaluating Research Resources

As you gather sources, you will need to examine them with a critical eye. Smart researchers continually ask themselves two questions: "Is this source relevant to my purpose?" and "Is this source reliable?" The first question will help you avoid wasting valuable time reading sources that stray too far from

your specific topic and research questions. The second question will help you find accurate, trustworthy sources.

## Determining Whether a Source Is Relevant

At this point in your research process, you may have identified dozens of potential sources. It is easy for writers to get so caught up in checking out books and printing out articles that they forget to ask themselves how they will use these resources in their research. Now is a good time to get a little ruthless. Reading and taking notes takes time and energy, so you will want to focus on the most relevant sources.

To weed through your stack of books and articles, skim their contents. Read quickly with your research questions and subtopics in mind. **Table 7.4: Tips for Skimming Books and Articles** explains how to skim to get a quick sense of what topics are covered. If a book or article is not especially relevant, put it aside. You can always come back to it later if you need to.

**Table 7.4 Tips for Skimming Books and Articles**

| Tips for Skimming Books | Tips for Skimming Articles |
|---|---|
| • Read the dust jacket and table of contents for a broad overview of the topics covered.<br>• Use the index to locate more specific topics and see how thoroughly they are covered.<br>• Flip through the book and look for subtitles or key terms that correspond to your research. | Skim the introduction and conclusion for summary material. Skim through subheadings and text features such as sidebars. Look for keywords related to your topic. Journal articles often begin with an abstract or summary of the contents. Read it to determine the article's relevance to your research. |

## Determining Whether a Source Is Reliable

All information sources are not created equal. Sources can vary greatly in terms of how carefully they are researched, written, edited, and reviewed for accuracy. Common sense will help you identify obviously questionable sources, such as tabloids that feature tales of alien abductions, or personal websites with glaring typos. Sometimes, however, a source's reliability—or lack of it—is not so obvious.

To evaluate your research sources, you will use critical thinking skills consciously and deliberately. You will consider criteria such as the type of source, its intended purpose and audience, the author's qualifications, the publication's reputation, any indications of bias or hidden agendas, how current the source is, and the overall quality of the writing, thinking, and design.

**Evaluating Types of Sources**

The different types of sources you will consult are written for distinct purposes and with different audiences in mind. This accounts for other differences, such as the following:

- How thoroughly the writers cover a given topic

- How carefully the writers research and document facts

- How editors review the work

- What biases or agendas affect the content.

A journal article written for an academic audience for the purpose of expanding scholarship in a given field will take an approach quite different from a magazine feature written to inform a general audience. Textbooks, hard news articles, and websites approach a subject from different angles as well. To some extent, the type of source provides clues about its overall depth and reliability. **Table 7.5: Source Rankings** ranks different source types.

**Table 7.5 Source Rankings**

| | |
|---|---|
| **High-Quality Sources** | These sources provide the most in-depth information. They are researched and written by subject matter experts and are carefully reviewed.<br><br>• Scholarly books and articles in scholarly journals<br>• Trade books and magazines geared toward an educated general audience, such as Police Chief *magazine*, Canadian Paramedicine, or *Harvard* Business Review<br>• Government documents, such as books, reports, and web pages<br>• Documents posted online by reputable organizations, such as universities and research institutes<br>• Textbooks and reference books, which are usually reliable but may not cover a topic in great depth |
| **Varied-Quality Sources** | These sources are often useful. However, they do not cover subjects in as much depth as high-quality sources, and they are not always rigorously researched and reviewed. Some, such as popular magazine articles or company brochures, may be written to market a product or a cause. **Use these sources with caution**.**<br><br>• News stories and feature articles (print or online) from reputable newspapers, magazines, or organizations, such as The Economist or the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation<br>• Popular magazine articles, which may or may not be carefully researched and fact checked<br>• Documents published by businesses and nonprofit organizations |
| **Questionable Sources** | These sources are often written primarily to attract a large readership or present the author's opinions and are not subject to careful review. **Avoid using these sources!**<br><br>• Loosely regulated or unregulated media content, such as Internet discussion boards, blogs, free online encyclopedias, talk radio shows, television news shows with obvious political biases, personal websites, and chat rooms |

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**H5P:** Quality of Sources

Determine whether the source listed is of high, variable, or questionable quality.

1. Scholarly book
2. Popular magazine articles
3. Talk radio interview
4. Internet discussion boards
5. Document published by a business
6. Government report

**Answer Key**

1. high quality
2. variable quality
3. questionable quality
4. questionable quality
5. variable quality
6. high quality

Tip: Free online encyclopedias and wikis may seem like a great source of information. They usually appear among the first few results of a web search. They cover thousands of topics, and many articles use an informal, straightforward writing style. Unfortunately, these sites have no control system for researching, writing, and reviewing articles. Instead, they rely on a community of users to police themselves. At best, these sites can be a starting point for finding other, more trustworthy sources. *Never use them as final sources*.

## Evaluating Credibility and Reputability

Even when you are using a type of source that is generally reliable, you will still need to evaluate the author's credibility and the publication itself on an individual basis. To examine the **author's credibility**—that is, how much you can believe of what the author has to say—examine his or her credentials. What career experience or academic study shows that the author has the expertise to write about this topic?

Keep in mind that expertise in one field is no guarantee of expertise in another, unrelated area. For instance, an author may have an advanced degree in physiology, but this credential is not a valid qualification for writing about psychology. Check credentials carefully.

Just as important as the author's credibility is the publication's overall reputability. **Reputability** refers to a source's standing and reputation as a respectable, reliable source of information. An established and well-known newspaper, such as the Globe and Mail or the New York Times, is more reputable than a college newspaper put out by comparatively inexperienced students. A website that is maintained by a well-known, respected organization and is regularly updated is more reputable than one created by an unknown author or group.

If you are using articles from scholarly journals, you can check databases that keep count of how many times each article has been cited in other articles. This can give you a rough indication of the article's quality or, at the very least, of its influence and reputation among other scholars.

## Checking for Biases and Hidden Agendas

Whenever you consult a source, always think carefully about the author's purpose in presenting the information. Few sources present facts completely objectively. In some cases, the source's content and tone are significantly influenced by biases or hidden agendas.

**Bias** refers to favouritism or prejudice toward a particular person or group. For instance, an author may be biased against a certain political party and present information in a way that subtly—or not so subtly—makes that organization look bad. Bias can lead an author to present facts selectively, edit quotations to misrepresent someone's words, and distort information.

**Hidden agendas** are goals that are not immediately obvious but influence how an author presents the facts. For instance, an article about the role of beef in a healthy diet would be questionable if it were written by a representative of the beef industry—or by the president of an animal rights organization. In both cases, the author would likely have a hidden agenda.

As Jorge conducted his research, he read several research studies in which scientists found significant benefits to following a low-carbohydrate diet. He also noticed that many studies were sponsored by a foundation associated with the author of a popular series of low-carbohydrate diet books. Jorge read these studies with a critical eye, knowing that a hidden agenda might be shaping the researchers' conclusions.

## Using Current Sources

Be sure to seek out sources that are current, or up to date. Depending on the topic, sources may become outdated relatively soon after publication, or they may remain useful for years. For instance, online social networking sites have evolved rapidly over the past few years. An article published in 2002 about this topic will not provide current information. On the other hand, a research paper on elementary education practices might refer to studies published decades ago by influential child psychologists.

When using websites for research, check to see when the site was last updated. Many sites publish this information on the homepage, and some, such as news sites, are updated daily or weekly. Many nonfunctioning links are a sign that a website is not regularly updated. Do not be afraid to ask your instructor for suggestions if you find that many of your most relevant sources are not especially reliable—or that the most reliable sources are not relevant.

## Evaluating Overall Quality by Asking Questions

When you evaluate a source, you will consider the criteria previously discussed as well as your overall impressions of its quality. Read carefully, and notice how well the author presents and supports his or her statements. Stay actively engaged—do not simply accept an author's words as truth. Ask questions

304 Chapter 7: Sources: Choosing the Right Ones

to determine each source's value. **Checklist 7.1** lists a series questions you should ask yourself as a critical reader.

## Checklist 7.1: Check Your Sources

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**H5P:** Check Your Sources

1. Is the type of source appropriate for my purpose? Is it a high-quality source or one that needs to be looked at more critically?

2. Can I establish that the author is credible and the publication is reputable?

3. Does the author support ideas with specific facts and details that are carefully documented?

4. Is the source of the author's information clear?

5. Does the source include any factual errors or instances of faulty logic?

6. Does the author leave out any information that I would expect to see in a discussion of this topic?

7. Do the author's conclusions logically follow from the evidence that is presented? Can I see how the author got from one point to another?

8. Is the writing clear and organized, and is it free from errors, clichés, and empty buzzwords? Is the tone objective, balanced, and reasonable?

9. Are there any obvious biases or agendas? Based on what I know about the author, are there likely to be any hidden agendas?

10. Is the source contradicted by information found in other sources?

## Writing at Work

The critical thinking skills you use to evaluate research sources as a student are equally valuable when you conduct research on the job. If you follow certain periodicals or websites, you have probably identified publications that consistently provide reliable information. Reading blogs and online discussion groups is a great way to identify new trends and hot topics in a particular field, but these sources should not be used for substantial research.

Self-Practice Exercise 7.5

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**H5P:** Using Search Engines

Use a search engine to conduct a web search on your topic. Refer to the tips provided earlier to help you streamline your search. Evaluate your search results critically based on the criteria you have learned. Identify and bookmark one or more websites that are reliable, reputable, and likely to be useful in your research.

It's really important to keep detailed notes of everything you find, both so you can find them later and so you can accurately cite your sources (and avoid accusations of plagiarism!). Make notes about anything relevant to your web searching time here.

## Managing Source Information

As you determine which sources you will rely on most, it is important to establish a system for keeping track of your sources and taking notes. There are several ways to go about it, and no one system is necessarily superior. What matters is that you keep materials in order; record bibliographical information you will need later; and take detailed, organized notes.

Bibliographic information is all the referencing information you need from all sources you consider using for your paper—think of this as your working references page. Any time you look at a source, you should make note of all the referencing information—you may later decide to change direction in your paper or simply choose not to use that source as you develop your paper, but if you do decide to use that source, you will have all the details you need when compiling your **references** page.

**Note:** Following the APA format, you need to submit a references page or reference list; you do not submit a bibliography because your references should only include the sources to which you directly referred or cited within your paper, not everything you looked at but did not use.

### Keeping Track of Your Sources

Think ahead to a moment a few weeks from now when you will have written your final research paper and are almost ready to submit it for a grade. There is just one task left: writing your list of sources.

As you begin typing your list, you realize you need to include the publication information for a book you cited frequently. Unfortunately, you already returned it to the library several days ago. You do not remember the URLs for some of the websites you used or the dates you accessed them—information

that also must be included in your reference page. With a sinking feeling, you realize that finding this information and preparing your references will require hours of work.

This stressful scenario can be avoided. Taking time to organize source information now will ensure that you are not scrambling to find it at the last minute. Throughout your research, record bibliographical information for each source as soon as you begin using it. You may use pen-and-paper methods, such as a notebook or note cards, or maintain an electronic list. (If you prefer the latter option, many office software packages include separate programs for recording bibliographic information.)

**Table 7.6: Details for Commonly Used Source Types** shows the specific details you should record. Use these details to develop a **working bibliography**—a preliminary list of sources that you will later use to develop the references section of your paper. You may wish to record information using the formatting system of the American Psychological Association (APA), which will save a step later on.

**Table 7.6 Details for Commonly Used Source Types**

| Source Type | Necessary Information |
|---|---|
| Book | Author(s), title and subtitle, publisher, city of publication, year of publication |
| Essay or article published in a book | Include all the information you would for any other book. Additionally, record the essay's or article's title, author(s), the pages on which it appears, and the name of the book's editor(s). |
| Periodical | Author(s), article title, publication title, date of publication, volume and issue number, and page numbers |
| Online source | Author(s) (if available), article or document title, organization that sponsors the site, database name (if applicable), date of publication, date you accessed the site, and URL |
| Interview | Name of person interviewed, method of communication, date of interview |

Self-Practice Exercise 7.6

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**H5P:** APA Style Practice

Thanks to the TRU Library's APA guide (https://libguides.tru.ca/apa) for the citations in this activity.

Put the words in the correct order to form a correct APA citation. You should definitely check your APA guide for reference as you work through this activity.

1. This is a government report.

   - Retrieved from
   - http
   - Statistics Canada.
   - Gross domestic product by industry, July 2013.

2. This is a book with two authors.

   - (2014).
   - &
   - Doughman, P
   - Climate change
   - MIT Press.
   - DiMento, J. C.

3. This is a journal article.

   - The International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity,
   - 118-128.
   - Active gaming in Dutch adolescents
   - Simons, M. ,
   - 9(1),
   - Slinger, J.
   - (2012).
   - https
   - Bernaards, C, &

4. This is a website.

   - (2018).
   - http
   - World Health Organization
   - Questions and answers on immunization and vaccine safety

5. This is a podcast.

   - http (2017, Oct 10).
   - Pagel, J.
   - CBC.
   - [Audio podcast].
   - (Producer).
   - These girls will stop at nothing to get their own hockey team

Tip: To make your working bibliography even more complete, you may wish to record additional details, such as a book's call number or contact information for a person you interviewed. That way, if you need to locate a source again, you will have all the information you need right at your fingertips. You may also wish to assign each source a code number to use when taking notes (1, 2, 3, or a similar system).

# Taking Notes Efficiently

Good researchers stay focused and organized as they gather information from sources. Before you begin taking notes, take a moment to step back and think about your goal as a researcher—to find information that will help you answer your research question. When you write your paper, you will present your conclusions about the topic supported by research. That goal will determine what information you record and how you organize it.

Writers sometimes get caught up in taking extensive notes, so much so that they lose sight of how their notes relate to the questions and ideas they started out with. Remember that you do not need to write down every detail from your reading. Focus on finding and recording details that will help you answer your research questions. The following strategies will help you take notes efficiently.

## Use Headings to Organize Ideas

Whether you use old-fashioned index cards or organize your notes using word processing software, record just one major point from each source at a time, and use a heading to summarize the information covered. Keep all your notes in one file, digital or otherwise. Doing so will help you identify connections between different pieces of information. It will also help you make connections between your notes and the research questions and subtopics you identified earlier.

## Know When to Summarize, Paraphrase, or Directly Quote a Source

Your notes will fall under three categories: summary notes, paraphrased information, and direct quotations from your sources. Effective researchers make choices about which is most appropriate for their purpose.

- **Summary notes** sum up the main ideas in a source in a few sentences or a short paragraph. A summary is considerably shorter than the original text and captures only the major ideas. Use summary notes when you do not need to record specific details, but you intend to refer to broad concepts the author discusses.
- **Paraphrased information** restates a fact or idea from a source using your own words and sentence structure.
- **Direct quotations** use the exact wording used by the original source and enclose the quoted material in quotation marks. It is a good strategy to copy direct quotations when an author expresses an idea in an especially lively or memorable way. However, do not rely exclusively on direct quotations in your note taking.

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**H5P:** Identifying Types of Note Taking

Match the correct label to each type of source.

1. "The only way to prevent an influenza outbreak is to maintain scrupulous hygiene." – Dr. Smarts, "The Best Article on Influenza"

2. In "The Best Article on Influenza," Smarts gives a good overview of the kinds of strategies that reduce the risk of outbreak; there are also a number of useful statistics offered.

3. Smarts prioritizes hygiene and the value of handwashing in his "The Best Article on Influenza."

**Label**

A. paraphrase

B. quotation

C. summary

Note: you should keep scrupulous note of the citations where you find your materials, especially when you paraphrase! It can be hard to find that material again.

**Answer Key**

1. B                    2. C                    3. A

Most of your notes should be paraphrased from the original source. Paraphrasing as you take notes is usually a better strategy than copying direct quotations because it forces you to think through the information in your source and understand it well enough to restate it. In short, it helps you stay engaged with the material instead of simply copying and pasting. Synthesizing will help you later when you begin planning and drafting your paper.

## Maintain Complete, Accurate Notes

Regardless of the format used, any notes you take should include enough information to help you organize ideas and locate them instantly in the original text if you need to review them. Make sure your notes include the following elements:

- Heading summing up the main topic covered
- Author's name, a source code, or an abbreviated source title
- Page number
- Full URL of any pages buried deep in a website

Throughout the process of taking notes, be scrupulous about correctly attributing each idea to its

source. Always include source information so you know exactly which ideas came from which sources. Use quotation marks to set off any words for phrases taken directly from the original text. If you add your own responses and ideas, make sure they are distinct from ideas you quoted or paraphrased.

Finally, make sure your notes accurately reflect the content of the original text. Make sure quoted material is copied verbatim. If you omit words from a quotation, use ellipses to show the omission and make sure the omission does not change the author's meaning. Paraphrase ideas carefully, and check your paraphrased notes against the original text to make sure that you have restated the author's ideas accurately in your own words.

## Use a System That Works for You

There are several formats you can use to take notes. No one technique is necessarily better than another; it is more important to choose a format you are comfortable using. Choosing the format that works best for you will ensure your notes are organized, complete, and accurate. Consider implementing one of these formats when you begin taking notes:

- Use index cards. This traditional format involves writing each note on a separate index card. It takes more time than copying and pasting into an electronic document, which encourages you to be selective in choosing which ideas to record. Recording notes on separate cards makes it easy to later organize your notes according to major topics. Some writers colour code their cards to make them still more organized.

- Use note-taking software. Word processing and office software packages often include different types of note-taking software. Although you may need to set aside some time to learn the software, this method combines the speed of typing with the same degree of organization associated with handwritten note cards.

- Maintain a research notebook. Instead of using index cards or electronic note cards, you may wish to keep a notebook or electronic folder, allotting a few pages (or one file) for each of your sources. This method makes it easy to create a separate column or section of the document where you add your responses to the information you encounter in your research.

- Annotate your sources. This method involves making handwritten notes in the margins of sources that you have printed or photocopied. If using electronic sources, you can make comments within the source document. For example, you might add comment boxes to a PDF version of an article. This method works best for experienced researchers who have already thought a great deal about the topic because it can be difficult to organize your notes later when starting your draft.

Choose one of the methods from the list to use for taking notes. Continue gathering sources and taking notes.

Key Takeaways

- A writer's use of primary and secondary sources is determined by the topic and purpose of the research. Sources used may include print sources, such as books and journals; electronic sources, such as websites and articles retrieved from databases; and human sources of information, such as interviews.

- Strategies that help writers locate sources efficiently include conducting effective keyword searches, understanding how to use online catalogues and databases, using strategies to narrow web search results, and consulting reference librarians.

- Writers evaluate sources based on how relevant they are to the research question and how reliable their content is.

- Skimming sources can help writers determine their relevance efficiently.

- Writers evaluate a source's reliability by asking questions about the type of source (including its audience and purpose); the author's credibility, the publication's reputability, the source's currency, and the overall quality of the writing, research, logic, and design in the source.

- In their notes, effective writers record organized, complete, accurate information. This includes bibliographic information about each source as well as summarized, paraphrased, or quoted information from the source.

## Journal Entry 6

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**H5P:** Question Prompts

- How difficult was it for you to identify then apply keywords when searching for a source? Why?

- How easy or difficult was it for you to find an academic article for your critique? Why?

- How do you feel after having completed your first essay for this course?

- Make some general points of how your writing has progressed.

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*https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=124#h5p-103 (https://opentextbc.ca/*
*writingforsuccessh5p/?p=124#h5p-103)*

# Chapter 8: Being Critical

You should have already chosen a source on which to base your critique due in week 10. In this chapter, you will develop your critical thinking and analysis skills through examining the second essay type to which you will be introduced: a critique. The chapter will also provide guiding questions to help you formulate the elements to include in your critique. The self-practice exercises will provide you opportunities to examine more in depth what critiquing entails, and you will have the opportunity to proceed through the stages to develop your own critique.

# 8.1 What Makes a Critique a Critique?

This section will introduce you to another essay form instructors often ask their students to produce: the critique.

A **critique** is a written work critically analyzing or evaluating another piece of writing; also known as a review or critical response.

## What Is a Critique?

When you see the word *critique,* the first thing you may think of is *to criticize*. In actuality, critiques do not need to look only at the negative aspects of a source; they can also focus on the positive components or even have a mix of the positive and negative elements. They are **critical response** papers analyzing and evaluating an **original source**, such as the academic journal article you are being asked to use for this assignment.

**Self-Practice Exercise 8.1**

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**H5P:**Reading Critical Response

Read the following short critique, and then come up with a list of elements you believe make this a critique as opposed to an expository paper.

Vetter and Perlstein's work on terrorism and its future is an excellent basis for evaluating views and attitudes

to terrorism before the tragic events of 9/11. Written in 1991, the book provides an objective (but more theoretical) view on what terrorism is, how it can be categorized, and to what ideology it can be linked. Perspectives on Terrorism is a multifaceted review of numerous factors that impact and influence the global development of terrorism; those studying sociology or criminal justice might find ample information regarding the ideological roots and typology of terrorism as a phenomenon and as a specific type of violent ideology that has gradually turned into a dominant force of political change.

Vetter and Perlstein (1991) begin their work with the words "it has almost become pro forma for writers on terrorism to begin by pointing out how hard it is to define the term terrorism." However, the authors do not waste their time trying to define what terrorism is; rather, they are trying to look at terrorism through the prism of its separate elements, and objectively evaluate the concept of public acceptability of terrorism as a notion. Trying to answer the two critical questions "why surrogate the war?" and "who sponsors terrorism?" Vetter and Perlstein (1991) evaluate terrorism as a unjustifiable method of violence for the sake of unachievable goals, tying the notion of terrorism to the notion of morality.

To define terrorism in its present form it is not enough to determine the roots and the consequences of particular terrorist act; nor is it enough to evaluate the roots and the social implications of particular behavioural characteristics beyond morality. On the contrary, it is essential to tie terrorism to particular political conditions, in which these terrorist acts take place. In other words, whether the specific political act is terrorist or non-terrorist depends on the thorough examination of the social factors beyond morality and law. In this context, even without an opportunity to find the most relevant definition of terrorism, the authors thoroughly analyze the most important factors and sociological perspectives of terrorism, including the notion of threat, violence, publicity, and fear.

Typology of terrorism is the integral component of our current understanding of what terrorism is, what form it may take, and how we can prepare ourselves to facing the challenges of terrorist threats. Vetter and Perlstein (1991) state that "finding similarities and differences among objects and events is the first step toward determining their composition, functions, and causes." Trying to evaluate the usefulness of various theoretical perspectives in terrorism, the authors offer a detailed review of psychological, sociological, and political elements that form several different typologies of terrorism. For example, Vetter and Perlstein (1991) refer to the psychiatrist Frederick Hacker, who classifies terrorists into crazies, criminals, and crusaders. Later throughout the book, Vetter and Perlstein provide a detailed analysis of both the criminal and the crazy types of terrorists, paying special attention to who crusaders are and what role they play in the development and expansion of contemporary terrorist ideology. Vetter and Perlstein recognize that it is almost impossible to encounter an ideal type of terrorist, but the basic knowledge of terrorist typology may shed the light onto the motivation and psychological mechanisms that push criminals (and particularly crusaders) to committing the acts of political violence.

Perspectives on Terrorism pays special attention to the politics of terrorism, and the role, which ideology plays in the development of terrorist attitudes in society. "Violence or terrorism can be used both by those who seek to change or destroy the existing government or social order and those who seek to maintain the status quo" (Vetter & Perlstein, 1991). In other words, the authors suggest that political ideology is integrally linked to the notion of terrorism. With ideology being the central element of political change, it necessarily impacts the quality of the political authority within the state; as a result, the image of terrorism is gradually transformed into a critical triangle with political authority, power, and violence at its ends. In their book, Vetter and Perlstein (1991) use this triangle as the basis for analyzing the political assumptions, which are usually made in terms of terrorism, as well as the extent to which political authority may make violence (and as a result, terrorism) legally permissible. The long sociological theme of terrorism that is stretched from the very beginning to the very end of the book makes it particularly useful to those who seek the roots of terrorism in the distorted political ideology and blame the state as the source and the reason of terrorist violence.

**Reference**

Vetter, H.J. & Perlstein, G.R. (1991). Perspectives on terrorism (Contemporary issues in crime and justice). Pacific Grove, CA, USA: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company.

Taken from: http://www.custom-essays.org/examples/
Perspectives_on_Terrorism_Essay_Vetter__Perlstein.html

List three to five elements you think make this a critique.

## How a Critique Is Different

A critique is different from an expository essay which is, as you have learned, a discussion revolving around a topic with multiple sources to support the discussion points. As you can see in **Self–Practice Exercise 8.1**, depending on the type of critique you are writing, your reference page could include one source only. However, as you may discuss topical ideas within the original source, you may also want to include secondary sources to which you can compare and contrast the original source's ideas, but you need to always connect your discussion points back to the original source. **Figure 8.1: Critiquing versus Other Essay Forms** shows visual representations of what a critique structure could look in comparison to another essay, such as one that is expository or persuasive in purpose.
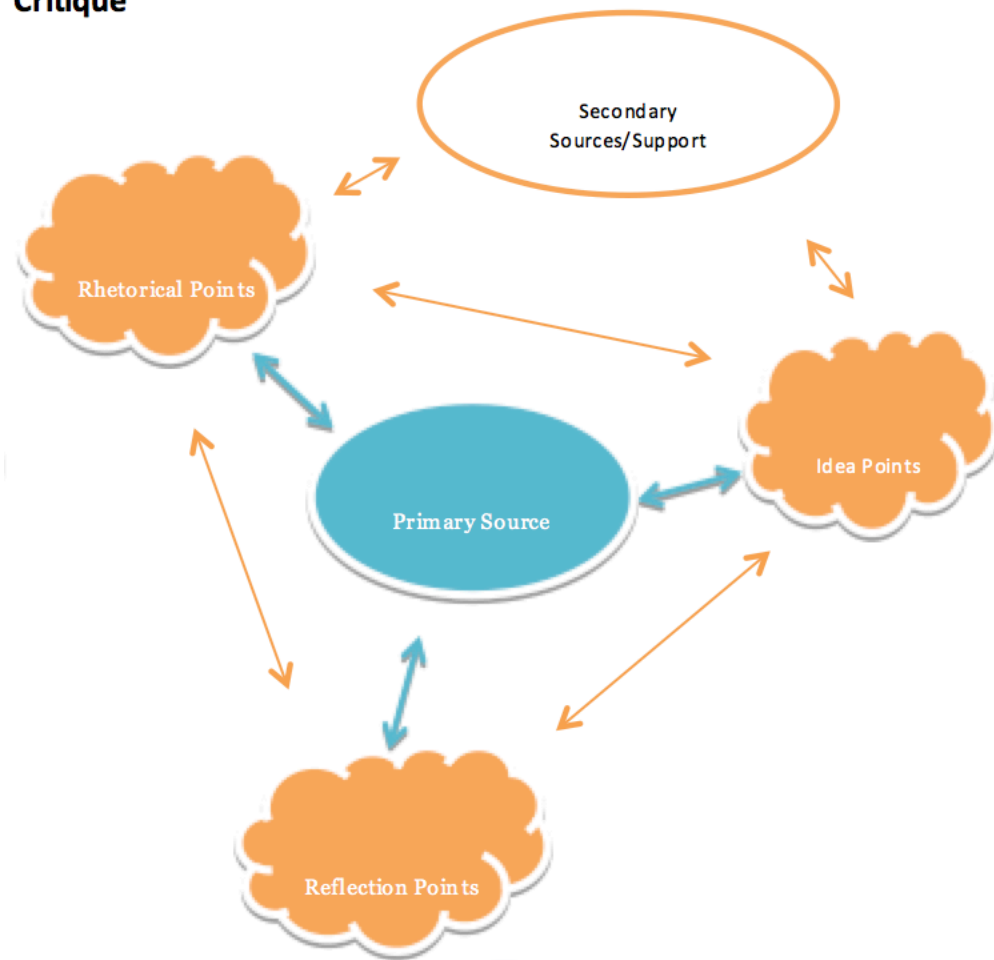
**Critique**



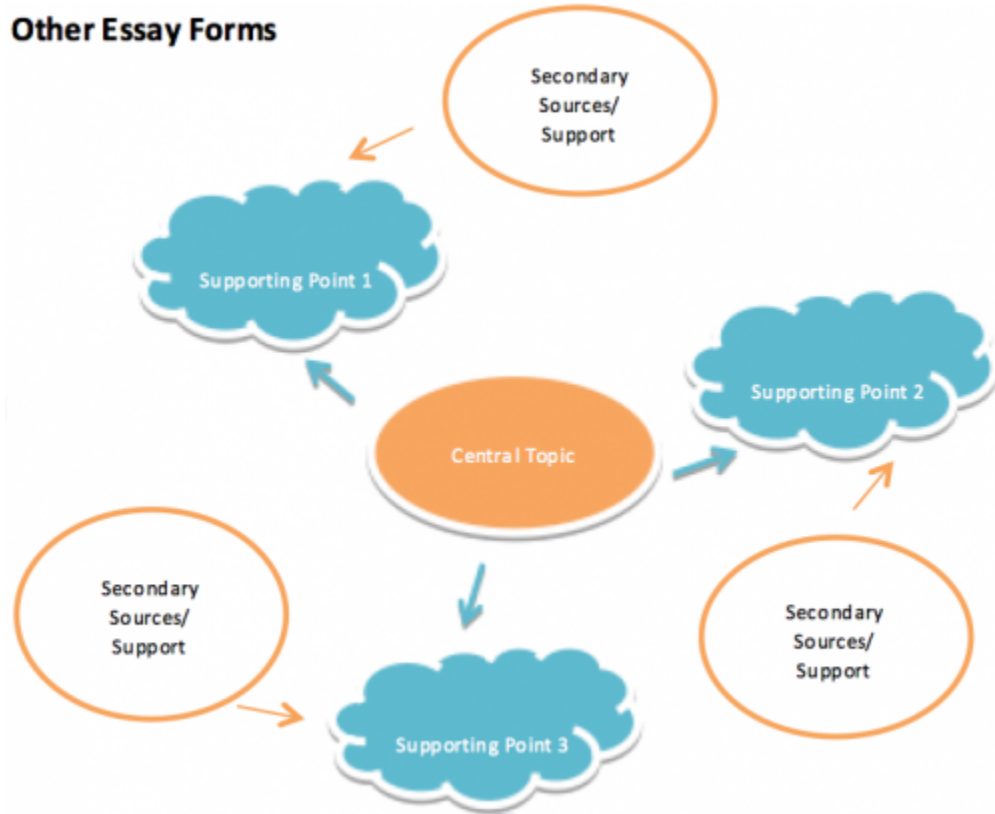*Figure 8.1 Critiquing Essay*

**Other Essay Forms**



*Figure 8.2 Other Essay Forms*

If you look at the mind map for the critique, you can see how all of the discussion points stem from and relate back to the original article and how all of the discussion points can be interconnected. Also, the bubble labelled Secondary Sources/Support shows you can integrate secondary sources to compare and contrast when discussing either rhetorical or idea points. In the second diagram, you can see that the supporting ideas relate to the central topic, but they are extensions of the topic each with their own supporting forms of evidence. There is less emphasis placed on synthesis of ideas, although this is something you can still do when composing this type of essay.

## The Purpose of Critiquing

In a post-secondary environment, your instructors will expect you to demonstrate critical thinking skills that go beyond simply taking another person's ideas and spitting out facts. They will want you to show your ability to assess and analyze any type of information you use; they will also want to see that you have used sources to develop ideas of your own. Critiquing, or critical analysis, demonstrates you are able to connect ideas, arrive at your own conclusions, and develop new directions for discussion. You are also showing you have strong background knowledge on the topic in order to provide feedback on another person's discussion on the issue.

Critical analysis appears in many forms in the academic world. It is present when you select appropriate sources for your support; you practise it when you choose what information from those sources to include as your evidence; you demonstrate it when you start breaking down your topic to develop discussion points. Very importantly, you also use critical analysis or thinking when you

synthesize, or blend, your ideas with those of experts. This means you go beyond a statement of facts and take a stance on a topic. In this case of a critique, you not only state your view on an idea or issue but also on one core source of information on that topic: you insert your ideas into the text's conversation.

## Elements of a Critique

Often people go online for to read reviews of services or products. They sometimes make personal choices based on those reviews, such as what movie to go to or which restaurant to eat at. When you ask for a recommendation, the person you are asking will usually give you a brief summary of the experience then break his or her opinion down into smaller aspects—good and bad. For example, imagine you want to visit a new restaurant, and you ask your friend to recommend a place. Here is a sample response:

There is an amazing Japanese restaurant called Mega Sushi at the corner of Main and 12th. The food, atmosphere, and service are great. The food is always excellent, and they have a lot of original creations or spins on traditional Japanese food, but it still tastes authentic. The ingredients are always incredibly fresh, and you never have to worry about ordering the sashimi. The decor is also very authentic and classic, and the entire place is incredibly clean.

The service is generally very good—they even bring you a free sample roll while you wait for your food—but it can be a little slow during the dinner rush because it is such a popular place. Also, the prices are a little high because an average roll costs $15, but for the amazing food you get, it is totally worth it! I love this place!

When you break this example into sections, you can see the first and second sentences give the reviewer's general opinion of the restaurant; they also summarize the main components the reviewer will cover. The review is then broken into smaller categories or points. Notice that not all the points covered are positive: while the food and atmosphere are good, the service has both positive and negative aspects but is overall good. Also, the prices are high, but the writer states that people who eat there get good value for their money. Providing a generalized description first, the reviewer introduced the topic to the audience; she then analyzed individual aspects or components of the experience with examples to help convince the audience of her perspective. Not everyone may have the same positive experience, of course. What if it was someone's first time at this particular restaurant, and she arrived during the dinner rush feeling very hungry and had to wait a long time for a table? Not knowing how good the food is and that it is worth the wait, she may just leave, so her general impression of the restaurant would probably not be favourable. Whether the experience would be positive or negative would depend on an individual's personal experience and situation. The same is true for any critique. No two people will have exactly the same response to a source because of who they are, the time, and their prior experiences. When critiquing, you are responding to anything that sparks a response in *you* when you are reading a source. When reading your article, pay close attention to any time you have to reread a sentence or paragraph. Make note of this; at the time you may not know why you have an issue with that section. Just realize that there was a point where you had to stop and make a notation of some sort on the paper. Once you have finished reading, you can go back and think about what the issue actually was. Maybe the vocabulary was difficult; maybe the author's grammar was awkward and confusing; maybe the ideas did not make sense how they were organized; maybe you completely

disagreed with the idea the author presented. Also, maybe something you read really sparked your interest, and you have the same opinion as the author, or perhaps the vocabulary was academic but not overly challenging where you would need to use a dictionary (the guiding questions for each critique form provided below will help you with this). All of these responses are valid and are things you can write about in your critique. Any critique, no matter if it is of a book, an article, or a movie, needs to contain the following elements:

- A thesis: usually a general view of a source
  - Example: In Smith's (2009) article, he effectively argues his case for the reinstatement of capital punishment in Canada.
- A summary: highlighting the main points presented
  - This would be the same as if you were writing a summary of any source you read.
- Critiquing points: elements the reader (you) have a reaction to when reading the source
  - You will decide on these points based on your reactions and personal preferences using the guiding questions for each of the forms below as suggestions.

# 8.2 Getting Started on Your Critique

Learning Objectives

- Compose a concise summary of your article

## Before You Begin Critiquing

As with any source you examine, you need to make sure you have a solid grasp on the ideas presented by the author. Before you start analyzing your source, it is helpful to compose a summary to confirm you understand what the source is all about and that you do not leave out any important points. Remember that if your audience does not have a strong understanding of the overall picture of the source, he or she may have difficulty following your critique.

Often what we share verbally when summarizing a source highlights the main points of our impression of the material; we capture all the necessary points, but we do so concisely. For **Self-Practice Exercise 8.2**, you will need to work with a partner to compose a succinct summary of your article.

Self-Practice Exercise 8.2

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**H5P:** Critique Pre-Writing

For this exercise, you will spend some time ensuring that you really understand the article you intend to work with. It might feel repetitive, but ensuring you have a good handle on the content is critical to writing a good critique.

For this exercise, you will need the article you intend to use for your critique and your pre-writing exercises from chapter 7.

- Briefly make note of any area you struggle with or have a reaction to. (This will help you later.)

Make notes on what you think the main ideas are.

- Compose a short paragraph summarizing your article (75 to 100 words).

**Peer Review**

For this exercise, you will work with a partner.

If you aren't able to work with a classmate, you can also bounce ideas off a friend or family member and get them to help you talk through some of the same question prompts below.

- Do not refer to your summary for this next part. Verbally summarize your article for your partner in 30 to 60 seconds.
- Your partner will need to take very brief notes of the verbal summary you give.
- Switch roles. Take notes for your partner in the space below.

Once you have both summarized verbally and taken notes for each other, show the summary paragraph you wrote in Part A to your partner.

Read the summary paragraph and compare it to the notes you took from the verbal summary.

Prepare feedback based on the following questions.

- What were the differences between the verbal and written summaries?
- Did the written summary contain anything unnecessary or miss anything important?
- Which one was organized more logically?

Share your thoughts verbally with your partner, and be sure to ask questions to clarify your partner's notes for you, too.

If it's helpful, you can skip ahead to the document download page to export a version of the document so far and send it over to them.

**Reflection**

Reflect on what you learned from working with your partner. Are there discrepancies in or issues with your summary? Revise your summary so you will have a composed paragraph you can insert into your critique later.

Now, let's establish a working thesis for this essay. Remember, your thesis isn't set in stone — we just need something we can work with for now. Consider the sample thesis above:

- In Smith's (2009) article, he effectively argues his case for the reinstatement of capital punishment in Canada.

This suggests you thesis should reference the article (Smith), say what it is about (bringing back capital punishment in Canada), and make a judgement about it ("effectively argues his case").

Can you use that formula to establish a working thesis for this essay?

Later, you will need to decide on one of two formulas to follow when composing your critique. If you choose to use Formula 1, you will need to include an independent summary paragraph, which you have now already completed and may only require a little fine tuning. If you choose Formula 2, you will not

include the summary as its own paragraph, but you will need to break it apart when you introduce the points you are going to discuss within the critique.

The following sections will discuss the different critiquing forms and what you can look for when deciding what points you would like to discuss in your critique.

# 8.3 Critiquing Forms and Formulas

## Critiquing Forms

Again, critiquing does not mean you are looking only for the negative points in a source; you can also discuss elements you like or agree with in the article. Also, you may generally get a positive impression from the source but have some issues with some aspects for which you can provide constructive criticism—perhaps what the author could have done better, in your opinion, to make a stronger and more effective impact. There are four critiquing forms on which you can structure your analysis of a source. These are: Rhetorical Ideas Reflection Blended The critiquing elements you will be required to apply to each assignment will vary depending on your instructor's directions, the purpose of the assignment, and the writer (you). In some cases, your instructor will want to see very little of your own voice in the paper, so you will want to avoid using personal reflection; on the other hand, some instructors will only want to see how your personal experiences connect to the content. You will need to confirm with your instructor what his or her preferences and expectations are. For this course, you need to produce a **blended critique**, which means you will need to include at least one rhetorical, one idea, and one reflective discussion. **Rhetorical** We have discussed previously the use of rhetorical questions**,** the type of questions meant to engage the reader in the content. Here, **rhetorical** refers to the technique or way of using the questions. It relates to the construction or mechanics of how the question is used. The term **rhetorical** refers to the *way a source is constructed and organized* and *whichwriting techniques are used*. A rhetorical critique will also evaluate how effectively an author has achieved his or her purpose or intended goals. If the writer intended to convince or persuade the reader to a particular point of view, did he or she use credible sources to support the ideas or use primarily newspapers and blogs? We have seen, and will do so again later, that the types of evidence can affect how convincing the argument becomes. Furthermore, if the writer has only has presented a limited discussion without much evidence, and the discussion is mostly opinion based, will the reader be convinced? Probably not. Conversely, if the author considered all points of view in the discussion and provided suitable, trustworthy evidence, the reader will more likely be convinced, and the writer will have successfully achieved the purpose. Often when trying to come up with a thesis statement,

considering all points of view is where you should probably start because it will demonstrate to the reader of your critique what your overall impression was when you examined the original source. If you look back at the sample critique in **Self–Practice Exercise 8.1**, you'll see that the thesis is the first sentence:

Vetter and Perlstein's work on terrorism and its future is an excellent basis **for evaluating views and attitudes to terrorism before the tragic events of 9/11**.

This statement outlines the authors' purpose (bold) and the critique writer's general opinion of the work (underlined). From the exercise you completed earlier, you saw not everything in the critique was positive; however, this first sentence provides the overall impression the critique author had. Just as with any other thesis, the content in the rest of the essay will connect back to this thesis, saying how it supports or goes against the authors' purpose. Once you choose an article that meets the required criteria, scan the article and make note of some answers to the guiding questions below. You can then choose three to four of the questions/answers you feel you can support and discuss most as your essay points.

### Guiding Questions: Rhetorical

Focusing on the rhetorical elements when critiquing means you are looking at the construction elements of a source. Use the following questions as a reference point when you are going through your article to provide you with some focus and help you generate ideas for your paper (not all may be relevant to your article).

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**H5P:** Guiding Questions: Rhetorical

Make brief, 1-2 sentence notes or observations for each question. You'll be able to dig deeper into one or two in the next exercise.

- What is the author's purpose?
- For whom is the author writing? Who is the audience?
- What type of language does the author use? Technical? Straightforward? Too informal?
- How appropriate is the language, sentence structure, and complexity for the intended audience?

- What is the genre, and how has it impacted the writing style?
- How logical/reasonable is the argument?
- What kind of evidence does the author use to support? Is it reputable, relevant, or current, and is there enough?
- To what degree did the author engage or interest the reader in the topic?
- How much bias does the author show, or is the argument presenting multiple points of view?
- How convinced are you by the presentation of ideas?
- Is there anything the author could have done differently to convince you more completely?
- Is there anything about the technical writing style you did or did not like?
- How was the source organized? How may that affect the reader?

A note of warning when using these questions: you should *not* use more than two of these in your short critique. For this assignment, choose only one or two to develop thoroughly. If you include brief answers to all of the questions, you will have not have space to develop your ideas or show you really engaged with the content. By choosing just one or two, you will have the opportunity to really explain the impact and significance of what you have decided to discuss, showing to your audience you have thoroughly considered the meaning and importance of your points and demonstrating excellent critical analysis skills.

Self-Practice Exercise 8.3

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**H5P:** Rhetorical Questions

Here we begin to search for what you want to say about your article. In Self-Practice Exercise 8.1, you read your article and were asked to make notations wherever you got caught up by something within the source. Now, look back at those notations, decide which if any relate to the rhetorical guiding questions above. If none seem relevant, choose no more than three of the prompts above — the ones you have the most to say about! — to elaborate upon further.

- Answer for prompt #1.
- Answer for prompt #2.
- Answer for prompt #3.

**Ideas:** When discussing the ideas of a source, you are examining the topic presented in the source. You explore how the author's ideas mesh with your own and state whether you agree or disagree; you are essentially joining the discussion on that topic. You may find you agree with some parts of the discussion but not others, or you may completely agree or disagree, or you may think the author has great points but does not develop them adequately. Also, you may want to provide differing points of view from other sources to show you have not just accepted what the first author wrote; you have explored the topic further and will present a thorough discussion in your own critique.

## Guiding Questions: Ideas

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**H5P:** Guiding Questions: Ideas

Make brief, 1-2 sentence notes or observations for each question. You'll be able to dig deeper into one or two in the next exercise.

- On which points do I agree or disagree with the author? (Remember, you do not always have to only agree or disagree on all points).
- What new ideas has the author introduced on the topic? How has the author contributed to the field?
- What could the author have done differently to provide a stronger discussion?
- How narrow or broad was the author's discussion? Did the author consider multiple points of view? Is there anything the author overlooked?
- How do other experts approach a discussion on this topic?

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**H5P:** Ideas Questions

Here we continue our search for what you want to say about your article. In Self-Practice Exercise 8.1, you read your article and were asked to make notations wherever you got caught up by something within the source. Now, look back at those notations, decide which if any relate to the ideas guiding questions above, and use the space below to explore. If none seem relevant, choose no more than three of the prompts above — the ones you have the most to say about! — to elaborate upon further.

- Answer for prompt #1.
- Answer for prompt #2.
- Answer for prompt #3.

**Reflection:** By providing a personal reflection on the source, you are being introspective and showing you have thought about how the source affects you personally and connects to your personal experiences, beliefs, and values. In this case, you can give personal observations and experiences as your own forms of supporting evidence; however, you do not want your paper to solely use this type of support because you need more factual evidence to convince your reader. Also, remember to check with your instructor if this is a form you are required to use.

## Guiding Questions: Reflection

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**H5P:** Guiding Questions: Reflection

Make brief, 1-2 sentence notes or observations for each question. You'll be able to dig deeper into one or two in the next exercise.

- How does this source connect to your personal experiences or memories?
- What challenges does the source raise when you consider your own personal values and beliefs?
- How does the source confirm your personal values and beliefs?
- What new ideas or insight did the source raise for you?
- How did the source inspire you to do more research on the topic?

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Self-Practice Exercise 8.5

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**H5P:** Reflection Questions

**Ideas Questions**

This is the last prewriting step in the search for what you want to say about your article. In Self-Practice Exercise 8.1, you read your article and were asked to make notations wherever you got caught up by something within the source. Now, look back at those notations, decide which if any relate to the ideas guiding questions above, and use the space below to explore. If none seem relevant, choose no more than three of the prompts above — the ones you have the most to say about! — to elaborate upon further.

- Answer for prompt #1.
- Answer for prompt #2.
- Answer for prompt #3.

**Blended:**  In a blended form, your critique pretty much evolves however you want it to. You can take certain elements from each of the three previous forms: whichever questions are the easiest for you to discuss and are maybe the most interesting for you. This shows how paying attention to your reactions when you initially read the source is helpful; once you have made note of where and what you reacted to, you can go back each list of guiding questions and decide which best relate to each of your notations. There are no guiding questions for the blended form because you use you mix and match the questions already provided in the earlier sections. In a blended critique, you demonstrate an extremely

high level of critical thinking ability because you are not only synthesize your ideas with external sources, you also connect personally to one source, external sources, *and* different forms or aspects of analyzing written works.

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Self-Practice Exercise 8.6

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**H5P:**Narrowing Your Focus

Now it's time to narrow your focus!

Look back at your work for 8.3, 8.4, and 8.5 and choose one prompt from each section that you think you have the strongest argument for. These will make up the core of your essay. Dig deeper into your thoughts below.

- Prompt to pursue for your draft #1 (rhetorical).
- Prompt to pursue for your draft #2 (ideas).
- Prompt to pursue for your draft #3 (reflection).
- Any other prompts you think you might also like to pursue?

Now, collaborate with a classmate. Share your points and how you would expand on them. Ask your partner for any other ways he or she thinks you could expand on those points.

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# Blended Critique: Two Formulas

Once you have chosen a source and used the guiding questions to help generate points to discuss in your critique, you will need to decide how to best organize your ideas. There are two formulas you can apply as a framework when organizing your critique ideas. Remember that although the formulas below show each section as an individual paragraph, you may actually need to create more than one paragraph to fully develop your ideas.

### Formula 1

Organizing your critique following this model is fairly straightforward as there is not much overlap between the sections. You may want to choose this formula if you are feeling a little unsure of how to organize your ideas and prefer a more guided structure.

1. Introduction

- ◦ Attention getter

- ◦ Background

- ◦ Thesis + author's last name, publication date, and title of source

- ◦ Signposts (including that the next paragraph will be a summary)

2. Summary

- ◦ Restate author's name, publication date, and title of source (provides a citation for the paragraph).

- ◦ This needs to be brief and include only the points significant to your later discussion.

- ◦ If you include too much here, you may end up repeating yourself later.

3. Rhetorical

- ◦ Give topic sentence explain this paragraph/section will cover rhetorical points

- ◦ State point

- ◦ Give explanations

- ◦ Give examples and make connections relating directly back to section(s) of original source + citations

- ◦ Provide concluding statement summarizing rhetorical element discussion

4. Ideas

- ◦ Give topic sentence explain this paragraph/section will cover idea points

- ◦ State point

- ◦ Give explanations

- ◦ Give examples and make connections relating directly back to section(s) of original source + citations

- ◦ Provide concluding statement summarizing idea or topic element discussion

5. Reflection

- ◦ Give topic sentence explain this paragraph/section will cover reflection points

- ◦ State point

- ◦ Give explanations

- ◦ Give examples and make connections relating directly back to section(s) of original source + citations

- ◦ Provide concluding statement summarizing reflection element discussion

6. Conclusion

- ◦ Restate author's last name, publication date, and source's title
- ◦ Summarize your discussion points
- ◦ Restate your thesis

## Formula 2

This model is a little more challenging to stay organized and to not go off on a tangent when you are critiquing; however, it allows you to have much more freedom in how you piece your ideas together. When you use this formula, it is important to remember to keep referring to the outline you created before writing and to thoroughly develop ideas by connecting one critiquing form to another. This model differs from Formula 1 because the summary is briefly included in the introduction section, and the discussion points are not divided by critiquing points but rather by topic. That is, multiple critiquing forms are used to develop one topic point. Because this formula is a little more complicated to explain, an example outline is provided for you after the template.

1. Introduction

   - ◦ Attention getter
   - ◦ Thesis + author's last name, publication date, and title of source
   - ◦ Background (this includes the briefest of summaries of the source: one to two sentences only)
   - ◦ Signposts

2. Point 1: A

   - ◦ Choose one topic to focus on using the guiding questions (one of three forms)
   - ◦ Give a topic sentence introducing the point
   - ◦ Restate author's name, publication date, and title of source (provides a citation for the paragraph)
   - ◦ Develop point making connections relating directly back to section(s) of original source + citations
   - ◦ Provide brief concluding sentence for paragraph

3. Point 1: B

   - ◦ Give topic sentence explaining that this paragraph/section connects to or expands on previous paragraph (different form used in previous paragraph)
   - ◦ Restate author's name and publication date (provides a citation for the paragraph)
   - ◦ Develop point making connections relating directly back to section(s) of original source + citations and to previous paragraph
   - ◦ Provide concluding statement summarizing entire discussion of point 1

4. Point 2: A

   ◦ Choose one topic to focus on using the guiding questions (one of three forms)

   ◦ Give a topic sentence introducing the point

   ◦ Restate author's name and publication date (provides a citation for the paragraph)

   ◦ Develop point making connections relating directly back to section(s) of original source + citations

   ◦ Provide brief concluding sentence for paragraph

5. Point 2: B

   ◦ Give topic sentence explaining this paragraph/section connects to or expands on previous paragraph (different form used in previous paragraph)

   ◦ Restate author's name and publication date (provides a citation for the paragraph)

   ◦ Develop point making connections relating directly back to section(s) of original source + citations and to previous paragraph

   ◦ Provide concluding statement summarizing entire discussion of point 2

6. Conclusion

   ◦ Restate author's last name, publication date, and source's title

   ◦ Restate your thesis

   ◦ Summarize your discussion points

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**Formula 2: Example**

1. Introduction

   ◦ Attention getter

   ◦ Thesis + author's last name, publication date, and title of source

   ◦ Background (this includes the briefest of summaries of the source: one-two sentences only)

   ◦ Signposts

2. Point 1: Language + Audience (Rhetorical)

   ◦ Restate author's name, publication date, and title of source (provides a citation for the paragraph)

   ◦ Give a topic sentence introducing the point

   ◦ Develop and explain complexity of language + perhaps: the language is too difficult

for the average reader—forcing audience to have to constantly look up words in dictionary

- Explain impact = distracting + annoying
- Use specific examples from source (with citations)

3. Point 1: Language + Audience (Reflection)

- Give topic sentence explaining this paragraph/section relates to previous paragraph
- Explain whether or not you are member of intended audience—know this from impact language had on you personally
- Had to look up words; give examples (with citations)
- Could not understand author's point; give examples (with citations)
- Clearly not part of target audience
- Concluding statement summarizing point discussion from both paragraphs

4. Point 2: Topic: Capital punishment (Ideas)

- Give topic sentence explaining this paragraph/section will cover idea point
- State point
- Give explanations
- Give examples relating directly back to section(s) of original source

5. Point 2: Topic: Capital punishment (Reflection)

1. Give topic sentence explaining this paragraph/section will cover reflection point in relation to your own point of view—maybe personal experience—and topic sentence needs to connect this to previous paragraph
2. State point
3. Give explanations
4. Give examples relating directly back to section(s) of original source
5. Concluding statement summarizing point discussion from both paragraphs

6. Conclusion

1. Restate author's last name, publication date, and source's title
2. Summarize your discussion points
3. Restate your thesis

Hopefully this example helps you to see how Formula 2 allows a lot more flexibility in organizing the discussion points. You can probably also see how easy it would be for the writer to get off topic. The key is to connect the ideas together. This formula definitely shows a greater complexity of thought development and synthesis of ideas, both of which your instructor will appreciate. However, you need

to make sure you have a solid formal sentence outline before you begin the writing process, or you may confuse your reader too much for him or her to follow your development.

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**Self-Practice Exercise 8.7**

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**H5P:** Topic Outline

Now let's get your essay outlined!

First, choose whether you are going to use Formula 1 or Formula 2. Feel free to use the sample outlines to model your work.

Next, decide which points you want to develop in your Critique. 3-4 points is a good number.

When you're ready, draft your Topic Outline (the point form one) below.

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**Self-Practice Exercise 8.8**

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**H5P:** Sentence Outline

When you're ready, revisit your outline from the last Self-Practice Exercise and expand it into a Sentence Outline.

If you have chosen to use Formula 1, you can insert the summary you composed in Self-Practice Exercises 8.2.If you have chosen to use Formula 2, you will need to separate the summary you composed in Self -Practice Exercises 8.2 into topical discussion points for each paragraph. You will then use these separate points to provide context for each discussion point.

Remember to start integrating specific examples from your source. Make sure you note the page numbers for later when you need to add citations (you will learn this next week).

When you're ready, draft your Sentence Outline (the more detailed one) below.

### Essay 2: Critique (15%)

**Part A**

Choose an article 5 to 10 pages long on which you will base a blended critical discussion. You must have your article approved by week 7 (which you have already done). You will also need to compose a paragraph (50 to 100 words) outlining what you will discuss in your critique.

**Part B**

After you have your article approved by your instructor (week 7), compose a critical analysis/response paper based around a discussion of one external source.

You will need to apply a blended critiquing structure including at least one point of discussion for each of the three critiquing forms: rhetorical, ideas, and reflection.

You will need to follow one of the two formulas for your critique organization.

Your critique will need to be 750 to 900 words in length; the length of your paper often depends on the length of your original article.

You must include a reference page containing an entry for:

Your original source

2 or 3 supplemental sources used to support your ideas or to provide background information.

You must also include citation information whenever you use ideas from any source, including when you refer to your original source.

Use information in the JIBC APA Style Guide as a resource for your citations and referencing.

You need to submit this assignment to your instructor for marking in week 10. (15%)

### Journal Entry 7

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**H5P:** Question Prompts

- Which type of critiquing did you find the easiest? Why?
- Which type did you find the most challenging? Why?
- Why have you chosen to follow either Formula 1 or 2?
- What do think will be the easiest/most challenging things you will encounter when you start composing your critique draft?

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# Chapter 9: Citations and Referencing

# 9.1 Supporting Your Ideas

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Learning Objectives

- Evaluate when to use primary or secondary sources for support
- Explain the two forms of plagiarism and how to avoid them
- Explain the importance of academic integrity and the potential consequences of not abiding by this

</div>

In this chapter you are going to learn more about compiling references and citations. You will also learn strategies for handling some of the more challenging aspects of writing a research paper, such as integrating material from your sources, citing information correctly, and avoiding any misuse of your sources. The first section of this chapter will introduce you to broad concepts associated with adding support to your ideas and providing documentation—citations and references—when you use sources in your papers.

## Using Primary and Secondary Research

As you write your draft, be mindful of how you are using primary and secondary source material to support your points. Recall that primary sources present firsthand information. Secondary sources are one step removed from primary sources. They present a writer's analysis or interpretation of primary source materials. How you balance primary and secondary source material in your paper will depend on the topic and assignment.

## Using Primary Sources Effectively

Some types of research papers must use primary sources extensively to achieve their purpose. Any paper that analyzes a primary text or presents the writer's own experimental research falls in this category. Here are a few examples:

- A paper for a literature course analyzing several poems by Emily Dickinson
- A paper for a political science course comparing televised speeches delivered by two candidates for prime minister
- A paper for a communications course discussing gender bias in television commercials
- A paper for a business administration course that discusses the results of a survey the writer

> conducted with local businesses to gather information about their work from home and flextime policies

- A paper for an elementary education course that discusses the results of an experiment the writer conducted to compare the effectiveness of two different methods of mathematics instruction

For these types of papers, primary research is the main focus. If you are writing about a work (including non-print works, such as a movie or a painting), it is crucial to gather information and ideas from the original work, rather than rely solely on others' interpretations. And, of course, if you take the time to design and conduct your own field research, such as a survey, a series of interviews, or an experiment, you will want to discuss it in detail. For example, the interviews may provide interesting responses that you want to share with your reader.

## Using Secondary Sources Effectively

For some assignments, it makes sense to rely more on secondary sources than primary sources. If you are not analyzing a text or conducting your own field research, you will need to use secondary sources extensively.

As much as possible, use secondary sources that are closely linked to primary research, such as a journal article presenting the results of the authors' scientific study or a book that cites interviews and case studies. These sources are more reliable and add more value to your paper than sources that are further removed from primary research. For instance, a popular magazine article on junk food addiction might be several steps removed from the original scientific study on which it is loosely based. As a result, the article may distort, sensationalize, or misinterpret the scientists' findings.

Even if your paper is largely based on primary sources, you may use secondary sources to develop your ideas. For instance, an analysis of Alfred Hitchcock's films would focus on the films themselves as a primary source, but might also cite commentary from critics. A paper that presents an original experiment would include some discussion of similar prior research in the field.

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**H5P:** Primary vs. Secondary Sources

For each of the following sources, indicate whether it is a primary or secondary source.

1. Original medical research into the effects of a new pharmaceutical

2. A review of all research published in the last ten years on vehicle emissions

3. A magazine article that profiles five historians of the civil war

4. A memoir written by a retired fighter pilot

5. A copy of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

**Answer Key**

1. primary                        4. primary

2. secondary                      5. primary

3. secondary

Jorge, who is preparing his essay on low-carbohydrate diets, knew he did not have the time, resources, or experience needed to conduct original experimental research for his paper. Because he was relying on secondary sources to support his ideas, he made a point of citing sources that were not far removed from primary research.

Tip: Some sources could be considered primary or secondary sources, depending on the writer's purpose for using them. For instance, if a writer's purpose is to inform readers about how the American No Child Left Behind legislation has affected elementary education in the United States, a *Time* magazine article on the subject would be a secondary source. However, suppose the writer's purpose is to analyze how the news media has portrayed the effects of the No Child Left Behind legislation. In that case, articles about the legislation in news magazines like *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *US News & World Report* would be primary sources. They provide firsthand examples of the media coverage the writer is analyzing.

# Avoiding Plagiarism

Your research paper presents your thinking about a topic, supported and developed by other people's ideas and information. It is crucial to always distinguish between the two—as you conduct research, as you plan your paper, and as you write. Failure to do so can lead to plagiarism.

### Intentional and Accidental Plagiarism

**Plagiarism** is the act of misrepresenting someone else's work as your own. Sometimes a writer plagiarizes work on purpose—for instance, by copying and pasting or purchasing an essay from a website and submitting it as original course work. This often happens because the person has not

managed his or her time and has left the paper to the last minute or has struggled with the writing process or the topic. Any of these can lead to desperation and cause the writer to just take someone else's ideas and take credit for them.

In other cases, a writer may commit accidental plagiarism due to carelessness, haste, or misunderstanding. For instance, a writer may be unable to provide a complete, accurate citation because of neglecting to record bibliographical information. A writer may cut and paste a passage from a website into her paper and later forget where the material came from. A writer who procrastinates may rush through a draft, which easily leads to sloppy paraphrasing and inaccurate quotations. Any of these actions can create the appearance of plagiarism and lead to negative consequences.

Carefully organizing your time and notes is the best guard against these forms of plagiarism. Maintain a detailed working reference list and thorough notes throughout the research process. Check original sources again to clear up any uncertainties. Allow plenty of time for writing your draft so there is no temptation to cut corners.

To avoid unintentional/accidental plagiarism, follow these guidelines:

- Understand what types of information must be cited.

- Understand what constitutes fair dealing of a source.

- Keep source materials and notes carefully organized.

- Follow guidelines for summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting sources.

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**H5P:** Plagiarism

1. Jane read three articles late last night. She includes some details from them in her essay, but she can't remember which information came from which article. She includes the article information generally at the end of her essay to be safe.

   A. plagiarism

   B. not plagiarism

2. Eloise is stressed out and doesn't know where to start with her paper. She finds one online that looks a lot like the topic she is supposed to write about. She gathers some ideas from it, and sets about writing her own paper. Some of the main points she examines were in

the paper she found online. She doesn't disclose that in her References list.

    A.  plagiarism

    B.  not plagiarism

3. Lamar feels in over his head about his topic. He knows his instructor doesn't like Wikipedia, but he reads its article on his topic to get an overview. When he does, he finds lots of interesting articles from reputable sources in the References section. He starts looking them up, and he's suddenly really excited as he learns about his topic more deeply.

    A.  plagiarism

    B.  not plagiarism

**Answer Key**

  1.  A                       2.  A                       3.  B

## Academic Integrity

The concepts and strategies discussed in this section connect to a larger issue—academic integrity. You maintain your integrity as a member of an academic community by representing your work and others' work honestly and by using other people's work only in legitimately accepted ways. It is a point of honour taken seriously in every academic discipline and career field.

Academic integrity violations have serious educational and professional consequences. Even when cheating and plagiarism go undetected, they still result in a student's failure to learn necessary research and writing skills. Students who are found guilty of academic integrity violations face consequences ranging from a failing grade to expulsion. Employees may be fired for plagiarism and do irreparable damage to their professional reputation. In short, it is never worth the risk.

# 9.2 Documenting Source Material

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**Learning Objectives**

- Identify when to summarize, paraphrase, and directly quote information from research sources
- Identify when citations are needed
- Introduce sources
- Throughout the writing process, be scrupulous about documenting information taken from sources. The purpose of doing so is twofold:
- To give credit to other writers or researchers for their ideas
- To allow your reader to follow up and learn more about the topic if desired

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You will cite sources within the body of your paper and at the end of the paper in your references section. For this assignment, you will use the citation format used by the American Psychological Association (also known as APA style). Within this course and for all of your courses at JIBC, you will need to follow the JIBC APA Reference Guide (http://lgdata.s3-website-us-east-1.amazonaws.com/docs/766/161187/APA_Style-6th_ed-Jan2015.pdf) when formatting citations and references within your papers.

This section covers the nitty-gritty details of in-text citations. You will learn how to format citations for different types of source materials, whether you are citing brief quotations, paraphrasing ideas, or quoting longer passages. You will also learn techniques you can use to introduce quoted and paraphrased material effectively. Keep this section handy as a reference to consult while writing the body of your paper.

## Formatting Cited Material: The Basics

In-text citations usually provide the name of the author(s) and the year the source was published. For direct quotations, the page number must also be included. Use past tense verbs when introducing a quote: for example, "Smith found…," not "Smith finds.…"

## Citing Sources in the Body of Your Paper

**In–text citations** document your sources within the body of your paper. These include two vital pieces of information: the author's name and the year the source material was published. When quoting a print source, also include in the citation the page number where the quoted material originally appears. The

page number follows the year in the in-text citation. *Page numbers are necessary only when content has been directly quoted, not when it has been summarized or paraphrased.*

## Using Source Material in Your Paper

One of the challenges of writing a research paper is successfully integrating your ideas with material from your sources. Your paper must explain what you think, or it will read like a disconnected string of facts and quotations. However, you also need to support your ideas with research, or they will seem insubstantial. How do you strike the right balance?

In your essay, the introduction and conclusion function like the frame around a picture. They define and limit your topic and place your research in context. In the body paragraphs of your paper, you need to integrate ideas carefully at the paragraph level and at the sentence level. You will use topic sentences in your paragraphs to make sure readers understand the significance of any facts, details, or quotations you cite. You will also include sentences that transition between ideas from your research, either within a paragraph or between paragraphs. At the sentence level, you will need to think carefully about how you introduce paraphrased and quoted material.

Earlier you learned about summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting when taking notes. In the next few sections, you will learn how to use these techniques in the body of your paper to weave in source material to support your ideas.

## Summarizing Sources

Look back at Section 3.2: Summarizing to refresh your memory of how Jorge summarized the article. As was mentioned there, when you are summarizing, you are focusing on identifying and sharing the main elements of a source. This is when you paraphrase the concepts and put them in your own words, demonstrating you have a firm understanding of the concepts presented and are able to incorporate them into your own paper.

Within a paragraph, this information may appear as part of your introduction to the material or as a parenthetical citation at the end of a sentence. Read the examples that follow.

Summary

Leibowitz (2008) found that low-carbohydrate diets often helped subjects with Type II diabetes maintain a healthy weight and control blood sugar levels.

The introduction to the source material (the **attributive tag**) includes the author's name followed by the year of publication in parentheses.

> Low-carbohydrate diets often help subjects with Type II diabetes maintain a healthy weight and control blood sugar levels (Leibowitz, 2008).

The parenthetical citation at the end of the sentence includes the author's name, a comma, and the year the source was published. The period at the end of the sentence comes after the parentheses.

## Formatting Paraphrased and Summarized Material

When you paraphrase or summarize ideas from a source, you follow the same guidelines previously provided, except that you are not required to provide the page number where the ideas are located. If you are summing up the main findings of a research article, simply providing the author's name and publication year may suffice, but if you are paraphrasing a more specific idea, consider including the page number.

Read the following examples.

### Examples

> Chang (2008) pointed out that weight-bearing exercise has many potential benefits for women.

Here, the writer is summarizing a major idea that recurs throughout the source material. No page reference is needed.

> Chang (2008) found that weight-bearing exercise could help women maintain or even increase bone density through middle age and beyond, reducing the likelihood that they will develop osteoporosis in later life (p. 86).

Although the writer is not directly quoting the source, this passage paraphrases a specific detail, so the writer chose to include the page number where the information is located.

## Introducing Cited Material Effectively

Including an introductory phrase in your text, such as "Jackson wrote" or "Copeland found," often helps you integrate source material smoothly. This citation technique also helps convey that you are actively engaged with your source material. Unfortunately, during the process of writing your research paper, it is easy to fall into a rut and use the same few dull verbs repeatedly, such as "Jones said," "Smith stated," and so on.

Punch up your writing by using strong verbs that help your reader understand how the source material presents ideas. There is a world of difference between an author who "suggests" and one who "claims," one who "questions" and one who "criticizes." You do not need to consult your thesaurus every time

you cite a source, but do think about which verbs will accurately represent the ideas and make your writing more engaging. **Strong Verbs for Introducing Cited Material** shows some possibilities.

## Strong Verbs for Introducing Cited Material

- ask
- suggest
- question
- recommend
- determine
- insist
- explain
- assert

- claim
- hypothesize
- measure
- argue
- propose
- compare
- contrast
- evaluate

- conclude
- find
- study
- sum up
- believe
- warn
- point out
- assess

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**H5P:** For each of the sentences below, choose the best verb for the job. Get into the habit of thinking through how you introduce cited material to your reader. There's nothing more confusing than a quotation lobbed out of nowhere!

1. Johal (2015) _____ that his discovery was earth-shattering, but Best & MacDonald (2017) _____ persuasively that he is incorrect.
2. Lindsay (2020) _____ where the fossil record has gone.
3. While there are many aspects to healthy living, the primacy of the Canada Food Guide for much of modern history _____ that nutrition is a critical component.
4. In her groundbreaking research, DeWit (2019) _____ a new way of looking at the stars.
5. In three different studies, Johnson (2014, 2015, 2018) _____ drivers to pedestrians in terms of level of aggression displayed.
6. Most experts _____ against the dangers of climate change starting in the 1970s.
7. Loxman (2003) _____ the relationship between dogs and their owners.

**Verbs**

| A. argued | D. claimed | G. asked |
|---|---|---|
| B. warned | E. compared | H. studied |
| C. suggested | F. proposed | |

**Answer Key**

| 1. D, A | 4. F | 7. H |
|---|---|---|
| 2. G | 5. E | |
| 3. C | 6. B | |

## When to Cite

*Any idea or fact taken from an outside source must be cited, in both the body of your paper and the references.* The only exceptions are facts or general statements that are common knowledge. Common knowledge facts or general statements are commonly supported by and found in multiple sources. For example, a writer would not need to cite the statement that most breads, pastas, and cereals are high in carbohydrates; this is well known and well documented. However, if a writer explained in detail the differences among the chemical structures of carbohydrates, proteins, and fats, a citation would be necessary. When in doubt, cite!

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**H5P:** To Cite or Not to Cite

For each example of a piece of evidence, state whether you need to cite or not cite the original source.

1. A general fact about the periodic table you found in an encyclopedia

    A. do need to cite

    B. don't need to cite

2. A brief summary of a study you read, written in your own words

A. do need to cite

B. don't need to cite

3. The dictionary definition of a key term

A. do need to cite

B. don't need to cite

4. A paraphrase of an idea in one of your source articles

A. do need to cite

B. don't need to cite

**Answer Key**

1. B

2. A

3. B

4. A

# Fair Dealing

In recent years, issues related to the fair use of sources have been prevalent in popular culture. Recording artists, for example, may disagree about the extent to which one has the right to sample another's music. For academic purposes, however, the guidelines for fair dealing are reasonably straightforward.

Writers may quote from or paraphrase material from previously published works without formally obtaining the copyright holder's permission. **Fair dealing** in copyright law allows a writer to legitimately use brief excerpts from source material to support and develop his or her own ideas. For instance, a columnist may excerpt a few sentences from a novel when writing a book review. However, quoting or paraphrasing another's work excessively, to the extent that large sections of the writing are unoriginal, is not fair dealing.

As he worked on his draft, Jorge was careful to cite his sources correctly and not to rely excessively on any one source. Occasionally, however, he caught himself quoting a source at great length. In those instances, he highlighted the paragraph in question so that he could go back to it later and revise. Read the example, along with Jorge's revision.

Summary

Heinz (2009) found that "subjects in the low-carbohydrate group (30% carbohydrates; 40% protein, 30% fat) had a mean weight loss of 10 kg (22 lbs) over a four-month period." These results were "noticeably better than results for subjects on a low-fat diet (45% carbohydrates, 35% protein, 20% fat)" whose average weight loss was only "7 kg (15.4 lbs) in the same period." From this, it can be concluded that "low-carbohydrate diets obtain more rapid results." Other researchers agree that "at least in the short term, patients following low-carbohydrate diets enjoy greater success" than those who follow alternative plans (Johnson & Crowe, 2010).

Self-Practice Exercise 9.1

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**H5P:** Summary

Paraphrasing practice is always a good thing! Take a look at Jorge's "summary" above. Notice he is not really summarizing but rather quoting. While this is technically not plagiarism, it does not show any processing of the information from the original source. It is just copying and pasting; the end result seems very choppy, and a lot of the information can be generalized.

For this exercise, try to rewrite Jorge's summary in your own words. Remember to try to catch all the key terms and concepts.

Summary

Low-carbohydrate diets may indeed be superior to other diet plans for short-term weight loss. In a study comparing low-carbohydrate diets and low-fat diets, Heinz (2009) found that subjects who followed a low-carbohydrate plan (30% of total calories) for four months lost, on average, about 3 kilograms more than subjects who followed a low-fat diet for the same time. Heinz concluded that these plans yield quick results, an idea supported by a similar study conducted by Johnson and Crowe (2010). What remains to be seen, however, is whether this initial success can be sustained for longer periods.

As Jorge revised the paragraph, he realized he did not need to quote these sources directly. Instead, he paraphrased their most important findings. He also made sure to include a topic sentence stating the main idea of the paragraph and a concluding sentence that transitioned to the next major topic in his essay.

Tip: It is extremely important to remember that even though you are summarizing and paraphrasing from another source—not quoting—you must still include a citation, including the last name(s) of the author(s) and the year of publication.

### Example

Additionally, marijuana burning creates toxins; this strategy is counterproductive, and there are numerous individual hazards associated with using the plant as medicine (Ogborne, Smart, & Adlaf, 2000).

Example taken from:

Writing Commons. (2014, September). Open Text. Retrieved from http://writingcommons.org/format/apa/675-block-quotations-apa (http://writingcommons.org/format/apa/675-block-quotations-apa)

## Writing at Work

It is important to accurately represent a colleague's ideas or communications in the workplace. When writing professional or academic papers, be mindful of how the words you use to describe someone's tone or ideas carry certain connotations. Do not say a source "argues" a particular point unless an argument is, in fact, presented. Use lively language, but avoid language that is emotionally charged. Doing so will ensure you have represented your colleague's words in an authentic and accurate way.

### Key Takeaways

- An effective research paper focuses on the writer's ideas. The introduction and conclusion present and revisit the writer's thesis. The body of the paper develops the thesis and related points with information from research.

- Ideas and information taken from outside sources must be cited in the body of the paper and in the references section.

- Material taken from sources should be used to develop the writer's ideas. Summarizing and paraphrasing are usually most effective for this purpose.

- A summary concisely restates the main ideas of a source in the writer's own words.

- A paraphrase restates ideas from a source using the writer's own words and sentence structures.

- Direct quotations should be used sparingly. Ellipses and brackets must be used to indicate words that are omitted or changed for conciseness or grammatical correctness.

- Always represent material from outside sources accurately.

- Plagiarism has serious academic and professional consequences. To avoid accidental plagiarism, keep research materials organized, understand guidelines for fair dealing and appropriate citation of sources, and review the paper to make sure these guidelines are followed.

# 9.3 Making Your Quotes Fit

Learning Objectives

- Apply guidelines for citing sources within the body of the paper
- Evaluating when to use a short or long quote
- Incorporate short quotes with correct APA formatting
- Incorporate long quotations with correct APA formatting

So, now you may have decided after much critical thought, that you definitely have found the most amazing, well-suited quote that cannot be paraphrased, and you want to incorporate that quote into your paper. There are different ways to do this depending on how long the quote is; there are also a number of formatting requirements you need to apply.

## Quoting Sources Directly

Most of the time, you will summarize or paraphrase source material instead of quoting directly. Doing so shows that you understand your research well enough to write about it confidently in your own words. However, direct quotes can be powerful when used sparingly and with purpose.

Quoting directly can sometimes help you make a point in a colourful way. If an author's words are especially vivid, memorable, or well phrased, quoting them may help hold your reader's interest. Direct quotations from an interviewee or an eyewitness may help you personalize an issue for readers. Also, when you analyze primary sources, such as a historical speech or a work of literature, quoting extensively is often necessary to illustrate your points. These are valid reasons to use quotations.

Less-experienced writers, however, sometimes overuse direct quotations in a research paper because it seems easier than paraphrasing. At best, this reduces the effectiveness of the quotations. At worst, it results in a paper that seems haphazardly pasted together from outside sources. *Use quotations sparingly for greater impact.*

When you do choose to quote directly from a source, follow these guidelines:

- Only use a quote when the original writer has phrased a statement so perfectly that you do not believe you could rephrase it any better without getting away from the writer's point.
- Make sure you have transcribed the original statement accurately.
- Represent the author's ideas honestly. Quote enough of the original text to reflect the author's

point accurately.

- Use an attributive tag (e.g., "According to Marshall (2013)….") to lead into the quote and provide a citation at the same time.

- Never use a standalone quotation. Always integrate the quoted material into your own sentence.

- Make sure any omissions or changed words do not alter the meaning of the original text. Omit or replace words only when absolutely necessary to shorten the text or to make it grammatically correct within your sentence.

- Use ellipses (3) […] if you need to omit a word or phrase; use (4) [….] when you are removing a section—maybe a complete sentence—that would end in a period. This shows your reader that you have critically and thoroughly examined the contents of this quote and have chosen only the most important and relevant information.

- Use brackets [ ] if you need to replace a word or phrase or if you need to change the verb tense.

- Use [*sic*] after something in the quote that is grammatically incorrect or spelled incorrectly. This shows your reader that the mistake is in the original, not your writing.

- Use double quotation marks [" "] when quoting and use single quotation marks [' '] when you include a quote within a quote (i.e., if you quote a passage that already includes a quote, you need to change the double quotation marks in the original to single marks, and add double quotations marks around your entire quote).

Remember to include correctly formatted citations that follow the JIBC APA Reference Guide.

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**H5P:** Quoting Sources Correctly

In each of the two examples, pick the quotation that is formatted most correctly.

1.   A. It's clear that students need to learn time management skills. "The biggest barrier to success is poor time management" (James, 2019, p. 743).

     B. Student need to learn time management skills because, according to James (2019), "the biggest barrier to success is poor time management" (p. 743).

2.   A. The research shows that smoking is "bad" for the health of smokers

(Simmons, 2018, p. 56).

      B.  The research shows that smoking is not a healthy lifestyle choice (Simmons, 2018).

3.      A.  Chan (2020) argues persuasively that people "[are] angry about the government response to an overwhelming crisis" (p. 432).

      B.  Chan (2020) argues persuasively that people "is angry about the government response to an overwhelming crisis" (p. 432).

**Answer Key**

1. B                        2. B                        3. A

Jorge interviewed a dietitian as part of his research, and he decided to quote her words in his paper. Read an excerpt from the interview and Jorge's use of it, which follows.

- **Source:** Personally, I don't really buy into all of the hype about low-carbohydrate miracle diets like Atkins and so on. Sure, for some people, they are great, but for most, any sensible eating and exercise plan would work just as well.

- **Summary:** Registered dietitian Dana Kwon (2010) admits, "Personally, I don't really buy into all of the hype.… Sure, for some people, [low carbohydrate diets] are great, but for most, any sensible eating and exercise plan would work just as well."Notice how Jorge smoothly integrated the quoted material by starting the sentence with an introductory phrase. His use of an ellipsis and brackets did not change the source's meaning.

- **Short versus Long Quotations:** Remember, what you write in essays should be primarily your own words; your instructors want to know what your ideas are and for you to demonstrate your own critical thinking. This means you should only use the ideas of experts in the form of quotes to support your ideas. A paper that consists of mostly quotes pieced together does not demonstrate original thought but rather that you are good at cutting and pasting. Therefore, you should strive to state your ideas, develop them thoroughly, and then insert a supporting quote, and only if necessary. Focus on paraphrasing and integrating and blending those external sources into your own ideas (giving the original author credit by using a citation, of course). When deciding to use any quotation as opposed to paraphrasing, you need to make sure the quote is a statement that the original author has worded so beautifully it would be less effective if you changed it into your own words. When you find something you would like to include **verbatim** (word for word) from a source, you need to decide if you should include the whole paragraph or section, or a smaller part. Sometimes, you may choose to use a longer quote but remove any unnecessary words. You would then use ellipses to show what content you have removed. The following examples show how this is done.

- **Original:** According to Marshall (2010), "Before the creation of organized governmental policing agencies, it was citizens possessing firearms who monitored and maintained the

peace" (p. 712).

- **With Ellipses:** According to Marshall (2010), "Before the creation of organized governmental policing agencies, … citizens possessing firearms … monitored and maintained the peace" (p. 712).

- **Short Quotations:** A short quote can be as one word or a phrase or a complete sentence as long as three lines of text (again, removing any unnecessary words). Generally, a short quotation is one that is fewer than 40 words. Whether you use a complete sentence or only part of one, you need to make sure it blends in perfectly with your own sentence or paragraph. For example, if your paragraph is written in the present tense but the quote is in the past, you will need to change the verb, so it will fit into your writing. (You will read about on this shortly.) Using an **attributive tag** is another way to help incorporate your quote more fluidly. An attributive tag is a phrase that shows your reader you got the information from a source, and you are giving the author attribution or credit for his or her ideas or words. Using an attributive tag allows you to provide a citation at the same time as helping integrate the quote more smoothly into your work.

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**Examples**

According to Marshall (2010), "Before the creation of organized governmental policing agencies, it was citizens possessing firearms who monitored and maintained the peace" (p. 712).

In the example above, the attributive tag (with citation) is underlined; this statement is giving Marshall credit for his own words and ideas. You should note that this short quotation is a complete sentence taken from Marshall's bigger document, which is why the first word, *Before*, is capitalized. If you were to include only a portion of that sentence, perhaps excerpting from the middle of it, you would not start the quote with a capital.

Marshall (2010) argues that vigilantism in the Wild West was committed by "citizens possessing firearms who monitored and maintained the peace" (p. 712).

In this example, notice how the student has only used a portion of the sentence, so did not need to include the capital.

---

Tip: If you do not use an attributive tag because the quote already fits smoothly into your sentence, you need to include the author's name after the sentence in parentheses with the date and page number.

Example

Vigilantism in the Wild West was committed by "citizens possessing firearms who monitored and maintained the peace" (Marshall, 2010, p. 712).

## Formatting Short Quotations

For short quotations, use quotation marks to indicate where the quoted material begins and ends, and cite the name of the author(s), the year of publication, and the page number where the quotation appears in your source. Remember to include commas to separate elements within the parenthetical citation. Also, avoid redundancy. If you name the author(s) in your sentence, do not repeat the name(s) in your parenthetical citation. Review following the examples of different ways to cite direct quotations.

Examples

Chang (2008) emphasized that "engaging in weight-bearing exercise consistently is one of the single best things women can do to maintain good health" (p. 49).

The author's name can be included in the body of the sentence or in the parenthetical citation. Note that when a parenthetical citation appears at the end of the sentence, it comes *after* the closing quotation marks and *before* the period. The elements within parentheses are separated by commas.

*Weight Training for Women* (Chang, 2008) claimed that "engaging in weight-bearing exercise consistently is one of the single best things women can do to maintain good health" (p. 49).

*Weight Training for Women* claimed that "engaging in weight-bearing exercise consistently is one of the single best things women can do to maintain good health" (Chang, 2008, p. 49).

Including the title of a source is optional.

In Chang's 2008 text *Weight Training for Women*, she asserts, "Engaging in weight-bearing exercise is one of the single best things women can do to maintain good health" (p. 49).

The author's name, the date, and the title may appear in the body of the text. Include the page number in the parenthetical citation. Also, notice the use of the verb *asserts* to introduce the direct quotation.

"Engaging in weight-bearing exercise," Chang asserts, "is one of the single best things women can do to maintain good health" (2008, p. 49).

You may begin a sentence with the direct quotation and add the author's name and a strong verb before continuing the quotation.

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**H5P:** Quoting Sources Correctly 2

In each of the two examples, pick the quotation that is formatted most correctly.

1.
    A. In their research, Callow (2014) argued in favour "a patient-centred care approach," even in pediatric departments (p. 41).

    B. In their research, Callow (2014) argued in favour "a patient-centred care approach," even in pediatric departments (Callow, 2014, p. 41).

2.
    A. On page 362, Wing (2019) worried about the long-term impact of "moral stress" on nursing staff.

    B. Wing (2019) worried about the long-term impact of "moral stress" on nursing staff (p. 362).

3.
    A. Abara (2017) asserted that there are "three critical crises at play" in the delivery of medicine in Canada (p. 21).

    B. Abara (2017) said that there are "three critical crises at play" in the delivery of medicine in Canada (p. 21).

**Answer Key**

1.  A                    2.  B                    3.  A

Tip: Although APA style guidelines do not require writers to provide page numbers for material that is not directly quoted, your instructor may wish you to do so when possible. Check with your instructor about his or her preferences.

## Long (Block) Quotations

Long quotations should be used even more sparingly than shorter ones. Long quotations can range in length from four to seven or eight lines (40 words or more, and should *never* be as long as a page. There are two reasons for this: First, by using a long quote, you are essentially letting the original

author do all the thinking for you; remember that your audience wants to see *your* ideas, not someone else's. Second, unless all the information and every word in the long quote is essential and could not be paraphrased (which is highly doubtful with a long passage), you are not showing your audience you have processed or evaluated the importance of the source's critical information and weeded out the unnecessary information. If you believe you have found the perfect paragraph to support your ideas, and you decide you really want or need to use the long quote, see if you can shorten it by removing unnecessary words or complete sentences and put ellipses in their place. This will again show your reader that you have put a lot of thought into the use of the quote and that you have included it just because you did not want to do any thinking.

---

Tip: Be wary of quoting from sources at length. Remember, your ideas should drive the paper, and quotations should be used to support and enhance your points. Make sure any lengthy quotations that you include serve a clear purpose. Generally, no more than 10 to 15 percent of a paper should consist of quoted material.

---

## Long Quotations: How to Make Them Fit

As with short quotations, you need to make sure long quotations fit into your writing. To introduce a long quote, you need to include a **stem** (this can include an attributive tag) followed by a colon (:). The stem is underlined in the example below.

---

Example

Marshall uses the example of towns in the Wild West to explain that:

> Much of the population—especially younger males—frequently engaged in violence by participating in saloon fights and shootouts and gun fights. [However,] crimes committed by females, the elderly, or the infirm were rare occasions were much rarer because of those individuals being less likely to frequent such drinking establishments. (2010, p. 725)

In example, you can see the stem clearly introduces the quote in a grammatically correct way, leading into the quote fluidly.

---

## Formatting Longer Quotations

When you quote a longer passage from a source—40 words or more—you need to use a different format to set off the quoted material. Instead of using quotation marks, create a **block quotation** by starting the quotation on a new line and indented five spaces from the margin. Note that in this case, the parenthetical citation comes *after* the period that ends the sentence. If the passage continues into a

second paragraph, indent a full tab (five spaces) again in the first line of the second paragraph. Here is an example:

In recent years, many writers within the fitness industry have emphasized the ways in which women can benefit from weight-bearing exercise, such as weightlifting, karate, dancing, stair climbing, hiking, and jogging. Chang (2008) found that engaging in weight-bearing exercise regularly significantly reduces women's risk of developing osteoporosis. Additionally, these exercises help women maintain muscle mass and overall strength, and many common forms of weight bearing exercise, such as brisk walking or stair climbing, also provide noticeable cardiovascular benefits.

It is important to note that swimming cannot be considered a weight-bearing exercise, since the water supports and cushions the swimmer. That doesn't mean swimming isn't great exercise, but it should be considered one part of an integrated fitness program. (p. 93)

---

### Self-Practice Exercise 9.2

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**H5P:** Long Quotations

In each of the two examples, pick the quotation that is formatted most correctly.

1.  A.  We use block quotations for quotations of four sentences or more.
    B.  We use block quotations for quotations of 40 words or more.

2.  A.  The parenthetical citation comes after the period that ends the sentence
    B.  The parenthetical citation comes before the period that ends the sentence

3.  A.  Block quotations start on a new line and are off-set from the text.
    B.  Block quotations continue from the text and are part of the natural prose of the essay.

**Answer Key**

1.  B                    2.  A                    3.  A

Tip: To format a long quote, you need to remember the following:

- You may want to single space the quote, but not the main part of your essay. This will allow the long block quotation to stand out even more.

- Indent on both sides of the quote; you can use *left* or *full* justification.

- Do not use quotation marks; they are unnecessary because the spacing and indenting (and citation) will tell your reader this is a quote.

- Do not put the quote in italics.

- Include the end period (.) before the citation. See the example above.

# 9.4 Citation Guidelines

- Apply APA guidelines for citing sources within the body of the paper for various source types

## In-Text Citations

Throughout the body of your paper, you must include a citation whenever you quote or paraphrase material from your research sources. The purpose of citations is twofold: to give credit to others for their ideas and to allow your reader to follow up and learn more about the topic if desired. Your in-text citations provide basic information about your source; you will provide more detailed information for each source you cite in text in the references section. (Refer to your JIBC APA Reference Guide (http://lgdata.s3-website-us-east-1.amazonaws.com/docs/766/161187/APA_Style-6th_ed-Oct2013.pdf) for guidance on compose citation—for quotes or paraphrasing—under the referencing example for each type of source.)

In-text citations must provide the name of the author or authors and the year the source was published. (When a given source does not list an individual author, you may provide the source title or the name of the organization that published the material instead.) When directly quoting a source, you must include the page number where the quote appears in the work being cited. This information may be included within the sentence or in a parenthetical reference at the end of the sentence, as in these examples.

> Epstein (2010) points out that "junk food cannot be considered addictive in the same way that we think of psychoactive drugs as addictive" (p. 137).

Here, the writer names the source author when introducing the quote and provides the publication date in parentheses after the author's name. The page number appears in parentheses after the closing quotation marks and before the period that ends the sentence.

> Addiction researchers caution that "junk food cannot be considered addictive in the same way that we think of psychoactive drugs as addictive" (Epstein, 2010, p. 137).

Here, the writer provides a parenthetical citation at the end of the sentence that includes the author's name, the year of publication, and the page number separated by commas. Again, the parenthetical citation is placed *after* the closing quotation marks and *before* the period at the end of the sentence.

> As noted in the book *Junk Food, Junk Science* (Epstein, 2010, p. 137), "junk food cannot be considered addictive in the same way that we think of psychoactive drugs as addictive."

Here, the writer chose to mention the source title in the sentence (an optional piece of information to include) and followed the title with a parenthetical citation. Note that in this example the parenthetical citation is placed *before* the comma that signals the end of the introductory phrase.

> David Epstein's book *Junk Food, Junk Science* (2010) pointed out that "junk food cannot be considered addictive in the same way that we think of psychoactive drugs as addictive" (p. 137).

Another variation is to introduce the author and the source title in your sentence and include the publication date and page number in parentheses within the sentence or at the end of the sentence. As long as you have included the essential information, you can use the option that works best for that particular sentence and source.

Citing a book with a single author is usually straightforward. Of course, your research may require that you cite many other types of sources, such as books or articles with more than one author or sources with no individual author listed. You may also need to cite sources available in both print and online and nonprint sources, such as websites and personal interviews.

## Self-Practice Exercise 9.3

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*https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=144#h5p-125 (https://opentextbc.ca/*
*writingforsuccessh5p/?p=144#h5p-125)*

**H5P:** Noticing Errors in Quotations

Examples taken from: Writing Commons. (2014, September). Open Text. Retrieved from
http://writingcommons.org/format/apa/675-block-quotations-apa

1.  According to a recent research study, 'that women aged 41 and over were 5 times less likely to use condoms than were men aged 18 and younger' (2007, p. 707).

    A.  Single quotation marks are used instead of double quotation marks.

    B.  The period is placed after the citation not before.

    C.  "That" should have been removed to make the quote flow with the rest of the sentence.

    D.  There is no attributive tag and no mention of the authors in the citation: Sormanti & Shibusawa.

2.  One researcher outlines the viewpoints of both parties: Freedom of research is undoubtedly a cherished ideal in our society. In that respect, research has an interest in being free, independent, and unrestricted. Such interests weigh against regulations. On the other hand, research should also be valid, verifiable, and unbiased, to attain the overarching goal of gaining obtaining generalisable knowledge (Simonsen, 2012, p. 46).

    A.  [sic] is required after "obtaining" because it is a mistake in the original.

    B.  There are no quotation marks

    C.  The period is placed after the citation not before.

    D.  The quote is not indented on either side.

3.  According to Emlet, the rate in which older adults have contracted HIV has grown exponentially. Currently, "approximately 20% of all HIV cases were among older adults". (Emlet, 2008).

    A.  The original quote used the past tense ("were"), but the transition word "currently" requires this verb to be changed to present tense ("are") inside square brackets to make it fit.

    B.  The writer used an attributive tag with the name of the source's author, then gave the name again in the citation at the end. The second one is redundant.

    C.  There is an extra period before the citation. With a short quote, you put the end punctuation after the citation.

    D.  The word, "Currently" breaks the flow of the sentence.

**Answer Key**

1. A, C, D          2. A, C, D          3. A, B, C,

# Formatting In-Text Citations

The following subsections discuss the correct format for various types of in-text citations. Read them through quickly to get a sense of what is covered, and then refer to them again as needed.

## Print Sources

This section covers books, articles, and other print sources with one or more authors.

## A Work by One Author

For a print work with one author, follow the guidelines provided in the JIBC APA Reference Guide (http://lgdata.s3-website-us-east-1.amazonaws.com/docs/766/161187/APA_Style-6th_ed-Oct2013.pdf). Always include the author's name and year of publication. Include a page reference whenever you quote a source directly. (See also the guidelines presented earlier in this chapter about when to include a page reference for paraphrased material.)

> Chang (2008) emphasized that "engaging in weight-bearing exercise consistently is one of the single best things women can do to maintain good health" (p. 49).
>
> Chang (2008) pointed out that weight-bearing exercise has many potential benefits for women.

## Two or More Works by the Same Author

At times, your research may include multiple works by the same author. If the works were published in different years, a standard in-text citation will serve to distinguish them. If you are citing multiple works by the same author published in the same year, include a lowercase letter immediately after the year. Rank the sources in the order they appear in your references section. The source listed first should include an *a* after the year, the source listed second should include a *b*, and so on.

> Rodriguez (2009a) criticized the nutrition supplement industry for making unsubstantiated and sometimes misleading claims about the benefits of taking supplements. Additionally, he warned that

> consumers frequently do not realize the potential harmful effects of some popular supplements (Rodriguez, 2009b).

The author's last name is again mentioned in the final citation despite it being used in the attributive tag. In this case, this is acceptable because this is referring to a different source written by the same person.

## Works by Authors with the Same Last Name

If you are citing works by different authors with the same last name, include each author's initials in your citation, whether you mention them in the text or in parentheses. Do so even if the publication years are different.

> J. S. Williams (2007) believes nutritional supplements can be a useful part of some diet and fitness regimens. C. D. Williams (2008), however, believes these supplements are overrated.
>
> According to two leading researchers, the rate of childhood obesity exceeds the rate of adult obesity (K. Connelley, 2010; O. Connelley, 2010).
>
> Studies from both A. Wright (2007) and C. A. Wright (2008) confirm the benefits of diet and exercise on weight loss.

## A Work by Two Authors

When two authors are listed for a given work, include both authors' names each time you cite the work. If you are citing their names in parentheses, use an ampersand (&) between them. (Use the word *and*, however, if the names appear in your sentence.)

> As Garrison and Gould (2010) pointed out, "It is never too late to quit smoking. The health risks associated with this habit begin to decrease soon after a smoker quits" (p. 101).
>
> As doctors continue to point out, "It is never too late to quit smoking. The health risks associated with this habit begin to decrease soon after a smoker quits" (Garrison & Gould, 2010, p. 101).

## A Work by Three to Five Authors

If the work you are citing has three to five authors, list all the authors' names the first time you cite the source. In subsequent citations, use the first author's name followed by the abbreviation *et al.* (*Et al.* is short for *et alia,* the Latin phrase for "and others.")

> Henderson, Davidian, and Degler (2010) surveyed 350 smokers aged 18 to 30.One survey, conducted among 350 smokers aged 18 to 30, included a detailed questionnaire about participants' motivations for smoking (Henderson, Davidian, & Degler, 2010).
>
> Note that these examples follow the same ampersand conventions as sources with two authors. Again, use the ampersand only when listing authors' names in parentheses.
>
> As Henderson et al. (2010) found, some young people, particularly young women, use smoking as a means of appetite suppression.
>
> Disturbingly, some young women use smoking as a means of appetite suppression (Henderson et al., 2010).

Note how the phrase *et al.* is punctuated. There is no period comes after *et,* but there is one with  *al.* because it is an abbreviation for a longer Latin word. In parenthetical references, include a comma after *et al.* but not before. Remember this rule by mentally translating the citation to English: "Henderson and others, 2010."

## A Work by Six or More Authors

If the work you are citing has six or more authors, list only the first author's name, followed by *et al.,* in your in-text citations. The other authors' names will be listed in your references section.

> Researchers have found that outreach work with young people has helped reduce tobacco use in some communities (Costello et al., 2007).

## A Work Authored by an Organization

When citing a work that has no individual author but is published by an organization, use the organization's name in place of the author's name. Lengthy organization names with well-known abbreviations can be abbreviated. In your first citation, use the full name, followed by the abbreviation in square brackets. Subsequent citations may use the abbreviation only.

It is possible for a patient to have a small stroke without even realizing it (American Heart Association [AHA], 2010).

Another cause for concern is that even if patients realize that they have had a stroke and need medical attention, they may not know which nearby facilities are best equipped to treat them (AHA, 2010).

## A Work with No Listed Author

If no author is listed and the source cannot be attributed to an organization, use the title in place of the author's name. You may use the full title in your sentence or use the first few words—enough to convey the key ideas—in a parenthetical reference. Follow standard conventions for using italics or quotations marks with titles:

- Use italics for titles of books or reports.
- Use quotation marks for titles of articles or chapters.

"Living With Diabetes: Managing Your Health" (2009) recommends regular exercise for patients with diabetes.Regular exercise can benefit patients with diabetes ("Living with Diabetes," 2009).

## A Work Cited within Another Work

To cite a source that is referred to within another secondary source, name the first source in your sentence. Then, in parentheses, use the phrase *as cited in* and the name of the second source author.

Rosenhan's study "On Being Sane in Insane Places" (as cited in Spitzer, 1975) found that psychiatrists diagnosed schizophrenia in people who claimed to be experiencing hallucinations and sought treatment—even though these patients were, in fact, imposters.

## Two or More Works Cited in One Reference

At times, you may provide more than one citation in a parenthetical reference, such as when you are

discussing related works or studies with similar results. List the citations in the same order they appear in your references section, and separate the citations with a semicolon.

> Some researchers have found serious flaws in the way Rosenhan's study was conducted (Dawes, 2001; Spitzer, 1975).Both of these researchers authored works that support the point being made in this sentence, so it makes sense to include both in the same citation.

## A Famous Text Published in Multiple Editions

In some cases, you may need to cite an extremely well-known work that has been repeatedly republished or translated. Many works of literature and sacred texts, as well as some classic nonfiction texts, fall into this category. For these works, the original date of publication may be unavailable. If so, include the year of publication or translation for your edition. Refer to specific parts or chapters if you need to cite a specific section. Discuss with your instructor whether he or she would like you to cite page numbers in this particular instance.

> In *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho Analysis*, Freud explains that the "manifest content" of a dream—what literally takes place—is separate from its "latent content," or hidden meaning (trans. 1965, lecture XXIX).

In this example, the student is citing a classic work of psychology, originally written in German and later translated to English. Since the book is a collection of Freud's lectures, the student cites the lecture number rather than a page number.

## An Introduction, Foreword, Preface, or Afterword

To cite an introduction, foreword, preface, or afterword, cite the author of the material and the year, following the same format used for other print materials.

## Electronic Sources

Whenever possible, cite electronic sources as you would print sources, using the author, the date, and where appropriate, a page number. For some types of electronic sources—for instance, many online articles—this information is easily available. Other times, however, you will need to vary the format to reflect the differences in online media.

**Online Sources without Page Numbers**

If an online source has no page numbers but you want to refer to a specific portion of the source, try to locate other information you can use to direct your reader to the information cited. Some websites number paragraphs within published articles; if so, include the paragraph number in your citation. Precede the paragraph number with the abbreviation for the word *paragraph* and the number of the paragraph (e.g., para. 4).

> As researchers have explained, "Incorporating fresh fruits and vegetables into one's diet can be a challenge for residents of areas where there are few or no easily accessible supermarkets" (Smith & Jones, 2006, para. 4).

Even if a source does not have numbered paragraphs, it is likely to have headings that organize the content. In your citation, name the section where your cited information appears, followed by a paragraph number.

> The American Lung Association (2010) noted, "After smoking, radon exposure is the second most common cause of lung cancer" (What Causes Lung Cancer? section, para. 2).

This student cited the appropriate section heading within the website and then counted to find the specific paragraph where the cited information was located.

If an online source has no listed author and no date, use the source title and the abbreviation *n.d.* in your parenthetical reference.

> It has been suggested that electromagnetic radiation from cellular telephones may pose a risk for developing certain cancers ("Cell Phones and Cancer," n.d.).

**Personal Communication**

For personal communications, such as interviews, letters, and emails, cite the name of the person involved, clarify that the material is from a personal communication, and provide the specific date the communication took place. Note that while in-text citations correspond to entries in the references

section, personal communications are an exception to this rule. They are cited only in the body text of your paper.

J. H. Yardley, M.D., believes that available information on the relationship between cell phone use and cancer is inconclusive (personal communication, May 1, 2009).

## Writing at Work

At work, you may sometimes share information resources with your colleagues by photocopying an interesting article or forwarding the URL of a useful website. Your goal in these situations and in formal research citations is the same: to provide enough information to help your professional peers locate and follow up on potentially useful information. Provide as much specific information as possible to achieve that goal, and consult with your supervisor or professor as to what specific style he or she may prefer.

Key Takeaways

- In APA papers, in-text citations include the name of the author(s) and the year of publication whenever possible.

- Page numbers are always included when citing quotations. It is optional to include page numbers when citing paraphrased material; however, this should be done when citing a specific portion of a work.

- When citing online sources, provide the same information used for print sources if it is available.

- When a source does not provide information that usually appears in a citation, in-text citations should provide readers with alternative information that would help them locate the source material. This may include the title of the source, section headings and paragraph numbers for websites, and so forth.

- When writing a paper, discuss with your instructor what particular standards you should follow.

# 9.5 Creating a References Page

Learning Objectives

- Navigate and find examples of references in the JIBC APA Reference Guide
- Compose an APA-formatted references page

The brief citations included in the body of your paper correspond to the more detailed citations provided at the end of the paper in the references section. In-text citations provide basic information—the author's name, the publication date, and the page number if necessary—while the references section provides more extensive information, which allows your reader to follow up on the sources you cited and do additional reading about the topic if desired.

In-text citations are necessary within your writing to show where you have borrowed ideas or quoted directly from another author. These are kept short because you do not want to disrupt the flow of your writing and distract the reader. While the in-text citation is very important, it is not enough to enable yourreaders to locate that source if they would like to use it for their own research.

The references section of your essay may consist of a single page for a brief research paper or may extend for many pages in professional journal articles. This section provides detailed information about how to create the references section of your paper. You will review basic formatting guidelines and learn how to format bibliographical entries for various types of sources. As you create this section of your paper, follow the guidelines provided here.

## Formatting the References Page

To set up your references section, use the insert page break feature of your word processing program to begin a new page. Note that the header and margins will be the same as in the body of your paper, and pagination will continue from the body of your paper. (In other words, if you set up the body of your paper correctly, the correct header and page number should appear automatically in your references section.) The references page should be double spaced and list entries in alphabetical order by the author's last name. If an entry continues for more than one line, the second line and each subsequent line are indented five spaces, or one tab space; this is called a "hanging indent."

### What to Include in the References Section

Generally, the information to include in your references section is:

- The name(s) of the author(s) or institution that wrote the source

- The year of publication and, where applicable, the exact date of publication

- The full title of the source

- For books, the city of publication

- For articles or essays, the name of the periodical or book in which the article or essay appears

- For magazine and journal articles, the volume number, issue number, and pages where the article appears

- For sources on the web, the URL where the source is located

Before you start compiling your own references and translating referencing information from possibly other styles into APA style, you need to be able to identify each piece of information in the reference. This can sometimes be challenging because the different styles format the information differently and may put it in different places within the reference. However, the types of information each of the referencing styles requires is generally the same.

## Navigating Your Reference Guide

The JIBC APA Reference Guide (http://lgdata.s3-website-us-east-1.amazonaws.com/docs/766/161187/APA_Style-6th_ed-Oct2013.pdf) is organized into types of sources—print, online, mixed media—and by number of authors (or if there is no author). Once you find the referencing format you need in the guide, you can study the example and follow the structure to set up your own citations. (The style guide also provides examples for how to do the in-text citation for quotes and paraphrasing from that type of source.)

You may be asking yourself why you cannot just use the reference that is often provided on the first page of the source (like a journal article), but you need to remember that not all authors use APA style referencing, or even if they do, they may not use the exact formatting you need to follow.

Putting together a references page becomes a lot easier once you recognize the types of information you continually see in references. For example, anytime you see something *italicized* for APA or underlined (in MLA), you know it is the title of the major piece of writing, such as a book with chapters or an academic journal with multiple articles. Take a look at the examples below.

---

### Sample Book Entry

- Use author's last name and initials followed by periods.

- Use a single space between parts of the entry. Include periods and other punctuation as indicated.

- Use sentence case for book titles.

- Use standard postal abbreviations for the state where the source was published

- Use a colon between the city of publication, and the publisher.

Atkins, R.C. (2002). *Dr. Atkin's diet revolution.* New York, NY: M. Evans and Company.

Sample Journal Article Entry

- Use sentence case for article titles. Do not use quotation marks around the title.
- Use title case for journal titles and italicize the title.
- Include the volume number in italics followed by the issue number in parentheses, with no space between them.
- Include commas after the journal title and issue number.
- Include the page number(s) where the article appears. Use an en dash between page numbers.

Bass, D. N. (2010). Frad in the lunchroom? *Education Next, 10*(1), 67-71.

Tip: If you are sourcing a chapter from a book, do not italicize the title of the chapter; instead, use double quotes. You also need to include the pages of the chapter within the book. (You *do* italicize the title of the book, similar to the journal article example above.)

The following section provides general guidelines for formatting the reference page. For the remainder of this chapter, you will learn about how to format reference entries for different source types, including multi-author and electronic sources.

## Formatting the References Section: APA General Guidelines

1. Include the heading References, centred at the top of the page. The heading should not be boldfaced, italicized, or underlined.
2. Use double-spaced type throughout the references section, as in the body of your paper.

3. Use **hanging indentation** for each entry. The first line should be flush with the left margin, while any lines that follow should be indented five spaces. (Hanging indentation is the opposite of normal indenting rules for paragraphs.)

4. List entries in alphabetical order by the author's last name. For a work with multiple authors, use the last name of the first author listed.

5. List authors' names using this format: Smith, J. C.

6. For a work with no individual author(s), use the name of the organization that published the work or, if this is unavailable, the title of the work in place of the author's name.

7. For works with multiple authors, follow these guidelines:

    ◦ For works with up to and including seven authors, list the last name and initials for each author.

    ◦ For works with more than seven authors, list the first six names, followed by ellipses, and then the name of the last author listed.

    ◦ Use an ampersand before the name of the last author listed.

8. Use title case for journal titles. Capitalize all important words in the title.

9. Use sentence case for all other titles—books, articles, web pages, and other source titles. Capitalize the first word of the title. Do not capitalize any other words in the title except for the following:

    ◦ Proper nouns

    ◦ First word of a subtitle

    ◦ First word after a colon or dash

10. Use italics for book and journal titles. Do not use italics, underlining, or quotation marks for titles of shorter works, such as articles.

---

Tip: There are many word processing programs and websites available that allow you to just plug in your referencing information and it will format it to the style required. If you decide to use such a program, you must still check all your references against your referencing guide because the way those programs and sites piece the information together may not be the *exact* way you are expected to do so at your school. Always double check!

---

## Writing at Work

Citing other people's work appropriately is just as important in the workplace as it is in school. If you need to consult outside sources to research a document you are creating, follow the general guidelines already discussed, as well as any industry-specific citation guidelines. For more extensive use of

others' work—for instance, requesting permission to link to another company's website on your own corporate website—always follow your employer's established procedures.

## Formatting Reference Page Entries

As is the case for in-text citations, formatting reference entries becomes more complicated when you are citing a source with multiple authors, various types of online media, or sources for which you must provide additional information beyond the basics listed in the general guidelines. The following sections show how to format reference entries by type of source.

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*An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=147#h5p-126 (https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=147#h5p-126)*

---

**H5P:** APA Style Practice

You have already seen a very similar version of this exercise, but let's try it again with difference sources as a pre-test for this section. You can then scroll down to the examples to dig in and compare your answers and thinking to the rules this chapter is about to elucidate.

Thanks to the TRU Library's APA guide for the citations in this activity: https://libguides.tru.ca/apa.

Put the words into the correct order to form a correct APA citation. You should definitely check your APA guide for reference as you work through this activity.

1. This is a report from a non-profit.

   - The best and worst place to be a woman in Canada
   - Mclnturff, K.
   - (2014).
   - Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

2. This is an ebook.

   - Cities and climate change
   - World Bank.
   - https
   - World, B. G.
   - (2011).

3. This is a journal article.

   - Agabi, O G. (2017).
   - 17-26.
   - Linking early childhood education with Indigenous education using

<div>

                gamification                          Research,

- ◦ Ukala, C. C.             ◦ 13(1),
- ◦ Journal Of International Education

4. This is a website.

- ◦ (n.d.).          ◦ Royal Institute of British Architects
- ◦ Shaping the future      ◦ http

5. This is a movie.

- ◦ [Film].          ◦ Universal Pictures.
- ◦ Hitchcock, A.       ◦ (1963)
- ◦ The birds         ◦ (Director).

</div>

## Print Sources: Books

For book-length sources and shorter works that appear in a book, follow the guidelines that best describe your source.

### A book by two or more authors

List the authors' names in the order they appear on the book's title page. Use an ampersand (&) before the last author's name.

> Campbell, D. T., & Stanley, J. C. (1963). *Experimental and quasi-experimental designs for research.* Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.

### An edited book with no author

List the editor or editors' names in place of the author's name, followed by *Ed.* or*Eds.* in parentheses.

> Myers, C., & Reamer, D. (Eds.). (2009). *2009 nutrition index.* San Francisco, CA: HealthSource, Inc.

**An edited book with an author**

List the author's name first, followed by the title and the editor or editors. Note that when the editor is listed after the title, you list the initials before the last name.

> Dickinson, E. (1959). *Selected poems & letters of Emily Dickinson*. R. N. Linscott.(Ed.). Garden City, NY: Doubleday.
>
> *Capitalize "Ed." when the abbreviation refers to an editor.

> Tip: The previous example shows the format used for an edited book with one author—for instance, a collection of a famous person's letters that has been edited. This is different from an anthology, which is a collection of articles or essays by different authors. For citing works in anthologies, see the guidelines later in this section.

**A translated book**

Include the translator's name after the title, and at the end of the citation, list the date the original work was published. Note that for the translator's name, you list the initials before the last name.

> Freud, S. (1965). *New introductory lectures on psycho-analysis* (J. Strachey, Trans.). New York, NY: W. W. Norton. (Original work published 1933).

**A book published in multiple editions**

If you are using any edition other than the first, include the edition number in parentheses after the title.

> Berk, L. (2001). *Development through the lifespan* (2nd ed.). Needham Height, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
>
> *Do not capitalize "ed." when the abbreviation refers to an edition of a book.

**A chapter in an edited book**

List the name of the author(s) who wrote the chapter, followed by the chapter title. Then list the names of the book editor(s) and the title of the book, followed by the page numbers for the chapter and the usual information about the book's publisher.

> Hughes, J.R., & Pierattini, R. A. (1992). An introduction to pharmacotherapy for mental disorders. In J. Grabowski & G. VandenBos (Eds.), *Psychopharmacology* (pp. 97 -125). Washington, DC: American Psychology Association.
>
> *Include the abbreviation "pp." when listing the pages where a chapter or article appear in a book.

**A work that appears in an anthology**

Follow the same process you would use to cite a book chapter, substituting the article or essay title for the chapter title.

> Beck, A. T., & Young, J. (1986). College blues. In D. Goleman & D. Heller (Eds.), *The pleasures of psychology* (pp. 309-323). New York, NY: New American Library.
>
> *Include the abbreviation "pp." when listing the pages where a chapter or article appears in a book.

**An article in a reference book**

List the author's name if available; if no author is listed, provide the title of the entry where the author's name would normally be listed. If the book lists the name of the editor(s), include it in your citation. Indicate the volume number (if applicable) and page numbers in parentheses after the article title.

> The census. (2006). In J.W. Wright (Ed.), *The New York Times 2006 almanac* (pp. 268-275). New York, NY: Penguin.
>
> *Capitalize proper nouns that appear in a book title.

**Two or more books by the same author**

List the entries in order of their publication year, beginning with the work published first.

> Swedan, N. (2001). *Women's sports medicine and rehabilitation.* Gaithersburg, MD: Aspen Publishers.
>
> Swedan, N. (2003). *The active woman's health and fitness handbook.* New York, NY: Perigee.

If two books have multiple authors, and the first author is the same but the others are different, alphabetize by the second author's last name (or the third or fourth, if necessary).

> Carroll, D., & Aaronson, F. (2008). *Managing type II diabetes.* Chicago, IL: Southwick Press.
>
> Carroll, D., & Zuckerman, N. (2008). *Gestational diabetes.* Chicago, IL: Southwick Press.

**Books by different authors with the same last name**

Alphabetize entries by the authors' first initial.

> Smith, I. K. (2008). *The 4-day diet.* New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.
>
> Smith, S. (2008). *The complete guide to Navy Seal fitness: Updated for today's warrior elite* (3rd ed.). Long Island City, NY: Hatherleigh Press.
>
> *Capitalize the first word of a subtitle.

**A book authored by an organization**

Treat the organization name as you would an author's name. For the purposes of alphabetizing, ignore words like *the* in the organization's name (e.g., a book published by the American Heart Association would be listed with other entries whose authors' names begin with *A*.)

American Psychiatric Association. (1994). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders DSM-IV* (4th ed.). Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Publishing.

## A book authored by a government agency

Treat these as you would a book published by a non-governmental organization, but be aware that these works may have an identification number listed. If so, include the number in parentheses after the publication year.

U.S. Census Bureau. (2002). *The decennial censuses from 1790 to 2000*(Publication No. POL/02-MA). Washington, DC: US Government Printing Offices.

# Print Sources: Periodicals

## An article in a scholarly journal

Include the following information:

- Author or authors' names
- Publication year
- Article title (in sentence case, without quotation marks or italics)
- Journal title (in title case and in italics)
- Volume number (in italics)
- Issue number (in parentheses)
- Page number(s) where the article appears

DeMarco, R. F. (2010). Palliative care and African American women living with HIV. *Journal of Nursing Education, 49*(5), 1–4.

## An article in a journal paginated by volume

In journals, page numbers are continuous across all the issues in a particular volume. For instance, the winter issue may begin with page 1, and in the spring issue that follows, the page numbers pick up where the previous issue left off. (If you have ever wondered why a print journal did not begin on page

1, or wondered why the page numbers of a journal extend into four digits, this is why.) Omit the issue number from your reference entry.

> Wagner, J. (2009). Rethinking school lunches: A review of recent literature. *American School Nurses' Journal, 47,* 1123–1127.

**An abstract of a scholarly article**

At times you may need to cite an **abstract**—the summary that appears at the beginning of a published article. If you are citing the abstract only, and it was published separately from the article, provide the following information:

- Publication information for the article
- Information about where the abstract was published (for instance, another journal or a collection of abstracts)

> Romano, S. (2005). Parental involvement in raising standardized test scores. [Abstract]. *Elementary Education Abstracts, 19*, 36.
>
> *Use this format for abstracts published in a collection of abstracts.

> Simpson, M. J. (2008) Assessing educational progress: Beyond standardized testing. *Journal of the Association for School Administrative Professionals,* 35(4), 32-40. Abstract obtained from Assessment in Education, 2009, 73(6), Abstract No. 537892.
>
> *Use this format for abstracts published in another journal.

**A journal article with two to seven authors**

List all the authors' names in the order they appear in the article. Use an ampersand before the last name listed.

Barker, E. T., & Bornstein, M. H. (2010). Global self-esteem, appearance satisfaction, and self-reported dieting in early adolescence. *Journal of Early Adolescence, 30*(2), 205–224.

Tremblay, M. S., Shields, M., Laviolette, M., Craig, C. L., Janssen, I., & Gorber, S. C. (2010). Fitness of Canadian children and youth: Results from the 2007–2009 Canadian Health Measures Survey. *Health Reports, 21*(1), 7–20.

**A journal article with more than eight authors**

List the first six authors' names, followed by a comma, an ellipsis, and the name of the last author listed. The article in the following example has 16 listed authors; the reference entry lists the first six authors and the 16th, omitting the seventh through the 15th.

Straznicky, N.E., Lambert, E.A., Nestel, P. J., McGrane, M. T., Dawood, T., Schlaich, M. P., … Lambert, G. W. (2010). Sympathetic neural adaptation to hypocaloric diet with or without exercise training in obese metabolic syndrome subjects. *Diabetes, 59*(1), 71-79.

*Because some names are omitted, use a comma and ellipsis, rather than an ampersand, before the final name listed.

**Writing at work**

The idea of an eight-page article with 16 authors may seem strange to you—especially if you are in the midst of writing a 10-page research paper on your own. More often than not, articles in scholarly journals list multiple authors. Sometimes, the authors actually did collaborate on writing and editing the published article. In other instances, some of the authors listed may have contributed to the research in some way while being only minimally involved in the process of writing the article. Whenever you collaborate with colleagues to produce a written product, follow your profession's conventions for giving everyone proper credit for their contribution.

**A magazine article**

After the publication year, list the issue date. Otherwise, magazine articles as you would journal articles. List the volume and issue number if both are available.

Marano, H. E. (2010, March/April). Keen cuisine: Dairy queen. *Psychology Today, 43*(2), 58.

*List the month after the year. For weekly magazines, list the full date. e.g. "March 8, 2010."

**A newspaper article**

Treat newspaper articles as you would magazine and journal articles, with one important difference: precede the page number(s) with the abbreviation *p.* (for a single-page article) or *pp.* (for a multipage-page article). For articles that have non-continuous pagination, list all the pages included in the article. For example, an article that begins on page A1 and continues on pages A4 would have the page reference A1, A4. An article that begins on page A1 and continues on pages A4 and A5 would have the page reference A1, A4–A5.

Corwin, C. (2009, January 24). School board votes to remove soda machines from county schools. *Rockwood Gazette,* pp. A1-A2.

*Include ths section in your page reference.

**A letter to the editor**

After the title, indicate in brackets that the work is a letter to the editor.

Jones, J. (2009, January 31). Food police in our schools [Letter to the editor]. *Rockwood Gazette*, p. A8.

**A review**

After the title, indicate in brackets that the work is a review and state the name of the work being reviewed. (Note that even if the title of the review is the same as the title of the book being reviewed, as in the following example, you should treat it as an article title. Do not italicize it.)

> Penhollow, T.M., & Jackson, M.A. (2009). Drug abuse: Concept, prevention, and cessation [Review of the book *Drug abuse: Concepts, prevention, and cessation*]. *American Journal of Health Behavior, 33*(5), 620-622.
>
> *Italicize the title of the reviewed book only where it appears in brackets.

## Electronic Sources

### Citing articles from online periodicals: URLs and Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs)

Whenever you cite online sources, it is important to provide the most up-to-date information available to help readers locate the source. In some cases, this means providing an article's URL, or web address. (The letters *URL* stand for uniform resource locator.) Always provide the most complete URL possible. Provide a link to the specific article used, rather than a link to the publication's homepage.

As you likely know, web addresses are not always stable. If a website is updated or reorganized, the article you accessed in April may move to a different location in May. The URL you provided may become a dead link. For this reason, many online periodicals, especially scholarly publications, now rely on DOIs rather than URLs to keep track of articles.

A **DOI** is a digital object identifier—an identification code provided for some online documents, typically articles in scholarly journals. Like a URL, its purpose is to help readers locate an article. However, a DOI is more stable than a URL, so it makes sense to include it in your reference entry when possible. Follow these guidelines:

If you are citing an online article with a DOI, list the DOI at the end of the reference entry.

If the article appears in print as well as online, you do not need to provide the URL. However, include the words *electronic version* after the title in brackets.

In all other respects, treat the article as you would a print article. Include the volume number and issue number if available. (Note, however, that these may not be available for some online periodicals.)

### An article from an online periodical with a DOI

List the DOI if one is provided. There is no need to include the URL if you have listed the DOI.

> Bell, J. R. (2006). Low-carb beats low-fat diet for early losses but not long term. *OBGYN News, 41*(12), 32. doi:10.1016/S0029-7437(06)71905-X

**An article from an online periodical with no DOI**

List the URL. Include the volume and issue number for the periodical if this information is available. (For some online periodicals, it may not be.)

> Laufer-Cahana, A. (2010, March 15). Lactose intolerance do's and don'ts. Salon. Retrieved from http://www.salon.con/food/feature/2010/03/15/lactose_intolerance_ayala
>
> *Used the words "Retrieved from" before the URL
>
> **This publication is online-only, so a URL must be included in the citation.
>
> ***Do not include a period after the URL.

Note that if the article appears in a print version of the publication, you do not need to list the URL, but do indicate that you accessed the electronic version.

> Robbins, K. (2010, March/April). Nature's bounty: A heady feast [Electronic version]. *Psychology Today, 43*(2), 58.

**A newspaper article**

Provide the URL of the article.

> McNeil, D. G. (2010, May 3). Maternal health: A new study challenges benefits of vitamin A for women and babies. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/04/health/04glob.html?ref=health

**An article accessed through a database**

Cite articles accessed through a database the same way you would normally cite a print article. Provide database information only if the article is difficult to locate.

Tip: APA style does not require the item number or accession number for articles retrieved from databases. You may choose to include it if the article is difficult to locate or the database is an obscure one. Check with your instructor for specific requirements for your course.

**An abstract of an article**

Format article abstracts as you would an article citation, but add the word *Abstract* in brackets after the title.

Bradley, U., Spence, M., Courtney, C. H., McKinley, M. C., Ennis, C. N., McCance, D. R.…Hunter, S. J. (2009). Low-fat versus low-carbohydrate weight reduction diets: Effects on weight loss, insulin resistance, and cardiovascular risk: A randomized control trial [Abstract]. *Diabetes,58*(12), 2741–2748. http://diabetes.diabetesjournals.org/content/early/2009/08/23/db00098.abstract

**A nonperiodical web document**

The ways you cite different nonperiodical web documents may vary slightly from source to source, depending on the information available. In your citation, include as much of the following information as you can:

- Name of the author(s), whether an individual or organization
- Date of publication (Use *n.d.* if no date is available.)
- Title of the document
- Address where you retrieved the document

If the document consists of more than one web page within the site, link to the homepage or the entry page for the document.

American Heart Association. (2010). *Heart attack, stroke, and cardiac arrest warning signs.* Retrieved from http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=3053

**An entry from an online encyclopedia or dictionary**

Because these sources often do not include authors' names, you may list the title of the entry at the beginning of the citation. Provide the URL for the specific entry.

Addiction. (n.d.) In *Merriam-Webster's online dictionary*. Retrieved from http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/addiction

**Graphic data**

When citing graphic data—such as maps, pie charts, bar graphs, and so on—include the name of the organization that compiled the information, along with the publication date. Briefly describe the contents in brackets. Provide the URL where you retrieved the information. (If the graphic is associated with a specific project or document, list it after your bracketed description of the contents.)

US Food and Drug Administration. (2009). [Pie charts showing the percentage breakdown of the FDA's budget for fiscal year 2005]. *2005 FDA budget summary*. Retrieved from mhttp://www.fda.gov/AboutFDA/ReportsManualsForms/Reports/BudgetReports/2005FDABudgetSummary/ucm117231.htm

**An electronic book**

Electronic books may include books available as text files online or audiobooks. If an electronic book is easily available in print, cite it as you would a print source. If it is unavailable in print (or extremely difficult to find), use the format in the example. (Use the words *Available from* in your citation if the book must be purchased or is not available directly.)

Chisholm, L. (n.d.). *Celtic tales.* Retrieved from http://www.childrenslibrary.org/icdl/BookReader?bookid=chicelt_00150014&twoPage=false&route=text&size=0&fullscreen=false&pnum1=1&lang=English&ilang=English

**A chapter from an online book or a chapter or section of a web document**

Chapters and sections from online books or web documents are treated similarly to their print counterparts with the addition of retrieval information. Include the chapter or section number in parentheses after the book title.

Hart, A. M. (1895). Restoratives—Coffee, cocoa, chocolate. In *Diet in sickness and in health* (VI).

> Retrieved from http://www.archive.org/details/dietinsicknessin00hartrich

**A dissertation or thesis from a database**

Provide the author, date of publication, title, and retrieval information. If the work is numbered within the database, include the number in parentheses at the end of the citation.

> Coleman, M.D. (2004). *Effect of a low-carbohydrate, high-protein diet on bone mineral density, biomarkers of bone turnover, and calcium metabolism in healthy premenopausal females.* Retrieved from Virginia Tech Digital Library & Archives: Electronic Theses and Dissertations. (etd-07282004-174858)
>
> *Italicize the titles of theses and dissertations.

**Computer software**

For commonly used office software and programming languages, it is not necessary to provide a citation. Cite software only when you are using a specialized program, such as the nutrition tracking software in the following example. If you download software from a website, provide the version and the year if available.

> Internet Brands, Inc. (2009). FitDay PC (Version 2) [Software]. Available from http://www.fitday.com/Pc/PcHome.html?gcid=14

**A post on a blog or video blog**

Citation guidelines for blogs are similar to those used for discussion forum postings. Briefly describe the type of source in brackets after the title.

> Fazio, M. (2010, April 5). Exercising in my eighth month of pregnancy [Web log comment]. Retrieved from http://somanyblogs.com/~faziom/postID=67

> *Do not italicize the titles of blog or video blog postings.

**Writing at work**

Because the content may not be carefully reviewed for accuracy, discussion forums and blogs should not be relied upon as a major source of information. However, it may be appropriate to cite these sources for some types of research. You may also participate in discussion forums or comment on blogs that address topics of personal or professional interest. Always keep in mind that when you post, you are making your thoughts public—and in many cases, available through search engines. Make sure any posts that can easily be associated with your name are appropriately professional, because a potential employer could view them.

**A television or radio broadcast**

Include the name of the producer or executive producer; the date, title, and type of broadcast; and the associated company and location.

> West, Ty. (Executive producer). (2009, September 24). *PBS special report: Health care reform* [Television broadcast]. New York, NY, and Washington, DC: Public Broadcasting Service.

**A television or radio series or episode**

Include the producer and the type of series if you are citing an entire television or radio series.

> Couture, D., Nabors, S., Pinkard, S., Robertson, N., & Smith, J. (Producers). (1979). *The Diane Rehm show* [Radio series]. Washington, DC: National Public Radio.

To cite a specific episode of a radio or television series, list the name of the writer or writers (if available), the date the episode aired, its title, and the type of series, along with general information about the series.

> Bernanke, J., & Wade, C. (2010, January 10). Hummingbirds: Magic in the air [Television series episode]. In F. Kaufman (Executive producer), *Nature*. New York, NY: WNET.

**A motion picture**

Name the director or producer (or both), year of release, title, country of origin, and studio.

> Spurlock, M. (Director/producer), Morley, J. (Executive producer), & Winters. H. M. (Executive producer). (2004). *Super size me*. United States: Kathbur Pictures in association with Studio on Hudson.

**A recording**

Name the primary contributors and list their role. Include the recording medium in brackets after the title. Then list the location and the label.

> Smith, L. W. (Speaker). (1999). *Meditation and relaxation* [CD]. New York, NY: Earth, Wind, & Sky Productions.

> Székely, I. (Pianist), Budapest Symphony Orchestra (Performers), & Németh, G. (Conductor). (1988). *Chopin piano concertos no. 1 and 2* [CD]. Hong Kong: Naxos.

**A podcast**

Provide as much information as possible about the writer, director, and producer; the date the podcast aired; its title; any organization or series with which it is associated; and where you retrieved the podcast.

> Kelsey, A. R. (Writer), Garcia, J. (Director), & Kim, S. C. (Producer). (2010, May 7). Lies food labels tell us. *Savvy consumer podcast* [Audio podcast]. Retrieved from http://www.savvyconsumer.org/podcasts/050710

Self-Practice Exercise 9.4

*An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=147#h5p-127 (https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=147#h5p-127)*

**H5P:** APA References Practice

Using the guidelines above identify what each of these types of sources are based on their identifying characteristics and under which categories you would find them in the reference guide. Choose the answer that best describes each example.

Some examples taken from: Writing Commons. (2014, September). Open Text. Retrieved from http://writingcommons.org/format/apa/675-block-quotations-apa

1. Baudrillard, Jean. (1981). *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign*. Trans. Charles Levin. Saint Louis: Telos.

    A. A book with two authors

    B. A book with one author

    C. An article in a journal

    D. A multi-volume work

2. United States Drug Enforcement Administration. (2014). The Dangers and consequences of marijuana abuse. Retrieved from http://www.justice.gov/dea/docs/dangers-consequences-marijuana-abuse.pdf

    A. Online codes and standards

    B. Online government document

    C. Online task force report, corporate author

    D. A blog

3. Watson, S. (2003). Antigone. In R. Sullivan & M. Levene (Eds.), *Short Fiction: An Anthology* (pp. 323-329). Don Mills, Ont.: Oxford University Press. (Original work published 1979)

    A. A chapter in a book

    B. A short story reprinted in an anthology

    C. A book with three authors

    D. A multi-volume book

4. Gilbert, Elliot. "The Ceremony of Innocence: Charles Dickens's A Christmas Carol." PMLA 90 (1975): 22-31.

    A.   An online journal article

    B.   A chapter in a book

    C.   A newspaper article

    D.   An academic article

5.   Ogborne, A.C., Smart, R.G., & Adlaf, E.M. (2000). Self-reported medical use of marijuana: A survey of the general population. *Canadian Medical Association Journal,* 162(12), 1685. Retrieved from http://ecmaj.ca.cgi

    A.   An online authored report, non-governmental organization

    B.   An e-version of a print book

    C.   An online academic journal article

    D.   An online academic journal article by multiple authors

6.   David, L. (Producer) & Guggenheim, D. (Director). (2006). *An Inconvenient Truth* [Motion Picture]. United States: Lawrence Bender Productions.

    A.   A blog

    B.   A video/DVD

    C.   A television series

    D.   A CD-ROM

7.   Jaynes, J. 1986. Consciousness of the voices of the mind. *Canadian Psychology* 27. 128-137.

    A.   A print journal article

    B.   An online journal article

    C.   A magazine article

    D.   A book

8.   Spiro, M.D. (1983). Introduction: Thirty years of kibbutz research. In E. Krause (Ed.), *The sociology of the kibbutz: Studies in Israeli society II*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books.

    A.   An edited book

    B.   A chapter

    C.   A book

    D.   All of the options are correct

9.   Kamel, F., Tanner, C., Umbach, D., Hoppin, J., Alavanja, M., Blair, A.,… Sandler, D. (2007). Pesticide exposure and self-reported Parkinson's disease in the agricultural health study. *Am J Epidemiol,* 165: 364-374.

    A.   A book with eight or more authors

    B.   A chapter in an edited book

    C.   A print journal article with eight or more authors

        D.  An online academic article with eight or more authors

10.  McPartland, J.M., & Pruitt, P.L. (1997). Medical marijuana and its use by the immunocompromised. Alternative Therapies in Health and Medicine, 3(3), 39-45. doi: 10.1080/102825

        A.  All of the options are correct

        B.  A chapter of a book from an online library

        C.  An online newspaper article

        D.  An online article with DOI

**Answer Key**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1.  B | 5.  D | 9.  C |
| 2.  B | 6.  B | 10.  D |
| 3.  B | 7.  A | |
| 4.  D | 8.  D | |

## Sample Reference Page

Review the following example from Jorge's paper on evaluating low-carbohydrate diets. This is an example of how to piece all of your referencing information into one section.

*Figure 9.1 Sample Reference List*

## Assignment 3 (2.5%)

Using the JIBC APA Reference Guide (http://lgdata.s3-website-us-east-1.amazonaws.com/docs/766/161187/APA_Style-6th_ed-Oct2013.pdf), compile a reference page consisting of the six sources given below. You will need to apply the required formatting for each of the references as well as the page as a whole. You will have to look at each of the sources and the information that is given for each: there may be some extra information you will need to omit from the references.

1. Identify what type of source this is from the information given.

2. Find the example of that type of source in the reference guide.

3. Decide what information you need and do not need for each.

4. Compose each individual source's reference.

5. On a separate page, combine the references you created for the six sources into a correctly formatted reference page.

**Submit this assignment to your instructor for grading. (2.5%)**

**Referencing information for Assignment 3**

1. *American Music Teacher*, August-Sept 1999 v49 (1) p34(5) 1998 National Survey of High School Pianists. Harold Kafer; Richard Kennel

2. *The Economist* (US), June 1, 1996 v339 n7968 p79(1) The food of the gods.

3. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, Dec 2005 v14 i6 p317(4) Music and Cognitive Abilities. Glenn E. Schellenberg

4. *Nursing interventions: effective nursing treatments* / [edited by] Gloria M. Bulechek, Joanne C. McCloskey. Philadelphia: Saunders, c1999. 3rd ed Includes bibliographical references and index. ISBN: 072167724X Fenwick Stacks Call Number: RT48 .N8833 1999

5. Kok, S.C. (2005). Music and learning. In Hoffman, B. (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Educational Technology*.Retrieved: March 28, 2008, from http://coe.sdsu.edu/eet/articles/musiclearning/start.htm

6. Tuning up young minds: music lessons give kids a small IQ advantage.B. Bower. *Science News* 165.25 (June 19, 2004): p389(1). (446 words)

## Checklist 9.1: Reference Page Reminder

Just to review, your final reference page needs to:

1. Start on an fresh page after your last page of writing

2. Be titled "Reference Page" or "References"

3. Be in alphabetical order based on the author's last name

4. Be double spaced

5. Have hanging indents

Tip: In APA style, book and article titles are formatted in sentence case, not title case. Sentence case means that only the first word is capitalized, along with any proper nouns.

Key Takeaways

- In APA papers, in-text citations usually include the name(s) of the author(s) and the year of publication.

- In-text citations correspond to entries in the references section, which provide detailed referencing information about a source.

- Entries in the references section include as much of the following information as possible:

- Print Resources: Author(s), date of publication, title, publisher, page numbers (for shorter works), editors (if applicable), and periodical title (if applicable).

- Online resources (text based). Author(s), date of publication, title, publisher or sponsoring organization, and DOI or URL (if applicable).

- Electronic resources (non text based).Details about the creator(s) of the work, title, associated company or series, and date the work was produced or broadcast. The specific details provided will vary depending on the medium and the information that is available.

- Electronic resources (text based). If widely available in print form, it is sometimes unnecessary to provide details about how to access the electronic version. Check the guidelines for the specific source type.

## Journal Entry 8

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**H5P:** Question Prompts

- What did you find the most straightforward/easy about citations?

- What did you find more difficult about citations?

- What did you find the most straightforward/easy about composing references?

- What did you find more difficult about composing references?

- What concerns you most about referencing citations? What will you do to address this?

*An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=147#h5p-129 (https://opentextbc.ca/ writingforsuccessh5p/?p=147#h5p-129)*

# Chapter 10: Persuasion

This chapter is short in comparison to the other chapters you have read. That is because you will be expected to complete your critique this week. In the next chapter, **Developing a Convincing Argument**, you will need to apply this information and structures in developing your persuasive paper, the last essay form you will learn in this course.

# 10.1 The Purpose of Persuasion

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

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

Most people have strong views on **controversial topics** (ones that inspire extreme points of view or opinions) and are often very willing to share those strong views. However, imagine you are having a discussion with someone who is only willing to share a particular point of view, ignoring yours, which may be in opposition. The ideas presented by that person would be very narrow, almost as if the person has tunnel vision and is merely expressing a personal opinion. If that person does provide you with facts, they may often be skewed or not from a credible source. After the discussion, there is only a slight chance you would be convinced of the other person's point of view. You may have new ideas you had not considered before or a new perspective, but you would probably not be thoroughly convinced because that person has not made any attempt to present a well-rounded, fact-based point of view. This is why it is essential for you to not only provide your reader with strong, substantiated evidenced, but also to ensure you present an argument that looks at the topic from multiple angles.

Now, you may be asking yourself, "How can my argument be convincing if I present ideas contrary to my main point of view?" Well, while you need to concede there are other views different from your own, it is very important to show your reader you have thought about different angles and that the conclusions you have come to have been critically developed. This evidence of critical thinking will elevate your argument to a level so that your reader cannot really have any objections to. Also, when you look at the structures for persuasive writing, outlined in the next section, you will learn how you can rebut the possible objections you present, essentially smashing those contrary ideas and showing how your point of view is the convincing one.

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

# 10.2 The Structure of a Persuasive Essay

Learning Objectives

- Determine the structure of persuasion in writing
- Apply a formula for a classic persuasive argument

## Writing a Persuasive Essay

You first need to choose a topic that you feel passionate about. If your instructor requires you to write about a specific topic, approach the subject from an angle that interests you. Begin your essay with an engaging introduction. Your thesis should typically appear somewhere in your introduction.

Next, need to acknowledge and explain points of view that may conflict with your own to build credibility and trust with your audience. You also should state the limits of your argument. This 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.

Be sure to make your appeals in support of your thesis by using sound, credible evidence. Use a balance of facts and opinions from a wide range of sources, such as scientific studies, expert testimony, statistics, and personal anecdotes. Each piece of evidence should be fully explained and clearly stated. Also, write in a style and tone that is appropriate for your subject and audience. Tailor your language and word choice to these two factors, while still being true to your own voice. Finally, write a conclusion that effectively summarizes the main argument and reinforces your thesis.

## Structuring a Persuasive Essay

The formula below for organizing a persuasive essay may be one with which you are familiar. It will present a convincing argument to your reader because your discussion is well rounded and thorough, and you leave your audience with your point of view at the end. *Remember to consider each of these components in this formulaas sections instead of paragraphs because you will probably want to discuss multiple ideas backing up your point of view to make it more convincing.*

When writing a persuasive essay, it is best to begin with the most important point because it immediately captivates your readers and compels them to continue reading. For example, if you were supporting your thesis that homework is detrimental to the education of high school students, you

would want to present your most convincing argument first, and then move on to the less important points for your case.

Some key transitional words you should use with this method of organization are: *most importantly*, *almost as importantly*, *just as importantly*, and *finally*.

**The Formula** You will need to come up with objection points, but you will also need to think of direct rebuttals to each of those ideas. Remember to consult your outline as you are writing because you may need to double-check that you have countered *each* of the possible opposing ideas you presented.

### Section 1: Introduction

- Attention getter
- Thesis (showing main and controlling ideas)
- Background
- Signposts (make sure you outline the structure your argument will follow: Pros Cons/Pros)

### Section 2: (Multiple) Ideas in Support of Claim

- Give a topic sentence introducing the point (showing main and controlling ideas)
- Give explanations + evidence on first point
- Make concluding statement summarizing point discussion (possibly transitioning to next supporting idea)
- Repeat with multiple ideas in separate paragraphs

### Section 3: Summary of (Some) Opposing Views

- Give topic sentence explaining this paragraph will be opposing points of view to provide thorough, convincing argument
- Present general summary of some opposing ideas
- Present some *generalized* evidence
- Provide brief concluding sentence for paragraph—transitioning into next rebuttal paragraph

### Section 4: Response to Opposing Views

- Give topic sentence explaining this paragraph/section **connects to or expands on previous paragraph**
- [may recognize validity of some of points] then need to present how your ideas are stronger
- Present evidence **directly countering/refutingideas** mentioned in previous section
- Give concluding statement summarizing the **countering** arguments

**Section 5: Conclusion**

- Restate your thesis
- Summarize your discussion points
- Leave the reader with a strong impression; do not waiver here
- May provide a "call for action"

Tip: In a persuasive essay, the writer's point of view should be clearly expressed at the beginning of each paragraph in the topic sentence, which should contain the main idea of the paragraph and the writer's controlling idea.

# 10.3 Being Critical

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Learning Objectives

- Explain the importance and benefits of acknowledging opposing ideas
- Identify the importance of cautious use of tone in a persuasive essay
- Identify bias in writing
- Assess various rhetorical devices, including the use of *I*
- Distinguish between fact and opinion
- Understand the importance of visuals to strengthen arguments

</td></tr>
</table>

In Chapter 7: Sources: Choosing the Right Ones, we discussed being critical when evaluating sources, the ideas presented in those sources, and how those ideas are presented. When writing a persuasive essay, you need to focus on the same elements, but you also need to ensure you are presenting an argument that considers other points of view on your topic; you need to acknowledge there are other angles, and you need to present ideas countering those objections in order to increase your chance at convincing your reader.

## Style and Tone of Language

Just as with any essay, the way you write and the tone you use is very important to consider. Think back to the earlier mention of that one-sided argument. If you are talking with a person who uses aggressive and inflammatory words, are you more or less likely to listen to the whole argument and ultimately be convinced? If someone is waving his hands and swearing or yelling, the gestures and raised voice may actually distract you from what is being said. Also, when people are extremely animated in their discussions, their audience may become defensive if they do not agree with the ideas presented. In such a case, the audience may then respond in the same way, and no one ends up really hearing other points of view and will definitely not be convinced. Consider the same discussion, but imagine the original speaker being calm and controlled. Do you think you would be more likely to listen and consider the ideas? That is what often happens; the speaker also allows you to give your input and views, and together, you can arrive at a blend of ideas. While you may not be convinced to change your mind completely, the way the speaker presents the argument (calmly and substantively) creates an environment or situation where you are more open to discussion. This is the same when you write; if you choose inflammatory language not appropriate to your audience, the overall impact is almost "bloggish"—like someone ranting on a topic and just stating his or her opinion. This becomes a bigger issue if no substantive evidence or support is given for the discussion. The writer just seems like

a radical expressing views, not someone you can use for credible support. In short, remember to choose your words carefully. While you will need to use assertive language to support your ideas, you need to choose objective words. How you make your argument more convincing is by:Using strong, peer-reviewed, and reliable evidence to back up your ideasPresenting and rebutting at least one opposing idea

## Acknowledging Opposing Ideas and Limits to Your Argument

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

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

Acknowledging different points of view also fosters 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. Your readers will know from the beginning that you are a reasonable writer, and they will trust your argument as a result. For example, in the following concessionary statement, the writer advocates for stricter gun control laws, but admits it will not solve all of our problems with crime:

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

Such a concession will be welcome by those who might disagree with this writer's argument in the first place. To effectively persuade their readers, writers need to be modest in their goals and humble in their approach to get readers to listen to the ideas. See below for Phrases of Concession for some useful phrases of concession.

### Phrases of Concession

- although
- granted that
- of course

- still
- though
- yet

## 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 coloured 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.

In your first assignment a number of weeks ago, you were asked to sit somewhere, make observations, and write both a positive and negative description of the same scene—or to show two angles of vision. The purpose of this exercise was to make it evident to you how easily bias and angles can appear even through the smallest words you choose to use in your writing. Choosing each word carefully is even more significant in a persuasive paper because, as already mentioned, you want your reader to view your presentation of ideas as logical and not just a tirade. Using objective and neutral language and evidence and acknowledging you have a possible bias will help you present a well-rounded and developed argument.

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 personal bias** is that it can 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.

## Fact and Opinion

**Facts** are statements that can be definitely proven using objective data. The statement that is a fact is absolutely valid. In other words, the statement can be pronounced as true or false. For example, 2 + 2 = 4. This expression identifies a true statement, or a fact, because it can be proved with objective data.

**Opinions** are personal views, or judgments. An opinion is what an individual believes about a particular subject. However, an opinion in argumentation must have legitimate backing; adequate evidence and credibility should support the opinion. Consider the credibility of expert opinions, as experts in a given field have the knowledge and credentials to make their opinion meaningful to a larger audience.

For example, you seek the opinion of your dentist when it comes to the health of your gums, and you

seek the opinion of your mechanic when it comes to the maintenance of your car. Both have knowledge and credentials in those respective fields, which is why their opinions matter to you. But the authority of your dentist may be greatly diminished should he or she offer an opinion about your car, and vice versa.

In your writing, you want to strike a balance between credible facts and authoritative opinions. Relying on one or the other will likely lose more of your audience than it gains.

## The Use of I in Writing

The use of *I* in writing is often a topic of debate, and the acceptance of its usage varies from instructor to instructor. It is difficult to predict the preferences for all your present and future instructors, but consider the effects it can potentially have on your writing.

Be mindful of the use of *I* in your writing because it can make your argument sound overly biased, for two primary reasons:

Excessive repetition of any word will eventually catch the reader's attention—and usually not in a good way. The use of *I* is no different.

The insertion of *I* into a sentence alters not only the way a sentence might sound but also the composition of the sentence itself. *I* is often the subject of a sentence. If the subject of the essay is supposed to be, say, smoking, then by inserting yourself into the sentence, you are effectively displacing the subject of the essay into a secondary position. In the following example, the subject of the sentence is bolded and underlined:

**Smoking** is bad. vs. **I** think smoking is bad.

In the first sentence, the rightful subject, *smoking*, is in the subject position in the sentence. In the second sentence, the insertion of *I* and *think* replaces *smoking* as the subject, which draws attention to *I* and away from the topic that is supposed to be discussed. Remember to keep the message (the subject) and the messenger (the writer) separate.

You can use **Checklist 10.1: Developing Sound Arguments,** as you work on your persuasive essay.

**Checklist 10.1: Developing Sound Arguments**

*An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=155#h5p-130 (https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=155#h5p-130)*

**H5P:** Review the notes you have made so far for your Persuasive Essay, and ensure that your essay contains the following elements. Put a checkmark next to each item you have in place:

- An engaging introduction
- A conclusion that will adequately summarize the essay and reinforce the thesis
- Respectful acknowledgment and explanation of opposing ideas
- Acknowledgment of the argument's limits
- A varied range of evidence from credible sources
- A reasonable, specific thesis that is able to be supported by evidence
- A style and tone of language that is appropriate for the subject and audience

Tip: The word *prove* is frequently used in the discussion of persuasive writing. Writers may claim that one piece of evidence or another proves the argument, but proving an argument is often not possible. No evidence proves a debatable topic one way or the other; that is why the topic is debatable. Facts can be proved, but opinions can only be supported, explained, and persuaded.

## Using Visual Elements to Strengthen Arguments

Adding visual elements to a persuasive argument can often strengthen its persuasive effect. However, remember you want to use them to make a bigger impact for your reader, so you need to make sure they are:

- **Relevant and essential.** They should help your reader visualize your point.
- **Easy to follow.** The reader should not have to work too hard to understand.
- **Appropriate to audience, tone, and purpose.** Always keep the audience in mind.
- **Appropriately cited and referenced.** If you borrow from a source, be sure to include proper citations.
- **NOT disrespectful.** You want your writing to been seen as fair and non-biased.
- **NOT used too often.** They will become more of a distraction than a focal point if they are used too often

There are two main types of visual elements: quantitative visuals and qualitative visuals.

- **Quantitative** visuals present data graphically. They allow the audience to see statistics spatially. The purpose of using quantitative visuals is to make logical appeals to the audience. For example, sometimes it is easier to understand the disparity in certain statistics if it is displayed graphically. Bar graphs, pie charts, Venn diagrams, histograms, and line graphs are all ways of presenting quantitative data in spatial dimensions.

- **Qualitative** visuals present images that appeal to the audience's emotions. Photographs and pictorial images are examples of qualitative visuals. Such images often try to convey a story, and seeing an actual example can carry more power than hearing or reading about the example. For example, one image of a child suffering from malnutrition will likely have more of an emotional impact than pages dedicated to describing that same condition in writing.

**Writing at Work**

When making a business presentation, you typically have limited time to get your idea across. Providing visual elements for your audience can be an effective timesaving tool. Quantitative visuals in business presentations serve the same purpose as they do in persuasive writing. They should make logical appeals by showing numerical data in a spatial design. Quantitative visuals should be pictures that might appeal to your audience's emotions. You will find that many of the rhetorical devices used in writing are the same ones used in the workplace.

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**Key Takeaways**

- The purpose of persuasion in writing is to convince or move readers toward a certain point of view, or opinion.
- An argument is a reasoned opinion supported and explained by evidence. To argue, in writing, is to advance knowledge and ideas in a positive way.
- A thesis that expresses the opinion of the writer in more specific terms is better than one that is vague.
- It is essential that you address counterarguments and do so respectfully.
- It is helpful to establish the limits of your argument and what you are trying to accomplish through a concession statement.
- To persuade a skeptical audience, you need to use a wide range of evidence. Scientific studies, opinions from experts, historical precedent, statistics, personal anecdotes, and current events are all types of evidence that you might use in explaining your point.
- Word choice and writing style should be appropriate for both your subject and your audience.
- You should let your reader know your bias, but do not let that bias blind you to the primary components of good argumentation: sound, thoughtful evidence and respectfully and reasonably addressing opposing ideas.
- You should be mindful of the use of $^I$in your writing because it can make your argument sound more biased than it needs to.

- Facts are statements that can be proven using objective data.

- Opinions are personal views, or judgments, that cannot be proven.

- In writing, you want to strike a balance between credible facts and authoritative opinions.

- Quantitative visuals present data graphically. The purpose of using quantitative visuals is to make logical appeals to the audience.

- Qualitative visuals present images that appeal to the audience's emotions.

# 10.4 Examples: Persuasive Essay

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Learning Objectives

- Read two examples of persuasive essays on the same topic

</div>

## EXAMPLE 1 Justice: Retribution or Restoration?

Every day when I pick up my newspaper I read about crime. What strikes me as tragic in these discussions is that the solutions which are proposed are simply more of the same: bigger threats, more punishment. Few people ask more basic questions about whether punishment ought to be our main concern. Even fewer seem genuinely concerned about victims and what they need.

Consequently, victims' needs and wishes continue to be ignored. Prisons are massively crowded, and the call for a return to the death penalty is back with a vengeance. The costs to us as taxpayers keep soaring.

Actually, there is good reason why we ignore victims and focus instead on more punishment for offenders. It has to do with our very definitions of what constitutes crime and what justice entails.

If you have been a victim, you know something about the fear, the anger, the shame, the sense of violation that this experience generates. You know something about the needs that result: needs for repayment, for a chance to talk, for support, for involvement, for an experience that feels like justice. Unfortunately, you may also know from personal experience how little help, information and involvement you can expect from the justice process.

If you have experienced crime, you know for a fact that you yourself are the victim, and you would like to be remembered in what happens thereafter. But the legal system does not define the offence that way and does not assume that you have a central role.

Legally, the essence of the crime lies in breaking a law rather than the actual damage done. More importantly, the official victim is the state, not you. It is no accident, then, that victims and their needs are so often forgotten: they are not even part of the equation, not part of the definition of the offence!

When a crime occurs, the state as victim decides what must be done, and the process of deciding focuses primarily on two questions: "Is the person guilty? If so, how much punishment does he or she deserve?" Our definitions of crime and justice, then, might be summarized like this:

> Crime is a violation of the state and its laws.
>
> Justice establishes blame and administers pain through a contest between offender and state.

This way of viewing crime might be called "retributive justice." It has little place for victims, uses what some scholars have called a "battle model" for settling things, and, because it is centred so heavily on establishing blame, looks primarily to the past rather than the future. It assumes that punishment or pain, usually in the form of a prison term, is the normal outcome.

This process concentrates almost exclusively on offenders, but, ironically, does not hold them accountable. To be accountable, offenders ought to be helped to understand and acknowledge the human consequences of their actions. Then they ought to be encouraged to take responsibility for what happens thereafter, including taking steps to right the wrong. Yet this rarely happens; indeed, the justice process discourages responsibility. Thus neither victim nor offender is offered the kind of opportunities that might aid healing and resolution for both.

But what is the alternative? How should we understand crime and justice?

An alternate understanding of crime and justice might look something like this:

> Crime is a violation of people and their relationships.
>
> Justice identifies needs and obligations so that things can be made right through a process which encourages dialogue and involves both victims and offenders.

A restorative approach to justice would understand that the essence of crime is a violation of people and of harmonious relations between them. Instead of asking first of all, "Who 'done' it? What should they get?" (and rarely going beyond this), a restorative approach to justice would ask "Who has been hurt? What can be done to make things right, and whose responsibility is it?" True justice would have as its goals restoration, reconciliation, and responsibility rather than retribution.

Restorative justice would aim to be personal. Insofar as possible, it would seek to empower victims and offenders to be involved in their own cases and, in the process, to learn something about one another. As in the Victim-Offender Reconciliation Program (VORP), which operates in many communities in the U.S. and Canada, when circumstances permit, justice would offer victims and offenders an opportunity to meet in order to exchange information and decide what is to be done. Understanding of one another, acceptance of responsibility, healing of injuries, and empowerment of participants would be important goals.

Is restorative approach practical? Can it work? The experience of the VORP suggests that while there

are limitations and pitfalls, restoration and reconciliation can happen, even in some tough cases. Moreover, our own history points in this direction. Through most of western history, most crimes were understood to be harms done to people by other people. Such wrongs created obligations to make right, and the normal process was to negotiate some sort of restitution agreement. Only in the past several centuries did our present retributive understanding displace this more reparative approach.

If our ancestors could view crime and justice this way, why can't we?

Adapted from: Zehr, H. (n.d.). *Justice: Retribution or Restoration?* Retrieved from: http://www.peaceworkmagazine.org/pwork/0499/049910.htm

# EXAMPLE 2 Retribution

Retribution is perhaps the most intuitive—and the most questionable—aim of punishment in the criminal law. Quite contrary to the idea of rehabilitation and distinct from the utilitarian purposes of restraint and deterrence, the purpose of retribution is actively to injure criminal offenders, ideally in proportion with their injuries to society, and so expiate them of guilt.

The impulse to do harm to someone who does harm to you is older than human society, older than the human race itself (go to the zoo and watch the monkey cage for a demonstration.) It's also one of the most powerful human impulses—so powerful that at times it can overwhelm all else. One of the hallmarks of civilization is to relinquish the personal right to act on this impulse, and transfer responsibility for retribution to some governing body that acts, presumably, on behalf of society entire. When society executes retribution on criminals by means of fines, incarceration, or death, these punishments are a social expression of the personal vengeance the criminal's victims feel, rationally confined (it is hoped) to what is best for society as a whole.

While "it's natural" tends not to carry much weight in the criminal law, "it's morally right" can. Moral feelings and convictions are considered, even by the criminal law, to be some of the most powerful and binding expressions of our humanity. In binding criminal trial juries to restrict guilty verdicts to situations of the highest certainty, "beyond a reasonable doubt" is also often described as "to a moral certainty." It is to their moral feelings of what is truly right that jury members are asked look before delivering a verdict. It's perhaps not too much of a stretch, then, to argue that it's morally right to make criminals suffer as their victims have suffered, if that's the way one's moral certainty points.

No matter what one's moral feelings are about inflicting deliberate harm on a human being, the majority of the citizenry still holds that it's right to exact retribution on criminal offenders. This is almost certainly true of the majority of victims, and their loved ones, for whom equanimity becomes more and more difficult depending on the severity of the crime. What rape victim does not wish to see her attacker suffer? What parent does not hate the one who killed their child? The outrage that would result from leaving these passions for revenge unsatisfied might be seen as a dramatic failure of the entire criminal justice system. It's a good argument for retributive justice, then, that in this world public vengeance is necessary in order to avoid the chaos ensuing from individuals taking revenge into their own hands. And, until the moral certainty of a majority of society points towards compassion rather than revenge, this is the form the criminal law must take.

Adapted from: The Lectric Law Library. (n.d.). *Retribution (http://www.lectlaw.com/mjl/cl062.htm).* Retrieved from: http://www.lectlaw.com/mjl/cl062.htm

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### Journal Entry 9

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**H5P:** Question Prompts

- Briefly describe one or two topics on which you may want to base your persuasive essay.
- Why is this a good topic?
- What types of challenges do you think you may face in developing ideas on this topic?

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# Chapter 11: Developing a Convincing Argument

In this chapter, we will be applying the concepts presented to you in Chapter 10: Persuasion. Working through the self-practice exercise will help you to develop a strong, convincing argument on a topic of your choice. At the end of Section 11.3: Organizing Your Ideas, you will need to produce an outline to show to your instructor.

# 11.1 Coming Up With a Topic

**The Requirements** This assessment is divided into three parts (the requirements of each are described below): A formal outline due week 11 A rough draft due week 12 A final draft due week 13. You will receive 2.5% each for parts 1 and 2, and the final essay is worth 25%.

## Essay 3: Persuasion (2.5%+2.5%+25%)

Choose a controversial topic on which you can base a persuasive discussion of 1,350 to 1,500 words.

You must:

- Demonstrate the application of dialectics and consideration of altering points of view
- Construct and follow a logical argument discussion
- Provide supporting evidence from five to seven supplemental sources and include a reference page and citations.

**Part A: Essay 3: Persuasive formal outline/5 marks (2.5%) \*\*Due week 11\*\***

Create a formal, sentence outline for your instructor's approval. You must include:

- A working thesis
- A working outline
- Topic sentences for each supporting paragraph

- Notes of how you plan to develop your ideas
- The sourcing information of where you will get evidence to support your ideas.

You will be marked on level of completion of the five components described above. You do not have to stick to the outline exactly when you start working on your draft, but you will need to demonstrate you have done some of the preliminary work.

**Part B: Essay 3: Persuasive draft/10 marks (2.5%)\*\*Due week 12\*\***

Create a first draft of your persuasive essay. You must include:

- A complete introduction
- A complete conclusion
- Paragraph development
- A demonstration of idea development
- A draft reference page

**Part C: Essay 3: Persuasive final submission/100 marks (25%)\*\*Due week 13\*\***

Write a 1,350 to 1,500 word persuasive essay on a controversial topic. Use the thesis, evidence, opposing argument, and concessionary statement as the basis for writing a full persuasive essay. You must include:

- An engaging introduction
- Clear explanations of all the evidence you present
- A strong conclusion.

**The Controversy:** A **controversial topic** is one on which people have strong views. Imagine the type of discussion that can become really heated, usually when the subject is something people are passionate about. But a person who is passionate about a particular issue does not necessarily mean they recognize the merits of the other view (although that often happens); it just means that the person has collected evidence (from a variety of sources) and synthesized those ideas to arrive at a particular point of view.

When you are trying to choose your topic for your persuasive paper, it is easier if you choose a topic about which you feel very strongly. You probably have realized by this point that when you are writing, it is a lot easier to write about a topic you already have some background knowledge on, and something you are extremely interested in. This helps to engage you and keep you interested in the writing process. No matter the topic you eventually decide to discuss, there are a few things you need to think about before you begin the writing process. You will need to make sure your subject is:

- **Significant.** Is a discussion of this topic one that has the potential to contribute to a field of

study? Will it make an impact? This does not mean every discussion has to change lives, but it needs to be something relatively important. For example, a significant topic would be to convince your reader that eating at fast-food restaurants is detrimental to people's cardiovascular system. A less significant discussion would be if you were to try to convince your reader why one fast-food restaurant is better than another.

- **Singular.** This means you need to focus on one subject. Using the fast-food restaurant example, if you were to focus on both the effects on the cardiovascular *and* endocrine system, the discussion would lose that singular focus and there would be too much for you to cover.

- **Specific.** Similar to the point above, your topic needs to be narrow enough to allow for you to really discuss the topic within the essay parameters (i.e., word count). Many writers are afraid of getting too specific because they feel they will run out of things to say. If you develop the idea completely and give thorough explanations and plenty of examples, the specificity should not be a problem.

- **Supportable.** Does evidence for what you want to discuss actually exist? There is probably some form of evidence out there even for the most obscure topics or points of view. However, you need to remember you should use credible sources. Someone's opinions posted on a blog about why one fast-food restaurant is the best does not count as credible support for your ideas.

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Self-Practice Exercise 11.1

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**H5P:** Freewriting

Choose one of the topics below for your essay. Remember, you will need to focus your ideas to a manageable size for a five– to seven–page research paper.

- Illegal immigration in Canada
- Bias in the media
- The role of religion in educational systems
- The possibility of life in outer space
- Modern day slavery around the world, ie. Human trafficking
- Foreign policy
- Television and advertising

- Stereotypes and prejudice
- Gender roles and the workplace
- Driving and cell phones

You are also welcome to choose another topic; you may want to double-check with your instructor if it is suitable. It is important to remember that you want your paper to be unique and stand out from others'; writing on overly common topics may not help with this. Since we have already discussed the death penalty as a form of punishment in the last chapter and already developed ideas, you should probably not choose this topic because your instructor wants you to demonstrate you have applied the process of critical thinking on another topic.

- Set a timer for **five minutes** and freewrite on your chosen topic. Remember, when we freewrite, the goal is to just dump out everything we know or think about our topic. Try not to censor yourself. You just want to see what you know.

- Review your freewriting to find the key words you will use to help shape your research. Try to identify five to seven key terms from your writing.

## Formulating a Research Question

In forming a research question, you are setting a goal for your research. Your main research question should be substantial enough to form the guiding principle of your paper, but focused enough to guide your research. A strong research question requires you not only to find information but also to put together different pieces of information, interpret and analyze them, and figure out what you think. As you consider potential research questions, ask yourself whether they would be too hard or too easy to answer.

To determine your research question, review the freewriting you completed earlier. Skim through books, articles, and websites and list the questions you have. (You may wish to use the 5WH strategy to help you formulate questions.) Include simple, factual questions and more complex questions that require analysis and interpretation. Determine your main question—the primary focus of your paper—and several subquestions that you will need to research to answer that main question.

Here are the research questions Jorge will use to focus his research. Notice that his main research question has no obvious, straightforward answer. Jorge will need to research his subquestions, which address narrower topics, to answer his main question.

**Topic:** Low-carbohydrate diets

**Main question:** Are low-carbohydrate diets as effective as they have been portrayed to be by media sources?

**Subquestions:**

- Who can benefit from following a low-carbohydrate diet?
- What are the supposed advantages to following a low-carbohydrate diet?
- When did low-carb diets become a "hot" topic in the media?
- Where do average consumers get information about diet and nutrition?
- Why has the low-carb approach received so much media attention?
- How do low-carb diets work?

Self-Practice Exercise 11.2, 11.3, 11.4

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**H5P:** Self Practice Exercises

**11.2**

For this exercise, you will need your notes from Self-Practice Exercise 11.1.

- Review your notes and think about what you already know about your topic. Identify a research question you would like to explore from the key ideas you identified in the last exercise.
- If you're working in class, ask a partner to review your question and ask how they might help to narrow and shape it. If you're not working in class, ask a trusted friend to weigh in. Make note of any suggestions you are offered below.

**11.3**

Time to hit the library or library databases! Using your research question and related key terms, find good sources for your essay. Ensure you find the following:

- One subject-specific periodicals database likely to include relevant articles on your topic
- Two articles about your topic written for an educated general audience
- At least one article about your topic written for an audience with specialized knowledge

Take good citational notes in the space below.

Organize your list of resources into primary and secondary sources. What makes them either primary or

secondary? Pick one primary source and one secondary source and write a sentence or two summarizing the information that each provides.

What type of primary source did you choose? Who wrote it, and why? Do you think this source provides accurate information, or is it biased in some way?

Where did the information in the secondary source come from? Was the author citing an initial study, piece of literature, or work of art? Where could you find the primary source?

**11.4**

- Using the research you've done so far, identify your working thesis statement. Remember that the working thesis should answer the research question and should have a clear argument that you will use your research to support.

- Now, sketch out a draft outline for your essay.

Remember, all of this is likely to change as you work toward your final draft. Don't feel too rigidly committed to these ideas — enjoy them as a useful place to start.

**How to Be Really Convincing** Sometimes it can be very challenging to convince someone of your ideas and that your point of view is valid. If your reader has strong contrary views or has had emotional experiences in the past connected to that topic, your job in persuading will be more challenging. However, if you consider your audience and tone (as discussed in **Section 10.3: Being Critical**) and think about the answers to the following questions in **Checklist 11.1, Who Is My Audience?,** you will be better able to predict possible objections your reader may have to your argument and address those accordingly. It will also help you make recognize how much and what kind of background information you need to provide your reader with context for your discussion.

**Checklist 11.1: Who Is My Audience?**

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**H5P:** Audience

The following questions will help you to think through your audience. Remember, understanding your audience is critical to writing persuasively for them in favour of your argument.

- Who are my readers?
- What do they already know on the subject?

- What are they likely to be interested in?

- How impartial or biased are they?

- Is the subject one that may challenge their ethical or moral beliefs?

- What values do we share?

- What types of evidence will be most effective?

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## Self-Practice Exercise 11.5

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**H5P:** Reviewing Persuasive Essays

Go and review the two essays printed in Chapter 10 (see 10.4) and think about the strengths and weaknesses of each essay. If you're in class, feel free to work with a partner on these questions.

- What are the strengths of "Justice: Retribution or Restoration"?

- What are the weaknesses of "Justice: Retribution or Restoration"?

- What are the strengths of "Retribution"?

- What are the weaknesses of "Retribution"?

**Applying Your Knowledge**

After thinking about the two sample essays, how would you improve "Justice: Retribution or Restoration?"

After thinking about the two sample essays, how would you improve "Retribution"?

How will you apply what you've learned from these sample essays to your own persuasive essay?

# 11.2 Dialectics

As you read in Section 10.3: Being Critical, a strong persuasive essay will respectfully identify and discuss perspectives of the same topic. When you do this, you are presenting a well-rounded and complete discussion to your reader that shows you have critically thought about the topic and have been selective in choosing your points. As a result, there is a higher probably that you will convince your reader. The process of looking at multiple sides of a topic is called **dialectics**.

Dialectics is the act of using logical reasoning to combine, juxtapose, or synthesize opposing ideas to arrive at a strong conclusion.

**The Components of Dialectics** To begin the dialectic process, you first need to come up with an idea of what topic will be discussed; this is the **thesis** behind the discussion. Once you have determined your thesis, through various methods (the easiest being discussion with someone else), you will explore opposing sides to the topic, eventually discovering at least one **antithesis**. Combining those two perspectives, you can then make your own conclusions. Maybe this process will result in you standing by the original thesis, or maybe the antithesis is incredibly convincing and you will switch sides of the argument, or maybe you still believe the original thesis but accept there are other conditions that have credibility as well. This end result is called the **synthesis**: the blending of ideas. Essentially, the process would look like this:



(http://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccess/wp-content/uploads/sites/107/2015/08/chap11_2.png)

Considering both your thesis and the discovered antithetical perspectives will help you to arrive at a

wider view of a topic: one that has more credibility. Looking back to the persuasive essay samples you read in Section 10.4 and discussed in **Self–Practice Exercise 11.5**, consider to what degree the authors acknowledged opposing views. How did they justify their opinions? Consider how integrating dialectics into each of those arguments to a greater degree would have strengthened their points of view, ultimately making their arguments more convincing.

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**Self-Practice Exercise 11.6**

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**H5P:** Integrating Dialectics

**Reviewing the Argument**

Based on the thesis "Governments use capital punishment as an effective tool for deterring violent crime," answer the following questions.

- What is your stance on this statement? To what extent do you agree/disagree?
- List all the ideas you can think of that would support your stance on the statement.
- List all the ideas you can think of that would counter your stance on the statement.

**Embracing Perspectives**

Discuss your answers with a partner (if you're not in class, enlist a trusted friend). Can you expand either list based on what your partner has to say? Make those notes below.

After coming up with and considering the other perspective, has your point of view changed at all?

Do you still stick by your same point of view 100 percent? Or do you concede that there are valid points from the other perspective?

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**Self-Practice Exercise 11.7/Discussion 3**

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**H5P:** Dialectics

**Reviewing Your Notes**

For this exercise, you will need the work you did for Self-Practice Exercise 11.4. In addition, you might find it helpful to review Self-Practice Exercise 11.6 in order to remind yourself of what dialectic work looks like.

- Make a list of all the information you have that supports your thesis.
- Using your dialectic skills, work with a partner in class (or a trusted friend outside of class) to think through your position and any possible counter positions. Note what you learn from your discussions about the other side of the argument below.
- Did doing this exercise change your original point of view at all? Is there anything you can make concessions on being valid?

**Revising Your Work**

Doing this exercise may have changed your working thesis statement. Redraft your central argument below.

Now, revise your outline, using one or two of the counter points and incorporating them into your argument.

# 11.3 Organizing Your Ideas

For this section, you will need to refer back to Section 10.2: The Structure of a Persuasive Essay to help you piece your supporting and opposing ideas together.

## Creating an Introduction and Thesis

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

## Re-evaluate Your Working Thesis

A careful analysis of your notes will help you re-evaluate your working thesis and determine whether you need to revise it. Remember that your working thesis was the starting point—not necessarily the end point—of your research. You should revise your working thesis if your ideas changed based on what you read. Even if your sources generally confirmed your preliminary thinking on the topic, it is still a good idea to tweak the wording of your thesis to incorporate the specific details you learned from research.

Jorge realized that his working thesis oversimplified the issues. He still believed that the media was exaggerating the benefits of low-carb diets. However, his research led him to conclude that these diets did have some advantages. Read Jorge's revised thesis.

> Although following a low-carbohydrate diet can benefit some people, these diets are not necessarily the best option for everyone who wants to lose weight or improve their health.

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

Self-Practice Exercise 11.8

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**H5P:** Evidence

Use your working thesis and the revised outline from Self–Practice Exercise 11.7 and list the types of evidence you might use in support of that thesis. Essentially, you are expanding your outline to include more source information.

## Synthesizing and Organizing Information

By now, your thinking on your topic is taking shape. You have a sense of what major ideas to address in your paper, what points you can easily support, and what questions or subtopics might need a little more thought. In short, you have begun the process of synthesizing information—that is, of putting the pieces together into a coherent whole.

It is normal to find this part of the process a little difficult. Some questions or concepts may still be unclear to you. You may not yet know how you will tie all of your research together. Synthesizing information is a complex, demanding mental task, and even experienced researchers struggle with it at times. A little uncertainty is often a good sign! It means you are challenging yourself to work thoughtfully with your topic instead of simply restating the same information.

### Synthesizing Information

You have already considered how your notes fit with your working thesis. Now, take your synthesis a step further. Organize your notes with headings that correspond to points and subpoints you came up with through dialectics and compiled in your outline, which you presented to your instructor. As you

proceed, you might identify some more important subtopics that were not part of your original plan, or you might decide that some points are not relevant to your paper.

Categorize information carefully and continue to think critically about the material. Ask yourself whether the sources are reliable and whether the connections between ideas are clear.

Remember, your ideas and conclusions will shape the paper. They are the glue that holds the rest of the content together. As you work, begin jotting down the big ideas you will use to connect the dots for your reader. (If you are not sure where to begin, try answering your major research question and subquestions. Add and answer new questions as appropriate.) You might record these big ideas on sticky notes or type and highlight them within an electronic document.

Jorge looked back on the list of research questions that he had written down earlier. He changed a few to match his new thesis, and he began a rough outline for his paper.

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**Topic:** Low-carbohydrate diets

**Main question:** Are low carbohydrate diets as effective as they have been portrayed to be by media sources?

**Thesis:** Although following a low-carbohydrate diet can benefit some people, these diets are not necessarily the best option for everyone who wants to lose weight or improve their health.

**Main points:**

- How do low-carb diets work?

    ◦ Low carb diets cause weight loss by lowering insulin levels, causing the body to burn stored fat.

- When did low-carb diets become a "hot" topic in the media?

    ◦ The Atkins diet was created in 1972 by Richard Atkins, but it didn't gain wide-scale attention until 2003. The South Beach diet and other low-carb diets became popular around the same time, and led to a low-carb craze in America from 2003 to 2004.

- What are the supposed advantages to following a low-carbohydrate diet?

    ◦ They are said to help you lose weight faster than other diets and allow people to continue to eat protein and fats while dieting.

- What are some of the negative effects of a low-carb diet?

    ◦ Eating foods high in saturated fats can increase your cholesterol levels and lead to heart disease. Incomplete fat breakdown can lead to a condition called ketosis, which puts a strain on the liver and can be fatal.

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You may be wondering how your ideas are supposed to shape the paper, especially since you are

writing a research paper based on your research. Integrating your ideas and your information from research is a complex process, and sometimes it can be difficult to separate the two.

Some paragraphs in your paper will consist mostly of details from your research. That is fine, as long as you explain what those details mean or how they are linked. You should also include sentences and transitions that show the relationship between different facts from your research by grouping related ideas or pointing out connections or contrasts. The result is that you are not simply presenting information; you are synthesizing, analyzing, and interpreting it.

## Plan How to Organize Your Paper

The final step to complete before beginning your draft is to choose an organizational structure. For some assignments, this may be determined by the instructor's requirements. For instance, if you are asked to explore the impact of a new communications device, a cause-and-effect structure is obviously appropriate. In other cases, you will need to determine the structure based on what suits your topic and purpose.

The purpose of Jorge's paper was primarily to persuade. With that in mind, he planned the following outline.

I. Introduction

    A. Background

    B. Thesis

II. Purported Benefits of Low-Carbohydrate Diets

    A. United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) nutrition guidelines

    B. Potential flaws in USDA nutrition guidelines

        1. Effects of carbohydrates on blood sugar, insulin

        2. Relationship to metabolism and obesity

III. Research on Low-Carbohydrate Diets and Weight Loss

    A. Short-term effectiveness for weight-loss

    B. Long-term effectiveness not established

IV. Other Long-Term Health Outcomes

    A. Cholesterol and heart disease

    B. Blood pressure

    C. Diabetes

V.  Conclusion

## Essay 3: outline (2.5%)

Review the organizational structure discussed in Chapter 10: Persuasion. Working with the notes you organized earlier, follow these steps to begin planning how to organize your paper.

- Create an outline that includes your working thesis, major subtopics, and supporting points.
- The major headings in your outline will become sections or paragraphs in your paper. Remember that your ideas should form the backbone of the paper. For each major section of your outline, write a topic sentence stating the main point you will make in that section.
- As you complete step 2, you may find that some points are too complex to explain in a sentence. Consider whether any major sections of your outline need to be broken up and jot down additional topic sentences as needed.
- Review your notes and determine how the different pieces of information fit into your outline as supporting points.
- Add any sources you have identified that you plan on using to support your ideas.

**Collaboration**

- Please share the outline you created with a classmate.
- Examine your classmate's outline and see if any questions come to mind or if you see any area that would benefit from an additional point or clarification. Return the outlines to each other and compare observations.
- After you have discussed your formal outline with a classmate, submit it to your instructor for approval.

You will receive up to 2.5% toward your final grade depending on how thoroughly you have conducted a dialectical discussion and developed your outline.

# 11.4 Critical Thinking and Research Applications

At this point in your project, you are preparing to move from the research phase to the writing phase. You have gathered much of the information you will use, and soon you will be ready to begin writing your draft. This section helps you transition smoothly from one phase to the next.

Beginning writers sometimes attempt to transform a pile of note cards into a formal research paper without any intermediary step. This approach presents problems. The writer's original question and thesis may be buried in a flood of disconnected details taken from research sources. The first draft may present redundant or contradictory information. Worst of all, the writer's ideas and voice may be lost.

An effective research paper focuses on the writer's ideas—from the question that sparked the research process to how the writer answers that question based on the research findings. Before beginning a draft, or even an outline, good writers pause and reflect. They ask themselves questions such as the following:

- How has my thinking changed based on my research? What have I learned?
- Was my working thesis on target? Do I need to rework my thesis based on what I have learned?
- How does the information in my sources mesh with my research questions and help me answer those questions? Have any additional important questions or subtopics come up that I will need to address in my paper?
- How do my sources complement each other? What ideas or facts recur in multiple sources?
- Where do my sources disagree with each other, and why?

In this section, you will reflect on your research and review the information you have gathered. You will determine what you now think about your topic. You will **synthesize**, or put together, different pieces of information that help you answer your research questions. Finally, you will determine the organizational structure that works best for your paper and revise the outline you have already made and had approved to be a more formal sentence outline (an outline that contains more information like topic sentences, your supporting ideas organized more appropriately, and the sources you plan to use.

# Selecting Useful Information

At this point in the research process, you have gathered information from a wide variety of sources. Now it is time to think about how you will use this information as a writer.

When you conduct research, you keep an open mind and seek out many promising sources. You take notes on any information that looks like it might help you answer your research questions. Often, new ideas and terms come up in your reading, and these, too, find their way into your notes. You may record facts or quotations that catch your attention even if they did not seem immediately relevant to your research question. By now, you have probably amassed an impressively detailed collection of notes. You will not use all of your notes in your paper.

Good researchers are thorough. They look at multiple perspectives, facts, and ideas related to their topic, and they gather a great deal of information. Effective writers, however, are selective. They determine which information is most relevant and appropriate for their purpose. They include details that develop or explain their ideas—and they leave out details that do not. The writer, not the pile of notes, is the controlling force. The writer shapes the content of the research paper.

In **Chapter 7: Sources: Choosing the Right Ones**, you used strategies to filter out unreliable or irrelevant sources and details. Now you will apply your critical thinking skills to the information you recorded—analyzing how it is relevant, determining how it meshes with your ideas, and finding how it forms connections and patterns.

## Writing at Work

When you create workplace documents based on research, selectivity remains important. A project team may spend months conducting market surveys to prepare for rolling out a new product, but few managers have time to read the research in its entirety. Most employees want the research distilled into a few well-supported points. Focused, concise writing is highly valued in the workplace.

## Identify Information That Supports Your Thesis

Begin by identifying the notes that clearly support your thesis. Mark or group these, either physically or using the cut-and-paste function in your word processing program. As you identify the crucial details that support your thesis, make sure you analyze them critically. Ask the following questions to focus your thinking:

- **Is this detail from a reliable, high-quality source? Is it appropriate for me to cite this source in an academic paper?** The bulk of the support for your thesis should come from reliable, reputable sources. If most of the details that support your thesis are from less-reliable sources, you may need to do additional research or modify your thesis.

- **Is the link between this information and my thesis obvious, or will I need to explain it to my readers?** Remember, you have spent more time thinking and reading about this topic than your audience. Some connections might be obvious to both you and your readers. More often, however, you will need to provide the analysis or explanation that shows how the

information supports your thesis. As you read through your notes, jot down ideas you have for making those connections clear.

- **What personal biases or experiences might affect the way I interpret this information?** No researcher is 100 percent objective. We all have personal opinions and experiences that influence our reactions to what we read and learn. Good researchers are aware of this human tendency. They keep an open mind when they read opinions or facts that contradict their beliefs.

Tip: It can be tempting to ignore information that does not support your thesis or that contradicts it outright. However, such information is important. At the very least, it gives you a sense of what has been written about the issue. More importantly, it can help you question and refine your own thinking so that writing your research paper is a true learning process.

## Find Connections between Your Sources

As you find connections between your ideas and information in your sources, also look for information that connects your sources. Do most sources seem to agree on a particular idea? Are some facts mentioned repeatedly in many different sources? What key terms or major concepts come up in most of your sources regardless of whether the sources agree on the finer points? Identifying these connections will help you identify important ideas to discuss in your paper.

Look for subtler ways your sources complement one another, too. Does one author refer to another's book or article? How do sources that are more recent build upon the ideas developed in earlier sources?

Be aware of any redundancies in your sources. If you have amassed solid support from a reputable source, such as a scholarly journal, there is no need to cite the same facts from an online encyclopedia article that is many steps removed from any primary research. If a given source adds nothing new to your discussion and you can cite a stronger source for the same information, use the stronger source.

Determine how you will address any contradictions found among different sources. For instance, if one source cites a startling fact that you cannot confirm anywhere else, it is safe to dismiss the information as unreliable. However, if you find significant disagreements among reliable sources, you will need to review them and evaluate each source. Which source presents a more sound argument or more solid evidence? It is up to you to determine which source is the most credible and why.

Finally, do not ignore any information simply because it does not support your thesis. Carefully consider how that information fits into the big picture of your research. You may decide that the source is unreliable or the information is not relevant, or you may decide that it is an important point you need to bring up. What matters is that you give it careful consideration.

Self-Practice Exercise 11.9

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**H5P:** Critically Reviewing Evidence

For this assignment, you will need your formal outline; not just the version you created for Self-Practice Exercise 11.8, but the final version you submitted.

- Is every source you have chosen **useful**? First, think about what this chapter says **useful** means in this context, and then reflect on your own sources.

- Is every source you have chosen **relevant**? First, think about what this chapter says **relevant** means in this context, and then reflect on your own sources.

- Is every source you have chosen **appropriate**? First, think about what this chapter says **appropriate** means in this context, and then reflect on your own sources.

- Review what you've discussed here today, and reflect honestly on whether you have any sources that are off-topic or not credible. Make a note about that below, and make a plan for how you will move forward if you do.

Key Takeaways

- An effective research paper focuses on presenting the writer's ideas using information from research as support.

- Effective writers spend time reviewing, synthesizing, and organizing their research notes before they begin drafting a research paper.

- It is important for writers to revisit their research questions and working thesis as they transition from the research phase to the writing phrase of a project. Usually, the working thesis will need at least minor adjustments.

- To organize a research paper, writers choose a structure that is appropriate for the topic and purpose. Longer papers may make use of more than one structure.

## Journal Entry 10

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**H5P:** Question Prompts

What is the topic around which you would like to base your persuasive essay discussion?

Why did you choose this topic?

What challenges do you think you may face when writing about this topic?

Reflect on your writing skill development over the semester. Be as specific as possible.

What are you most confident doing? What do you still need to practise?

What do you think is your biggest accomplishment this semester?

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# Chapter 12: Peer Review and Final Revisions

# 12.1 Revision

Revising and editing are the two tasks you undertake to significantly improve your essay. Both are very important elements of the writing process. You may think that a completed first draft means that little improvement is needed. However, even experienced writers need to improve their drafts and rely on peers during revising and editing. You may know that athletes miss catches, fumble balls, or overshoot goals. Dancers forget steps, turn too slowly, or miss beats. For both athletes and dancers, the more they practise, the stronger their performance will become. Web designers seek better images, a more clever design, or a more appealing background for their web pages. Writing has the same capacity to profit from improvement and revision.

You should revise and edit in stages: do not expect to catch everything in one go. If each time you review your essay you focus on a different aspect of construction, you will be more likely to catch any mistakes or identify any issues. Throughout this chapter, you will see a number of checklists containing specific things to look for with each revision. For example, you will first look at how the overall paper and your ideas are organized.

In the second section of this chapter, you will focus more on editing: correcting the mechanical issues. Also at the end of the chapter, you will see a comprehensive but more general list of things you should be looking for.

## Understanding the Purpose of Revising and Editing

Revising and editing allow you to examine two important aspects of your writing separately, so that you can give each task your undivided attention.

- **When you revise, you take a second look at your ideas**. You might add, cut, move, or change information in order to make your ideas clearer, more accurate, more interesting, or

more convincing.

- **When you edit, you take a second look at how you expressed your ideas**. You add or change words. You fix any problems in grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure. You improve your writing style. You make your essay into a polished, mature piece of writing, the end product of your best efforts.

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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 the writing process; 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?

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For many people, the words *critic*, *critical*, and *criticism* provoke only negative feelings that make them blush, grumble, or shout. However, as a writer and a thinker, you need to learn to be critical of yourself in a positive way and have high expectations for your work. You also need to train your eye and trust your ability to fix what needs fixing. To do this, you need to teach yourself where to look.

## Revising Your Paper: Organization, Cohesion, and Unity

When writing a research paper, it is easy to become overly focused on editorial details, such as the proper format for bibliographical entries. These details do matter. However, before you begin to address them, it is important to spend time reviewing and revising the content of the paper.

A good research paper is both organized and cohesive. **Organization** means that your argument flows logically from one point to the next. **Cohesion** means that the elements of your paper work together smoothly and naturally. In a cohesive research paper, information from research is seamlessly integrated with the writer's ideas.

### Revise to Improve Organization

When you revise to improve organization, you look at the flow of ideas throughout the essay as a whole and within individual paragraphs. You check to see that your essay moves logically from the introduction to the body paragraphs to the conclusion, and that each section reinforces your thesis. Use **Checklist 12.1: Revise for Organization** to help you.

**Checklist 12.1: Revise for Organization**

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**H5P:** Review your essay and determine if you have achieved the following goals.

- Do the main ideas in the body paragraphs flow in a logical order?
- Does my conclusion summarize my main ideas and revisit my thesis?
- Is each paragraph connected to the one before it?
- Do I need to add or revise topic sentences or transitions to make the overall flow of ideas clearer?
- Does each body paragraph have a clear main idea that relates to the thesis?
- Does my introduction proceed clearly from the opening to the thesis?

Review each and every body paragraph in your essay and ensure you've achieved the following goals.

- Do the details in the paragraph relate to the main idea?
- Does the topic sentence clearly state the main idea?
- Do I need to recast any sentences or add transitions to improve the flow of sentences?

Jorge reread his draft paragraph by paragraph. As he read, he highlighted the main idea of each paragraph so he could see whether his ideas proceeded in a logical order. For the most part, the flow of ideas was clear. However, he did notice that one paragraph did not have a clear main idea. It interrupted the flow of the writing. During revision, Jorge added a topic sentence that clearly connected the paragraph to the one that had preceded it. He also added transitions to improve the flow of ideas from sentence to sentence.

Read the following paragraphs twice, the first time without Jorge's changes, and the second time with them.

Picture this: You're standing in the aisle of your local grocery store when you see a chubby guy nearby staring at several brands of ketchup on display. After deliberating for a moment, he reaches for the bottle with the words "Low-Carb!" display prominently on the label. (You can't help but notice that the low car ketchup is higher priced.) Is he making a smart choice that will help him lose weight

and enjoy better health – or is he just buying into the latest diet fad? <u>Over the past decade, increasing numbers of Americans have jumped on the low-carbohydrate bandwagon.</u> Some researchers estimate that approximately 40 million Americans, or about one-fifth of the population, have attempted to restrict their intake of foods high in carbohydrates (Sandra & Katz, 2004). Proponents of low-carb diets say they're <u>not only</u> the most effective way to lose weight. ~~They~~ <u>but also</u> yield health benefits such as lower blood pressure and improved cholesterol levels. <u>Meanwhile,</u> some doctors claim that low-carbohydrate diets are overrated and caution that their long-term effects are unknown. Although following a low-carbohydrate diet can have many benefits – especially for people who are obese or diabetic – these diets are not necessarily the best option for everyone who wants to lose weight or improve their health.

## Self-Practice Exercise 12.1

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**H5P:** Revising for Organization

Follow these steps to begin revising your paper's overall organization.

Print out a hard copy of your paper. (You will use this for multiple self-practice exercises in this chapter.) If you prefer to work on a screen, make sure you have the ability to mark up or annotate your work.

Read your paper paragraph by paragraph. Highlight your thesis and the topic sentence of each paragraph.

Using the thesis and topic sentences as starting points, outline the ideas you presented—just as you would do if you were outlining a chapter in a textbook. Do not look at the outline you created during prewriting. You may write in the margins of your draft or make your notes in the space below.

Next, reread your paper more slowly, looking for how ideas flow from sentence to sentence. Identify places where adding a transition or recasting a sentence would make the ideas flow more logically.

Review the topics on your outline. Is there a logical flow of ideas? Identify any places where you may need to reorganize ideas. You may write in the margins of your draft or make your notes in the space below.

Begin to revise your paper to improve organization. Start with any major issues, such as needing to move an entire paragraph. Then proceed to minor revisions, such as adding a transitional phrase or tweaking a topic sentence so it connects ideas more clearly.

> Tip: Writers choose transitions carefully to show the relationships between ideas—for instance, to make a comparison or elaborate on a point with examples. Make sure your transitions suit your purpose and avoid overusing the same ones.

## Creating Coherence

Careful writers use transitions to clarify how the ideas in their sentences and paragraphs are related. These words and phrases help the writing flow smoothly. Adding transitions is not the only way to improve coherence, but they are often useful and give a mature feel to your essays. Earlier chapters have discussed using transitions for specific purposes in the planning of your writing. **Common Transitional Words and Phrases** groups many common transitions according to their purpose.

## Common Transitional Words and Phrases According to Purpose

**Transitions that show sequence or time**

- after
- before
- later
- afterward
- before
- long
- meanwhile
- as soon as
- finally
- next
- at first
- first, second, third
- soon
- at last
- in the first place
- then

**Transitions that show position**

- above
- across
- at the bottom
- at the top
- behind
- below
- beside
- beyond
- inside
- near
- next to
- opposite
- to the left, to the right, to the side
- under
- where

**Transitions that show a conclusion**

- indeed
- hence
- in conclusion
- in the final analysis
- therefore
- thus

**Transitions that continue a line of thought**

- consequently
- furthermore
- additionally
- because

- besides the fact
- following this idea further
- in addition
- in the same way

- moreover
- looking further
- considering…, it is clear that

**Transitions that change a line of thought**

- but
- yet

- however
- nevertheless

- on the contrary
- on the other hand

**Transitions that show importance**

- above all
- best
- especially

- in fact
- more important
- most important

- most
- worst

**Transitions that introduce the final thoughts in a paragraph or essay**

- finally
- last

- in conclusion
- most of all

- least of all
- last of all

**All-purpose transitions to open paragraphs or to connect ideas inside paragraphs**

- admittedly
- at this point
- certainly
- granted
- it is true

- generally speaking
- in general
- in this situation
- no doubt
- no one denies

- obviously
- of course
- to be sure
- undoubtedly
- unquestionably

**Transitions that introduce examples**

- for instance
- for example

**Transitions that clarify the order of events or steps**

- first, second, third
- generally, furthermore, finally

- in the first place, also, last
- in the first place, furthermore, finally

- in the first place, likewise, lastly

When Mariah (who you were introduced to in Chapters 5 and 6) revised her essay for unity, she examined her paragraph about televisions to check for coherence. She looked for places where she needed to add a transition or perhaps reword the text to make the flow of ideas clear. In the version that follows, she has already deleted the sentences that were off topic.

Tip: Many writers make their revisions on a printed copy and then transfer them to the version on screen. They conventionally use a small arrow called a caret (^) to show where to insert an addition or correction.

Finally, nothing is more confusing to me than choosing among televisions. It confuses lots of people who want a new high-definition digital television (HDtelevision) with a large screen to watch sports and DVDs on. There's good reason for this confusion: You face decisions you never had to make with the old, bulky picture-tube televisions. The first big decision is the screen resolution you want. Screen resolution means the number of horizontal scan lines the screen can show. This resolution is often 1080p, or full HD, or 768p. The trouble is that if you have a smaller screen, 32 inches or 37 inches diagonal, you won't be able to tell the difference with the naked eye. The second ~~other~~ important decision you face as you walk around the sales floor is whether to get a plasma screen or an LCD screen. Along with the choice of display type, a further decision buyers face is screen size and features. Plasma flat-panel television screens can be much larger in diameter than their LCD rivals. Plasma screens show truer blacks and can be viewed at a wider angle than current LCD screens. However, large flat-panel plasma screens are much more expensive than flat-screen LCD models. Don't let someone make you by more television than you need!

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**Self-Practice Exercise 12.2**

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**H5P:** Understanding Transitions

Answer the following questions about Mariah's revised paragraph.

- What transition words or phrases did Mariah add to her paragraph? Why did she choose each one?

- Do you agree with the transitions and other changes that Mariah made to her paragraph? Which would you keep and which were unnecessary? Explain.

- What effect does adding additional sentences have on the coherence of the paragraph? Explain. When you read both versions aloud, which version has a more logical flow of ideas? Explain.

## Revise to Improve Cohesion

When you revise to improve cohesion, you analyze how the parts of your paper work together. You look for anything that seems awkward or out of place. Revision may involve deleting unnecessary material or rewriting parts of the paper so that the out of place material fits in smoothly.

In a research paper, problems with cohesion usually occur when a writer has trouble integrating source material. If facts or quotations have been awkwardly dropped into a paragraph, they distract or confuse the reader instead of working to support the writer's point. Overusing paraphrased and quoted material has the same effect. Use **Checklist12.2: Revise for Cohesion** to review your essay for cohesion.

**Checklist 12.2: Revise for Cohesion**

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**H5P:** Reread your paper and check whether you have achieved the following goals in working towards cohesion in your writing.

- Do I need to add to or revise parts of the paper to help the reader understand how certain information from a source is relevant?

- Are there any places where I have overused material from sources?

- Have I included support from research for each main point in the body of my paper?

- Have I included introductory material before any quotations? Quotations should never stand alone in a paragraph.

- Does my conclusion make sense based on the rest of the paper? Make sure any new questions or suggestions in the conclusion are clearly linked to earlier material.

- Does paraphrased and quoted material clearly serve to develop my own points?

- Does the opening of the paper clearly connect to the broader topic and thesis? Make sure entertaining quotes or anecdotes serve a purpose.

As Jorge reread his draft, he looked to see how the different pieces fit together to prove his thesis. He realized that some of his supporting information needed to be integrated more carefully and decided to omit some details entirely. Read the following paragraph, first without Jorge's revisions and then with them.

One likely reason for these lackluster long-term results is that a low-carbohydrate diet-like any restrictive diet – is difficult to adhere to for any extended period. ~~Most people enjoy foods that are high in carbohydrates, and no one wants to be the person who always turns down that slice of birthday cake.~~ In commenting on the Gardner study, experts at the Harvard School of Public Health (2010) noted that women in all four diet groups had difficulty following the plan. Because it is hard for dieters to stick to a low-carbohydrate eating plan, the initial success of these diets is short-lived (Heinz, 2009). Medical professionals caution that low-carbohydrate diets are difficult for many people to follow consistently and that, to maintain a healthy weight, dieters should try to develop nutrition and exercise habits they can incorporate in their lives in the long term (Mayo clinic, 2008). Registered dietician Dana Kwon (2010) comments, "For some people, [low-carbohydrate diets] are great, but for most, any sensible eating and exercise plan should work just as well" (Kwon, 2010)

Jorge decided that his comment about pizza and birthday cake came across as subjective and was not necessary to make his point, so he deleted it. He also realized that the quotation at the end of the paragraph was awkward and ineffective. How would his readers know who Kwon was or why her opinion should be taken seriously? Adding an introductory phrase helped Jorge integrate this quotation smoothly and establish the credibility of his source.

### Self-Practice Exercise 12.3

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**H5P:** Revising for Organization
Follow these steps to begin revising your paper's overall organization.

- Print out a hard copy of your paper. (You will use this for multiple self-practice exercises in this chapter.) If you prefer to work on a screen, make sure you have the ability to mark up or annotate your work.
- Read the body paragraphs of your paper first. Each time you come to a place that cites information from sources, ask yourself what purpose this information serves. Check that it helps support a point and that it is clearly related to the other sentences in the paragraph.
- You may write in the margins of your draft or make your notes in the space below.
- Identify unnecessary information from sources that you can delete. You may write in the margins of your draft or make your notes in the space below.
- Identify places where you need to revise your writing so that readers understand the significance of the details cited from sources. You may write in the margins of your draft or make your notes in the space below.
- Skim the body paragraphs once more, looking for any paragraphs that seem packed with citations. Review these paragraphs carefully for cohesion. Review your introduction and conclusion. Make sure the information presented works with ideas in the body of the paper. You may write in the margins of your draft or make your notes in the space below.
- Revise the places you identified in your paper to improve cohesion.

**Writing at work**

Understanding cohesion can also benefit you in the workplace, especially when you have to write and deliver a presentation. Speakers sometimes rely on cute graphics or funny quotations to hold their audience's attention. If you choose to use these elements, make sure they work well with the substantive content of your presentation. For example, if you are asked to give a financial presentation, and the financial report shows that the company lost money, funny illustrations would not be relevant or appropriate for the presentation.

Tip: Reading your writing aloud will often help you find problems with unity and coherence. Listen for the clarity and flow of your ideas. Identify places where you find yourself confused, and write a note to yourself about possible fixes.

## Creating Unity

Sometimes writers get caught up in the moment and cannot resist a good digression. Even though you might enjoy such detours when you chat with friends, unplanned digressions usually harm a piece of writing.

Following your outline closely offers you a reasonable guarantee that your writing will stay on purpose and not drift away from the controlling idea. However, when writers are rushed, are tired, or cannot find the right words, their writing may become less than they want it to be. Their writing may no longer be clear and concise, and they may add information that is not needed to develop the main idea.

When a piece of writing has **unity**, all the ideas in each paragraph and in the entire essay clearly belong and are arranged in an order that makes logical sense. When the writing has **coherence**, the ideas flow smoothly. The wording clearly indicates how one idea leads to another within a paragraph and from paragraph to paragraph.

Mariah stayed close to her outline when she drafted the three body paragraphs of her essay she tentatively titled "Digital Technology: The Newest and the Best at What Price?" But a recent shopping trip for an HDTV upset her enough that she digressed from the main topic of her third paragraph and included comments about the sales staff at the electronics store she visited. When she revised her essay, she deleted the off-topic sentences that affected the unity of the paragraph.

Read the following paragraph twice, the first time without Mariah's changes and the second time with them.

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Nothing is more confusing to me than choosing among televisions. It confuses lots of people who want a new high-definition digital television (HDTV) with a large screen to watch sports and DVDs on. ~~You could listen to the guys in the electronics store, but word has it they know little more than you do. They want to sell what they have in stock, not what best fits your needs.~~ You face decisions you never had to make with the old, bulky picture-tube televisions. Screen resolution means the number of horizontal scan lines the screen can show. This resolution is often 1080p, or full HD, or 768p. The trouble is that if you have a smaller screen, 32 inches or 37 inches diagonal, you won't be able to tell the difference with the naked eye. ~~The 1080p televisions cost more, though, so those are what the salespeople want you to buy. They get bigger commissions.~~ The ~~other~~ important decision you face as you walk around the sales floor is whether to get a plasma screen or an LCD screen. ~~Now here the salespeople may finally give you decent info.~~ Plasma flat-panel television screens can be much larger in diameter than their LCD rivals. Plasma screens show truer blacks and can be viewed at a wider angle than current LCD screens. ~~But be careful and tell the salesperson you have budget constraints.~~ Large flat-panel plasma screens are much more expensive than flat-screen LCD models. Don't ~~let someone make you~~ by more television than you need!

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**Self Practice Exercise 12.4**

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**H5P:** Understanding Transitions

Answer the following questions about Mariah's revised paragraph.

- Do you agree with Mariah's decision to make the deletions she made? Did she cut too much, too little, or just enough? Explain.

- Is the explanation of what screen resolution means a digression? Or is it audience friendly and essential to understanding the paragraph? Explain.

Now, print out another copy of your essay or use the printed version(s) you used in Self–Practice Exercises 12.1 and 12.3. Reread it to find any statements that affect the unity of your writing. Decide how best to revise.

Tip: When you reread your writing to find revisions to make, look for each type of problem in a separate sweep. Read it straight through once to locate any problems with unity. Read it straight through a second time to find problems with coherence. You may follow this same practice during many stages of the writing process.

**Writing at work**

Many companies hire copy editors and proofreaders to help them produce the cleanest possible final drafts of large writing projects. Copy editors are responsible for suggesting revisions and style changes; proofreaders check documents for any errors in capitalization, spelling, and punctuation that have crept in. Many times, these tasks are done on a freelance basis, with one freelancer working for a variety of clients.

## Using a Consistent Style and Tone

Once you are certain that the content of your paper fulfills your purpose, you can begin revising to improve **style** and **tone**. Together, your style and tone create the voice of your paper, or how you come across to readers. Style refers to the way you use language as a writer—the sentence structures you use and the word choices you make. Tone is the attitude toward your subject and audience that you convey through your word choice.

## Determining an Appropriate Style and Tone

Although accepted writing styles will vary within different disciplines, the underlying goal is the same—to come across to your readers as a knowledgeable, authoritative guide. Writing about research is like being a tour guide who walks readers through a topic. A stuffy, overly formal tour guide can make readers feel put off or intimidated. Too much informality or humour can make readers wonder whether the tour guide really knows what he or she is talking about. Extreme or emotionally charged language comes across as unbalanced.

To help prevent being overly formal or informal, determine an appropriate style and tone at the beginning of the research process. Consider your topic and audience because these can help dictate style and tone. For example, a paper on new breakthroughs in cancer research should be more formal than a paper on ways to get a good night's sleep.

A strong research paper comes across as straightforward, appropriately academic, and serious. It is generally best to avoid writing in the first person, as this can make your paper seem overly subjective and opinion based. Use **Checklist 12.3: Revise for Style** to review your paper for other issues that affect style and tone. You can check for consistency at the end of the writing process. Checking for consistency is discussed later in this section.

**Checklist 12.3: Revise for Style**

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**H5P:** Reread your paper and check whether you have achieved the following goals in working towards better style in your writing.

- I have used the active voice whenever possible.
- My paper avoids excessive wordiness.
- My sentences are varied in length and structure.
- I have avoided using first person pronouns such as I and we.
- My paper states my point of view using a balanced tone—neither too indecisive nor too forceful.
- I have used clear, straightforward language whenever possible and avoided unnecessary jargon.

- I have defined specialized terms that might be unfamiliar to readers.

## Word Choice

Note that word choice is an especially important aspect of style. In addition to checking the points noted on **Checklist 12.3**, review your paper to make sure your language is precise, conveys no unintended connotations, and is free of bias. Here are some of the points to check for:

- Vague or imprecise terms
- Slang
- Repetition of the same phrases ("Smith states…, Jones states…") to introduce quoted and paraphrased material (For a full list of strong verbs to use with in text citations, see **Chapter 9: Citations and Referencing**.)
- Exclusive use of masculine pronouns or awkward use of  *heorshe*
- Use of language with negative connotations, such as *haughty* or *ridiculous*
- Use of outdated or offensive terms to refer to specific ethnic, racial, or religious groups

Tip: Using plural nouns and pronouns or recasting a sentence can help you keep your language gender neutral while avoiding awkwardness. Consider the following examples.

- **Gender biased:** When a writer cites a source in the body of his paper, he must list it on his references page.

- **Awkward:** When a writer cites a source in the body of his or her paper, he or she must list it on his or her references page.

- **Improved:** Writers must list any sources cited in the body of a paper on the references page.

## Keeping Your Style Consistent

As you revise your paper, make sure your style is consistent throughout. Look for instances where a word, phrase, or sentence does not seem to fit with the rest of the writing. It is best to reread for style after you have completed the other revisions so that you are not distracted by any larger content issues. Revising strategies you can use include the following:

- **Read your paper aloud.** Sometimes your ears catch inconsistencies that your eyes miss.

- **Share your paper with another reader whom you trust to give you honest feedback.** It is often difficult to evaluate one's own style objectively—especially in the final phase of a challenging writing project. Another reader may be more likely to notice instances of wordiness, confusing language, or other issues that affect style and tone.

- **Edit your paper slowly, sentence by sentence.** You may even wish to use a sheet of paper to cover up everything on the page except the paragraph you are editing. This practice forces you to read slowly and carefully. Mark any areas where you notice problems in style or tone, and then take time to rework those sections.

On reviewing his paper, Jorge found that he had generally used an appropriately academic style and tone. However, he noticed one glaring exception—his first paragraph. He realized there were places where his overly informal writing could come across as unserious or, worse, disparaging. Revising his word choice and omitting a humorous aside helped Jorge maintain a consistent tone. Read his revisions.

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Beyond the Hype: Evaluating Low-Carb DietsI. Introduction

I. Introduction

Picture this: You're standing in the aisle of your local grocery store when you see <u>an overweight man</u> a chubby guy nearby staring at several brands of ketchup on display. After deliberating for a moment, he reaches for the bottle with the words "Low-Carb!" display prominently on the label. (You can't help but notice that the low car ketchup is higher priced.) Is he making a smart choice that will help him lose weight and enjoy better health – or is he just buying into the latest diet fad?

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**Self-Practice Exercise 12.5**

Using Checklist 12.3: Revise for Style, revise your paper line by line. You may use either of these techniques:

- Print out a hard copy of your paper or work with your printout from **Self–Practice Exercise 12.1**. Read it line by line. Check for the issues noted on **Checklist 12.3**, as well as any other aspects of your writing style you have previously identified as areas for improvement. Mark any areas where you notice problems in style or tone, and then take time to rework those sections.

- If you prefer to work with an electronic document, use the menu options in your word processing program to enlarge the text to 150 or 200 percent of the original size. Make sure the type is large enough that you can focus on one paragraph at a time. Read the paper line by line as described in step 1. Highlight any areas where you notice problems in style or tone, and then take time to rework those sections.

Optional collaboration: Please exchange papers with a classmate. On a separate piece of paper, note places

where the essay does not seem to flow or you have questions about what was written. Return the essay and compare notes.

## Completing a Peer Review

After working so closely with a piece of writing, writers often need to step back and ask for a more objective reader. What writers need most is feedback from readers who can respond only to the words on the page. When they are ready, writers show their drafts to someone they respect and who can give an honest response about its strengths and weaknesses.

You, too, can ask a peer to read your draft when it is ready. After evaluating the feedback and assessing what is most helpful, the reader's feedback will help you when you revise your draft. This process is called **peer review**.

You can work with a partner in your class and identify specific ways to strengthen each other's essays. Although you may be uncomfortable sharing your writing at first, remember that each writer is working toward the same goal: a final draft that fits the audience and the purpose. Maintaining a positive attitude when providing feedback will put you and your partner at ease. The box that follows provides a useful framework for the peer review session.

### Writing at Work

One of the reasons why word processing programs build in a reviewing feature is that work groups have become a common feature in many businesses. Writing is often collaborative, and the members of a work group and their supervisors often critique group members' work and offer feedback that will lead to a better final product.

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Self-Practice Exercise 12.6

*An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=172#h5p-150 (https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=172#h5p-150)*

**H5P:** Peer Review

**Peer Review Introduction**

Exchange essays with a classmate and complete a peer review of each other's draft in progress. Remember to

give positive feedback and to be courteous and polite in your responses. Focus on providing one positive comment and one question for more information to the author.

- Title of my peer's essay:
- Peer's name:
- This essay is about:
- The main points in this essay are:
- What I liked most about this essay is:

**Strengths in This Essay**

- One strong aspect of this essay is:
- It is strong because:
- A second strong aspect of this essay is:
- It is strong because:
- A final strong aspect of this essay is:
- It is strong because:

**Room for Improvement in This Essay**

- One aspect of this essay that is not clear to me is:
- It needs improvement because:
- A second aspect of this essay that is not clear to me is:
- It needs improvement because:
- A final aspect of this essay that is not clear to me is:
- It needs improvement because:
- One additional change you could make to strengthen this essay is:

## Using Feedback Objectively

The purpose of peer feedback is to receive constructive criticism of your essay. Your peer reviewer is your first real audience, and you have the opportunity to learn what confuses and delights a reader so that you can improve your work before sharing the final draft with a wider audience (or your intended audience).

It may not be necessary to incorporate every recommendation your peer reviewer makes. However, if you start to observe a pattern in the responses you receive from peer reviewers, you might want to consider that feedback in future assignments. For example, if you read consistent comments about a need for more research, then you may want to consider including more research in future assignments.

## Using Feedback from Multiple Sources

You might get feedback from more than one reader as you share different stages of your revised draft. In this situation, you may receive feedback from readers who do not understand the assignment or who lack your involvement with and enthusiasm for it.

You need to evaluate the responses you receive according to two important criteria:

- Determine if the feedback supports the purpose of the assignment.
- Determine if the suggested revisions are appropriate to the audience.
- Then, using these standards, accept or reject revision feedback.

### Self-Practice Exercise 12.7

Consider the feedback you received from the peer review and all of the revision exercises throughout this section. Compile a final draft of your revisions that you can use in the next section to complete your final edits.

### Key Takeaways

- Revising and editing are the stages of the writing process in which you improve your work before producing a final draft.
- Unity in writing means that all the ideas in each paragraph and in the entire essay clearly belong together and are arranged in an order that makes logical sense.
- Coherence in writing means that the writer's wording clearly indicates how one idea leads to another within a paragraph and between paragraphs.
- Transitional words and phrases effectively make writing more coherent.
- Writing should be clear and concise, with no unnecessary words.
- Effective formal writing uses specific, appropriate words and avoids slang, contractions, clichés, and overly general words.
- Peer reviews, done properly, can give writers objective feedback about their writing. It is the writer's responsibility to evaluate the results of peer reviews and incorporate only useful feedback.

## 12.2 Editing and Developing a Final Draft of a Research Paper

Learning Objectives

- Edit your paper to ensure that language, citations, and formatting are correct

Given all the time and effort you have put into your research paper, you will want to make sure that your final draft represents your best work. This requires taking the time to revise and edit your paper carefully.

You may feel like you need a break from your paper before you edit it. That feeling is understandable, so you want to be sure to leave yourself enough time to complete this important stage of the writing process. This section presents a number of opportunities for you to focus on different aspects of the editing process; as with revising a draft, you should approach editing in different stages.

Some of the content in this section may seem repetitive, but again, it provides you with a chance to double-check any revisions you have made at a detailed level.

## Editing Your Draft

If you have been incorporating each set of revisions as Mariah and Jorge have, you have produced multiple drafts of your writing. So far, all your changes have been content changes. Perhaps with the help of peer feedback, you have made sure that you sufficiently supported your ideas. You have checked for problems with unity and coherence. You have examined your essay for word choice, revising to cut unnecessary words and to replace weak wording with specific and appropriate wording.

The next step after revising the content is editing. When you edit, you examine the surface features of your text. You examine your spelling, grammar, usage, and punctuation. You also make sure you use the proper format when creating your finished assignment.

Tip: Editing takes time. Be sure to budget time into the writing process to complete additional edits after revising. Editing and proofreading your writing helps you create a finished work that represents your best efforts. Here are a few more tips to remember about your readers:

- Readers do not notice correct spelling, but they do notice misspellings.
- Readers look past your sentences to get to your ideas—unless the sentences are awkward, poorly constructed, and frustrating to read.
- Readers notice when every sentence has the same rhythm as every other sentence, with no variety.
- Readers do not cheer when you use there, their, and they're correctly, but they notice when you do not.
- Readers will notice the care with which you handled your assignment and your attention to detail in the delivery of an error-free document.

## Being Clear and Concise

Some writers are very methodical and painstaking when they write a first draft. Other writers unleash a lot of words in order to get out all that they feel they need to say. Do either of these methods match your style? Or is your composing style somewhere in between? No matter which description best fits you, the first draft of almost every piece of writing, no matter its author, can be made clearer and more concise.

If you have a tendency to write too much, you will need to look for unnecessary words. If you have a tendency to be vague or imprecise in your wording, you will need to find specific words to replace any overly general language.

## Identifying Wordiness

Sometimes writers use too many words when fewer words will appeal more to their audience and better fit their purpose. Here are some common examples of wordiness to look for in your draft. Eliminating wordiness helps all readers, because it makes your ideas clear, direct, and straightforward.

- **Sentences that begin with** *There is* **or** *There are*
- **Wordy.** There are two major experiments that the Biology Department sponsors.
- **Revised.** The Biology Department sponsors two major experiments.
- **Sentences with unnecessary modifiers**
- **Wordy.** Two extremely famous and well-known consumer advocates spoke eloquently in favour of the proposed important legislation.
- **Revised.** Two well-known consumer advocates spoke in favour of the proposed legislation.

**Sentences with deadwood phrases that add little to the meaning.** Be judicious when you use phrases such as *in terms of, with a mind to, on the subject of, as to whether or not, more or less, as far*

*as…is concerned,* and similar expressions. You can usually find a more straightforward way to state your point.

- **Wordy.** As a world leader in the field of green technology, the company plans to focus its efforts in the area of geothermal energy. A report as to whether or not to use geysers as an energy source is in the process of preparation.

- **Revised.** As a world leader in green technology, the company plans to focus on geothermal energy. Researchers are preparing a report about using geysers as an energy source.

**Sentences in the passive voice or with forms of the verb** *to be***:** Sentences with passive voice verbs often create confusion because the subject of the sentence does not perform an action. Sentences are clearer when the subject performs the action and is followed by a strong verb. Use strong active voice verbs in place of forms of *to be*, which can lead to wordiness. Avoid passive voice when you can.

- **Wordy.** It might perhaps be said that using a GPS device is something that is a benefit to drivers who have a poor sense of direction.

- **Revised.** Using a GPS device benefits drivers who have a poor sense of direction.

**Sentences with constructions that can be shortened**

- **Wordy.** The e-book reader, which is a recent invention, may become as commonplace as the cell phone. My over-60 uncle bought an e-book reader, and his wife bought an e-book reader, too.

- **Revised.**  The e-book reader, a recent invention, may become as commonplace as the cell phone. My over-60 uncle and his wife both bought e-book readers.

## Choosing Specific, Appropriate Words

Most essays at the post-secondary level should be written in formal English suitable for an academic situation. Follow these principles to be sure that your word choice is appropriate. For more information about word choice, see **Chapter 2: Working with Words: Which Word Is Right?**

- **Avoid slang.** Find alternatives to *bummer*, *kewl*, and *rad*.

- **Avoid language that is overly casual.** Write about "men and women" rather than "girls and guys" unless you are trying to create a specific effect. A formal tone calls for formal language.

- **Avoid contractions.** Use *do not* in place of *don't, I am* in place of *I'm,have not* in place of *haven't,* and so on. Contractions are considered casual speech.

- **Avoid clichés.** Overused expressions such as *green with envy, face the music, better late than never,* and similar expressions are empty of meaning and may not appeal to your audience.

- **Be careful when you use words that sound alike but have different meanings.** Some examples are *allusion/illusion*; *complement/compliment; council/counsel; concurrent/ consecutive; founder/flounder;* and *historic/historical.* When in doubt, check a dictionary.

- **Choose words with the connotations you want.** Choosing a word for its connotations is as

important in formal essay writing as it is in all kinds of writing. Compare the positive connotations of the word *proud* and the negative connotations of *arrogant* and *conceited*.

- **Use specific words rather than overly general words.** Find synonyms for *thing, people, nice, good, bad, interesting,* and other vague words. Or use specific details to make your exact meaning clear.

Now read the revisions Mariah made to make her third paragraph clearer and more concise. She has already incorporated the changes she made to improve unity and coherence.

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Finally, nothing ~~is more confusing to me than choosing among televisions. It confuses lots of people who want~~ confuses buyers more than purchasing a new high-definition digital television (HDTV), ~~with a large screen to watch sports and DVDs on. There's~~ and with good reason. ~~for this confusion: You face decisions you never had to make with the old, bulky picture-tube televisions.~~ The first big decision ~~is the~~ involves screen resolution, ~~you want. Screen resolution~~ which means the number of horizontal scan lines the screen can show. This resolution is often expressed as 1080p, or full HD, or as 768p, which is half that. The trouble is that ~~if you have~~ on a smaller ~~screen,~~ 32-inch or 37-inch diagonal screen, viewers will not ~~you won't~~ be able to tell the difference between them with the naked eye. The second other important decision ~~you face as you walk around the sales floor~~ is whether to get a plasma screen or an LCD screen. ~~Along with the choice of display type, a further decision buyers face is screen size and features.~~ Plasma flat-panel television screens can be much larger in diameter than their LCD rivals. Plasma screens show ~~truer~~ deeper blacks and can be viewed at a wider angle than current LCD screens. However, large flat-panel plasma screens are much more expensive than flat-screen LCD models. ~~Don't let someone make you by more television than you need!~~ Only after buyers are totally certain they know what they want should they open their wallets.

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## Self-Practice Exercise 12.8

*An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=175#h5p-151 (https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=175#h5p-151)*

**H5P:** Understanding Word Choice

Answer the following questions about Mariah's revised paragraph.

- Read the unrevised and the revised paragraphs aloud. Explain in your own words how changes in word choice have affected Mariah's writing.

- Do you agree with the changes that Mariah made to her paragraph? Which changes would you keep and which were unnecessary? Explain. What other changes would you have made?

- What effect does removing contractions and the pronoun you have on the tone of the paragraph? How would you characterize the tone now? Why?

Now return once more to your essay in progress. Read carefully for problems with word choice. Be sure that your draft is written in formal language and that your word choice is specific and appropriate.

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**Self-Practice Exercise 12.9**

Return once more to the first draft of the essay you have been revising. Check it for unnecessary words.

Try making your sentences as concise as they can be.

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# Brief Punctuation Review

Throughout this book, you have been presented with a number of tables containing transitional words. The list below **Punctuating Transitional Words and Phrases** shows many of the transition words you have seen organized into different categories to help you know how to punctuate with each one.

## Punctuating Transitional Words and Phrases

**Joining Independent Clauses** (coordination)

- 2 IND: **IND; IND**
- Coordinating conjunctions: FANBOYS: **IND, _____ IND**

  - for
  - and
  - nor
  - but
  - or
  - yet
  - so

- Conjunctive adverbs and other transitional expressions: **IND. _____, IND** or **IND; _____,IND**

  - accordingly
  - after all
  - after a while
  - also
  - anyhow
  - as a result
  - at any rate
  - at the same time
  - besides
  - consequently
  - for example
  - for instance

- furthermore
- hence
- henceforth
- however
- in addition
- indeed
- in fact
- in other words

- in particular
- instead
- in the first place
- likewise
- meanwhile
- moreover
- nevertheless
- nonetheless

- on the contrary
- on the other hand
- otherwise
- still
- then
- therefore
- thus

**Forming Dependent Clauses** (subordination)

- **IND +DEP** or **DEP,IND**

- after
- although
- as
- as if
- as though
- because
- before
- if

- in order that
- since
- so that
- that
- though
- unless
- until
- when

- whenever
- where
- wherever
- *which
- while
- who
- whom
- whose

\* This column contains relative pronouns, which may be punctuated differently.

## Joining Independent Clauses

There are three ways to join independent clauses. By using a mix of all three methods and varying your transition words, you will add complexity to your writing and improve the flow. You will also be emphasizing to your reader which ideas you want to connect or to show things like cause and effect or contrast. For a more detailed review of independent clauses, look back at **Chapter 3: Putting Ideas into Your Own Words and Paragraphs**. **Option 1** By simply using a semicolon (**;**), you can make the ideas connect more than if you were to use a period. If you are trying to reinforce that connection, use a semicolon because it is not as strong of a pause as a period and reinforces the link. **Option 2** When you want to link two independent sentences and increase the flow between ideas, you can add a comma and a coordinating conjunction between them. With coordinating conjunctions (FANBOYS: for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so), you do not use a comma every time: you would only do so if what is on either side of the conjunction is a complete sentence not just a phrase. You would not put a comma if you are only giving a list of two items. For example:

**Comma:** It is cold outside**, so** I wore an extra warm coat.

**No comma:** It is cold outside. I wore an extra warm coat **and** gloves.

The first example contains a complete sentence (independent clause) on *either* side of the conjunction *so*. Just the conjunction by itself or just a comma by itself is not strong enough to join two independent clauses. However, if you put the two together with *so*, you can link the two. In the second example, *and* is simply connecting two noun phrases: *warm coat* and *gloves*. What comes after the conjunction is **not** a complete sentence, so you would not add a comma. To check if there is a complete, independent clause, ask yourself, "Can that part stand by itself as a complete sentence?" In the case of the no comma example, *gloves* is what comes after the comma. That is not a complete sentence, only a noun: that means it is part of a list and is not a complete sentence = no comma. The point of these examples was to show you that you have to be careful how you use commas and conjunctions. As easy as it would be to just always toss in a comma, doing so would confuse your reader as what is and is not part of a list and what ideas are joined. **Option 3** Your third choice is to join two independent clauses with a conjunctive adverb or another transition word. These words are very useful because they clearly show your reader how you would like your ideas to connect. If you wanted to emphasize contrasting ideas, you would use *on the other hand* or *however*. If you wanted to show cause and effect, you could use *as a result*. Refer to the tables you have seen in other chapters to make sure you are using the transitions you actually mean to be using; then, check Punctuating Transitional Words and Phrases above to confirm how you should punctuate it. After your first independent clause, you can choose to either use a period or a semicolon, again depending on how much of a link you want to show. You may also want to consider how many long sentences you have used prior to this. If you use a lot of complicated sentences, you should probably use a period to allow your reader to take a break. You must also remember to include a comma *after* the transition word.

**Period:** It is cold outside**. Therefore,** I wore an extra warm coat.

**Semicolon:** It is cold outside**; therefore,** I wore an extra warm coat.

### Joining Dependent Clauses

If one of the clauses in a sentence is independent and can stand on its own, but the other is not, you have to construct the sentence a little differently. Whenever you add a subordinating conjunction or relative pronoun to an independent sentence, you create a dependent clause—one that can never stand alone. In the examples below, notice that when the independent clause comes first, it is strong enough to carry the dependent clause at the end without any helping punctuation. However, if you want the dependent clause first, you must add a comma between it and the independent clause: the dependent clause is not strong enough to support the independent clause after without a little help. In the examples below, the independent clauses are double underlined and the dependent clause has a single underline.

**IND first:** I wore an extra warm coat **as** it is cold outside.

**DEP first: As** it is cold outside**,** I wore an extra warm coat.

> Tip: If you want to start a sentence with *Because,* you need to make sure there is a second half to that sentence that is independent. A *Because* (dependent) clause can never stand by itself.

At the bottom on **Punctuating Transitional Words and Phrases** you can see a list of five dependent markers that can be used a little differently. These are relative pronouns, and when you use them, you need to ask yourself if the information is 100 percent necessary for the reader to understand what you are describing. If it is optional, you can include a comma before the relative clause even if it comes *after* the independent clause.

**Non–essential:** As it is cold outside, I wore an extra warm coat**, which** was blue.

**Essential:** My coat **which is blue** is the one I wear when it is really cold outside.

In the *non–essential* example, the fact that the coat was warm was probably more important than that the coat was blue. The information that the coat is blue probably would not make a difference in keeping the person warm, so the information in that relative clause is not terribly important. Adding the comma before the clause tells the reader it is extra information. In the *essential* example, the use of the same clause *without* a preceding comma shows that this information is important. The writer is implying he has other coats that are not as warm and are not blue, so he is emphasizing the importance of the blue coat. These are the only five subordinators, or relative pronouns, for which you can do this; every other one needs to follow the previous explanation of how to use these dependent transition words. If you do decide to add a comma with one of the relative pronouns, you need to think critically about whether or not that description is completely essential.

Using any of these sentence joining strategies is helpful in providing sentence variety to help your reader stay engaged and reading attentively. By following these punctuation rules, you will also avoid creating sentence fragments, run-on sentences, and comma splices, all of which improves your end product.

Given how much work you have put into your research paper, you will want to check for any errors that could distract or confuse your readers. Using the spell checking feature in your word processing program can be helpful, it should not replace a full, careful review of your document. Be sure to check for any errors that may have come up frequently for you in the past. Use **Checklist 12.4: Editing Your Writing** to help you as you edit.

**Checklist 12.4: Editing Your Writing**

> *An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=175#h5p-152 (https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=175#h5p-152)*

**H5P:** Editing Your Writing

Reread your paper and use the list below to check your **grammar**.

- Does every verb agree with its subject?
- Is the antecedent of every pronoun clear?
- Is it clear which word a participial phrase modifies (eg. no dangling modifier)?
- Have you ensured there are no run-on sentences?
- Are subject, object, and possessive personal pronouns used correctly?
- Do all personal pronouns agree with their antecedents?
- Are all sentences complete sentences (eg. not fragments)?
- Are independent clauses joined with conjunctions?
- Are tense forms, especially for irregular verbs, written correctly?
- Are the correct comparative and superlative forms of adjectives and adverbs used?
- Are who and whom used correctly?
- Is every verb in the correct tense?

Reread your paper and use the list below to check your **sentence structure**.

- Is my parallel structure accurate?
- Have I chosen the best coordinating or subordinating conjunctions to join clauses?
- Are my sentences clear?
- Do I vary my sentence structure?

Reread your paper and use the list below to check your **sentence structure**.

- Have I used apostrophes correctly to write all singular and plural possessive forms?
- Have I used quotation marks correctly?
- Does every sentence end with the correct end punctuation?
- Can I justify the use of every exclamation point?

Reread your paper and use the list below to check your **mechanics and usage**.

- Have I corrected any spelling errors?
- Have I used capital letters where they are needed?
- Have I written abbreviations, where allowed, correctly?
- Have I corrected any errors in the use of commonly confused words, such as to/too/two?

Tip: Be careful about relying too much on spelling checkers and grammar checkers. A spelling checker cannot recognize that you meant to write *principle* but wrote *principal* instead. A grammar checker often queries constructions that are perfectly correct. The program does not understand your meaning; it makes its check against a general set of formulas that might not apply in each instance. If you use a grammar checker, accept the suggestions that make sense, but consider why the suggestions came up.

Tip: Proofreading requires patience; it is very easy to read past a mistake. Set your paper aside for at least a few hours, if not a day or more, so your mind will rest. Some professional proofreaders read a text backward so they can concentrate on spelling and punctuation. Another helpful technique is to slowly read a paper aloud, paying attention to every word, letter, and punctuation mark.

If you need additional proofreading help, ask a reliable friend, classmate, or peer tutor to make a final pass on your paper to look for anything you missed.

## Formatting

Your finished assignment should be properly formatted, following the style required of you. Formatting includes the style of the title, margin size, page number placement, location of the writer's name, and other factors. Your instructor or department may require a specific style to be used. The requirements may be more detailed and rigid for research projects and term papers, which often observe the American Psychological Association (APA) style guide, especially when citations of sources are included.

To ensure the format is correct and follows any specific instructions, make a final check before you submit an assignment.

### Self-Practice Exercise 12.10

With the help of Checklist 12.4, edit and proofread your essay.

## Checking Citations and Formatting

When editing a research paper, it is also important to check that you have cited sources properly and formatted your document according to the specified guidelines. There are two reasons for this. First, citing sources correctly ensures that you give proper credit to other people for ideas and information that helped you in your work. Second, using correct formatting establishes your paper as one student's contribution to the work developed by and for a larger academic community. Increasingly, American Psychological Association (APA) style guidelines are the standard for many academic fields. Use **Checklist 12.5: Citations and Formatting** to help.

**Checklist 12.5: Citations and Formatting**

*An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=175#h5p-153 (https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=175#h5p-153)*

**H5P:** Citation and Formatting

Reread your paper and check whether you have achieved the following goals in working towards proper citation and formatting.

- Each in-text citation includes the source author's name (or, where applicable, the organization name or source title) and year of publication. I have used the correct format of in text and parenthetical citations.
- Within the body of my paper, each fact or idea taken from a source is credited to the correct source.
- My paper includes a running head.
- Each source cited in the body of my paper has a corresponding entry in the references section of my paper.
- My references section includes a heading and double-spaced alphabetized entries.
- Each entry in my references section is indented on the second line and all subsequent lines.
- The margins of my paper are set at one inch. Text is double spaced and set in a standard 12-point font.
- My paper includes a title page.
- Each entry in my references section includes all the necessary information for that source type, in the correct sequence and format.

For detailed guidelines on APA citation and formatting, see **Chapter 9: Citations and Referencing**.

**Writing at Work**

Following APA citation and formatting guidelines may require time and effort. However, it is good practice for learning how to follow accepted conventions in any professional field. Many large corporations create a style manual with guidelines for editing and formatting documents produced by that corporation. Employees follow the style manual when creating internal documents and documents for publication.

During the process of revising and editing, Jorge made changes in the content and style of his paper. He also gave the paper a final review to check for overall correctness and, particularly, correct APA citations and formatting. Read the final draft of his paper: Beyond the Hype: Evaluating Low-Carb Diets (https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/wp-content/uploads/sites/384/2021/09/Beyond-the-Hype_Evaluating-Low-Carb-Diets.pdf).

**With the help of Checklist 12.5, edit and proofread your essay.**

Although you probably do not want to look at your paper again before you submit it to your instructor, take the time to do a final check. Since you have already worked through all of the checklists above focusing on certain aspects at one time, working through one final checklist should confirm you have written a strong, persuasive essay and that everything is the way you want it to be. As extra insurance you have produced a strong paper, you may even want someone else to double-check your essay using **Checklist 12.6: Final Revision**. Then you can compare to see how your perceptions of your paper match those of someone else, essentially having that person act as the one who will be grading your paper.

**Checklist 12.6: Final Revision**

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**H5P:** Final Revision

Although you probably do not want to look at your paper again before you submit it to your instructor, take the time to do a final check. Since you have already worked through all of the checklists above focusing on certain aspects at one time, working through one final checklist should confirm you have written a strong, persuasive essay and that everything is the way you want it to be. As extra insurance you have produced a strong paper, you may even want someone else to double-check your essay using

Checklist 12.6: Final Revision. Then you can compare to see how your perceptions of your paper match those of someone else, essentially having that person act as the one who will be grading your paper.

Reread your paper and use the list below to check your **organization**.

- Are your paragraphs organized in a logical manner?
- Focus: Have you clearly stated your thesis (your controlling idea) in the first paragraph?
- Check whether your paragraphs are organized according to a specific pattern.
- Unity: Write your opening and closing paragraphs and place each topic sentence in between. You should have a "mini essay"
- with several different main points supporting your thesis.
- Have you provided a comprehensive conclusion to your essay? Does it summarize your main points (using different words)?
- Do you show you understand the assignment: purpose, audience, and genre?
- Does your thesis statement catch the reader's attention?
- Does each topic sentence (per paragraph) logically follow the one preceding it?
- Do you have several points to support your thesis?
- Are your paragraphs organized in the best way to support your thesis?

Reread your paper and use the list below to check your **paragraphs and sentences**.

- Does each sentence logically follow the preceding one?
- Are there several sentences giving details, facts, quotes, reasons, and arguments in each paragraph?
- Is each supporting detail specific, concrete, and relevant to the topic sentence?
- Have you used transitional words to help the reader follow your thoughts?
- Does each paragraph have only one main point?
- Does your essay have an appropriate tone and point of view?
- Does each paragraph have main points and supporting details?
- Is each sentence is relevant to the main point of the paragraph?
- Is your approach or pattern used to develop your paragraph's main point followed?
- Are your paragraphs all an appropriate length?

Reread your paper and use the list below to check your **sentences and usage**.

- Verb tenses are consistent.
- Weak adverbs (may be) are replaced with strong verbs (is).
- Pronoun referents are clear.
- Wordiness has been eliminated.

- Subject and verbs agree.
- Subjects are person are consistent.
- Sentence structure is varied.
- Repetition has been eliminated.
- Fragments, splices, and run-on sentences have been revised.
- Each sentence has a subject and a verb.
- Lists are written in parallel.
- Wordiness has been corrected.
- All verbs are active.
- Modifiers have been checked for clarity.

Reread your paper and use the list below to check your **documentation**.

- Reference section is complete.
- All references are documented.
- In-text citations are formatted correctly.
- In-text citations are present for every reference.

Reread your paper and use the list below to check your **mechanics**.

- All spelling and typographical errors have been corrected.
- All words and sentences are punctuated according to common usage.

Reread your paper and use the list below to check your **content**.

- I have provided enough background information. The details I have provided are relevant and necessary.
- I believe what I have written.
- My controlling idea and the development of my argument make sense.
- I have primarily used paraphrasing (not direct quotation).

You should now be confident you have produced a strong argument that is wonderfully constructed and that you will be able to persuade your audience that your points and point of view are valid.

## Key Takeaways

- During revising, you add, cut, move, or change information in order to improve content.

- During editing, you take a second look at the words and sentences you used to express your ideas and fix any problems in grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure.

- Remember to budget time for careful editing and proofreading. Use all available resources, including editing checklists, peer editing, and your institution's writing lab, to improve your editing skills.

- Organization in a research paper means that the argument proceeds logically from the introduction to the body to the conclusion. It flows logically from one point to the next. When revising a research paper, evaluate the organization of the paper as a whole and the organization of individual paragraphs.

- In a cohesive research paper, the elements of the paper work together smoothly and naturally. When revising a research paper, evaluate its cohesion. In particular, check that information from research is smoothly integrated with your ideas.

- An effective research paper uses a style and tone that are appropriately academic and serious. When revising a research paper, check that the style and tone are consistent throughout.

- Editing a research paper involves checking for errors in grammar, mechanics, punctuation, usage, spelling, citations, and formatting.

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This is where you can add appendices or other back matter.

# Appendix 1: Readings: Examples of Essays

## A.1 Introduction to Sample Essays

Learning Objectives

- Identify the role of reading in the writing process
- Read examples of the rhetorical modes

This chapter contains quality samples of the rhetorical modes described in **Chapter 4: What are you writing, to whom, and how?** While you read these essays, remember the purpose of the writing and pay attention to the following:

- **Thesis statement:** What is the author's main point of the essay? Identify the sentence and see how well it is supported throughout the essay.

- **Topic sentence:** How well does each topic sentence support the thesis, and how well does it describe the main idea of the following paragraph?

- **Supporting evidence**: Identify the evidence that the author uses to support the essay's main ideas, and gauge their credibility.

*Note: the citations and references are missing to give you an opportunity to practice identifying when and where citations are required.

The best way to become a better writer is to become a closer reader. As you read each essay carefully take note of the content and the structure as well as the thesis statement, topic sentences, and supporting evidence. These should shape your response to the essay and should also shape your writing.

## A.2 Narrative Essay

Learning Objectives

- Read an example of the narrative rhetorical mode

### My Post-Secondary Education

The first class I went to in my post-secondary education was philosophy, and it changed my life forever. Our first assignment was to write a short response paper to the Albert Camus essay "The Myth of Sisyphus." I was extremely nervous about the assignment as well as college. However, through all the confusion in philosophy class, many of my questions about life were answered.

I entered my post-secondary studies intending to earn a degree in engineering. I always liked the way mathematics had right and wrong answers. I understood the logic and was very good at it. When I received my first philosophy assignment that asked me to write my interpretation of the Camus essay, I was instantly confused. What is the right way to do this assignment, I wondered. I was nervous about writing an incorrect interpretation and did not want to get my first assignment wrong. Even more troubling was that the professor refused to give us any guidelines on what he was looking for; he gave us total freedom. He simply said, "I want to see what you come up with."

Full of anxiety, I first set out to read Camus's essay several times to make sure I really knew what was it was about. I did my best to take careful notes, yet even after I took all these notes and knew the essay inside and out, I still did not know the right answer. What was my interpretation? I could think of a million different ways to interpret the essay, but which one was my professor looking for? In math class, I was used to examples and explanations of solutions. This assignment gave me nothing; I was completely on my own to come up with my individual interpretation.

Next, when I sat down to write, the words just did not come to me. My notes and ideas were all present, but the words were lost. I decided to try every prewriting strategy I could find. I brainstormed, made idea maps, and even wrote an outline. Eventually, after a lot of stress, my ideas became more organized and the words fell on the page. I had my interpretation of "The Myth of Sisyphus," and I had my main reasons for interpreting the essay. I remember being unsure of myself, wondering if what I was saying made sense, or if I was even on the right track. Through all the uncertainty, I continued writing the best I could. I finished the conclusion paragraph, had my spouse proofread it for errors, and turned it in the next day simply hoping for the best.

Then, a week or two later, came judgment day. The professor gave our papers back to us with grades and comments. I remember feeling simultaneously afraid and eager to get the paper back in my hands. It turned out, however, that I had nothing to worry about. The professor gave me an A on the paper, and his notes suggested that I wrote an effective essay overall. He wrote that my reading of the essay was

very original and that my thoughts were well organized. My relief and newfound confidence upon reading his comments could not be overstated.

What I learned through this process extended well beyond how to write a post-secondary school paper. I learned to be open to new challenges. I never expected to enjoy a philosophy class and always expected to be a math and science person. This class and assignment, however, gave me the self-confidence, critical thinking skills, and courage to try a new career path. I left engineering and went on to study law and eventually became a lawyer. More importantly, that class and paper helped me understand education differently. Instead of seeing post-secondary studies as a direct stepping stone to a career, I learned to see those studies as a place to first learn and then seek a career or enhance an existing career. By giving me the space to express my own interpretation and to argue for my own values, my philosophy class taught me the importance of education for education's sake. That realization continues to pay dividends every day.

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**H5P:** Notes on Sample Essays

- Thesis statement.
- Topic sentence.
- Supporting evidence.
- Citations.

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# A.3 Illustration Essay

Learning Objectives

- Read an example of the illustration rhetorical mode

**Letter to the City**

To: Lakeview Department of Transportation

From: A Concerned Citizen

The intersection of Central Avenue and Lake Street is dangerous and demands immediate consideration for the installation of a controlling mechanism. I have lived in Lakeview my entire life, and during that time, I have witnessed too many accidents and close calls at that intersection. I would like the Department of Transportation to answer this question: how many lives have to be lost on the corner of Central Avenue and Lake Street before a street light or stop sign is placed there?

Over the past twenty years, the population of Lakeview has increased dramatically. This population growth has put tremendous pressure on the city's roadways, especially Central Avenue and its intersecting streets. At the intersection of Central Avenue and Lake Street, it is easy to see how serious this problem is. For example, when I try to cross Central Avenue as a pedestrian, I frequently wait over ten minutes for the cars to clear, and even then, I must rush to the median. I will then have to continue to wait until I can finally run to the other side of the street. On one hand, even as a physically fit adult, I can run only with significant effort and care. Expecting a senior citizen or a child to cross this street, on the other hand, is extremely dangerous and irresponsible. I am concerned the city does not have any plans to do something about this.

Recent data show that the intersection of Central Avenue and Lake Street has been especially dangerous. According to the city's own statistics, three fatalities occurred at that intersection in the past year alone. Over the past five years, the intersection witnessed fourteen car accidents, five of which were fatal. These numbers officially qualify the intersection as the most fatal and dangerous in the entire province. It should go without saying that fatalities and accidents are not the clearest way of measuring the severity of this situation because for each accident that happens, countless other close calls never contribute to city data. I hope you will agree that these numbers alone are sufficient evidence that the intersection at Central Avenue and Lake Street is hazardous and demands immediate attention.

Nearly all accidents mentioned are caused by vehicles trying to cross Central Avenue while driving on Lake Street. I think the City of Lakeview should consider placing a traffic light there to control the traffic going both ways. While I do not have access to any resources or data that can show precisely how much a traffic light can improve the intersection, I think you will agree that a controlled busy intersection is much safer than an uncontrolled one. Therefore, at a minimum, the city must consider making the intersection a four way stop.

Each day that goes by without attention to this issue is a lost opportunity to save lives and make the community a safer, more enjoyable place to live. Because the safety of citizens is the priority of every government, I can only expect that the Department of Transportation and the City of Lakeview will act on this matter immediately. For the safety and well-being of Lakeview citizens, please do not let bureaucracy or money impede this urgent project.

Sincerely,

A Concerned Citizen

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*writingforsuccessh5p/?p=177#h5p-156)*

**H5P:** Notes on Sample Essays

- Thesis statement.
- Topic sentence.
- Supporting evidence.
- Citations.

# A.4 Descriptive Essay

Learning Objectives

- Read an example of the descriptive rhetorical mode

## Canada's Pastime

As the coldness hits my face and I breathe in the invigorating air, I temporarily forget that I am at a sporting event. However, when I open my eyes and look around, I am reminded of all things Canadian. From the national anthem to the international players on the ice, all the sights and sounds of a hockey game come together like a big forkful of poutine.

First, the entrance turnstiles click and clank, and then a hallway of noise bombards me. All the fans' voices coalesce in a chorus of sound, rising to a humming clamour. The occasional, "Programs, get your programs, here!" jumps out through the hum to get my attention. I navigate my way through the crowded walkways of the arena, moving to the right of some people, to the left of others, and I eventually find the section number where my seat is located. As I approach my seat, I hear the announcer's voice echo around the arena, "Attention fans. In honour of our country, please stand for the singing of the national anthem." His deep voice echoes around each angle of the arena, and every word

is heard again and again. The crowd sings and hums "O Canada," and I feel a surprising amount of national pride through the voices. I take my seat as the referee drops the puck, and the game begins.

Late in the second period of the game, I decide to find a concessions stand. The smell of hot dogs carries through the arena, down every aisle, and inside every concourse. They are always as unhealthy as possible, dripping in grease, while the buns are soft and always too small for the dog. The best way to wash down a hot dog is with a large pop, so I order both. Doing my best to balance the cold pop in one hand and the wrapped up dog in the other, I find the nearest condiments stand to load up my hot dog. A dollop of bright green relish and chopped onions, along with two squirts of the ketchup and mustard complete the dog. As I continue the balancing act between the loaded hot dog and pop back to my seat, a cheering fan bumps into my pop hand. The pop splashes out of the cup and all over my shirt, leaving me drenched. I make direct eye contact with the man who bumped into me and he looks me in the eye, looks at my shirt, tells me how sorry he is, and then I just shake my head and keep walking. "It's all just part of the experience," I tell myself.

Before I am able to get back to my seat, I hear the thud of someone hitting the glass, followed by an uproar from the crowd. Everyone is standing, clapping, and cheering. I missed a goal. I find my aisle and ask everyone to excuse me as I slip past them to my seat. "Excuse me. Excuse me. Thank you. Thank you. Sorry," is all I can say as I inch past each fan. Halfway to my seat, I can hear discarded food wrappers crunch beneath my feet, and each step is marked with a pronounced crunch.

When I finally get to my seat, I realize it is the start of the intermission. I quickly eat my hot dog and wash it down with what is left of my pop. The organ starts playing and everyone begins to sing "We Will Rock You." While singing the song, putting my arms around friends and family with me, I watch all the players taking the ice. It is wonderful to see the overwhelming amount of players on one team from around the world: Russia, the United States, Canada, and Finland. I cannot help but feel a bit of national pride at this realization. Seeing the international representation on the ice reminds me of the ways that Canadians, though from many different backgrounds and places, still come together under common ideals. For these reasons and for the whole experience in general, going to a National Hockey League game is the perfect way to glimpse a slice of Canadiana.

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**H5P:** Notes on Sample Essays

- Thesis statement.
- Topic sentence.

- Supporting evidence.
- Citations.

# A.5 Classification Essay

Learning Objectives

- Read an example of the classification rhetorical mode

## Types of Higher Education Programs

Today's students have many choices when it comes to pursuing a degree: four year programs, two year programs, large or small classroom settings, and even daytime or evening classes. With all the different options to consider, potential students should learn about the different types of post-secondary institutions, so they can find a school that best fits their personality, budget, and educational goals.

One type of higher education program for students to consider is a liberal arts college. These schools tend to be small in size and offer a range of undergraduate degrees in subjects like English, history, psychology, and education. Students may choose a liberal arts college if they want a more intimate classroom setting rather than large lecture style classes. Students may also consider a liberal arts college if they want to gain knowledge from a variety of disciplines, rather than focus on a single area of study. Liberal arts schools can come with a hefty price tag, and their high cost presents an obstacle for students on a tight budget; moreover, while some students might appreciate a liberal arts school's intimate atmosphere, others might encounter a lack of diversity in the student body. Still, students seeking a well-rounded education in the humanities will find liberal arts schools to be one option.

Universities, another type of higher education program, offer both undergraduate and graduate degrees. Usually universities are larger than colleges and can accommodate tens of thousands of students in many different majors and areas of study. A large student body means that class sizes are often larger, and some classes may be taught by graduate students rather than professors. Students will feel at home at a university if they want a focused academic program and state of the art research facilities. While some universities are private, many are public, which means they receive funding from the government, so tuition is more affordable and some even offer discounted in state tuition for state residents. Also, universities attract many international students, so those looking for a variety of campus cultural groups and clubs will appreciate a greater sense of diversity among the student body.

Universities can be overwhelming for some, but they are the right fit for students who seek research opportunities and academic studies, especially in the fields of mathematics and science.

Community college is a type of higher education program popular with students on a limited budget who want to take college courses but may not know what they want to major in. Most schools offer degrees after two years of study, usually a diploma that prepares students to enter the work force; many students choose to study at a community college for two years and then transfer to a four year college to complete their undergraduate degree. Like liberal arts schools, classes are small and allow instructors to pay more attention to their students. Community college allows students to live at home rather than in a dormitory, which also keeps costs down. While some young people might not like the idea of living at home for school, many adults choose to attend community college, so they can advance their education while working and living with their families.

Online universities are another type of higher education program that are gaining popularity as technology improves. These schools offer many of the same degree programs as traditional liberal arts colleges and universities. Unlike traditional programs, which require students to attend classes and lectures, online universities offer greater academic flexibility and are a great option for students wishing to pursue a degree while still working full time. At online universities, students access course materials, such as video lectures and assessments, remotely using a personal computer and are able to speed up or slow down their progress to complete their degree at their own pace. Students may attend classes in the comfort of their own home or a local library, but students hoping for the social community of higher education might not enjoy this aspect of higher education.

With so many colleges and universities to choose from, it may be difficult for a student to narrow down his or her selection, but once a student knows what he or she is looking for, the process may become much easier. It is very important for students to learn about the different types of higher education programs available before making their selections.

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**H5P:** Notes on Sample Essays

- Thesis statement.
- Topic sentence.
- Supporting evidence.
- Citations.

# A.6 Process Analysis Essay

## How to Grow Tomatoes from a Seedling

Growing tomatoes is a simple and rewarding task, and more people should be growing them. This paper walks readers through the main steps for growing and maintaining patio tomatoes from a seedling.

The first step in growing tomatoes is determining if you have the appropriate available space and sunlight to grow them. All tomato varieties require full sunlight, which means at least six hours of direct sun every day. If you have south facing windows or a patio or backyard that receives direct sunlight, you should be able to grow tomatoes. Choose the location that receives the most sun.

Next, you need to find the right seedling. Growing tomatoes and other vegetables from seeds can be more complicated (though it is not difficult), so I am only discussing how to grow tomatoes from a seedling. A seedling, for those who do not know, is typically understood as a young plant that has only recently started growing from the seed. It can be anything from a newly germinated plant to a fully flowering plant. You can usually find tomato seedlings at your local nursery for an affordable price. Less than five dollars per plant is a common price. When choosing the best seedling, look for a plant that is short with healthy, full leaves and no flowers. This last point tends to be counterintuitive, but it is extremely important. You do not want a vegetable plant that has already started flowering in the nursery because it will have a more difficult time adapting to its new environment when you replant it. Additionally, choose a plant with one strong main stem. This is important because the fewer stems that a tomato plant has, the more easily it can transport nutrients to the fruit. Multiple stems tend to divide nutrients in less efficient ways, often resulting in either lower yields or smaller fruit.

Once you have found the right seedlings to plant back home, you need to find the best way of planting them. I recommend that you plant your tomatoes in containers. If you have the space and sunlight, then you can certainly plant them in the ground, but a container has several advantages and is usually most manageable for the majority of gardeners. The containers can be used in the house, on a patio, or anywhere in the backyard, and they are portable. Containers also tend to better regulate moisture and drain excess water. Choose a container that is at least 10 inches in diameter and at least 1 foot deep. This will provide sufficient room for root development.

In addition to the container, you also need the appropriate soil mixture and draining mechanisms. For the best drainage, fill the bottom of your container with 2 or 3 inches of gravel. On top of the gravel, fill ¾ of the container with soil. Choose a well-balanced organic soil. The three main ingredients you will find described on soil bags are N-P-K—that is, nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium. Without

going into too much detail about the role of each element in plant growth, I will tell you that an average vegetable will grow fine in a 10-5-5 mixture. This ratio, too, will be easy to find at your local nursery.

Once you have the gravel in the bottom of the container and the soil on top, you are ready to transplant the tomato. Pick up the tomato in the plastic container it comes in from the nursery. Turn it upside down, and holding the stem between your fingers, pat the bottom lightly several times, and the plant should fall into your hand. Next, you should gently break up the root ball that formed in the nursery container with your hands. Be gentle, but be sure to rip them up a bit; this helps generate new root growth in the new container. Be careful not to damage the roots too much, as this could stunt the growth or even destroy the plant altogether.

Next, carve out a hole in the soil to make space for the plant. Make it deep enough to go about an inch higher than it was previously buried and wide enough so all the roots can comfortably fit within and beneath it. Place the seedling in the hole and push the removed soil back on top to cover the base of the plant. After that, the final step in planting your tomato is mulch. Mulch is not necessary for growing plants, but it can be very helpful in maintaining moisture, keeping out weeds, and regulating soil temperature. Place 2–3 inches of mulch above the soil and spread it out evenly.

Once the mulch is laid, you are mostly done. The rest is all watering, waiting, and maintenance. After you lay the mulch, pour the plant a heavy amount of water. Water the plant at its base until you see water coming through the bottom of the container. Wait ten minutes, and repeat. This initial watering is very important for establishing new roots. You should continue to keep the soil moist but never soaking wet. One healthy watering each morning should be sufficient for days without rain. You can often forego watering on days with moderate rainfall. Watering in the morning is preferable to the evening because it lessens mold and bacteria growth.

Choosing to grow the patio variety of tomatoes is easiest because patio tomatoes do not require staking or training around cages. They grow in smaller spaces and have a determinate harvest time. As you continue to water and monitor your plant, prune unhealthy looking leaves to the main stem and cut your tomatoes down at the stem when they ripen to your liking. As you can see, growing tomatoes can be very easy and manageable for even novice gardeners. The satisfaction of picking and eating fresh food and doing it yourself, outweighs all the effort you put in over the growing season.

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**H5P:** Notes on Sample Essays

- Thesis statement.
- Topic sentence.
- Supporting evidence.
- Citations.

## A.7 Definition Essay

Learning Objectives

- Read an example of the definition rhetorical mode

### Defining Good Students Means More than Just Grades

Many people define good students as those who receive the best grades. While it is true that good students often earn high grades, grades are just one aspect of how we define a good student. In fact, even poor students can earn high grades sometimes, so grades are not the best indicator of a student's quality. Rather, a good student pursues scholarship, actively participates in class, and maintains a positive, professional relationship with instructors and peers.

Good students have a passion for learning that drives them to fully understand class material rather than just worry about what grades they receive in the course. Good students are actively engaged in scholarship, which means they enjoy reading and learning about their subject matter not just because readings and assignments are required. Of course, good students will complete their homework and all assignments, and they may even continue to perform research and learn more on the subject after the course ends. In some cases, good students will pursue a subject that interests them but might not be one of their strongest academic areas, so they will not earn the highest grades. Pushing oneself to learn and try new things can be difficult, but good students will challenge themselves rather than remain at their educational comfort level for the sake of a high grade. The pursuit of scholarship and education rather than concern over grades is the hallmark of a good student.

Class participation and behaviour are another aspect of the definition of a good student. Simply attending class is not enough; good students arrive punctually because they understand that tardiness disrupts the class and disrespects the professors. They might occasionally arrive a few minutes early to ask the professor questions about class materials or mentally prepare for the day's work. Good students consistently pay attention during class discussions and take notes in lectures rather than engage in off

task behaviours, such as checking their cell phones or daydreaming. Excellent class participation requires a balance between speaking and listening, so good students will share their views when appropriate but also respect their classmates' views when they differ from their own. It is easy to mistake quantity of class discussion comments with quality, but good students know the difference and do not try to dominate the conversation. Sometimes class participation is counted toward a student's grade, but even without such clear rewards, good students understand how to perform and excel among their peers in the classroom.

Finally, good students maintain a positive and professional relationship with their professors. They respect their instructor's authority in the classroom as well as the instructor's privacy outside of the classroom. Prying into a professor's personal life is inappropriate, but attending office hours to discuss course material is an appropriate, effective way for students to demonstrate their dedication and interest in learning. Good students go to their professor's office during posted office hours or make an appointment if necessary. While instructors can be very busy, they are usually happy to offer guidance to students during office hours; after all, availability outside the classroom is a part of their job. Attending office hours can also help good students become memorable and stand out from the rest, particularly in lectures with hundreds enrolled. Maintaining positive, professional relationships with professors is especially important for those students who hope to attend graduate school and will need letters of recommendation in the future.

Although good grades often accompany good students, grades are not the only way to indicate what it means to be a good student. The definition of a good student means demonstrating such traits as engaging with course material, participating in class, and creating a professional relationship with professors. While every professor will have different criteria for earning an A in their course, most would agree on these characteristics for defining good students.

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**H5P:** Notes on Sample Essays

- Thesis statement.
- Topic sentence.
- Supporting evidence.
- Citations.

## A.8 Compare and Contrast Essay

**Comparing and Contrasting London and Washington, DC**

Both Washington, DC, and London are capital cities of English speaking countries, yet they offer vastly different experiences to their residents and visitors. Comparing and contrasting the two cities based on their history, their culture, and their residents show how different and similar the two are.

Both cities are rich in world and national history, though they developed on very different time lines. London, for example, has a history that dates back over two thousand years. It was part of the Roman Empire and known by the similar name, Londinium. It was not only one of the northernmost points of the Roman Empire but also the epicenter of the British Empire where it held significant global influence from the early sixteenth century on through the early twentieth century. Washington, DC, on the other hand, has only formally existed since the late eighteenth century. Though Native Americans inhabited the land several thousand years earlier and settlers inhabited the land as early as the sixteenth century, the city did not become the capital of the United States until the 1790s. From that point onward to today, however, Washington, DC, has increasingly maintained significant global influence. Even though both cities have different histories, they have both held, and continue to hold, significant social influence in the economic and cultural global spheres.

Both Washington, DC, and London offer a wide array of museums that harbour many of the world's most prized treasures. While Washington, DC, has the National Gallery of Art and several other Smithsonian galleries, London's art scene and galleries have a definite edge in this category. From the Tate Modern to the British National Gallery, London's art ranks among the world's best. This difference and advantage has much to do with London and Britain's historical depth compared to that of the United States. London has a much richer past than Washington, DC, and consequently has a lot more material to pull from when arranging its collections. Both cities have thriving theatre districts, but again, London wins this comparison, too, both in quantity and quality of theatre choices. With regard to other cultural places like restaurants, pubs, and bars, both cities are very comparable. Both have a wide selection of expensive, elegant restaurants as well as a similar amount of global and national chains. While London may be better known for its pubs and taste in beer, DC offers a different bar going experience. With clubs and pubs that tend to stay open later than their British counterparts, the DC night life tend to be less reserved overall.

Both cities also share and differ in cultural diversity and cost of living. Both cities share a very expensive cost of living—both in terms of housing and shopping. A downtown one bedroom apartment in DC can easily cost $1,800 per month, and a similar "flat" in London may double that amount. These high costs create socioeconomic disparity among the residents. Although both cities' residents are

predominantly wealthy, both have a significantly large population of poor and homeless. Perhaps the most significant difference between the resident demographics is the racial makeup. Washington, DC, is a "minority majority" city, which means the majority of its citizens are races other than white. In 2009, according to the US Census, 55 percent of DC residents were classified as "Black or African American" and 35 percent of its residents were classified as "white." London, by contrast, has very few minorities—in 2006, 70 percent of its population was "white," while only 10 percent was "black." The racial demographic differences between the cities is drastic.

Even though Washington, DC, and London are major capital cities of English speaking countries in the Western world, they have many differences along with their similarities. They have vastly different histories, art cultures, and racial demographics, but they remain similar in their cost of living and socioeconomic disparity.

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**H5P:** Notes on Sample Essays

- Thesis statement.
- Topic sentence.
- Supporting evidence.
- Citations.

## A.9 Cause and Effect Essay

Learning Objectives

- Read an example of the cause and effect rhetorical mode

**Effects of Video Game Addiction**

Video game addition is a serious problem in many parts of the world today and deserves more attention. It is no secret that children and adults in many countries throughout the world, including Japan, China, the United States, and Canada play video games every day. Most players are able to limit their usage in ways that do not interfere with their daily lives, but many others have developed an addiction to playing video games and suffer detrimental effects.

An addiction can be described in several ways, but generally speaking, addictions involve unhealthy attractions to substances or activities that ultimately disrupt the ability of a person to keep up with regular daily responsibilities. Video game addiction typically involves playing games uncontrollably for many hours at a time—some people will play only four hours at a time while others cannot stop for over twenty four hours. Regardless of the severity of the addiction, many of the same effects will be experienced by all.

One common effect of video game addiction is isolation and withdrawal from social experiences. Video game players often hide in their homes or in Internet cafés for days at a time—only reemerging for the most pressing tasks and necessities. The effect of this isolation can lead to a breakdown of communication skills and often a loss in socialization. While it is true that many games, especially massive multiplayer online games, involve a very real form of e-based communication and coordination with others, and these virtual interactions often result in real communities that can be healthy for the players, these communities and forms of communication rarely translate to the types of valuable social interaction that humans need to maintain typical social functioning. As a result, the social networking in these online games often gives the users the impression that they are interacting socially, while their true social lives and personal relations may suffer.

Another unfortunate product of the isolation that often accompanies video game addiction is the disruption of the user's career. While many players manage to enjoy video games and still hold their jobs without problems, others experience challenges at their workplace. Some may only experience warnings or demerits as a result of poorer performance, or others may end up losing their jobs altogether. Playing video games for extended periods of time often involves sleep deprivation, and this tends to carry over to the workplace, reducing production, and causing habitual tardiness.

Video game addiction may result in a decline in overall health and hygiene. Players who interact with video games for such significant amounts of time can go an entire day without eating and even longer without basic hygiene tasks, such as using the restroom or bathing. The effects of this behaviour pose significant danger to their overall health.

The causes of video game addiction are complex and can vary greatly, but the effects have the potential to be severe. Playing video games can and should be a fun activity for all to enjoy. But just like everything else, the amount of time one spends playing video games needs to be balanced with personal and social responsibilities.

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

*https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=177#h5p-156 (https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccessh5p/?p=177#h5p-156)*

**H5P:** Notes on Sample Essays

- Thesis statement.
- Topic sentence.
- Supporting evidence.
- Citations.

# Versioning History

This page provides a record of edits and changes made to this book since its initial publication. Whenever edits or updates are made in the text, we provide a record and description of those changes here. If the change is minor, the version number increases by 0.01. If the edits involve substantial updates, the version number increases to the next full number.

The files posted by this book always reflect the most recent version. If you find an error in this book, please fill out the Report an Error (https://collection.bccampus.ca/report-error/) form.

| Version | Date | Change | Details |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1.00 | 2011 | Book published by a publisher who has requested that they and the original author not receive attribution. | |
| 2.00 | August 24, 2015 | First Canadian Edition published. | Book adapted for a Canadian audience. |
| 3.00 | December 21, 2021 | First Canadian H5P Edition published. | • Added 150 interactive H5P activities with print equivalents.<br>• Made minor revisions to formatting and headings to make content easier to digest and navigate.<br>• Revised to ensure all content met accessibility guidelines.<br>• Broke chapters up so subsections would be listed in the table of contents.<br>• Added additional front and back matter pieces. |
| 3.01 | September 25, 2023 | Corrected typographical errors. | In 3.2 Summarizing, changed "Alcohol consumption continue to escalate" to "continues to escalate" and changed "eighteen to twenty-four-year-olds" to "eighteen- to twenty-four-year-olds." |
| 3.02 | November 1, 2023 | Corrected wording error. | In 6.1 Writing Body Paragraphs (#chapter-writing-body-paragraphs), replaced "Another J. D. Salinger" with "Author J. D. Salinger." |