

Communication Essentials for College

| Jen Booth, Emily Cramer & Amanda Quibell

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COMMUNICATION ESSENTIALS FOR COLLEGE

JEN BOOTH; EMILY CRAMER; AND AMANDA QUIBELL



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ACCESSING AND USING COMMUNICATION ESSENTIALS FOR COLLEGE

Welcome to *Communication Essentials for College*

This textbook is designed to be accessible using standard web browsers, mobile devices, screen readers and other assistive technology. You can access the book in a number of formats. Requirements, tools, and suggestions for navigating and using the book are listed on this page. If you encounter any issues in accessing the book, please connect with your professor.

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Recommendations

- Check for printing costs at your on-campus print shop (such as Grenville at Georgian College) or a local print shop (Staples, etc)
- Printing a large document is often significantly less expensive at a print shop than it is to print on your home printer or at the Library
- Consider printing in black & white and refer to the webbook or PDF for any diagrams that require colour (significantly less expensive)
- Ask about binding or 3 hole punching when you order, as this is usually low cost and will make your textbook easier to use

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TUTORS FOR COMMUNICATION ESSENTIALS

Tutors for Communication Essentials are available to all students registered in the course.

Why work with a tutor?

Tutors can...

- coach you through course concepts
- help you learn new study skills and resources
- help you feel confident reaching your academic goals
- direct you to appropriate services and resources when needed

Book a Tutor for COMM1016

COMM1016 tutors are available within the Writing Centre for both virtual and in-person assistance. Tutors may also be available for your other courses/programs – check Navigate360 or connect with Academic Success for more details.

How to Book a COMM1016 Tutoring Appointment (Text version)

How to book a Tutoring session

To book an appointment, you can:

- Use the Navigate360 app or visit the Navigate360 website
- Link to Navigate360 is available in MyGCLife

- Phone toll free: 1.877.890.8477 or Barrie area: 705.722.1518
- Email: Academic Success – academicsuccess@georgiancollege.ca
- Phone toll free: 1.877.890.8477 or Barrie area: 705.722.1518
- Stop by Academic Success at the Barrie campus Library to chat with someone in person

Other Student Supports

Your tutor will help you identify other college supports and services to help improve your success this semester. If you haven't already, consider the following supports:

- Research Help [new tab] – Help with Library website, databases, resources, searching, credible sources & more
- Writing Centre [new tab] – Help with APA, writing and citing
- Language Help Centre [new tab] – Help with foundational writing skills, grammar, sentences, paragraphs & more
- Student Advisor [new tab] – Help with time management, building resilience, learning online & more
- Counselling [new tab] – Help with everyday challenges, mental health, adapting to college & more

For a full list of student services, please visit the Student Success page on MyGCLife [new tab]

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Communication Essentials for College is dedicated to our students.

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This OER, *Communication Essentials for College*, is a collection of resources adapted by Amanda Quibell and Emily Cramer to meet the needs of students in introductory Communication courses. In most sections of this OER, updates have been made to the existing content to improve usability and accessibility, incorporate interactive elements and improve the overall student experience. This collection reuses content from the following key resources:

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The web version of *Communication Essentials for College* has been designed with accessibility in mind by incorporating the following features:

- It has been optimized for people who use screen-reader technology.
  - all content can be navigated using a keyboard.
  - links, headings, and tables are formatted to work with screen readers.
- All images in this guide are described fully in the text, alt-tag or in an image description section for complex images.
- Information is not conveyed by colour alone.
- Pressbooks has built in features such as the ability to change font size.

Other file formats available

This book is also available in PDF formats that you may save, print, access offline or use with internet access.

Efforts have been made to improve the user experience in all formats – if you encounter any access issues or barriers, please connect with your professor.

Known accessibility issues and areas for improvement

This book's adapters have attempted to improve upon existing features from the original sources and improve these materials for all users.

While we strive to ensure that this resource is as accessible and usable as possible, we might not always get it right. Any issues we identify will be listed below. If you encounter issues with this text, please notify your Professor.

List of Known Accessibility Issues

Location of Issue	Need for Improvement	Timeline	Work Around
Sections 3.5 & 7.3	Visual representation of editing markup in writing samples uses colour and graphics to demonstrate necessary changes/ editing.	On going	Recommended code added, text description of changes added. Work on going.
APA formatted references (throughout the book)	APA references require the location of resources to be listed as a full URL	Wait for APA update	Reference entry URLs are not "linked" but the full URL is listed in text. Plan to optimize using tagging for next update.
Video Captioning	All videos have accessible CC & transcripts via YouTube or other provider, but may not have transcripts that fully describe non-speech content.		Current provisions meet AODA requirements.
PDF version of book	PDF version of book may not be fully accessible, as it was generated using Pressbooks export.		Text versions of interactive activities added. Work on-going.

Accessibility standards

The web version of this resource has been designed to meet AODA requirements, along with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0, level AA. In addition, it follows all guidelines in Appendix A: Checklist for Accessibility of the *Accessibility Toolkit – 2nd Edition*.

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FOR EDUCATORS

Communication Essentials for College is specifically designed to support a foundational college course with a focus on academic writing, research, and presentation skills. The examples within the book emphasize the importance of academic integrity and teach students how to acknowledge sources following APA guidelines.

The informal, conversational language of the book models clear, concise, and professional language that facilitates communication and engagement.

Chapters 11-15 provide ancillary information on grammatical and sentence weaknesses common in student writing. When evaluating student work, instructors can also direct students to these chapters for additional support.

Ancillary resources for this textbook

Supplementary materials for this OER are available, including:

- Summary PowerPoints
- Quiz bank for GC faculty (available in Blackboard)

Please visit the web version of this OER to access Summary PowerPoint files. or connect with us via the OER Design Studio at the Georgian College Library.

Questions, Comments or Suggestions?

- Please let us know if you are using this text or have questions, comments or suggestions
- Email our team at OER [at] georgiancollege.ca

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Communication Essentials for College by Jen Booth, Emily Cramer & Amanda Quibell

- 1.1 – Why on earth am I taking another English course?
- 1.2 – Connect With Your Instructor
- 1.3 – Acting Professional in an Online Environment
- 1.4 – Academic Integrity

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Please visit the web version of *Communication Essentials for College* to access the complete book, interactive activities and ancillary resources.

1.1 - WHY ON EARTH AM I TAKING ANOTHER ENGLISH COURSE?

Learning Objectives

- Distinguish between the nature of English and Communications courses
- Explain the importance of studying Communications
- Identify communication-related skills and personal qualities favoured by employers
- Consider how communication skills will ensure your future professional success
- Recognize that the quality of your communication represents the quality of your company

Communications vs. English Courses

Whether students enter their first-year college Communications courses right out of high school or with years of work experience behind them, they often fear being doomed to repeat their high school English class, reading Shakespeare and analyzing confusing poetry. Welcome relief comes when they discover that a course in Communications has nothing to do with either of those things. If not High School English 2.0, what is Communications all about, then?

For our purposes, Communication*s* (yes, with a capital *C* and ending with an *s*) is essentially the practice of interacting with others in the academic world, the workplace and other professional contexts. While you are a college student, you will need to interact with scholarly sources and express your learning and ideas at an appropriate post-secondary level. When you embark on your career, absolutely every job—from A to Z, accountant to Zamboni mechanic—involves dealing with a variety of people all day long.

When dealing with various audiences, we adjust the way we communicate according to well-known conventions. You wouldn't talk to a professor or client the same way you would a long-time friendly co-worker. If we communicate effectively—that is, clearly, concisely, coherently, correctly, and convincingly—by following those conventions, we can do a better job of applying our core technical skills, whether they be in sales, the skilled trades, the service industry, health care, the arts, and so on.

This isn't to say that your high school English classes were useless; arguably the movement away from English fundamentals (grammar, punctuation, spelling, style, mechanics, etc.) in Canadian high schools does a disservice to students when they get into their careers. There they soon realize that stakeholders—customers, managers, co-workers, etc.—tend to judge the quality of a person's general competence by the quality of their writing (if that's all they have to go on) and speaking. The topic of Communications, then, includes aspects of the traditional English class curriculum, at least in terms of the basics of English writing and critical thought. But the emphasis always returns to what is practical and necessary for succeeding in the modern workplace—wherever that is—not simply what is "good for you" in the abstract just because someone says it is.

If you feel that you are a weak writer but an excellent speaker or vice versa, rest assured that weaknesses and strengths in different areas of the communication spectrum don't necessarily mean that you will always be good or bad at communication in general. Weaknesses can and should be improved upon, strengths built upon. It's important to recognize that we have more communication channels available to us than ever before, which means that the communication spectrum—from oral to written to nonverbal channels—is broader than ever. Competence across that spectrum is no longer just a "nice to have" asset sought by employers, but essential to career success.

Exercise 1



List your communication strengths and weaknesses. Next, explain what you hope to get out of this Communications course now that you know a little more about what it involves. Before you answer, however, read ahead through the rest of this chapter to get a further sense of why this course is so vital to your career success.

Communication Skills Desired by Employers

If there's a shorthand reason for why you need communication skills to complement your technical skills, it's that you don't get paid without them. You need communication and "soft" skills to get work and keep working so that people continue to want to employ you to apply your core technical skills. A diverse skill set that includes communication is really the key to survival in the modern workforce, and hiring trends bear this out.

In its Employability Skills, the Conference Board of Canada lists "the skills you need to enter, stay in, and progress" in the 21st century workplace. The first category listed is communication skills, specifically how to:

- Read and understand information presented in a variety of forms (e.g., words, graphs, charts, diagrams)
- Write and speak so others pay attention and understand
- Listen and ask questions to understand and appreciate the points of view of others
- Share information using a range of information and communications technologies (e.g., voice, e-mail, computers)
- Use relevant scientific, technological, and mathematical knowledge and skills to explain or clarify ideas (Conference Board, n.d., para. 2)

In other words, the quality of your communication skills in dealing with the various audiences that surround you in your workplace are the best predictors of professional success.

Exercise 2

1. Go to the Government of Canada's Job Bank site and find your chosen profession (i.e., the job your program will lead to) via the Explore Careers by Essential Skills [New tab] page. List the particular document types you will be responsible for communicating with in a professional capacity by reading closely through the Reading, Document Use, and Writing drop-downs. List the in-person responsibilities and communication technologies featured under the Oral Communication drop-down..
2. The Conference Board of Canada's Employability Skills Toolkit (access for Georgian students provided via the Library) lists 5 fundamental communication skills. Create a checklist document for these essential skills (listed below). Add to it some of the other personal

qualities listed in the section above. For each skill or quality, write the best example you can think of demonstrating it in your current or past employment experience, academic program of study, or personal life.**Conference Board of Canada's Fundamental Communication Skills:**

a. Read and understand information presented in different ways (e.g., words, graphs, charts, diagrams).
b. Write and speak so others can pay attention and understand.
c. Listen and ask questions to understand and appreciate the points of view of others.
d. Share information using different technologies (e.g., phone calls, e-mail, social media, the Internet).
e. Use relevant knowledge and skills to explain or clarify ideas.

(Conference Board of Canada, 2022, p. 3)

A Diverse Skillset Featuring Communications Is Key to Survival

The picture painted by this insight into what employers are looking for tells us plenty about what we must do about our skillset to have a fighting chance in the fierce competition for jobs: diversify it and keep our communication skills at a high level. Gone are the days when someone would do one or two jobs throughout their entire career. Rather, if the current job-hopping trend continues, "Canadians can expect to hold roughly 15 jobs in their careers" (Harris, 2014, para. 8) and the future for many will involve gigging for several employers at once rather than for one (Mahdawi, 2017).

Futurists tell us that the "gig economy" will evolve alongside advances in AI (artificial intelligence) and automation that will phase out jobs of a routine and mechanical nature with machines. On the bright side, jobs that require advanced communication skills will still be safe for humans because AI and robotics can't so easily imitate them in a way that meets human needs. Taxi drivers, for instance, are a threatened species now with Uber encroaching on their territory and will certainly go extinct when the promised driverless car revolution arrives in the next 10-15 years, along with truckers, bus drivers, and dozens of other auto- and transport-industry roles (Frey, 2016). They can resist, but the market will ultimately force them into retraining and finding work that is hopefully more future-proof—work that prioritizes the human element.

Since the future of work is a series of careers and juggling several gigs at once, communication skills are key to transitioning between them all. The gears of every career switch and new job added are greased by the soft skills that help convince your new employers and clients to hire you, or, if you strike out on your own, convince your new partners and employees to work with or for you. Career changes certainly aren't the signs of catastrophe that they perhaps used to be; usually they mark moves up the pay scale so that you end your working life where you should: far beyond where you started in terms of both your role and pay bracket.

You simply cannot make those career and gig transitions without communication skills. In other words, you will be stuck on the first floor of entry-level gigging unless you have the soft skills to lift you up and shop you around. A nurse who graduates with a diploma and enters the workforce quilting together a patchwork of part-time gigs in hospitals, care homes, clinics, and schools, for instance, won't still be exhausted by this juggling act if they have the soft skills to rise to decision-making positions in any one of those places. Though the job will be technologically assisted in ways that it never had been before with machines handling the menial dirty work, the fundamental human need for human interaction and decision-making will keep that nurse employed and upwardly mobile. The more advanced your communication skills develop as you find your way through the gig economy, the further up the pay scale you'll climb.

Exercise 3

1. Again using the Government of Canada's Job Bank site, go to the Explore Job Prospects [New tab] page and search for your chosen profession (i.e., the job your program will lead to). Using the sources listed below as well as other internet research, explain whether near- and long-term projections predict that your job will survive the automation and AI revolution or disruption in the workforce. If the role you're training for will be redefined rather than eliminated, describe what new skill sets will "future proof" it.
2. Plot out a career path starting with your chosen profession and where it might take you. Consider that you can rise to supervisory or managerial positions within the profession you're training for, but then transfer into related industries. Name those related industries and consider how they too will survive the automation/AI disruption.

Communication Represents You and Your Employer

Imagine a situation where you are looking for a contractor for a custom job you need done on your car and you email several companies for a quote breaking down how much the job will cost. You narrow it down to two companies who have about the same price, and one gets back to you within 24 hours with a clear price breakdown in a PDF attached in an email that is friendly in tone and perfectly written. But the other took four days to respond with an email that looked like it was written by a sixth-grader with multiple grammar errors in each sentence and an attached quote that was just a scan of some nearly illegible chicken-scratch writing. Comparing the communication styles of the two companies, choosing who you're going to go with for your custom job is a no-brainer.

Of course, the connection between the quality of their communication and the quality of the job they'll do for you isn't water-tight, but it's a fairly good conclusion to jump to, one that customers will always make. The company representative who took the time to ensure their writing was clear and professional, even proofreading it to confirm that it was error-free, will probably take the time to ensure the job they do for you will be the same high-calibre work that you're paying for. By the same token, we can assume that the one who didn't bother to proofread their email at all will likewise do a quick, sloppy, and disappointing job that will require you to hound them to come back and do it right—a hassle you have no time for. We are all picky, judgmental consumers for obvious reasons: we are careful with our money and expect only the best work value for our dollar.

Good managers know that about their customers, so they hire and retain employees with the same scruples, which means they appreciate more than anyone that your writing represents you and your company. As tech CEO Kyle Wiens (2012) says, "Good grammar is credibility, especially on the internet" (para. 6) where your writing is "a projection of you in your physical absence" (para. 6). Just as people judge flaws in your personal appearance such as a stain on your shirt or broccoli between your teeth, suggesting a sloppy lack of self-awareness and personal care, so they will judge you as a person if it's obvious from your writing that "you can't tell the difference between their, there, and they're" (para. 6).

As the marketing slogan goes, you don't get a second chance to make a first impression. If potential employers or clients (who are, essentially, your employers) see that you care enough about details to write a flawless email, they will jump to the conclusion that you will be as conscientious in your job and are thus a safe bet for hire.

Again, it's no guarantee of future success, but it increases your chances immeasurably. As Wiens (2012) says of the job of coding in the business of software programming, "details are everything. I hire people who care about those details" (paras. 12-13), but you could substitute "programmer" with any job title and it would be just as true.

Exercise 4

Describe an incident when you were disappointed with the professionalism of a business you dealt with, either because of shoddy work, poor customer service, shabby online or in-person appearance, etc. Explain how the quality of their communication impacted that experience and what you would have done differently if you were in their position.

Key Takeaways

- By teaching you the communications conventions for dealing with a variety of stakeholders, a course in Communications has different goals from your high school English course and is a vitally important step towards professionalizing you for entry or re-entry into the workforce.
- Employers value employees who excel in communication skills rather than just technical skills because, by ensuring better workplace and client relations, they contribute directly to the viability of the organization.
- The quality of your communication represents the quality of your work and the organization you work for, especially online when others have only your words to judge.

Attributions & References

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1.2 - CONNECT WITH YOUR INSTRUCTOR

Learning Objective

- Identify ways to build a good relationship with your course instructors through in-class, email, and office hour communication.

A key to your success at college is knowing your instructors and what they identify as important in each of your courses. Developing good relationships with instructors involves good communication in and outside of class times. They are available to meet, communicate, and talk with you, but you must plan how to connect with them during their available times. It is part of an instructor's job to talk to learners outside class, and most successful learners take advantage of that option. It is your right to visit instructors during office hours and discuss any problems or concerns that you have in their course.

In-Class Communication

To build your relationship with your instructor in-class, consider ways that you can show your interest in the course material. Some ways to do this are:

- Listen actively during class to determine what is most important to the instructor.
- Avoid arguing with the instructor. If you disagree with something said in class, try to ask questions about the topic after class.
- Read the textbook before class and prepare questions to ask.
- Let your instructor know what interests you about the course.

Communicating in Office Hours

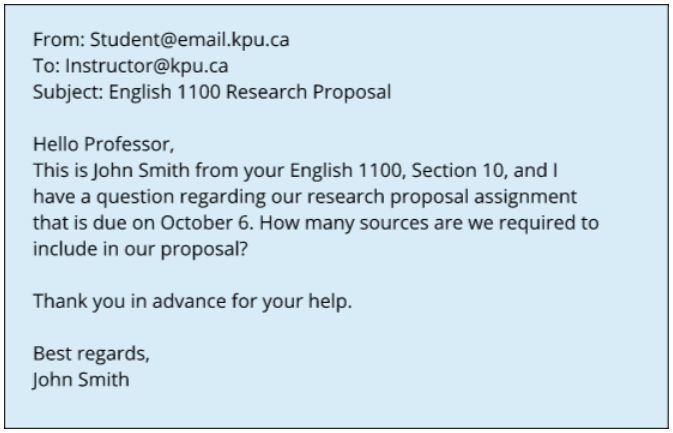
Instructors hold office hours outside of class. Whenever possible, try to meet your instructor during these times. You can use office hours to ask questions about the course material, to get clarification about the requirements for an assignment, or to learn more about a topic from the class that you find particularly interesting. Some tips for using office hours effectively:

- Arrive on time to be respectful of your instructor's and other students' time.
- Come prepared by bringing your textbook and other course materials.
- Prepare questions ahead of time.
- Summarize key points to make sure you understand.

Communicating By Email

Instructors often receive many e-mails from students. To write an effective e-mail, consider the following:

- Use your university e-mail account when possible.
- In the subject line, write the course name and topic of your email (e.g. *BIOL 1100 Lab Report 2).*
- Use a professional greeting in the e-mail ("Dear" rather than "Hey!").
- Write your question or concern in short, clear sentences.
- End your e-mail with an appropriate conclusion (e.g. "Thank you in advance for your help", or "Thank you for your time and consideration").
- Allow time for your instructor to respond – don't expect an instant reply.


From: Student@email.kpu.ca
To: Instructor@kpu.ca
Subject: English 1100 Research Proposal

Hello Professor,
This is John Smith from your English 1100, Section 10, and I have a question regarding our research proposal assignment that is due on October 6. How many sources are we required to include in our proposal?

Thank you in advance for your help.

Best regards,
John Smith

Example Email from instructor to student. Sent from a student email account. Use a specific subject line, polite tone and note your class and section. "Connect with your Instructor"licensed under CC BY-SA

By showing an interest, taking time to communicate with your instructor throughout the course, and using e-mail effectively, you will be well on your way to building a good relationship that will support your communication and learning. [1]

Try It!

If you have already reviewed your course presentation, you will know when and where you can contact your instructor during office hours. Plan to drop by your instructor's office hours this week. If you don't yet have a question to ask, consider having a brief conversation with your instructor about one of the following topics:

1. What is one thing I can do to / be successful in this course?
2. How do the concepts I will learn in this class connect with other courses I will take in the future?
3. What can I do to improve my class participation/ writing/ presentation skills?
4. What interests you most about your field?

Attribution & References

Except where otherwise noted, this chapter is adapted from " Connect with your Instructor" In *University 101: Study, Strategize and Succeed* by Megan Robertson, Kwantlen Polytechnic University Learning Centres licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0. / Adaptations include small edits to improve student-friendly language, and formatting. Accessibility updates also included.

Notes

1. Study Guides and Strategies. (n.d.). *Influencing teachers and improving classroom communication skills*. Retrieved from http://www.studygs.net/attmot2.htm ↵

1.3 - ACTING PROFESSIONALLY IN AN ONLINE ENVIRONMENT

Learning Objective

- Identify fundamental behaviours to establish professionalism in an online learning environment.

Faculty expect as much from you in an online space as they do in a face-to-face environment. Professional behaviour is necessary for the long-term success of an online student. The basis of this chapter will be learning the fundamental behaviours in an online environment. Moreover, you'll learn how to exhibit respect in your online lectures, and maintain academic integrity. Following this chapter, you will be confident, prepared, and excited about your online journey.

Online Professionalism

Professionalism during in-person interactions must be equally represented in the online environment. Professional online behaviour includes using the proper tools (i.e. headphones, microphones, camera) to interact with others. This can also include ensuring that you use the "raise your hand" feature and allowing the professor to call on you before speaking. It is common courtesy when in your online lectures to mute yourself until it is your turn to speak.

Online Discussion Boards

In an online environment, discussion boards or chat rooms are a common form of

communication between yourself and your peers. We often don't realize how important it is to maintain a professional relationship with our peers in our online interactions. As we move towards online school, being professional and establishing a social contract helps build a finer community for online learners.

Importance of Communication Skills

Communication skills play a vital role in an online environment. The most efficient way of communicating with your professors and Teaching Assistants/Graduate Assistants (TA/GA) is by email. Some tips which can help you build a formal relationship include:

- Using an appropriate subject line to summarize your email
- Using the proper salutation when addressing your professors
- Briefly explain your question/inquiry in the body paragraphs
- Include a proper closing statement (Regards, Sincerely, etc.)

Academic Integrity

One of the biggest concerns in the online environment is academic integrity. Academic integrity is the commitment to honesty while exemplifying moral behaviour in your studies. Universities have a very strict policy regarding plagiarism and failure to obey these policies could result in expulsion from your institution. If you ever find yourself unsure, reach out to your professor for clarification.

In conclusion...

Professional behaviour in an online environment will allow you to improve your communication skills and create professional relationships with both your peers and professors. Maintaining these relationships, along with being respectful and exhibiting academic integrity, are integral to your success. It is crucial to build professional connections that allow you to stay motivated while learning online.

Acting Professional in an Online Environment

Acting Professional in an Online Environment (Text version)

1. Which one of these should NOT be used in an online environment?
    a. The "raise your hand" feature
    b. Microphone, camera and headphones
    c. Your home television while you are in a lecture.
2. What are some of the proper steps to take when emailing your professor?
    a. Using a proper subject line to summarize your email.
    b. Include a proper closing statement (Regards, Sincerely, etc.)
    c. Both of the options.
3. What is one of the biggest concerns in an online environment?
    a. Academic Integrity
    b. The weather
    c. What you will have for lunch

Check your Answers: [1]

Activity Source: "Acting Professional in an Online Environment" In *Learning to Learn Online* by Bailey Csabai; Bilal Sohail; Jykee Pavo; Kristen Swiatoschik; Maryam Odeh; and Nitin Ramesh, licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0.

Attribution & References

Except where otherwise noted, this chapter (text & H5P activity) is adapted from "Acting Professional in an Online Environment" In *Learning to Learn Online* by Bailey Csabai; Bilal Sohail; Jykee Pavo; Kristen Swiatoschik; Maryam Odeh; and Nitin Ramesh, licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0.

Notes

1. 1. c, 2. c, 3. a

1.4 - ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Learning Objectives

- Explain why academic integrity is essential to your progress in a post-secondary program
- Review the Academic Integrity regulations in effect at Georgian College
- Identify examples of the different types of breaches of academic integrity
- Identify resources and services at your college/university to help you complete your assignments with integrity
- Describe how the use of artificial intelligence tools in your academic work could be detrimental to your academic progress

Academic Integrity: A shared responsibility

As a student at Georgian College, you are a part of an academic community that is governed by the fundamental principles of academic integrity. It is important for all members of the community, professors and students alike, to uphold these principles for the advancement of academic scholarship and the continued building of knowledge.

Why you should care

A degree, diploma or certificate that is achieved without compromising your own integrity and simultaneously upholding Georgian College's academic integrity standards, is a true representation of all the hard work and dedication you put into your studies. You can therefore rightfully be proud of your achievement as you have maintained your reputation, as well as that of Georgian College.

You will also be well prepared for success in your career as you have put the necessary

time and effort into your work, increased your knowledge and developed many valuable skills, such as research, critical thinking and writing skills and more.

Explore Academic Integrity and Breaches of Academic Integrity at Georgian College

Read Explore Academic Integrity and Breaches of Academic Integrity at Georgian College in Plain text

Academic Integrity Core values

Watch What is Academic Integrity? (2 mins) on YouTube.

Georgian College's Academic Integrity Regulations

Georgian College's policies about Academic Integrity are included in the Academic Regulations portion of the college website.

All students are required to:

- Read and understand the college's Academic Integrity regulations and consequences for breaches of academic integrity
- Submit course work and meet the learning outcomes of each course without breaches of academic integrity
- Ask for help if they are unsure about any area of the regulations or course learning outcomes

Breaches of Academic Integrity

7 types of breaches of academic integrity in the college's regulations are Cheating, Fabrication, Plagiarism, Facilitating a breach of academic integrity, Impersonation, Denying access to information or material and Copyright violation.

Academic Integrity: Terminology

A lot of terminology surrounds academic integrity.

Different academic institutions used slightly different words or definitions. In the following videos, you may hear some of these terms...

- Academic honesty or integrity
- Academic dishonesty or misconduct
- Plagiarism, cheating, impersonation, fabrication, falsification... and many more

While watching the videos on the following slides, try to match the examples to Georgian College's definitions of Breaches of Academic Integrity [New Tab].

Watch for popups in interactive videos. The video will pause, and you can answer questions to check your learning.

At the end of this slideshow, watch a short video that discusses the Core Values of Academic Integrity before continuing on with your reading.

Identifying Breaches of Academic Integrity: Interactive Video

Watch Academic integrity #2: Types of misconduct (5 mins) on YouTube and/or read the transcript Academic Integrity Part 2: Types of Academic Misconduct [PDF]

At the following times pause the video and compare the example to Georgian's Academic Integrity regulations and answer a question to check your understanding.

1. **Pause at 0:42: What is another example of cheating noted in Georgian's Academic Integrity regulations?**
   a. Handing in a paper created by a term paper creation organization;
   b. Using the library database(s) to find research articles for your paper;
   c. Using Google scholar to locate research articles for your presentation. [1]
2. **Pause at 1:07: Which citation style does Georgian College's Academic Integrity regulations list as an example of how one can cite their sources?**
   a. Chicago Manual of Style
   b. Modern Language Association (MLA)
   c. American Psychological Association (APA) Style [2]
3. **Pause at 1:31: Under what section of Georgian's Academic Integrity regulations**

would you classify this offence?

a. 8.2.1 – Cheating

b. 8.2.4 – Facilitating a Breach of Academic Integrity

c. 8.2.6 – Denying access to information or material [3]

4. **Pause at 2:10: According to Georgian College's Academic Integrity regulations, who would be charged with a breach of academic integrity if friend A completes an exam on behalf of friend B?**

   a. Friend A

   b. Friend B

   c. Both Friends A & B [4]

5. **Pause at 2:30: Under Georgian College's Academic Integrity regulations, what breach of academic integrity is committed if a student resubmits previous work?**

   a. 8.2.4 – Facilitating a breach of academic integrity

   b. 8.2.3 – Plagiarism

   c. 8.2.7 – Copyright violation [5]

6. **Pause at 3:21: What is an example of fabrication provided in the Georgian College Academic Integrity regulations, but not discussed here in the video?**

   a. to invent data based on one experiment, rather than conducting the other experiments required

   b. to create a quote and in-text citation in your paper for a research article that doesn't exist [6]

7. **Pause at 3:49: Which type of breach of academic integrity from Georgian's Academic Integrity regulations best matches Improper Research?**

   a. 8.2.1 Cheating

   b. 8.2.2 Fabrication

   c. 8.2.3 Plagiarism [7]

8. **Pause at 4:12: Which type of breach of academic integrity in Georgian's Academic Integrity regulations matches the idea of obstruction?**

   a. 8.2.1 Cheating

   b. 8.2.4 Facilitating a breach of academic integrity

   c. 8.2.6 Denying access to information or material [8]

9. **Pause at 4:40: What part of Georgian's breach of academic integrity definitions include aiding and abetting?**

   a. 8.2.1 Cheating

   b. 8.2.4 Facilitating a breach of academic integrity

c. 8.2.6 Denying access to information or material [9]

Activity source: Except where otherwise noted, "Explore Academic Integrity and Breaches of Academic Integrity at Georgian College" is licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0.

Academic Integrity Values

The International Center for Academic Integrity (2013), defines Academic Integrity as a commitment to uphold six fundamental values in the academic community, even when faced with adversity:

- honesty
- trust
- fairness
- respect
- responsibility
- courage

The following sections define the six academic integrity values in more detail and will give you various real life scenarios to illustrate appropriate and inappropriate actions. The scenarios are adapted from the *Integrity Matters* app (MusicCentric Technologies, 2018).

Honesty

Honest students respect college policies, follow the instructions of their professors and do their work on their own, without any unauthorized help. Dishonest behaviour, such as lying, cheating, fraud, theft, impersonating another person, falsification of data and the like, are morally and ethically not acceptable to a person of integrity.

Scenario 1

Your friend asks you if you want to meet up and do an online quiz together. Somehow you feel uneasy about this. What should you do?

Click on the responses to see the answers to each.

Read Scenario 1 in Plain text

1. **Complete the quiz together:**
   You are expected to do your work on your own, unless your instructor tells you specifically that you can work together. Working with someone else on an individual quiz is considered a breach of academic integrity. In Georgian's Academic Integrity policy, this is called **cheating** (a breach of academic integrity**)** (working with someone else on work which was supposed to be done on your own).
2. **Check the course outline to check if you can work together on the quiz:**
   It is a good idea to check the course outline first for your instructor's rules and expectations. However, if you are still unsure after reading the outline, make sure you check directly with your instructor for clarification.
3. **Ask another student if this is allowed:**
   Asking another student can be helpful, but to be sure to have the correct information, it is best to check your course outline, and if you are still unsure, to ask your instructor
4. **Ask your professor if this is allowed:**
   If you are still unsure after checking your course outline, then do check with your instructor for clarification. This is the best way to make sure that you are meeting the expectations of the assignment and that you are following the rules.

Activity source: "Honesty" by Ulrike Kestler In *Academic Integrity* is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. / Text version created.

Trust

If you are always honest, you will be able to build a relationship of trust both with your peers and with your instructors. Trust is established over time and is based mostly on your actions.

Scenario 2

Charlotte has a difficult time writing her essay. She asks you if she can just have a quick look at yours to see how you went about it. As she is your friend, you want to be helpful, and give it to her before you leave for your job. Charlotte is tired and thinks to herself: "I just want to be done with this. I'm going to change a few things. That should be enough to submit it." Why do you think Charlotte made this choice?

Click on the responses to see the answers to each.

Read Scenario 2 in Plain text

1. **To get a better grade:**
   This may or may not give her a better grade. Charlotte would only know how well she really did, if she did her own work. Most importantly though is that she is breaking both her friend's and her instructor's trust.
2. **To finish the essay:**
   Although Charlotte is able to finish her essay in time, she is doing so by betraying her roommate's and her instructor's trust. She could have avoided this by starting her research earlier, visiting the library's research help service and by getting help at the Writing Centre or the Language Help Centre for her writing.
3. **The essay is too hard for her to do on her own:**
   Practice makes perfect! Charlotte can only improve her writing skills if she completes assignments herself. If she needed assistance, she could have asked for help from library professionals for her research and from the Writing Centre or the Language Help Centre for her writing. This is no excuse for betraying her friend's and her instructor's trust.
4. **She believes the changes make it her own work:**
   Charlotte may believe that by changing the work enough she has made it her own, but this is not the case because it is still essentially someone else's work that she submits. She not only betrays her friend's and her instructor's trust, but by submitting someone else's work, she is also committing a serious act of plagiarism.

Activity source: "Trust" by Ulrike Kestler In *Academic Integrity* is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. / Text version created.

Fairness

A person of integrity is fair. You are fair to your peers – when you do your own work, to authors – when you acknowledge their work by citing it, to the college – when you respect and follow academic integrity standards, and to alumni – when your behaviour helps to support the value of their degree.

Scenario 3

You are a new student and are juggling to keep up with your courses while also working a part-time job. You are a bit stressed about your upcoming exam. A student who is a year ahead of you offers you a copy of the exam questions to one of your courses. What action would be acceptable?

Click on the responses to see the answers to each.

Read Scenario 3 in Plain text

1. **Take the exam copy to help you prepare:**
   If you accept the offer, you will put yourself at an unfair advantage over your classmates, as you won't need to put as much effort into studying your course notes as everyone else in your class.
2. **Decline the offer and keep studying:**
   This is the fair and ethical way of responding. It may be very tempting to accept the offer, but you know you would be cheating and have an unfair advantage over your classmates if you did. You may also want to explain Academic Integrity principles to the student and point out that it is a breach of academic integrity to assist another student in cheating.
3. **Don't take the exam copy, but ask to just take a look at the type of questions asked:**
   Although this seems harmless, it still gives you an unfair advantage over your classmates, as you would be aware of the types of questions that will be asked in the exam.
4. **Take the exam copy and look at it, but don't study from it:**
   You may feel that this approach is fair, because you likely won't remember specific questions, but you'll remember which aspects of the course you should focus on the most, which is not fair to your classmates.

Activity source: "Fairness" by Ulrike Kestler In *Academic Integrity* is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. / Text version created.

Respect

You show respect when you adhere to your assignment instructions, when you actively participate in learning and show interest in gaining new knowledge, when you contribute your thoughts to the academic discourse while accepting that others may disagree with you, when you credit others for their ideas, and when you show that you are putting your best efforts forward.

Scenario 4

At the end of your class your instructor says: "Don't forget your assignment is due next class. Remember, this is an individual assignment. You are meant to work on this alone!" You think, "Oh no, I already completed half of the assignment with Jason and Harpreet!" What should you do?

Click on the responses to see the answers to each.

Read Scenario 4 in Plain text

1. **Finish the rest of the assignment with Jason and Harpreet:**
   If you complete the rest of the assignment with your classmates, you are not doing the work as an individual as required. You are not only disrespecting the assignment guidelines and your instructor, but you are also **Cheating** (working with someone else on work which was supposed to be done on your own).
2. **Complete the last half of the assignment on your own:**
   In this case, half of the assignment is indeed your original work, but the other half is not. Although this is somewhat better than continuing to finish the assignment with your classmates, you are still disrespecting your instructor and the guidelines given to you, and you are still **Cheating** (working with someone else on work which was supposed to be done on your own).

3. **Ask Jason and Harpreet what they want to do:**
   This is not a decision for Jason and Harpreet to make. You must choose the best option for you and take into consideration the results of your action. If you want to be respectful and uphold academic integrity principles, your only option is to start the assignment over on your own. You should also encourage Jason and Harpreet to do the same.
4. **Start the assignment over on your own:**
   Although it will take more time and effort to start over, this is an honest way to proceed. Not only will you demonstrate that you understand the material, but by completing your work individually, you show that you respect your instructor and the guidelines given for the assignment.
5. **Consult with your instructor about your situation:**
   This is also a good way to proceed. We all forget or misunderstand instructions sometimes, and only realize our error later. Your instructor will appreciate your honesty and will respect you for respecting their instructions. They may tell you to start over or find another acceptable way for you to finish the assignment.

Activity source: "Respect" by Ulrike Kestler In *Academic Integrity* is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. / Text version created.

Responsibility

You show responsible behaviour when you lead by example, when you resist negative peer pressure, and when you discourage others from violating academic integrity principles. Being responsible means being accountable to yourself and others and to do your work to the best of your abilities.

Scenario 5

You have difficulties with your studies, especially in one of your courses. You have been stuck on

your essay for a whole week already. You are afraid that you may fail the course if you can't turn this situation around. What should you do?

Click on the responses to see the answers to each.

Read Scenario 5 in Plain text

1. **Ask your friends for advice:**
   Although this is a good place to start and your friends may have some helpful advice, it is your responsibility to take advantage of all the options available to you, such as looking for advice from your professor and the various student support services offered by Georgian College.
2. **Drop the course in which you are not doing well:**
   This may feel like a good solution, but it is likely only a temporary fix. If your issues are related to time-management, effective study skills and needing research and writing help, then it is your responsibility to seek out the college's support services to overcome these challenges.
3. **Make no change and hope to pass:**
   You may choose to hope things get better by doing nothing, but you should take responsibility for your learning and seek out help available to you from various student support services offered by Georgian College.
4. **Spend more time on campus:**
   Spending more time on campus and trying to study more to overcome your difficulties may not result in improvement, but rather in increased stress. If you are struggling, you should seek out support from your instructor and from various student support services, such as the Library and Academic Success.
5. **Get a sample paper from an online service:**
   These companies often represent themselves as "tutoring" or "writing help" services, but they may try to lure students to buy a paper from them. They often also ask you to upload materials from your courses and sometimes even blackmail students who have used their service. These companies can be highly unethical and you should avoid using them. Instead, if you need help, seek out support from your instructor and from various student services, such as the Library and Academic Success. Remember: you can only improve and learn by doing the work yourself!
6. **Use an Artificial Intelligence tool such as ChatGPT to write some or all of your paper:**
   Unless your professor has specifically told you that you may use an artificial intelligence tool

such as ChatGPT in your paper, doing so could be considered plagiarism, cheating or another breach of academic integrity. Professors have tools to detect AI writing, and may also recognize that the writing in your paper does not match previous assignments. Choosing to use these tools may result in a serious breach of academic integrity conesequence that can affect your ability to progress in your program. Always seek your professor's permission before using these tools in your academic work, and always cite any sources that you use.

7. **Take advantage of the support Georgian College offers:**
   This would be your best course of action! If you need help, take advantage of all the approved services available to you at Georgian College, such as Counselling, the Library & Academic Success Centre which includes tutoring, the Math Centre, the Writing Centre and Language Help Centre. Remember: you can only improve and learn by doing the work yourself! Getting help from Georgian support services also ensures you are upholding Academic Integrity principles.

Activity source: "Responsibility" by Ulrike Kestler In *Academic Integrity* is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. / Text version created.

Courage

Upholding academic integrity standards requires courage to resist temptations for the "easy way out" and to speak up against wrongdoing.

Scenario 6

You are entering the room to write your final exam. You see a sign that reads "No electronic devices permitted. Please leave them at the front. You may pick them up after you have finished the exam". As you enter, you see your classmates put their phones in their pockets. What might you do?

Click on the responses to see the answers to each.

Read Scenario 6 in Plain text

1. **Do what your classmates did and put it in you pocket:**
   It is important to follow the guidelines of the exam room and have the courage to not simply follow what your friends are doing. Keeping it in your pocket is not a good choice. To avoid being accused of cheating, your phone should not be accessible to you.
2. **Ask if you can take your phone to keep it safe:**
   It is always best to ask if you are unsure about something. Also, while you may not want to tell on your classmates, you should not ignore a behaviour that goes against the rules. Having a phone during an exam may lead a student to use it to gain an unfair advantage over others. By alerting the exam invigilator, you show that you have the courage to uphold academic integrity principles and mention that others are doing so.
3. **Leave it in your bag under your seat:**
   This may be an acceptable solution, provided the phone is completely turned off and not accessible to you. However, you absolutely need to ask the exam invigilator if you can do so.
4. **Bring it with you in case of emergency:**
   Exam invigilators are trained to respond to emergencies. If you need to be accessible by phone during your exam, you need to make arrangements prior to the exam with the invigilator. If possible, however, notify others that you will not be available by phone for a scheduled period of time.

Activity source: "Courage" by Ulrike Kestler In *Academic Integrity* is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. / Text version created.

Hopefully, these scenarios showed you that you **always** have the opportunity to do the right thing, and that there is help available if you need it. It is up to **you** to make the appropriate choices.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools & Academic Integrity

Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, such as ChatGPT, are becoming increasingly popular and more and more widely available. While these tools may be very appealing, the **unauthorized use of AI tools**, such as (but not limited to) ChatGPT, Copilot, Quillbot, Wordtune, and Textsummarizer, mean that you are not completing assigned work yourself.

Watch Use ChatGPT to write essays for school? Students beware of this (5 mins) on YouTube

Thinking of using AI Tools? Check before you do!

Using an AI tool to complete your work without **specific permission** from your professor:

Using an AI tool? Cite it!
You must cite any work/ideas that are not your own.
Check the APA Guide for tips.

- Means handing in work that you did not complete **yourself**
- Affects your **integrity** and **credibility**
- Prevents you from meeting the learning outcomes of your course/program
- Can be detected – text written by AI has numerous features that your professor can identify
- Can result in a Breach of Academic Integrity such as:
  - **cheating** (using technology inappropriately, handing in someone else's work)
  - **fabrication** (AI tools often fabricate sources, invent citations, and use inaccurate information)
  - **plagiarism[**(AI tools do not properly credit their sources, and you're plagiarizing if you don't cite the AI tools yourself)

Reminder – Plagiarism & Breaches of Academic Integrity

- Submitting work that uses someone else's words/text without proper citation & referencing is Plagiarism, a breach of academic integrity
- Submitting work that you didn't complete yourself is cheating, another breach of academic integrity

Breaches of academic integrity can affect your ability to complete an assignment, a course, or progress through your program to graduation. Always seek your professor's permission before using any sort of AI tool to complete your assignments

What should students know about AI tools & ChatGPT?

Read what should students know about AI tools & ChatGPT in Plain text

- **Misinformation:** ChatGPT uses information from the internet. There is good information online, but there is also discriminatory, outdated and incorrect information as well. ChatGPT is also known to incorrectly explain ideas and misquote sources. ChatGPT will make errors, just as humans do!
- **Privacy:** Students must create an account to use ChatGPT, which enables the collection of data, which is a privacy concern. Some AI tools will require students to provide a phone number or other personal information. Students should be mindful of the information they share when creating an account. Please check out the privacy policy and terms of use for ChatGPT. Keep in mind that while using the tools, your conversations are typically recorded and stored by the tool and used for their purposes.
- **Research Skills**: AI tools like ChatGPT do not necessarily report the sources they use, and may not use sources that satisfy your assignment requirements. In testing, the sources that ChatGPT produces when prompted have frequently shown to be non-existent or inaccurate at best. ChatGPT may appear to conduct research on behalf of students, and this could mean that important skills — researching, critically evaluating information, and problem-solving — will not be learned by students.
- **Copyright:** ChatGPT uses material taken from the internet, generally without the permission of the authors. It has been argued that ChatGPT is " 'copyright laundering' — making works derivative of existing material without breaking copyright" (Hern, 2022, para. 11). Copyright compliance is part of academic integrity, making it very important to be critical about the use of such tools in your academic work.

Source: "What should students know about AI tools & ChatGPT" by Jennifer Easter, licensed under CC BY-NC-SA. / Plain text version added.

Academic Integrity Resources for Students

- Academic Integrity resources at the Library & Academic Success

Student & Academic Success Services that can help

Georgian has many fantastic resources to help you gain the skills you need to be successful in your academic work.

Read more about the following services, or stop by the Library and Academic Success or Student Success at your campus for more information.

- Language Help Centre
- Writing Centre
- Research Help
- Tutors & Peer Mentors
- Student advisors

Key Takeaways

- as a student **you are a part** of the scholarly community
- Georgian College's Academic Integrity regulations outline 7 types of breaches of academic integrity: cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, facilitating a breach of academic integrity, impersonation, denying access to information or material, copyright violation.
- all members of this community must uphold the six principles of academic integrity: **honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage**
- any breach of academic integrity:
    - is dishonest and compromises the worth of other's work
    - undermines the trust between students and professors
    - is unfair to students who pursue their studies honestly
    - disrespects professors and the institution as a whole
    - is irresponsible to yourself, because it prevents you from meaningfully reaching your own scholarly potential

- it is **your responsibility** to uphold academic integrity standards
- breaches of academic integrity can have severe academic consequences
- the use of AI tools, such as ChatGPT, to complete assignments without your professor's **specific permission** may result in a breach of academic integrity

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Attribution & References

Except where otherwise noted, this page is adapted from "Part 1: Academic Integrity: Introduction" by Ulrike Kestler In *Academic Integrity*, licensed under CC BY-NC-SA. / Adapted to reference Georgian College with addition of services and resources available for students.

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Notes

1. a. Handing in a paper created by a term paper creation organization
2. c. American Psychological Association (APA) Style

3. a. AND c. If the student used the materials themselves, this could be considered cheating under Georgian's Academic Integrity regulations. If the student shared these materials with others, it could also be 8.2.4 - Facilitating a Breach of Academic Integrity.
4. c. Both friends A & B. Georgian's Academic Integrity regulations states that both students would be held responsible for the breach of academic integrity.
5. b. 8.2.3 - Plagiarism. Resubmitting work is considered self-plagiarism under Georgian's regulations.
6. a. This is covered under 8.2.2 - Fabrication in Georgian's Academic Integrity regulations. b. This may also be fabrication, but it's not listed as an example under section 8.2.2 in Georgian's Academic Integrity regulations.
7. b. Yes, this scenario of improper research would likely fall under Fabrication at Georgian College.
8. c. Denying access to information or impeding the learning of others is covered under section 8.2.6.
9. b. Facilitating a breach of academic integrity covers aiding and abetting.

CHAPTER 2: READING & WRITING FOR COLLEGE

Communication Essentials for College by Jen Booth, Emily Cramer & Amanda Quibell

- 2.1 – Reading for College
- 2.2 – Note-Taking
- 2.3 – Writing for College
- 2.4 – Purpose, Audience, Tone, and Content
- 2.5 – Effective Means for Writing a Paragraph
- 2.6 – Writing Paragraphs: Exercises

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Please visit the web version of *Communication Essentials for College* to access the complete book, interactive activities and ancillary resources.

2.1 - READING FOR COLLEGE

Learning Objectives

- Understand the expectations for reading and writing assignments in post-secondary courses
- Understand and apply general strategies to complete college-level reading assignments efficiently and effectively

In college, 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.

High School versus Post-Secondary Assignments

High School vs. Post secondary Assignments (Text version)
Determine whether each statement reflects high school or post-secondary environments.

1. Reading assignments are moderately long. Teachers may set aside some class time for reading and reviewing the material in depth.
2. Reviewing for exams is primarily your responsibility.
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.
4. Writing assignments include personal writing and creative writing in addition to expository writing.
5. Depending on the course, you may be asked to master new forms of writing and follow standards within a particular professional field.
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."

Check your answers [1]

Activity source: "Table 1.1 Replacement" by Brenna Clarke Gray based on the content from "Chapter 1. Post-secondary Reading & Writing" In *Writing for Success – 1st Canadian H5P Edition* by Tara Harkoff & [author removed], licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. / Table content adapted into an activity.

Setting Goals

To do well , it is important to stay focused on how your day-to-day actions determine your long-term success. You may not have defined all of your career goals yet, but you likely 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.

Reflecting on Goals

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 activity: **High School versus Post-Secondary Assignments** 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?

Reading Strategies

Your 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

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 college 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.

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.

Active Reading Exercise

Choose any text that that you have been assigned to read for one of your courses. In your notes, complete the following tasks:

- Summarize the main points of the text in two to three sentences.
- Write down two to three questions about the text that you can bring up during class discussion.

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 campus 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 strategies
- 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 for 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 stages you will need to sharpen in order to get through your material are:

1. Survey reading
2. Close reading
3. Inquiry reading
4. 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.

1. 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.

2. 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.

3. 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

4. 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.

Using the SQ3R Strategy

The SQ3R 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

You may already use some variation of SQ3R. 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 (or Skim)

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.

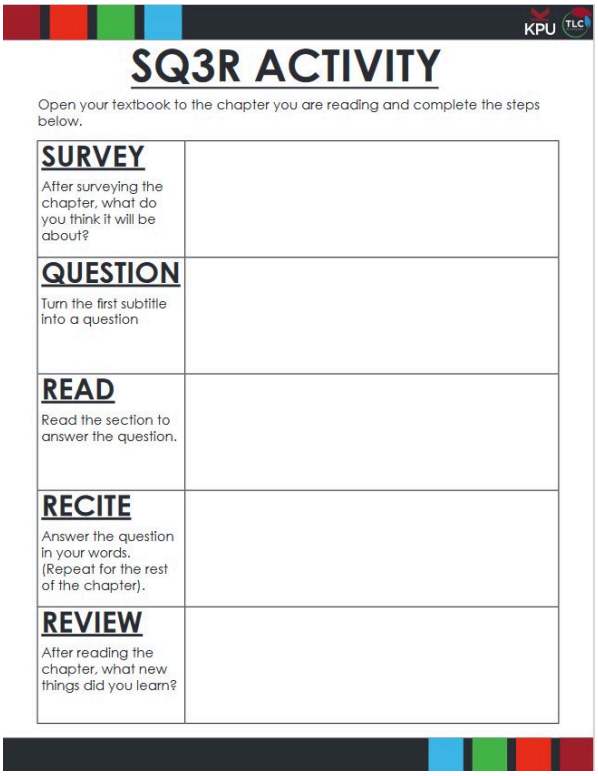
Review and reflect

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.)

Printable Handout – SQ3R

This template will guide you as you make your notes



KPU TLC

SQ3R ACTIVITY

Open your textbook to the chapter you are reading and complete the steps below.

SURVEY After surveying the chapter, what do you think it will be about?	
QUESTION Turn the first subtitle into a question	
READ Read the section to answer the question.	
RECITE Answer the question in your words. (Repeat for the rest of the chapter).	
REVIEW After reading the chapter, what new things did you learn?	

View or download the SQ3R handout [PDF format]

"SQ3R Activity" by Kwantlen Polytechnic University licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0.

Tip

As you go through your future readings, practise 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.

Watch SQ3R Reading Method on YouTube (3 mins)

Reading Activity – SQ3R

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.)

Be sure to complete all the steps involved. Then, reflect on how helpful you found this process. On a scale of 1 to 10, how useful did you find it? 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.

Attribution & References

- Except where otherwise noted, this chapter is adapted from " Chapter 1. Introduction to Academic Writing" In *Writing for Success – 1st Canadian Edition* by Tara Harkoff & [author removed], licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.
- Printable handout – SQ3R is included from "Read with a purpose: The SQ3R Strategy" In *University 101: Study, Strategize and Succeed* by Kwantlen Polytechnic University licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0.

Notes

1. 1. High school, 2. Post secondary, 3. High school, 4. High school, 5. Post secondary, 6. High school

2.2 - NOTE-TAKING

Learning Objectives

- Understand and apply strategies for taking notes efficiently.
- Determine the specific study and note-taking strategies that work best for you individually.

You've got the PowerPoint slides for your lecture, and the information in your textbook. Do you need to take notes as well?

Despite the vast amount of information available in electronic formats, taking notes is an important learning strategy. In addition, the way that you take notes matters, and not all note-taking strategies lead to equal results. By considering your note-taking strategies carefully, you will be able to create a set of notes that will help retain the most important concepts from lectures and tests, and that will assist you in your exam preparation.

Two Purposes for Taking Notes

People take notes for two main reasons:

1. To keep a record of the information they heard. This is also called the *external storage* function of note-taking.
2. To facilitate learning material they are currently studying.

The availability of information on the internet may reduce the importance of the *external storage* function of note-taking. When the information is available online, it may seem logical to stop taking notes. However, by neglecting to take notes, you lose the benefits of note-taking as a learning tool.

How Note-Taking Supports Learning

Taking notes during class supports your learning in several important ways:

1. Taking notes helps you to focus your attention and avoid distractions.
2. As you take notes in class, you will be engaging your mind in identifying and organizing the main ideas. Rather than passively listening, you will be doing the work of active learning while in class, making the most of your time.
3. Creating good notes means that you will have a record for later review. Reviewing a set of condensed and well-organized notes is more efficient than re-reading longer texts and articles.

Source: "Take Notes from Lectures – That You'll Actually Use" in *University 101: Study, Strategize and Succeed* by Kwantlen Polytechnic University licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0.

Everybody takes notes, or at least everybody claims to. But if you take a close look, many who are claiming to take notes on their laptops are actually surfing the Web, and paper notebooks are filled with doodles interrupted by a couple of random words with an asterisk next to them reminding you that "This is important!" In college and university, these approaches will not work. Your instructors expect *you* to make connections between class lectures and reading assignments; they expect *you* to create an opinion about the material presented; they expect *you* to make connections between the material and life beyond school. Your notes are your road maps for these thoughts. Do you take good notes? Actively listening and note-taking are key strategies to ensure your student success.

Effective note-taking is important because it

- supports your listening efforts.
- allows you to test your understanding of the material.
- helps you remember the material better when you write key ideas down.
- gives you a sense of what the instructor thinks is important.
- creates your "ultimate study guide."

There are various forms of taking notes, and which one you choose depends on both your personal style and the instructor's approach to the material. Each can be used in a notebook, index cards, or in a digital form on your laptop. No specific type is good for all students and all situations, so we recommend that you develop your own style, but you

should also be ready to modify it to fit the needs of a specific class or instructor. To be effective, all of these methods require you to listen actively and to think; merely jotting down words the instructor is saying will be of little use to you.

Table 1 – Note-taking methods

Method	Description	When to Use
Lists	A sequential listing of ideas as they are presented. Lists may be short phrases or complete paragraphs describing ideas in more detail.	This method is what most students use as a fallback if they haven't learned other methods. This method typically requires a lot of writing, and you may find that you are not keeping up with the professor. It is not easy for students to prioritize ideas in this method.
Outlines	The outline method places most important ideas along the left margin, which are numbered with roman numerals. Supporting ideas to these main concepts are indented and are noted with capital letters. Under each of these ideas, further detail can be added, designated with an Arabic number, a lowercase letter, and so forth.	A good method to use when material presented by the instructor is well organized. Easy to use when taking notes on your computer.
Concept Maps	When designing a concept map, place a central idea in the centre of the page and then add lines and new circles in the page for new ideas. Use arrows and lines to connect the various ideas.	Great method to show relationships among ideas. Also good if the instructor tends to hop from one idea to another and back.
Cornell Method	The Cornell method uses a two-column approach. The left column takes up no more than a third of the page and is often referred to as the "cue" or "recall" column. The right column (about two-thirds of the page) is used for taking notes using any of the methods described above or a combination of them. After class or completing the reading, review your notes and write the key ideas and concepts or questions in the left column. You may also include a summary box at the bottom of the page, in which to write a summary of the class or reading in your own words.	The Cornell method can include any of the methods above and provides a useful format for calling out key concepts, prioritizing ideas, and organizing review work. Most universities recommend using some form of the Cornell method.

The List Method

Example: The List Method of Note-taking

Learning Cycle

September 3

Prof. Jones

The learning cycle is an approach to gathering and retaining info that can help students be successful in Col. The cycle consists of 4 steps which should all be app'd. They are preparing, which sets the foundation for learning, absorbing, which exposes us to new knowledge, capturing, which sets the information into our knowledge base and finally reviewing and applying which lets us set the know. into our memory and use it.

Preparing for learning can involve mental preparation, physical prep, and oper. prep. Mental prep includes setting learning goals for self based on what we know the class w/ cover (see syllabus)/ Also it is **very important** to do any assignments for the class to be able to learn w/ confidence and....

Physical Prep means having enough rest and eating well. Its hard to study when you are hungry and you won't listen well in class if you doze off.

Operation Prep means bringing all supplies to class, or having them at hand when studying... this includes pens, paper, computer, textbook, etc. Also means setting to school on time and getting a good seat (near the front).

Absorbing new knowledge is a combination of listening and reading. These are two of the most important learning skills you can have.

The list method is usually not the best choice because it is focused exclusively on capturing as much of what the instructor says as possible, not on processing the information. Most students who have not learned effective study skills use this method,

because it's easy to think that this is what note-taking is all about. Even if you are skilled in some form of shorthand, you should probably also learn one of the other methods described here, because they are all better at helping you process and remember the material. You may want to take notes in class using the list method, but transcribe your notes to an outline or concept map method after class as a part of your review process. It is always important to review your notes as soon as possible after class and write a summary of the class in your own words.

The Outline Method

Example: The Outline Method of Note-taking

Learning Cycle

September 3

Prof Jones

Learning is a cycle made up of 4 steps:

I. Preparing: Setting the foundation for learning.
II. Absorbing: (Data input) Exposure to new knowledge.
III. Capturing: Taking ownership of the knowledge.
IV. Review & Apply: Putting new knowledge to work.

I. Preparing

    A. Mental Prep.

        1. Do assignments – New knowledge is built on prior knowledge.

            a. assignments from prior classes.
            b. Readings! (May not have been assigned in class – see Syllabus!)

        2. Review Syllabus

a. Know what instructor expects to cover
b. Know what assignments you need to do
c. Set your own objective

B. Physical Prep

1. Get right about of rest. Don't zzz in class.
2. Eat right. Hard to focus when you are hungry.
3. Arrive on time.

C. Practical Prep (Organizational Prep):

1. Bring right supplies – (Notebooks, Texts, Pens, etc.)
2. Arrive on time

a. Get organized and ready to listen
b. Don't interrupt the focus of others
c. Get a good seat

3. Sit in the front of the class.

The advantage of the outline method is that it allows you to prioritize the material. Key ideas are written to the left of the page, subordinate ideas are then indented, and details of the subordinate ideas can be indented further. To further organize your ideas, you can use the typical outlining numbering scheme (starting with roman numerals for key ideas, moving to capital letters on the first subordinate level, Arabic numbers for the next level, and lowercase letters following.) At first you may have trouble identifying when the instructor moves from one idea to another. This takes practice and experience with each instructor, so don't give up! In the early stages you should use your syllabus to determine what key ideas the instructor plans to present. Your reading assignments before class can also give you guidance in identifying the key ideas.

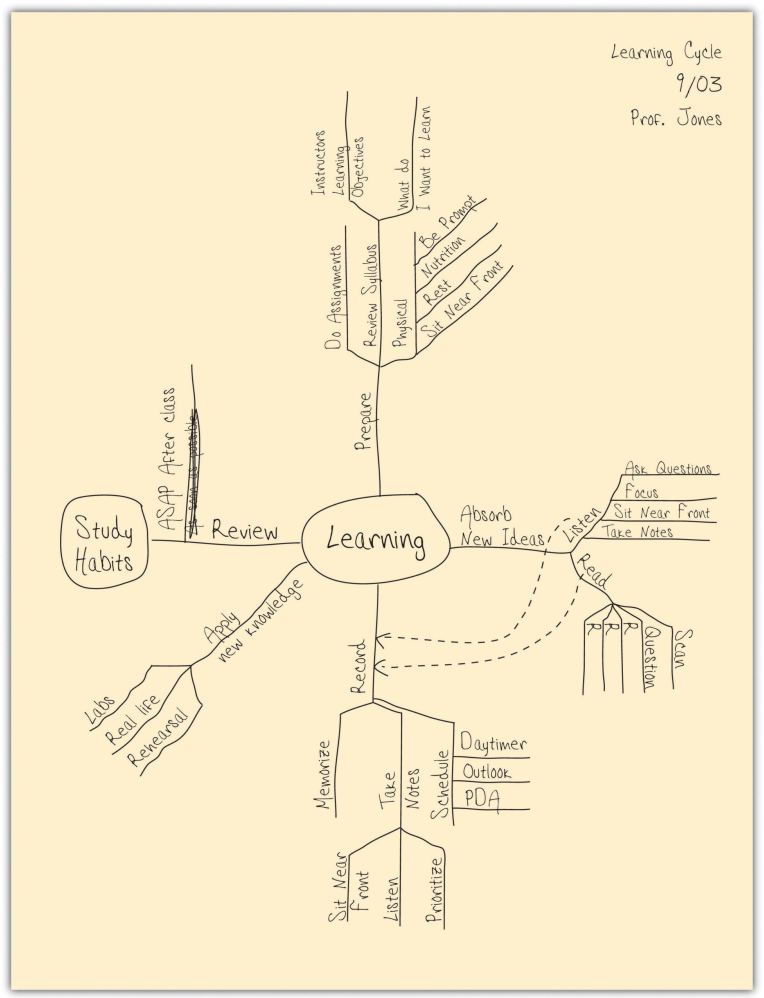
If you're using your laptop computer for taking notes, a basic word processing application (like Microsoft Word or Works) is very effective. Format your document by selecting the outline format from the format bullets menu. Use the increase or decrease indent buttons to navigate the level of importance you want to give each item. The software will take care of the numbering for you!

After class be sure to review your notes and then summarize the class in one or two

short paragraphs using your own words. This summary will significantly affect your recall and will help you prepare for the next class.

The Concept Map Method

Example: The Concept Map Method of Note-taking



Click on the image to see the full size.

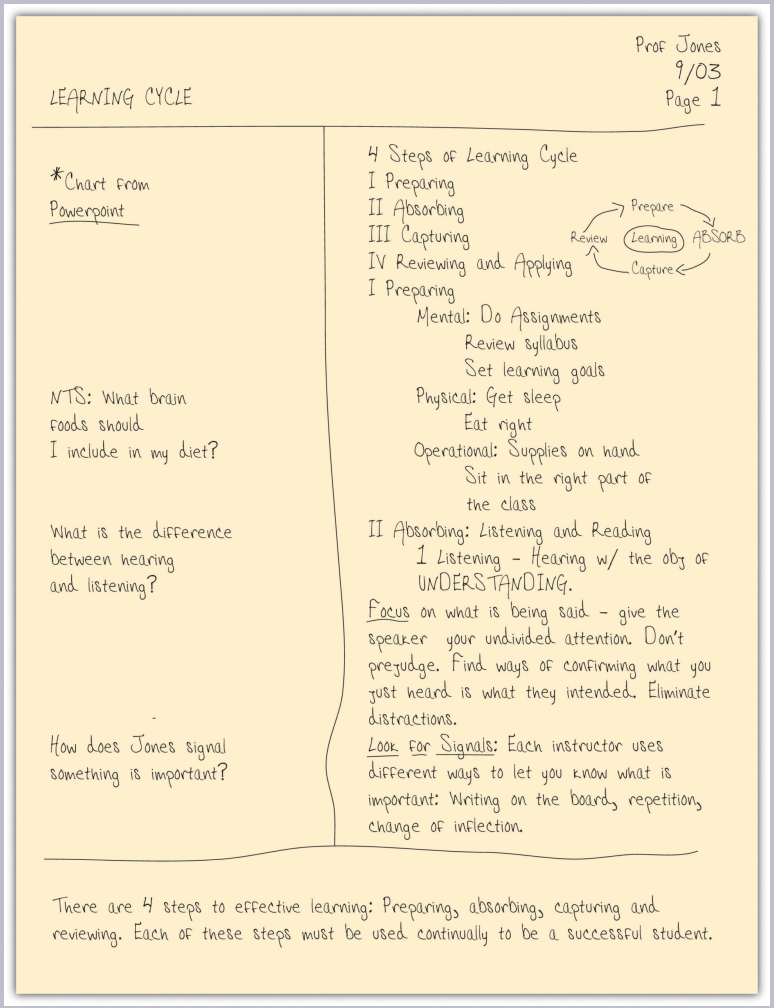
This is a very graphic method of note-taking that is especially good at capturing the relationships among ideas. Concept maps harness your visual sense to understand complex material “at a glance.” They also give you the flexibility to move from one idea to another and back easily (so they are helpful if your instructor moves freely through the material).

To develop a concept map, start by using your syllabus to rank the ideas you will listen to by level of detail (from high-level or abstract ideas to detailed facts). Select an overriding idea (high level or abstract) from the instructor’s lecture and place it in a circle in the middle of the page. Then create branches off that circle to record the more detailed information, creating additional limbs as you need them. Arrange the branches with others that interrelate closely. When a new high-level idea is presented, create a new circle with its own branches. Link together circles or concepts that are related. Use arrows and symbols to capture the relationship between the ideas. For example, an arrow may be used to illustrate cause or effect, a double-pointed arrow to illustrate dependence, or a dotted arrow to illustrate impact or effect.

As with all note-taking methods, you should summarize the chart in one or two paragraphs of your own words after class.

The Cornell Method

Example: The Cornell Method of Note-taking



Prof Jones
9/03
Page 1

LEARNING CYCLE

*Chart from Powerpoint

NTS: What brain foods should I include in my diet?

What is the difference between hearing and listening?

How does Jones signal something is important?

4 Steps of Learning Cycle
I Preparing
II Absorbing
III Capturing
IV Reviewing and Applying

I Preparing
Mental: Do Assignments
Review syllabus
Set learning goals
Physical: Get sleep
Eat right
Operational: Supplies on hand
Sit in the right part of the class

II Absorbing: Listening and Reading
1 Listening - Hearing w/ the obj of UNDERSTANDING.
Focus on what is being said - give the speaker your undivided attention. Don't prejudge. Find ways of confirming what you just heard is what they intended. Eliminate distractions.
Look for Signals: Each instructor uses different ways to let you know what is important: Writing on the board, repetition, change of inflection.

There are 4 steps to effective learning: Preparing, absorbing, capturing and reviewing. Each of these steps must be used continually to be a successful student.

Click on the image to see the full size.

The Cornell method was developed in the 1950s by Professor Walter Pauk at Cornell University [1]. It is recommended by many universities because of its usefulness and

flexibility. This method is simple to use for capturing notes, is helpful for defining priorities, and is a very helpful study tool.

The Cornell method follows a very specific format that consists of four boxes: a header, two columns, and a footer.

The header is a small box across the top of the page. In it you write identification information like the course name and the date of the class. Underneath the header are two columns: a narrow one on the left (no more than one-third of the page) and a wide one on the right. The wide column, called the "notes" column, takes up most of the page and is used to capture your notes using any of the methods outlined earlier. The left column, known as the "cue" or "recall" column, is used to jot down main ideas, keywords, questions, clarifications, and other notes. It should be used both during the class and when reviewing your notes after class. Finally, use the box in the footer to write a summary of the class in your own words. This will help you make sense of your notes in the future and is a valuable tool to aid with recall and studying.

Using Index Cards for the Cornell Method

Some students like to use index cards to take notes. They actually lend themselves quite well to the Cornell method. Use the "back" or lined side of the card to write your notes in class. Use one card per key concept. The "front" unlined side of the card replaces the left hand "cue" column. Use it after class to write keywords, comments, or questions. When you study, the cards become flash cards with questions on one side and answers on the other. Write a summary of the class on a separate card and place it on the top of the deck as an introduction to what was covered in the class.

> "I used to tape my lecture classes so I could fill in my sketchy notes afterwards. Now that I'm using the Cornell system, my notes are complete and organized in much less time. And my regular five-minute reviews make learning almost painless. No more taping and listening twice."
>
> — A student at Southern Methodist University

You will have noticed that all methods end with the same step: reviewing your notes as soon as possible after class. Any review of your notes is helpful (reading them, copying them into your computer, or even recasting them using another note-taking method).

But THINK! Make your review of notes a thoughtful activity, not a mindless process. When you review your notes, think about questions you still have and determine how you will get the answers. (From the next class? Studying with a friend? Looking up material in your text or on the net?) Examine how the material applies to the course; make connections with notes from other class sessions, with material in your text, and with concepts covered in class discussions. Finally, it's fun to think about how the material in your notes applies to real life. Consider this both at the very strategic level (as in "What does this material mean to me in relation to what I want to do with my life?") as well as at a very mundane level (as in, "Is there anything cool here I can work into a conversation with my friends?").

Instructor Handouts

Some instructors hand out or post their notes or their PowerPoint slides from their lectures. These handouts should *never* be considered a substitute for taking notes in class. They are a very useful complement and will help you confirm the accuracy of your notes, but they do not involve you in the process of learning as well as your own notes do. After class, review your notes with highlighter in hand and mark keywords and ideas in your notes. This will help you write a summary of the class in your own words.

General Tips on Note-Taking

Regardless of what note-taking method you choose, there are some note-taking habits you should get into for all circumstances and all courses:

1. **Be prepared.** Make sure you have the tools you need to do the job. If you are using a notebook, be sure you have it with you and that you have enough paper. Also be sure to have your pen (as well as a spare) and perhaps a pen with different-coloured ink to use for emphasis. If you are taking notes on your laptop, make sure the battery is charged! Select the application that lends itself best to your style of note-taking. Microsoft Word works very well for outline notes, but you might find taking notes in Excel to work best if you are working within the Cornell method. (It's easier to align your thoughts in the cue or recall column to your notes in the right column. Just be sure you keep one idea per row!)
2. **Write on only one side of the paper.** This will allow you to integrate your reading notes with your class notes.

3. **Label, number, and date all notes at the top of each page.** This will help you keep organized.
4. **When using a laptop, position it such that you can see the instructor and white board right over your screen.** This will keep the instructor in your field of vision even if you have to glance at your screen or keyboard from time to time. Make sure your focus remains with the instructor and not on your laptop. A word of caution about laptops for note-taking: use them if you are very adept at keyboarding, but remember that not all note-taking methods work well on laptops because they do not easily allow you to draw diagrams and use special notations (scientific and math formulas, for example).
5. **Don't try to capture everything that is said.** Listen for the big ideas and write them down. Make sure you can recognize the instructor's emphasis cues and write down all ideas and keywords the instructor emphasizes. Listen for clues like "the four causes were…" or "to sum up…."
6. **Copy anything the instructor writes on the board.** It's likely to be important.
7. **Leave space between ideas.** This allows you to add additional notes later (e.g. notes on the answer to a question you or one of your classmates asked).
8. **Use signals and abbreviations.** The ones you use are up to you, but be consistent so you will know exactly what you mean by "att." when you review your notes. You may find it useful to keep a key to your abbreviations in all your notebooks.
9. **Use some method for identifying your own thoughts and questions to keep them separate from what the instructor or textbook author is saying.** Some students use different colour ink; others box or underline their own thoughts. Do whatever works for you.
10. **Create a symbol to use when you fall behind** or get lost in your note-taking. Jot down the symbol, leave some space, and focus on what the instructor is covering now. Later you can ask a classmate or the professor to help you fill in what you missed, or you can find it in your textbook.
11. **Review your notes as soon after class as possible (the same day is best).** *This is the secret to making your notes work!* Use the recall column to call out the key ideas and organize facts. Fill in any gaps in your notes and clean up or redraw hastily drawn diagrams.
12. **Write a summary of the main ideas of the class in your own words.** This process is a great aid to recall. Be sure to include any conclusions from the lecture or discussion.
13. **Use notes when preparing for a test or doing an assignment.** Your notes usually have a summary of the most important points and are useful for making sure you incorporate important concepts in your assignments and for focusing on the main

concepts when studying for tests and exams.

This video provides some great tips for note-taking as well.

Watch [How to Take Great Notes on YouTube (5 mins)]

Exercise: Journal Entry

Choose one of your classes where you normally take notes. Make a conscious effort to use the Cornell method with either the outline or concept map method for taking your notes. Follow as many steps listed previously as possible. Now compare these notes with those you took in the previous class. Are your new notes more useful? What did you like about taking notes this way? What are some of the things you need to work on improving? (Remember this will get much easier with more practice.) Write your thoughts down.

What If You Miss Class?

Clearly the best way to learn class material is to be at the class and to take your own notes. In university, regular attendance is expected. But life happens. On occasion, you may have to miss a class or lecture. When this happens, here are some strategies you can use to make up for it:

- Check with the instructor to see if there is another section of the class you can attend. Never ask the instructor "Did I miss anything important?" (Think about what that's saying and you'll see it's rather insulting.)
- If the instructor posts his or her lectures as a podcast, listen to the lecture online and take notes. If the instructor uses PowerPoint slides, request a copy (or download them if posted) and review them carefully, jotting down your own notes and questions. Review your notes with a classmate who did attend.
- You may want to borrow class notes from a classmate. If you do, don't just copy them and insert them in your notebook. They will not be very helpful. When you borrow notes from a classmate, you should photocopy them and then review them carefully and mark your copy with your own notes and questions. Use your textbook

to try to fill in the gaps. Finally, schedule a study session with the person who gave you the notes to review the material and confirm your understanding.

- If none of these options is available for you, use the course syllabus to determine what was covered in the class, then write a short paper (two pages or so) on the material using the class readings and reliable online sources. See your instructor during office hours to review your key findings and to answer any questions you still may have.

Group Notes: A Collaborative Approach

Groups within a class can take notes together using file-sharing software on the Cloud such as Google Docs. The individuals in the group can add to the document in real time as different individuals are adding themselves. This creates a collaborative document that all can use, download, (or adapt). This won't work for all situations but can be very useful especially in a fast-moving classroom.

Keeping Your Notes

Class is over, and you have a beautiful set of notes in your spiral notebook or saved in your laptop. You have written the summary of the class in your own words. Now what?

Start by organizing your notes. We recommend you use a three-ring binder for each of your subjects. Print your notes if you used a computer. If you used note cards, insert them in plastic photo holders for binders. Group all notes from a class or unit together in a section; this includes class notes, reading notes, and instructor handouts. You might also want to copy the instructor's syllabus for the unit on the first page of the section.

Next, spend some time linking the information across the various notes. Use the recall column in your notes to link to related information in other notes (e.g. "See class notes date/page").

If you have had a quiz or test on the unit, add it to your binder, too, but be sure to write out the correct answer for any item you missed. Link those corrections to your notes, too.

Use this opportunity to write "notes on your notes." Review your summary to see if it still is valid in light of your notes on the reading and any handouts you may have added to your notes package.

You don't need to become a pack rat with your notes. It is fairly safe to toss them after the end of a course except in the following cases:

1. If the course you took is a prerequisite for another course, or when the course is part of a standard progression of courses that build upon each other (this is very common in math and science courses), you should keep them as a reference and review for the follow-up course.
2. If the course may pertain to your future major, keep your notes. You may not realize it now that they may have future value when you study similar topics or even the same topics in more depth.
3. If you are very interested in the course subject and would like to get into the material through a more advanced course, independent study, or even research, keep your notes as a prep tool for further work.

Exercise: Note-taking

1. Name two advantages of the Cornell system over the list method of note-taking.
2. Describe the benefits of—and potential problems with—taking class notes on a laptop.
3. List at least three ways to make up for missing notes because you miss a class.

Key Takeaways

- Good note-taking is a key strategy for academic success.
- Choose among effective note-taking styles for what works best for you and modify it to meet the needs of a specific class or instructor.

- List notes are generally less effective and not prioritized.
- Outlines work well for taking notes on a laptop when the instructor is well organized.
- Concept map notes are good for showing the relationships among ideas.
- The Cornell method is effective for calling out key concepts and organizing notes for review.
- Instructor handouts and PowerPoint presentations help with—but do not replace the need for—personal note-taking.
- If you miss a class, explore your options for replacing your missing notes.
- Keep your notes organized in a way that makes it easy to study for tests and other uses in the future.

Attribution & References

- The first two paragraphs and text under the "Two Purposes for Taking Notes" heading are from "Take Notes from Lectures – That You'll Actually Use" in *University 101: Study, Strategize and Succeed* by Kwantlen Polytechnic University. CC BY-SA.
- Except where otherwise noted, this chapter (images & text) was adapted from "Got Notes?" in *University Success* by N. Mahoney, B. Klassen, and M. D'Eon. Adapted by Mary Shier. CC BY-NC-SA.

Notes

1. Pauk, W. & Owens, R.J.Q. (2013). *How to Study in College*. Boston, MA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.

2.3 - WRITING FOR COLLEGE

Learning Objectives

- Identify common types of college writing assignments.
- Recognize the purpose of each type of writing assignment.

Common Writing Assignments

College writing assignments 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.

In college, many instructors will expect you to already have that foundation.

Your college communications courses will focus on writing for its own sake, helping you make the transition to college-level writing assignments. However, in most other college 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 in college than in

high school. College courses emphasize expository writing, writing that explains or informs. Usually 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. College instructors will hold you to a higher standard when it comes to supporting your ideas with reasons and evidence.

The following activity describes some of the most common types of college writing assignments. It includes minor, less formal assignments as well as major ones. Which specific assignments you encounter will depend on the courses you take and the learning objectives developed by your instructors.

Common Types of Post Secondary Assignments

Common Types of Post Secondary Assignments (Text version)

Match the assignment types listed below to the numbered descriptions.

Assignment types: Literature review, Personal response paper, Problem solution paper, Critique, Research paper, Research journal, Position paper, Laboratory report, Summary, Case study

Descriptions

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 (eg: Writing about videos on ineffective management for a business course).
2. Restates the main points of a longer passage objectively and in your own words (eg: a one-page precis of a research article).
3. States and defends your position on an issue (often a controversial issue) (eg: an essay agreeing with or disagreeing with capital punishment).
4. Presents a problem, explains its causes, and proposes and explains a solution (eg: a plan for a crisis communication strategy).
5. States a thesis about a particular literary work and develops the thesis with evidence from the work and, sometimes, from additional sources (eg: an essay that explains the purpose of a poem).
6. Sums up available research findings on a particular topic (eg: an examination of all the studies about violent media).

7. Investigates a particular person, group, or event in depth for the purpose of drawing a larger conclusion from the analysis (eg: a report on the successful treatment of a cat with kidney disease).
8. Presents a laboratory experiment, including the hypothesis, methods of data collection, results, and conclusions (eg: the results of a study on nutrition in rats)
9. Records a student's ideas and findings during the course of a long-term research project (eg: a reflection of the process of research, maintained over time).
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 (eg: a deeply researched examination on the success of seat belt laws).

Check your Answers: [1]

Activity source: "Table 1.2 Replacement" by Brenna Clarke Gray is based on the content from "Chapter 1. Post-secondary Reading & Writing" In *Writing for Success – 1st Canadian H5P Edition* by Tara Harkoff & [author removed], licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

Writing at Work

Part of managing your education is communicating well with others at your college. For instance, you might need to e-mail 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.

Attribution & References

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Notes

1. 1. Personal response paper, 2. Summary, 3. Position paper, 4. Problem solution paper, 5. Critique, 6. Literature Review, 7. Case study, 8. Lab report, 9. Research journal 10. Research paper

2.4 - 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.

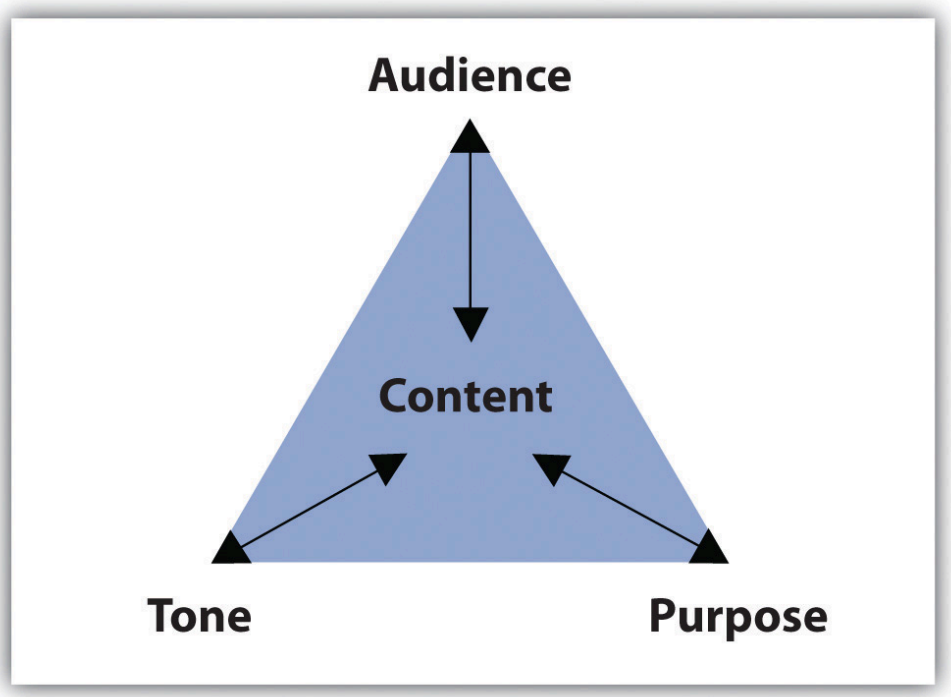
Imagine reading one long block of text, with each idea blurring into the next. Even if you are reading a thrilling novel or an interesting news article, you will likely lose interest in what the author has to say very quickly. During the writing process, it is helpful to position yourself as a reader. 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.

Three elements shape the content of each paragraph:

1. **Purpose**. The reason the writer composes the paragraph.
2. **Tone**. The attitude the writer conveys about the paragraph's subject.
3. **Audience**. The individual or group whom the writer intends to address.

Figure 1 – Purpose, Audience, Tone, and Content Triangle



Content is at the center of the triangle, audience at the top corner, tone on the left corner and purpose on the right corner. Arrows point from audience, tone and purpose to content in the center, and back.

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 for a piece of writing identifies the reason you write 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.

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. Identifying these purposes by reading paragraphs will prepare you to write individual paragraphs and to build longer assignments.

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 blockbuster movie you saw or the last novel you read. Chances are, at some point in a casual conversation with a friend, coworker, or classmate, you compressed all the action in a two-hour film or in a two-hundred-page book into a brief description of the major plot movements. While in conversation, you probably described the major highlights, or 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. Summaries need not contain all the specific facts and figures in the original document; they provide only an overview of the essential information.

A good summary accomplishes the following:

- It identifies or names the piece and its author(s) and states the main purpose of the text.
- It captures the text's main points.
- It does *not* include the reader's opinions, feelings, beliefs, counterarguments, etc.
- It is short. The idea of a summary is to "boil down" or condense a text to just a few sentences.

Consider the example of this journal report and the summary of it that follows:

Example: Journal report – "Underage Alcohol Use"

> According to the Monitoring the Future Study, almost two-thirds of 10th-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. 2006*a*). 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 drunk at

least once. In terms of current alcohol use, 33.2 percent of the Nation's 10th graders and 47.0 percent of 12th graders reported having used alcohol at least once in the past 30 days; 17.6 percent and 30.2 percent, respectively, reported having been drunk in the past 30 days; 21.0 percent and 28.1 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. 2006*a*).

Alcohol consumption continues to escalate after high school. In fact, 18-to 24-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. 2006*b*). Of note, college students on average drink more than their noncollege peers, even though they drank less during high school than those who did not go on to college (Johnston et al. 2006*a*,*b*; Schulenberg and Maggs 2002). For example, in 2005, the rate of binge drinking for college students (1 to 4 years beyond high school) was 40.1 percent, whereas the rate 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 in high school tends to be higher in 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 educational level of parents) is associated with more alcohol use during the early high school years; by the end of high school, and during the transition to adulthood, this relationship changes, and youth from higher socioeconomic backgrounds consume greater amounts of alcohol.

Source: The article "Underage alcohol use: summary of developmental processes and mechanisms: ages 16-20" by Brown et al. (2009), is in the Public Domain (U.S.A.), reused here for educational purposes. Full citation in references section.

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:

Sample summary of report

Brown et al. (2009) 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 and 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 adulthood. 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 need not contain all the specific facts and figures in the original document; they provide only an overview of the essential information.

Watch How to write a summary – Best guide! on YouTube (mins)

Analysis Paragraphs

An analysis separates complex materials in 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). Analysis is not limited to the sciences, of course. An analysis paragraph in academic writing fulfills the same purpose; it 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 the points relate to one another.

Take a look at a student's analysis of the journal report.

Student analysis of the journal report

At the beginning of their report, Brown et al. (2009) use specific data regarding the use of alcohol by high school and college-aged 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 far 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 drink 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.

Student synthesis of several sources

In their 2009 report, Brown et al. consider the rates of alcohol consumption among high school and college-aged 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 et al. (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 for alcohol abuse, a fact supported by Brown et al. (2009).

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 et al. (2009). 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 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 at his or her job.

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 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.

Student evaluation paragraph

> Throughout their report, Brown et al. (2009) provide valuable statistics that highlight the frequency of alcohol use among highschool 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 the Spoth et al. (2009) study 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. (2009) offer a useful set of statistics from which to base further research into alcohol use among high school and college students.

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.

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.

Summarize, synthesize, analyze, or evaluate?

Summarize, synthesize, analyze or evaluate? (Text version)

Identify which paragraph is the best example of each paragraph purpose (summarize, synthesize, analyze, evaluate).

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.

Check your Answers: [1]

Activity source: "Self-Practice 4.9" by Brenna Clarke Gray (H5P Adaptation) *Writing for Success – 1st Canadian Edition* by Tara Harkoff & [author removed], licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

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 specific 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.

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.

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' senses of humour in mind. Even at work, you send e-mails 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?

Examples

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.

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, their ethnicity, their religious beliefs, or their gender. Certain topics and assignments will require these kinds of considerations about your audience.

- **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.
- **Prior knowledge.** This refers to what the audience already knows about your 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 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 college tuition costs.

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.

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.

Consider the Writer's tone

Read the following paragraph and consider the writer's tone. How would you describe the writer's attitude toward wildlife conservation?

Consider the Writer's Tone (Text version)
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.

Is the writer's tone: impassioned? well informed? bored? funny? relaxed? urgent?

Check your Answer: [2]

Activity source: Self-Practice 4.12" by Brenna Clarke Gray (H5P Adaptation) *Writing for Success – 1st Canadian Edition* by Tara Harkoff & [author removed], licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. / Interactive content extracted to plain text.

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 third graders 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 third graders. 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.

Identify your Audience

Match the content in the box to the appropriate audience and purpose. On your own sheet of paper, write the correct letter next to the number.

1. Whereas economist Holmes contends that the financial crisis is far from over, the presidential advisor Jones points out that it is vital to catch the first wave of opportunity to increase market share. We can use elements of both experts' visions. Let me explain how.
2. In 2000, foreign money flowed into the United States, contributing to easy credit conditions. People bought larger houses than they could afford, eventually defaulting on their loans as interest rates rose.
3. The Emergency Economic Stabilization Act, known by most of us as the humungous government bailout, caused mixed reactions. Although supported by many political leaders, the statute provoked outrage among grassroots groups. In their opinion, the government was actually rewarding banks for their appalling behavior.

a. Audience: An instructor

   Purpose: To analyze the reasons behind the 2007 financial crisis

   Content:

b. Audience: Classmates

   Purpose: To summarize the effects of the $700 billion government bailout

   Content:

c. Audience: An employer

   Purpose: To synthesize two articles on preparing businesses for economic recovery

   Content:

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.

Attributions & References

Except where otherwise noted, this chapter is adapted from "6.1 Purpose, audience, tone and content" In *Writing for Success* by University of Minnesota licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0. / Adaptations include: adding in relevant references for writing example content, updates for accessibility & CC licensing.

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toward public health impact. *Alcohol Research & Health, 32*(1), 53–66.

Notes

1. 1. Summarize, 2. Analyze, 3. Synthesize, 4. Evaluate
2. The writers tone may be considered: urgent, well informed, impassioned

2.5 - 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.

Now that you have identified common purposes for writing and learned how to select appropriate content for a particular audience, you can think about the structure of a paragraph in greater detail. 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.

A strong paragraph contains three distinct components:

1. Topic sentence . The topic sentence is the main idea of the paragraph.
2. Body . The body is composed of the supporting sentences that develop the main point.
3. 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 (see Chapter 4.1 for more information about thesis statements) 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.

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 they are 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 (as you will read about in Chapter 3 "The Writing Process: How Do I Begin?"), 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 antinausea properties in marijuana are a lifeline for many cancer patients.
- Legalized marijuana creates 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.

Identifying main & controlling ideas

Identifying Main & Controlling Ideas (Text version)
Identify the **main idea** in the following topic sentences.

1. Raising the legal driving age to 21 would decrease road traffic accidents.
2. Exercising three times a week is the only way to maintain good physical health
3. Dog owners should be prohibited from taking their pets on public beaches.

Identify the **controlling idea** in the following topic sentence.

4. Sexism and racism are still rampant in today's workplace.
5. Owning a business is the only way to achieve financial success.

Check your Answers: [1]

Activity source: "Self Practice 3.9" by Brenna Clarke Gray (H5P Adaptation) *Writing for Success – 1st Canadian Edition* by Tara Harkoff & [author removed], licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. / Interactive content extracted to plain text.

Characteristics of a Good Topic Sentence

Five characteristics define a good topic sentence:

1. 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.)
2. 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.)
3. 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.)

4. 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.)

5. 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.)

Watch How to Write a Topic Sentence on YouTube (2 mins)

Test Yourself

Read each of the examples below, and decide whether it is a strong or weak topic sentence based on the criteria listed above. Then click on the sentence to find out if you are on the right track.

The growth of e-sports will benefit parks and recreation departments by increasing the use of services by hard to reach audiences.

Weak! This topic sentence has both a topic (the growth of e-sports) and a controlling idea (it will benefit parks and recreation departments), but it also includes unnecessary supporting detail. The *way* e-sports will be a benefit should be explained in the paragraph's body. It does not need to be stated in the topic sentence itself.

Contrary to common fears, automation creates new jobs, many of which are far more glamorous than their predecessors.

Strong! This topic sentence contains a topic (automation), a controlling idea (it creates new jobs), and it uses interesting and engaging vocabulary that makes the reader want to know more.

A key factor of McDonald's' success has been the company's worldwide creation of employment opportunity.

Strong! This topic sentence leaves no doubt what the paragraph will discuss. It will explain how McDonald's has been successful (topic) in part because of the creation of employment opportunity (controlling idea). Not a lot of room for confusion here!

Periodontal disease effects the gums and tissues surrounding the teeth, and people who use tobacco may present with bleeding and gum pain after eating, brushing and flossing.

Weak! This topic sentence is not very easy to follow. It has a topic (periodontal disease) and a controlling idea (the disease affects tobacco users), but the idea is not clearly stated nor connected to the topic. It could be clarified by saying, "Periodontal disease is prevalent in tobacco users."

This paragraph will discuss the history of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

Weak! This sentence has a topic (the history of the Commission) but not a controlling idea. What point is the paragraph going to make? Using a phrase like "This paragraph will..." or "In this essay, I will..." means that a point has not been established. Improve the sentence by saying something like, "Establishing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada was an important first step in healing the trauma created by the residential school system."

Activity Source: "Is the topic sentence WEAK or STRONG?" by Emily Cramer is licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0.

Effective Topic Sentences

Effective Topic Sentences (Text version)

Choose the most effective topic sentence from the following sentence pairs.

1. a. To boost their chances of winning the next election, the Liberals need to listen to public opinion. OR
   b. This paper will discuss the likelihood of the Liberals winning the next election.
2. a. Union workers are crippling the economy because companies are unable to remain competitive as a result of added financial pressure. OR
   b. To boost their chances of winning the next election, the Liberals need to listen to public opinion.
3. a. Authors are losing money as a result of technological advances. OR
   b. The introduction of new technology will devastate the literary world.
4. a. This essay will consider whether talent is required in the rap music industry. OR
   b. Rap music is produced by untalented individuals with oversized egos.

Check your Answers: [2]

Activity source: "Self Practice 3.10" by Brenna Clarke Gray (H5P Adaptation) *Writing for Success – 1st Canadian Edition* by Tara Harkoff & [author removed], licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

Practice: Creating Topic Sentences

Using the tips on developing effective topic sentences in this section, create a topic sentence on

each of the following subjects. Remember to include a controlling idea as well as a main idea. Write your responses on your own sheet of paper.

1. An endangered species
2. The cost of fuel
3. The legal drinking age
4. A controversial film or novel

Writing at Work

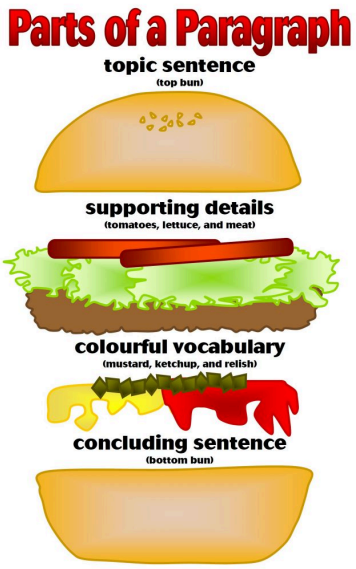
When creating a workplace document, use the "top-down" approach—keep the topic sentence at the beginning of each paragraph so that readers immediately understand the gist of the message. This method saves busy colleagues precious time and effort trying to figure out the main points and relevant details.

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.



Imagine the parts as a burger: topic sentence is the top bun, supporting details are the burger toppings (lettuce, tomato, meat), colourful vocabulary are the condiments (mustard, ketchup, relish), and concluding sentence is the bottom bun. Photo by Enokson is licensed under CC BY 2.0

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. This chapter has already discussed its purpose—to express a main idea combined with the writer's attitude about the subject. 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 2.2 Paragraph Structure Graphic Organizer



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

[Download/Access a text version of this worksheet [Word file]]

Read the following paragraph. The topic sentence (the first one in the paragraph) 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 favorites, 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!

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 the following paragraph. The topic sentence is underlined for you.

> Last year, a cat traveled 130 kilometers to reach its family, who had moved to another province and left their pet behind. Even though it had never been to their new home, the cat was able to track down its former owners. A dog in my neighborhood can predict when its master is about to have a seizure. It makes sure that he does not hurt himself during an epileptic fit. Compared to many animals, our own senses are almost dull.

The last sentence of this paragraph, "Compared to many animals, our own senses are almost dull.", 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.

> 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 by doing just a few breathing exercises a couple of hours before an exam, I gradually got my anxiety under control. 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's amazing how just breathing correctly has helped me learn to manage my anxiety symptoms.

In this paragraph, the sentence in bold, "Last year, I was referred to a specialist and finally found a way to control my anxiety – breathing exercises.", 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 he 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. To read more about topic sentences and where they appear in paragraphs, see Chapter 3 "The Writing Process: How Do I Begin?".

Identifying Topic, Supporting & Concluding Sentences

Identifying Topic, Supporting & Concluding Sentences (Text version)

Read the following passage:

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.

1. **Identify the topic sentence:**
    a. Of these hardy creatures, the kangaroo rat is possibly the most fascinating.
    b. Its ability to adapt to such a hostile environment makes the kangaroo rat a truly amazing creature.
2. **Identify one example of a supporting sentence:**
    a. Its ability to adapt to such a hostile environment makes the kangaroo rat a truly amazing creature.
    b. The desert provides a harsh environment in which few mammals are able to adapt.
    c. Able to live in some of the most arid parts of the southwest, the kangaroo rat neither sweats nor pants to keep cool.
3. **Identify the concluding sentences:**
    a. Its specialized kidneys enable it to survive on a minuscule amount of water.
    b. Its ability to adapt to such a hostile environment makes the kangaroo rat a truly amazing creature.

Check your Answers:[3]

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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 fifty-five.

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 miles to the gallon 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 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
- Website
- Biography/autobiography
- Map
- Dictionary
- Newspaper/magazine
- Interview
- Previous experience
- Personal research

To read more about sources and research, see "Introduction to Research Writing".

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.

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 Canada.
- 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 Canada 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.

Check Your Understanding

Check Your Understanding (Text version)

1. The concluding sentence is a good place to introduce a new idea, because readers find that engaging. True or False?
2. Fill in the missing words to complete the metaphor.
   If a paragraph is a hamburger, the topic sentence is the (a) _____ bun and the concluding sentence is the (b) _____ bun. This makes the body of the paragraph the (c) _____ (unless you prefer a veggie burger).
3. Match the type of concluding sentence (A) to the best example (B)

   A. Type of sentence:

      a. Restate the main idea.
      b. Summarize the key points in the paragraph
      c. Make a prediction, suggestion, or recommendation about the information in the paragraph.
      d. Draw a conclusion based on the information in the paragraph.
      e. Offer an additional observation about the controlling idea.

   B. Examples:

      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.

1.

Check your Answers: [4]

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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. First, they get 20 percent to 35 percent more miles to the litre than a fuel-efficient gas-powered vehicle. Second, they produce very few emissions during low speed city driving. Because they do not require 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 (first, second and because) 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 do not require 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.

The following lists provide some useful transition words to connect supporting sentences and concluding sentences. See "The Writing Process: How do I begin" for a more comprehensive look at transitional words and phrases.

Examples of transition words

For Supporting Sentences:

- above all, but, for instance, in particular, moreover, subsequently, also, conversely, furthermore, later on, nevertheless, therefore, aside from, correspondingly, however, likewise, on one hand, to begin with, at the same time, for example, in addition, meanwhile, on the contrary...

For Concluding sentences:

- after all, all things considered, in brief, in summary, on the whole, to sum up, all in all, finally, in conclusion, on balance, thus...

Practice What You've Learned About Paragraphs

Practice What You've Learned About Paragraphs (Text version)

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.

Remember:

- 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.
- Most paragraphs contain three to six supporting sentences depending on the audience and purpose for writing.
- 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.

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 Details

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.

Save your file and consider sharing with a classmate for feedback.

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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.

Attribution & References

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Notes

1.
1. Legal driving age
2. Exercising
3. Dog owners
4. Still rampant in today's workplaces
5. Financial success
6. 1. a, 2. a, 3. a, 4. b
7. 1. a, 2.c, 3. b
8. 1. False 2. a. top, b. bottom, c. meat/patty, 3. 1 (d), 2. (a), 3. (c), 4. (b), 5. (e).

2.6 - WRITING PARAGRAPHS: EXERCISES

End of Chapter Exercises

1. Select one of the following topics or choose a topic of your choice:
    a. The Alberta oil sands
    b. Drinking water access in First Nations reserves
    c. Introducing a four-day work week
    d. Bringing pets to work
    e. Charging airline passengers to use the in-flight bathroomCreate 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. Explain how each fully developed paragraph might differ in tone and content.
2. At some point during your career, you may be asked to write a report or complete a presentation. Imagine that you have been asked to report on the issue of health and safety in the workplace. Using the information under "Audience" in Chapter 2.4, complete an analysis of your intended audience—your fellow office workers. Consider how demographics, education, prior knowledge, and expectations will influence your report and explain how you will tailor it to your audience accordingly.
3. 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.

4. 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:

    a. Is the topic sentence clearly identifiable or is it implied?
    b. Do all the supporting sentences relate to the topic sentence?
    c. Does the writer use effective transitions to link his or her ideas?
    d. 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 among the topic sentence, supporting sentences, and concluding sentence. Use transitions to illustrate the connection between each sentence in the paragraph.

5. 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.

Attributions & References

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CHAPTER 3: THE WRITING PROCESS: HOW DO I BEGIN?

Communication Essentials for College by Jen Booth, Emily Cramer & Amanda Quibell

- 3.1 – The Writing Process: How Do I Begin?
- 3.2 – Apply Prewriting Models
- 3.3 – Outlining
- 3.4 – Drafting
- 3.5 – Revising and Editing
- 3.6 – The Writing Process: Exercises

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Please visit the web version of *Communication Essentials for College* to access the complete book, interactive activities and ancillary resources.

3.1 - THE WRITING PROCESS: HOW DO I BEGIN?

Learning Objective

- Use steps to break down the writing process.

Prewriting

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, bike riding, and 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 following steps and using strategies to accomplish your goals.

Breaking the Process Down

These are the five steps in the writing process:

1. Prewriting with reading and research
2. Outlining the structure of ideas
3. Writing a rough draft
4. Revising
5. 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 seven: using experience and observations, freewriting, asking questions, brainstorming, mapping, searching the Internet, and researching. Using the strategies in this chapter can help you overcome the fear of the blank page and confidently begin the writing process.

Attribution & References

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3.2 - APPLY PREWRITING MODELS

Learning Objective

- Use prewriting strategies to choose a topic and narrow the focus.

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:

1. Using experience and observations
2. Reading and researching
3. Freewriting
4. Asking questions

At this stage in the writing process, it is OK 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. Write your purpose and your audience on your own sheet of paper, and keep the paper close by as you read and complete exercises in this chapter.

My purpose: _____

My audience: _____

Using Experience and Observations

When selecting a topic, you may also 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 and Researching

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. This 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 his main idea and his support. When you judge the author's argument, you discover more about not only the author's opinion but also your own.

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 your 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.

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. 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.

> 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 try 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 email. 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 on 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 colour 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!

Exercise 1

Freewrite about one event you have recently experienced. With this event in mind, write without stopping for five minutes. After you finish, read over what you wrote. Does anything stand out to you as a good general topic to write about?

Asking Questions

Who? What? Where? When? Why? How? In everyday situations, you pose these kinds of questions to get more information. Who will be my partner for the project? When is the next meeting? Why is my car making that odd noise? Even the title of this chapter begins with the question "How do I begin?"

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 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.

Table 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, media 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. 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 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.

Exercise 2

Choose a general topic idea from the prewriting you completed in "Exercise 1" of this chapter. Then read each question and use your own paper to answer the 5WH questions. As with Mariah when she explored her writing topic for more detail, it is OK if you do not know all the answers. If you do not know an answer, use your own opinion to speculate, or guess. You may also use factual information from books or articles you previously read on your topic. Later in the chapter, you will read about additional ways (like searching the Internet) to answer your questions and explore your guesses.

5WH Questions

1. Who?
2. What?
3. Where?
4. When?
5. Why?
6. How?

Watch Tutorial: Choosing a Research Paper Topic on YouTube (4 mins)

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

The prewriting techniques of freewriting and asking questions helped Mariah think more about her topic, but the following prewriting strategies can help her (and you) narrow the focus of the topic:

- Brainstorming
- Idea mapping
- Searching the Internet
- Connecting with library staff

Narrowing the Focus

Narrowing the focus means breaking up the topic into subtopics, or more specific points. Generating lots of subtopics will help you eventually select the ones that fit the assignment and appeal to you and your audience.

After rereading her syllabus, Mariah realized her general topic, mass media, is too broad for her class's short paper requirement. Three pages are not 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 in 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
- Smart phones
- Text messages
- Tiny cameras
- GPS

From this list, Mariah could narrow her focus to a particular technology under the broad category of mass media.

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 center 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.

In addition to brainstorming, Mariah tried idea mapping. Review the following idea map that Mariah created:



Figure 1. Mariah's image map starts with Mass media, and branches off to radio and TV. Radio branches off to music, downloads vs. CDs and piracy. TV branches off to dvds and blue rays as well as cable, digital recording and high definition.

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.

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.

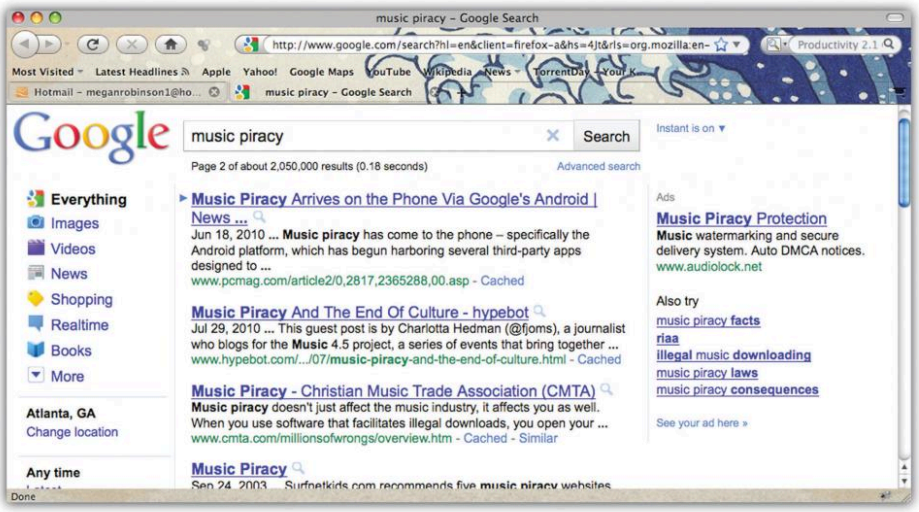
Results from an Internet search show writers the following information:

- 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.



Retrieved from
http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&client=firefox-a&hs=4Jt&rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&q=music+piracy&start=10&sa=N!>

Figure 2. Mariah's Google search revealed websites about music piracy from magazines, hypebot and trade associations.

Not all the results online search engines return will be useful or reliable. Give careful consideration to 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.

For more information on how to determine if sources are reliable, review section 6.3: The CRAAP Test and Evaluating Resources

The results from Mariah's search included websites from university publications, personal blogs, online news sources, and lots 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 paper topic on the products that have fed the mass media boom in everyday lives.

Connecting with Library Staff

Searching the internet can be an effective way to discover key terms, but many online search results are not useful or reliable. Take advantage of your college library, where library professionals can help you verify information, discover key words, and locate expert sources.

Exercise 3

In "Exercise 2", you chose a possible topic and explored it by answering questions about it using the 5WH questions. However, this topic may still be too broad. Here, in "Exercise 3", choose and complete one of the prewriting strategies to narrow the focus. Use either brainstorming, idea mapping, or searching the Internet.

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. An effective topic ensures that you are ready for the next step.

Topic Checklist – Developing a Good Topic

The following checklist can help you decide if your narrowed topic is a good topic for your assignment.

- Am I interested in this topic?
- Would my audience be interested?
- Do I have prior knowledge or experience with this topic? If so, would I be comfortable exploring this topic and sharing my experiences?
- Do I want to learn more about this topic?
- Is this topic specific?
- Does it fit the length of the assignment?
- Are there enough research sources available on this topic?

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. 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.

My narrowed topic:

Key Takeaways

- All writers rely on steps and strategies to begin the writing process.
- The steps in the writing process are prewriting, researching, 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.

Attribution & References

Except where otherwise noted, this chapter (text & images) is adapted from "8.1 Apply Prewriting Models" In *Writing for Success* by University of Minnesota licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0. / Adaptations: Additional accessibility features have been added to original content.

3.3 - OUTLINING

Learning Objectives

- Identify the steps in constructing an outline.
- Construct a topic outline and a sentence outline.

Your prewriting activities and research 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. 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 paper 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 . You will learn more about these in "Writing Essays: From Start to Finish"; however, 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 for 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 1 "Order versus Purpose" shows the connection between order and purpose.

Order	Purpose
Chronological Order	To explain the history of an event or a topic To explain how to do or make something To tell a story or relate an experience To explain the steps in a process
Spatial Order	To help readers visualize something as you want them to see it To create a main impression using the senses (sight, touch, taste, smell, and sound)
Order of Importance	To persuade or convince To rank items by their importance, benefit, or significance

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 ten-page term paper to the lengthy graduate 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.

For more detailed information about thesis statements, go to Chapter 4: Thesis Statements

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 will it take for me to explain and explore this 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 a thesis statement . **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.** Table 2 – "Topics and Thesis Statements" compares topics and thesis statements.

Table 2 – Topics and Thesis Statements

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.

Watch How to write a thesis statement on YouTube (3 mins)

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.

Exercise 1

Using the topic you selected in Section 3.1 "Apply Prewriting Models", develop a working thesis statement that states your controlling idea for the piece of writing you are doing. On a sheet of paper, write your working thesis statement.

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.

Writing an Outline



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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 college instructors require students to submit a formal outline before writing a major paper as a way to be sure you are on the right track and are working in an organized manner. 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. You build your paper based on the framework created by the outline.

Tip

Instructors may also require you to submit an outline with your final draft to check the direction of the assignment and the logic of your final draft. If you are required to submit an outline with the final draft of a paper, remember to revise the outline 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
2. Thesis statement
3. Main point 1 → *becomes the topic sentence of body paragraph 1*

Tip

In an outline, any supporting detail can be developed with subpoints. For simplicity, the model shows them 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 must be a II. 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 Topic Outlines

A 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. (For more information on parallel structure, see "Refining Your Writing: How Do I Improve My Writing Technique?".)

Here is the 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. She also makes a note of which source(s) she will use to support her ideas.

The majority of your academic assignments will require that you connect to credible research sources. Making note of your sources in the early stages of your writing will help you ensure you give proper credit to these sources. For more information, refer to Chapter 7.2: Avoiding Plagiarism

Mariah's Topic Outline

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 –** Information from (Baron, 2015)

   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 –** Information from (It takes a camera, 2011)

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 –** Information from (Hall, 2018)

A. Resolution
B. Backlighting and High Dynamic Range
C. Home media centers

V. **Conclusion**
– How to be a wise consumer

References

Baron, N.S. (2015). *Words Onscreen: The Fate of Reading in a Digital World.* Oxford University Press.

Hall, P. (2022, March 30). How to choose the right TV. *Wired.* https://www.wired.com/story/how-to-buy-the-right-tv/

It takes a camera. (2011). *Consumer Reports, 76*(8), 38-47.

Writing an Effective Topic Outline – Checklist

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.



Photo by StockSnap, used under Pixabay license.

- Do I have a controlling idea that guides the development of the entire piece of writing?
- Do I have three or more main points that I want to make in this piece of writing? Does each main point connect to my controlling idea?
- Is my outline in the best order—chronological order, spatial order, or order of importance—for me to present my main points? Will this order help me get my main point across?
- Do I have supporting details that will help me inform, explain, or prove my main points? Have I verified these details with support from sources?
- Have I made a note of which sources I used? Do I have all the information I need for my reference list?
- Do I need to add more support? If so, where?
- Are there credible sources that provide enough information?
- Do I need to make any adjustments in my working thesis statement before I consider it the final version?

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 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.

Exercise 2

Using the working thesis statement you wrote in Section 3.2 "Exercise 1" and the reading you did in Section 3.1 "Apply Prewriting Models", construct a topic outline for your essay. Be sure to observe correct outline form, including correct indentations and the use of Roman and Arabic numerals and capital letters.

Constructing 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 sentence outline that Mariah constructed for the essay she is developing.

Mariah's Sentence Outline

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 are changing the way people read.**

A. E-book readers make books easy to access and to carry (Baron, 2015).

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 (Baron, 2015).

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 (Baron, 2015).

1. The devices are owned by different brands and may not be compatible.
2. Few programs have been made to fit the other way people read by borrowing books from libraries

III. **Digital cameras have almost totally replaced film cameras**

A. The first major choice is the type of digital camera (It takes a camera, 2011).

1. Compact digital cameras are light but have fewer megapixels
2. Single lens reflex cameras, or SLRs, may be large and heavy but can be used for many functions.
3. Some cameras combine the best features of compacts and SLRs.

B. Choosing the camera type involves the confusing "megapixel wars." (It takes a camera, 2011).
C. The zoom lens battle also determines the camera you will buy. (It takes a camera, 2011).

IV. **Nothing is more confusing to me than choosing among televisions.**

A. In the resolution wars, what are the benefits higher resolution? (Hall, 2022)
B. What is Edge lighting and High Dynamic Range mean? (Hall, 2022)
C. Does every home really need a media center?

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.

References

Baron, N.S. (2015). *Words Onscreen: The Fate of Reading in a Digital World.* Oxford University Press.

Hall, P. (2022, March 30). How to choose the right TV. *Wired.* https://www.wired.com/story/how-to-buy-the-right-tv/

It takes a camera. (2011). *Consumer Reports, 76*(8), 38-47.

Notice that Mariah has included in-text citations within her outline and a reference list at the end. Linking to sources strengthens her paper, and keeping track of them with in-text citations helps to ensure that she avoids plagiarism.

Topic Outlines vs. Sentence Outlines

Topic Outlines vs. Sentence Outlines (Text version)
What is the key difference between a topic outline and a sentence outline?

1. A topic outline focuses on the topic of the essay, while a sentence outline focuses on the controlling idea of the essay.
2. A topic outline is written in short phrases, while a sentence outline is written in complete sentences that provide a little more information.
3. A topic outline is laid out using roman numerals, while a sentence outline uses letters and numbers.

Check your Answers: [1]

Activity source: "Topic Outline vs Sentence Outline" by Emily Cramer is licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0

Tip

The information compiled under each roman numeral will become a paragraph in your final paper. In

the previous example, the 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 or stringy, add an additional paragraph to your outline, renumbering the main points appropriately.

Exercise 3

Expand the topic outline you prepared in "Exercise 2" of this section to make it a sentence outline. In this outline, be sure to include multiple supporting points for your main topic even if your topic outline does not contain them. Be sure to observe correct outline form, including correct indentations and the use of Roman and Arabic numerals and capital letters.

Key Takeaways

- Writers must put their ideas in order so the assignment makes sense. The most common orders are chronological order, spatial order, and order of importance.
- After gathering and evaluating the information you found for your essay, the next step is to write a working, or preliminary, thesis statement.
- The working thesis statement expresses the main idea that you want to develop in the entire piece of writing. It can be modified as you continue the writing process.
- Effective writers prepare a formal outline to organize their main ideas and supporting details in the order they will be presented.
- A topic outline uses words and phrases to express 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.

- Making note of your supporting sources in the outline stage will help you avoid plagiarism as you draft your paper.

Attributions & References

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Notes

1. 2 is the correct answer - A topic outline is written in short phrases...

3.4 - DRAFTING

Learning Objectives

- Identify drafting strategies that improve writing.
- Use drafting strategies to prepare the first draft of an essay.

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 of "The Writing Process: How Do I Begin?" 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 start on paper and then type it before you revise. 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 multipage report or essay. Still, if you are antsy 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 take ten-minute breaks, 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 key 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 college 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?

Exercise 1

Using the topic for the essay that you outlined in Section 3.2 "Outlining", describe your purpose and your audience as specifically as you can. Use your own sheet of paper to record your responses. Then keep these responses near you during future stages of the writing process.

My purpose:

My audience:

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 stage. A first draft gives you a working version that you can later improve.

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. A first draft should include the following elements:

- An introduction that piques the audience's interest, tells what the essay is about, and motivates readers to keep reading.
- A *thesis statement* that presents the main point, or controlling idea, of the entire piece of writing.
- A topic sentence in each paragraph that states the main idea of the paragraph and implies how that main idea connects to the thesis statement.
- Supporting sentences in each paragraph that develop or explain the topic sentence. These can be specific facts, examples, anecdotes, or other details that elaborate on the topic sentence. Don't forget to include in-text citations at this step, to help you track your facts and research and avoid forgetting a source as you work.
- A conclusion that reinforces the thesis statement and leaves the audience with a feeling of completion.

These elements follow the standard five-paragraph essay format, which you probably first encountered in high school. This basic format is valid for most essays you will write in college, even much longer ones. For now, however, Mariah focuses on writing the three body paragraphs from her outline. Chapter 4 "Writing Essays: From Start to Finish" covers writing introductions and conclusions, and you will read Mariah's introduction and conclusion in Chapter 4 "Writing Essays: From Start to Finish".

Elements of a First Draft

Elements of a First Draft (Text version)

You've already seen these terms in context elsewhere in your textbook. Can you identify the correct definition for each of the following words?

- thesis statement
- supporting sentences
- introduction
- conclusion
- topic sentence

1. An _____ piques the audience's interest, tells what the essay is about, and motivates readers

to keep reading. (Tip: the first paragraph)
2. A _____ presents the main point, or controlling idea, of the entire piece of writing. (Tip: usually the last sentence of the introduction)
3. A _____ in each paragraph states the main idea of the paragraph and implies how that main idea connects to the thesis statement. (Tip: usually the first sentence of the paragraph)
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. (Tip: also referred to as supporting details).
5. A _____ that reinforces the thesis statement and leaves the audience with a feeling of completion. (Tip: the last paragraph)

Check your Answers: [1]

Activity Source: "Elements of a Draft (Pre-Test 6)" Brenna Clark Gray (H5P Adaptation) is based on content from *Writing for Success – 1st Canadian Edition* by Tara Harkoff & [author removed], licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

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 college 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 his or her 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.

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, along with in-text citations that point to the sources on the essay's reference page. By exploring and refining one main idea at a time, writers build a strong case for their thesis.

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 three-quarters 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 college-level writing. In general, try to keep the paragraphs longer than one sentence but shorter than one full page of double-spaced text.

Always be guided by what you instructor wants and expects to find in your draft. Many

instructors will expect you to develop a mature college-level style as you progress through the semester's assignments.

Paragraph Length

Paragraph Length (Text version)
How long should a paragraph be?

Long enough! A paragraph can be only a few sentences or much longer, provided it doesn't ramble. In general, aim for between a **minimum of 3 sentences** and a **maximum of one page of double-spaced text**.

Activity source: "Paragraph Length" by Emily Cramer is licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0

Exercise 2

To build your sense of appropriate paragraph length, use the Internet to find examples of the following items. Copy them into a file, identify your sources, and present them to your instructor with your annotations, or notes.

- A news article written in short paragraphs. Take notes on, or annotate, your selection with your observations about the effect of combining paragraphs that develop the same topic idea. Explain how effective those paragraphs would be.
- A long paragraph from a scholarly work that you identify through an academic search engine. Annotate it with your observations about the author's paragraphing style.

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 and Mariah in the proper mind-set to start.

Mariah's thesis statement

Everyone wants the newest and the best digital technology, but the choices are many, and the specifications are often confusing.

Here are the notes that Mariah wrote to herself to characterize her purpose and audience.

Purpose & Audience for Mariah's work

Purpose: My purpose is to inform readers about the wide variety of consumer digital technology available in stores and to explain why the specifications for these products, expressed in numbers that average consumers don't understand, often cause bad or 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 possibly 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. You will read her introduction again in Section 3.4 "Revising and Editing" when she revises it.

Tip

Remember Mariah's other options. She could have started directly with any of the body paragraphs.

You will learn more about writing attention-getting introductions and effective conclusions in Chapter 4 "Writing Essays: From Start to Finish".

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.

Mariah's Sentence Outline for her 1st body paragraph

II. **E-book readers are changing the way people read.**

A. E-book readers make books easy to access and to carry (Baron, 2015).

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 (Baron, 2015).

A. Booksellers sell their own e-book readers.
B. Electronics and computer companies also sell e-book readers.

C. Current e-book readers have significant limitations (Baron, 2015).

1. The devices are owned by different brands and may not be compatible.
2. Few programs have been made to fit the other way people read by borrowing books

from libraries.

Reference

Baron, N.S. (2015). *Words Onscreen: The Fate of Reading in a Digital World.* Oxford University Press.

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, and helped her keep track of what sources support her ideas.

Mariah's first body paragraph

E-book readers are changing the way people read, or so e-book developers hope. Since Amazon's *Kindle* hit the market in 2007, 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 (Baron, 2015). 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 keeps expanding as a lot of companies enter it, and digital reading has become more and more popular (Baron, 2015). 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 restrict 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 people read: by borrowing books from libraries. What is a buyer to do?

Exercise 3

Study how Mariah made the transition from her sentence outline to her first draft. First, copy her outline onto your own sheet of paper. Leave a few spaces between each part of the outline. Then copy sentences from Mariah's paragraph to align each sentence with its corresponding entry in her outline.

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.

Mariah's 2nd body paragraph outline

III. **Digital cameras have almost totally replaced film cameras (It takes a camera, 2011).**

A. The first major choice is the type of digital camera.

1. Compact digital cameras are light but lack the megapixels.
2. Single lens reflex cameras, or SLRs, may be large but can be used for many functions.
3. Some cameras that combine the best features of both compacts and SLRs.

B. Choosing the camera type involves the confusing "megapixel wars" (It takes a camera, 2011).

C. The zoom lens battle also determines the camera you will buy (It takes a camera, 2011)

Reference

It takes a camera. (2011). *Consumer Reports, 76*(8), 38-47.

Mariah's 2nd body paragraph

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. His smart phone had a camera, but he knew that a stand-alone camera would offer more features, particularly a superior optical zoom (It takes a camera, 2011). He decided to buy a digital camera. 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 x 10, the quality would be poor. When he investigated buying a single lens reflex camera, or SLR, he discovered they were as 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 thought 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 know that 3x was too small, but what about 25x? 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.

Mariah's 3rd body paragraph outline

IV. Nothing is more confusing to me than choosing among televisions.

   A. In the resolution wars, what are the benefits of higher resolution?
   B. In the screen-size wars, what does HDR and backlighting mean?
   C. Does every home really need a media center?

Reference

Hall, P. (2022, March 30). How to choose the right TV. *Wired.* https://www.wired.com/story/how-to-buy-the-right-tv/

Mariah's 3rd body paragraph

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 stream videos 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 information overload. Screen resolution means the number of horizontal scan lines the screen can show. Hall (2022) Explains that "modern TVs come in 1080p "Full HD" (1,920 x 1,080-pixel resolution), 4K "UHD" (3,840 x 2,160), and 8K "8K UHD" (7,680 x 4,320) variants" (para. 8). While, technically, more pixels means a clearer picture, in reality, you won't be able to tell the difference with the naked eye (Hall, 2022). The higher resolution televisions cost more, though, so those are what the salespeople want you to buy. They get bigger commissions. It's important to look for a TV with High Dynamic Range, which shows off more contrast and more lifelike colours (Hall, 2022). The other important detail to look for as you shop for TVs is its type of backlighting system. These make a big difference in the contrasts between light and dark images and improve the overall appearance (Hall, 2022). Now here the salespeople may finally give you decent information about edgelighting, local dimming, and LED technology (Hall, 2022).. But be careful and tell the salesperson you have budget constraints. Don't buy more television than you need.

Exercise 4

Reread body paragraphs two and three of the essay that Mariah is writing. Then answer the questions on your own sheet of paper.

1. 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?
2. 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?

3. Choose one of these two body paragraphs. Write a version of your own that you think better fits Mariah's audience and purpose.

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 (you will read her conclusion in Chapter 4 "Writing Essays: From Start to Finish"). 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 specifications 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, if you have not already done so. Follow the suggestions and the guidelines presented in this section.

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 in college-level 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.
- Support your ideas with sources, using citations.
- Generally speaking, write your introduction and conclusion last, after you have fleshed out the body paragraphs.

Attribution & References

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Notes

1. 1. introduction 2. thesis statement 3. topic sentence

4. supporting sentences
5. conclusion.

3.5 - REVISING AND EDITING

Learning Objectives

- Identify major areas of concern in the draft essay during revising and editing.
- Use peer reviews and editing checklists to assist revising and editing.
- Revise and edit the first draft of your essay and produce a final draft.

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 little improvement is needed. However, even experienced writers need to improve their drafts and rely on peers during revising and editing.

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.

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 over the course of this semester; then keep using the ones that bring results.

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

Many people hear the words *critic*, *critical*, and *criticism* and pick up only negative vibes that provoke 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. For this, you need to teach yourself where to look.

Creating Unity and Coherence

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 be adding 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.

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.

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.

Mariah's paragraph on televisions

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 stream videos 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 information overload. Screen resolution means the number of horizontal scan lines the screen can show. Hall (2022) Explains that "modern TVs come in 1080p "Full HD" (1,920 x 1,080-pixel resolution), 4K "UHD" (3,840 x 2,160), and 8K "8K UHD" (7,680 x 4,320) variants" (para. 8). While, technically, more pixels means a clearer

picture, in reality, you won't be able to tell the difference with the naked eye (Hall, 2022). The higher resolution televisions cost more, though, so those are what the salespeople want you to buy. They get bigger commissions. It's important to look for a TV with High Dynamic Range, which shows off more contrast and more lifelike colours (Hall, 2022). The other important detail to look for as you shop for TVs is its type of backlighting system. These make a big difference in the contrasts between light and dark images and improve the overall appearance (Hall, 2022). Now here the salespeople may finally give you decent information about edgelighting, local dimming, and LED technology (Hall, 2022). But be careful and tell the salesperson you have budget constraints. Don't buy more television than you need.

Reference

Hall, P. (2022, March 30). How to choose the right TV. *Wired*. https://www.wired.com/story/how-to-buy-the-right-tv/

Mariah's paragraph with changes

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 stream videos 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 information overload. Screen resolution means the number of horizontal scan lines the screen can show. Hall (2022) explains that "modern TVs come in 1080p "Full HD" (1,920 x 1,080-pixel resolution), 4K "UHD" (3,840 x 2,160), and 8K "8K UHD" (7,680 x 4,320) variants" (para. 8). While, technically, more pixels means a clearer picture, in reality, you won't be able to tell the difference with the naked eye (Hall, 2022). ~~The higher resolution televisions cost more, though, so those are what the salespeople want you to buy. They get bigger commissions.~~ It's important to look for a TV with High Dynamic Range (HDR), which shows off more contrast and more lifelike colours (Hall, 2022). ~~The other~~Another important detail to look for as you shop for TVs is its type of backlighting system. ~~Here's where salespeople give you decent info.~~ These make a big difference in the contrasts between light and dark images and improve the overall appearance (Hall, 2022). Now here the salespeople may finally give you decent information about edgelighting, local dimming, and LED technology (Hall, 2022). But be careful and tell the salesperson you have budget

constraints. Don't ~~let some one talk you into~~ buy~~ing~~ more television than you need.

Reference

Hall, P. (2022, March 30). How to choose the right TV. *Wired.* https://www.wired.com/story/how-to-buy-the-right-tv/

Summary of edits:

- Removed 3rd, 4th, 9th, & 12th sentence
- Replace the word "other" with "another" from the 11th sentence, and remove "let someone talk you into", change buying to buy in the last sentence

Exercise 1

1. Start to revise the first draft of the essay you wrote in Section 3.3 "Writing Your Own First Draft". 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.

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.

Table 1 – "Common Transitional Words and Phrases" groups many common transitions according to their purpose.

Type of transition	Common words and phrases
Transitions That Show Sequence or Time	after, afterward, as soon as, at first, at last, before, before long, finally, first, second, third, in the first place, later, meanwhile, next, soon, then
Transitions That Show Position	above, at the top, beside, near, to the left, to the right, to the side, across, behind, beyond, next to, under, at the bottom, below, inside, opposite, where
Transitions That Show a Conclusion	indeed, hence, in conclusion, in the final analysis, therefore, thus
Transitions That Continue a Line of Thought	consequently, because, in addition, looking further, furthermore, besides the fact, in the same way, considering… it is clear that, additionally, following this idea further, moreover
Transitions that Change a Line of Thought	but, yet, however, nevertheless, on the contrary, on the other hand
Transitions that Show Importance	above all, in fact, most, best, more important, worst, especially, most important
Transitions That Introduce the Final Thoughts in a Paragraph or Essay	finally, most of all, last, least of all, in conclusion, 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

After Mariah revised for unity, she next 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.

Edits for coherence

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 stream videos on. There's good reason for this confusion: You face information overload with all the options for features. The first big decision is the screen resolution you want. Screen resolution means the number of horizontal scan lines the screen can show. Hall (2022) Explains that "modern TVs come in 1080p "Full HD" (1,920 x 1,080-pixel resolution), 4K "UHD" (3,840 x 2,160), and 8K "8K UHD" (7,680 x 4,320) variants" (para. 8). While, technically, more pixels mean a clearer picture, in reality, you won't be able to tell the difference with the naked eye (Hall, 2022). Also, it's important to look for a TV with High Dynamic Range (HDR), which shows off more contrast and more lifelike colours (Hall, 2022). Another important detail to look for as you shop for TVs is its type of backlighting system. These make a big difference in the contrasts between light and dark images and improve the overall appearance (Hall, 2022). More decisions will be needed about edgelighting, local dimming, and LED technology (Hall, 2022). However, depending on your viewing habits, you may not even be able to see the more expensive upgrades. Don't buy more television than you need!

Reference

Hall, P. (2022, March 30). How to choose the right TV. *Wired.* https://www.wired.com/story/how-to-buy-the-right-tv/

Summary of edits: Add "Finally" to opening sentence. Add to 3rd Sentence: "There's good reason for this confusion" and "with all the options for features". Insert 4th sentence: "The first big decision is the screen resolution you want." Add "Also" to the 8th sentence. Edit 11th sentence to include "More decisions will be needed about" and changed second last sentence to "However,

depending on your viewing habits, you may not even be able to see the more expensive upgrades.
“

Unity and Coherence Exercise

Unity and Coherence (Text version)

1. Coherence is created through effective use of (11 letters) _____ .
2. The unity of a piece of writing is disrupted by a (10 letters) _____ (series of unrelated details).
3. Two adjacent sentences that are not related to each other interrupt the piece's (9 letters) _____ .
4. An essay lacks unity if all the content doesn't directly relate to the (6 letters) _____ statement.

Check your Answers: [1]

Activity source: “Unity and Coherence” by Emily Cramer is licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0.

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 composing styles 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 favor of the proposed important legislation.
  Revised: Two well-known consumer advocates spoke in favor 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.
  A report about using geysers as an energy source is in preparation.
- **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 of the sentence 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-sixty 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-sixty uncle and his wife both bought e-book readers.

Exercise 2

Now 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.

Choosing Specific, Appropriate Words

Most college essays 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 13 – "Working with Words: Which Word Is Right?".

- **Avoid slang.** Find alternatives to *bummer*, cool, 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.

Edits to make the paragraph more clear & concise

Finally, ~~nothing is more confusing to me than choosing among televisions. It confuses lots of people who want~~ confuses buyers more than a new high-definition digital television (HDtelevision) ~~with a large screen to watch sports and stream videos on. There's~~ and with good reason ~~for this confusion: You face information overload with all the options for features.~~ The first big decision involves ~~is~~ the screen resolution~~you want.~~ which ~~Screen resolution~~ means the number of horizontal scan lines the screen can show. Hall (2022) explains that "modern TVs come in 1080p "Full HD" (1,920 x 1,080-pixel resolution), 4K "UHD" (3,840 x 2,160), and 8K "8K UHD" (7,680 x 4,320) variants" (para.8). While, technically, more pixels mean a clearer picture, in reality, ~~you won't be able to~~ viewers can't tell the difference with the naked eye (Hall, 2022). Also, ~~it's important to~~ consumers should look for a TV with High Dynamic Range (HDR), which shows off more contrast and more lifelike colours (Hall, 2022), and consider the ~~Another important detail to look for as you shop for TVs is its t~~ype of backlighting system. ~~These~~ which ~~make a big difference in the~~ show contrasts between light and dark images and improve the overall appearance (Hall,

2022). More decisions will be needed about edgelighting, local dimming, and LED technology (Hall, 2022). However, ~~depending on your~~individual viewing habits determine whether ~~the you may not even be able to see the~~ more expensive upgrades are beneficial. ~~Don't buy more television than you need!~~ Only after buyers are totally certain they know what they want should they open their wallets.

Revised paragraph after editing:

Finally, confuses buyers more than a new high-definition digital television (HDtelevision), and with good reason. The first big decision involves the screen resolution which means the number of horizontal scan lines the screen can show. Hall (2022) explains that "modern TVs come in 1080p "Full HD" (1,920 x 1,080-pixel resolution), 4K "UHD" (3,840 x 2,160), and 8K "8K UHD" (7,680 x 4,320) variants" (para. 8). While, technically, more pixels mean a clearer picture, in reality, viewers can't tell the difference with the naked eye (Hall, 2022). Also, consumers should look for a TV with High Dynamic Range (HDR), which shows off more contrast and more lifelike colours (Hall, 2022), and consider the type of backlighting system, which shows contrasts between light and dark images and improve the overall appearance (Hall, 2022). More decisions will be needed about edgelighting, local dimming, and LED technology (Hall, 2022). However, individual viewing habits determine whether more expensive upgrades are beneficial. Only after buyers are totally certain they know what they want should they open their wallets.

Reference

Hall, P. (2022, March 30). How to choose the right TV. *Wired.* https://www.wired.com/story/how-to-buy-the-right-tv/

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 most need 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.

The Peer Review process is covered in more detail 7.4 – Peer Reviews

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.

Questions for Peer Review

Title of essay:

Date:

Writer's name:

Peer reviewer's name:

1. This essay is about:
2. Your main points in this essay are:
3. What I most liked about this essay is:
4. These three points struck me as your strongest:
    a. Point:
       Why:
    b. Point:
       Why:
    c. Point:
       Why:
5. These places in your essay are not clear to me:
    a. Where:
       Needs improvement because:

b. Where:
   Needs improvement because:
c. Where:
   Needs improvement because

6. The one additional change you could make that would improve this essay significantly is:

Exercise 3

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.

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 take that feedback into consideration 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.

Editing Your Draft

If you have been incorporating each set of revisions as Mariah has, 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 often takes time. Budgeting time into the writing process allows you 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..

Chapters 11-15 of this book offer a useful review of grammar, mechanics, and usage. Use these chapters to help you eliminate major errors in your writing and refine your understanding of the conventions of language. Do not hesitate to ask for help, too, from peer tutors in your academic department or in the college's writing lab. In the meantime, use the checklist to help you edit your writing.

Checklist – Editing Your Writing

Grammar

- Are some sentences actually sentence fragments?
- Are some sentences run-on sentences? How can I correct them?
- Do some sentences need conjunctions between independent clauses?
- Does every verb agree with its subject?
- Is every verb in the correct tense?
- Are tense forms, especially for irregular verbs, written correctly?
- Have I used subject, object, and possessive personal pronouns correctly?
- Have I used *who* and *whom* correctly?
- Is the antecedent of every pronoun clear?
- Do all personal pronouns agree with their antecedents?
- Have I used the correct comparative and superlative forms of adjectives and adverbs?
- Is it clear which word a participial phrase modifies, or is it a dangling modifier?

Sentence Structure

- Are all my sentences simple sentences, or do I vary my sentence structure?
- Have I chosen the best coordinating or subordinating conjunctions to join clauses?
- Have I created long, over packed sentences that should be shortened for clarity?
- Do I see any mistakes in parallel structure?

Punctuation

- Does every sentence end with the correct end punctuation?
- Can I justify the use of every exclamation point?
- Have I used apostrophes correctly to write all singular and plural possessive forms?
- Have I used quotation marks correctly?

Mechanics and Usage

- Can I find any spelling errors? How can I correct them?
- Have I used capital letters where they are needed?

- Have I written abbreviations, where allowed, correctly?
- Can I find any errors in the use of commonly confused words, such as *to*/*too*/*two*?

In-text citations & References

- Have I added an in-text citation whenever I quote, paraphrase and summarize someone else's work?
- Does each in-text citation have a matching entry on my reference page?
- Have I used each source on my reference page within my paper?
- Have I checked the citation style and corrected any issues with my in-text citations and reference page entries?
- Have I verified that my whole essay is formatted according to APA style?

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, a classmate, or a peer tutor to make a final pass on your paper to look for anything you missed.

Formatting

Remember to use proper format when creating your finished assignment. Sometimes an instructor, a department, or a college will require students to follow specific instructions on titles, margins, page numbers, or the location of the writer's name. These requirements may be more detailed and rigid for research projects and term papers, which often observe the American Psychological Association (APA) or Modern Language Association (MLA) style guides, 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.

Exercise 4

With the help of the checklist, edit and proofread your essay.

Key Takeaways

- Revising and editing are the stages of the writing process in which you improve your work before producing a final draft.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

Attribution & References

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Notes

1. 1. transitions
   2. digression
   3. coherence
   4. thesis

3.6 - THE WRITING PROCESS: EXERCISES

Exercises

1. 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.
2. 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 college 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.
3. 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: e-mails, 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.
4. **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.

5. **Group activity.** Working in a peer-review group of four, go to Section 3.3 "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 using the same level of inspection given to the essay's third paragraph in Section 3.4 "Revising and Editing". 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 college-level essay about her topic.

Attribution & References

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CHAPTER 4: WRITING ESSAYS FROM START TO FINISH

Communication Essentials for College by Jen Booth, Emily Cramer & Amanda Quibell

- 4.1 – Developing a Strong, Clear Thesis Statement
- 4.2 – Writing Body Paragraphs
- 4.3 – Organizing Your Writing
- 4.4 – Writing Introductory and Concluding Paragraphs
- 4.5 – Writing Essays: Exercises

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Please visit the web version of *Communication Essentials for College* to access the complete book, interactive activities and ancillary resources.

4.1 - 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 a person who was not very good at telling stories? You probably had trouble following his train of thought as he jumped around from point to point, either being too brief in places that needed further explanation or providing too many details on a meaningless element. Maybe he told the end of the story first, then moved to the beginning and later added details to the middle. His 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 professor 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.

Watch How to write an essay: Thesis statements on YouTube (5 mins)

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 individuals without employment benefits, then your precise thesis statement must make an exact claim about it, such as that all employers should be obligated to provide certain benefits. You must further pinpoint what you are going to discuss regarding these required benefits, such as what types should be required.

Ability to be argued. 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.

Ability to be demonstrated. 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. 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.

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.

Exercise 1

On a separate sheet of paper, write a thesis statement for each of the following topics. Remember to make each statement specific, precise, demonstrable, forceful and confident.

Topics

- Texting while driving
- The legal drinking age in Canada
- Steroid use among professional athletes
- Free speech
- Racism

Examples of Appropriate Thesis Statements

Each of the following thesis statements meets several of the following requirements:

- Specificity
- Precision
- Ability to be argued
- Ability to be demonstrated
- Forcefulness
- Confidence

1. Educating newcomers to Canada about historical Indigenous treaties is an important way to implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action.
2. Shakespeare's use of dramatic irony in *Romeo and Juliet* spoils the outcome for the audience and weakens the plot.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. Exposing children from an early age to the dangers of drug abuse is a sure method of preventing future drug addicts.
6. In today's crumbling job market, a high school diploma is not significant enough education to land a stable, lucrative job.

Now that you have read about the contents of a good thesis statement and have seen examples, take a look at the 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 Canada 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 Sir John A. Macdonald was long and challenging.

Tip

You can find thesis statements in many places, such as in the news; in the opinions of friends, coworkers 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.

Strong Thesis Statements

Strong Thesis Statements (Text version)

Match the terms following terms (a-f) to the correct phrase (1-6).

a. an ability to be demonstrated
b. confidence
c. precision
d. specificity
e. forcefulness
f. the ability to be argued

Phrases:

1. Phrases like “I believe” or “I feel” actually weaken your argument. Instead, take a stance with _____ which encourages readers to support your position.
2. Stating a fact is not enough. A thesis statement must have _____.
3. A strong thesis statement must have _____, which means a general topic is narrowed down and made unambiguous.
4. Your tone should have _____ which shows readers you are making an argument that could be opposed.
5. Your argument must remained focused on the overall topic while making a specific point. This is known as _____.
6. Any claim that is made in your thesis must be able to be supported by reasons and examples. This is know as _____.

Check your answers: [1]

Activity source: “Thesis statements” by Emily Cramer is licensed under CC BY.

Identifying Strong Thesis Statements

Identifying Strong Thesis Statements (Text version)

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.

Check your answers: [2]

Activity Source: "Self Practice Exercise 5.5" by Brenna Clarke Gray (H5P Adaptation) *Writing for Success – 1st Canadian Edition* by Tara Harkoff & [author removed], licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. / Interactive content extracted to plain text.

Writing at Work

Often in your career, you will need to ask your boss for something through an e-mail. Just as a thesis statement organizes an essay, it can also organize your e-mail request. While your e-mail 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.

Thesis Statement Revision

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. Your thesis statement begins as 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.

Ways to Revise Your Thesis

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 those 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.

A 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 himself or herself questions similar to the 5WH questions. (See Chapter 3 "The Writing Process: How Do I Begin?" for more information on 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 are forms of the verb *to be*, a verb that simply states that a situation exists.

Working thesis: Simcoe County school teachers are not paid enough.

Revised thesis: Simcoe County School board cannot afford to pay its educators enough, 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. Rather, they connect words and phrases to the second half of the sentence. Readers might wonder, "Why are they not paid enough?" But this statement does not compel them to ask many more questions. The writer should ask himself 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:

- Who is not paying the teachers enough?
- What is considered "enough"?
- What is the problem?
- 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 behavior.

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. 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 behavior show up?
- What are the repercussions?

Exercise 3

In the first section of Chapter 3 "The Writing Process: How Do I Begin?", you determined your purpose for writing and your audience. You then completed a freewriting exercise about an event you recently experienced and chose a general topic to write about. Using that general topic, you then narrowed it down by answering the 5WH questions. After you answered these questions, you chose one of the three methods of prewriting and gathered possible supporting points for your working thesis statement.

Now, on a separate sheet of paper, write down your working thesis statement. Identify any weaknesses in this sentence and revise the statement to reflect the elements of a strong thesis statement. Make sure it is specific, precise, arguable, demonstrable, forceful, and confident.

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 tell the goals of the project. After writing the proposal, you may find that the thesis needs revision to reflect exactly

what is expressed in the body. Using 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 can be 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.

Attribution & References

Except where otherwise noted, this chapter is adapted from " 9.1 Developing a strong, clear thesis statement" In *Writing for Success* by University of Minnesota licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0. / Adaptations include updates for student friendly language, attribution and topics, etc.

Notes

1.
   1. b) confidence
   2. f) an ability to be argued
   3. d) specificity
   4. e) forcefulness
   5. c) precision
   6. a) an ability to be demonstrated

2.
   1. Weak
   2. Strong
   3. Weak
   4. Weak
   5. Strong
   6. Weak.

4.2 - WRITING BODY PARAGRAPHS

Learning Objectives

- Select primary support related to your thesis.
- Support your topic sentences.

If your thesis gives the reader a roadmap 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 lots 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.

Information from research sources will improve your paper, supporting your points with more detail and building your credibility. As you work on your paper, always remember to note what information comes from sources so you can avoid plagiarism.

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 lots 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.
- **Be relevant.** As you add in detailed support, choose sources carefully. Aim to find recent sources that are up to date and relevant. Carefully evaluate your sources,

following the suggestions in 6.3 – The CRAAP Test And Evaluating Resources

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.

Exercise 1

Choose one of the following working thesis statements. On a separate sheet of paper, write for at least five minutes using one of the prewriting techniques you learned in Chapter 3 "The Writing Process: How Do I Begin?".

1. Unleashed dogs on city streets are a dangerous nuisance.
2. Students cheat for many different reasons.
3. There are many advantages to taking time to go outdoors.
4. The most important change that should occur at my college is:

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. 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 only the most compelling points. These will serve as the topic sentences for your body paragraphs.

Exercise 2

Refer to the previous exercise and select three of your most compelling reasons to support the thesis statement. Remember that the points you choose must be specific and relevant to the thesis. The statements you choose will be your primary support points, and you will later incorporate them into the topic sentences for the 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:

1. **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 "Ontario is the most populated province in Canada" is a pure fact, but it may require some explanation to make it relevant to your specific argument. The facts you present in any paper should come from credible research sources, which you evaluate carefully.
2. **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. Evaluate your research sources carefully to confirm that they share the judgment of true authorities on the topic. Follow the advice in 6.3 – The CRAAP Test And Evaluating Resources
3. **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; she 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.
4. **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.

Types of Supporting Facts

Types of supporting facts (Text version)
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.

Check your Answers: [1]

Activity Source: "Pre-Chapter Review (6)" by Brenna Clark Gray (H5P Adaptation) is based on content from *Writing for Success – 1st Canadian Edition* by Tara Harkoff & [author removed], licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

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.

Watch Evaluating sources for credibility on YouTube (4 mins)

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 3 "The Writing Process: How Do I Begin?", 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 essay, including the introduction and conclusion, is commonly the standard for exams and essay assignments.

Consider the following the thesis statement:

There's more to academic success than just studying; activities outside the classroom, such as spending

time outdoors, engaging in social activities, and getting enough sleep can all help to improve a student's overall learning experience.

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.

Time spent outdoors benefits students, as exposure to sunlight, a break from digital devices, and interaction with natural scenery all provide benefits that boost academic performance.

Exercise 3

In "Exercise 2" above, you chose three of your most convincing points to support the thesis statement you selected from the list. Take each point and incorporate it into a topic sentence for each body paragraph.

Supporting point 1:

Topic sentence:

Supporting point 2:

Topic sentence:

Supporting point 3:

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:

Sample supporting detail sentences

Essay Thesis statement:

There is more to academic success than just studying; activities outside the classroom, such as spending time outdoors, engaging in social activities, and getting enough sleep can all help to improve a student's overall learning experience.

1. **Supporting point 1:** Time spent outdoors benefits students, as exposure to sunlight, a break from digital devices, and interaction with natural scenery all provide benefits that boost academic performance.
   Supporting details:
   1. Sunlight elevates vitamin D, melatonin, and serotonin which improve cognitive function (Oglethorpe, 2012).
   2. Taking a rest from digital devices improves the brain (Selhub, 2015).
   3. Natural surroundings can reduce ADHD symptoms and attention fatigue, and walking outdoors among greenery improved school performance (Kuo & Taylor, 2004).
2. **Supporting point 2:** Connecting with groups of peers, whether through extra-curricular activities or sports teams, leads to improved academic performance.
   1. Students who participate in extra-curricular activities had consistently higher grades (Abdelhafifdh et al., 2022).
   2. Students who are active in sports also perform better in school (Burns, et al., 2020).
3. **Supporting point 3:** Being well-rested also helps ensure success in school, as consistent sleep improves memory, performance on tests, and problem-solving abilities.
   1. Studies show that sleep deprivation reduces memory (Okano, et al., 2019).
   2. Consistent sleep quality while subjects were studied results in improved test scores (Okano,

et al., 2019).
3. People do better on challenging tasks after they've had sufficient sleep (Alhola & Polo-Kantola, 2007).

References

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Oglethorpe, A. (2012). Dim wits. *Psychology Today*, *45*(1), 43.

Okano, K., Kaczmarzyk, J. R., Dave, N., Gabrieli, J. D. E., & Grossman, J. C. (2019). Sleep quality, duration, and consistency are associated with better academic performance in college students. *NPJ Science of Learning*, *4*(1), 1–5. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41539-019-0055-z

Selhub, E. (2015). Nature and the brain. *Alive*. https://www.alive.com/health/nature-and-the-brain/

The following paragraph contains supporting detail sentences for the primary support sentence (the topic sentence – the very first one in the paragraph), which is underlined.

Sample paragraph with supporting detail sentences

Time spent outdoors benefits students, as exposure to sunlight, a break from digital devices, and interaction with natural scenery all provide benefits that boost academic performance. Many studies shed light on the brain's response to sunny days. By increasing serotonin, sunlight provides a natural anti-depressant (Oglethorpe, 2012). Oglethorpe (2012) reports that cognitive function is improved as sunlight affects blood flow to the brain and elevates vitamin D and melatonin. Not only will outdoor lighting enhance thinking power, but also unplugging from devices while being outside allows the brain to take a rest from digital overload. Selhub (2015) praises the "rejuvenating act of contemplation" (para. 6) in a natural setting, away from screens, as a necessary way to reduce mental fatigue. Research has shown that students have higher test scores when they can view natural scenery (Selhub, 2015). In addition to improving academic performance, nature provides a sense of tranquility (Kuo & Taylor, 2004). Kuo and Taylor (2004) observed that students had increased focus and an improved sense of well-being after being outside. Although students may feel that a walk in the park is a waste of time, they can enhance their academic success with a walk outdoors among natural scenery and sunlight will improve their mood, restore their concentration, and boost their well-being.

References

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Selhub, E. (2015). Nature and the brain. *Alive.* https://www.alive.com/health/nature-and-the-brain/

Exercise 4

Using the three topic sentences you just composed for the thesis statement in "Exercise 3", draft at least three supporting details for each point.

Thesis statement:

Primary supporting point 1:

Supporting details:

Primary supporting point 2:

Supporting details:

Primary supporting point 3:

Supporting details:

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.

Attribution & References

Except where otherwise noted, this chapter is adapted from " 9.2 Writing Body Paragraphs" In *Writing for Success* by University of Minnesota licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0.

Notes

1. 1. fact, 2. judgement, 3. testimony, 4. Personal observation

4.3 - ORGANIZING YOUR WRITING

Learning Objectives

- Understand how and why organizational techniques help writers and readers stay focused.
- Assess how and when to use chronological order to organize an essay.
- Recognize how and when to use order of importance to organize an essay.
- Determine how and when to use spatial order to organize an essay.

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:

1. Chronological order
2. Order of importance
3. 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.

Chronological Order

In Chapter 3 "The Writing Process: How Do I Begin?", 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 transition 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.

Using Chronological Order

Using Chronological Order (Text version)

Put the statements in the correct chronological order by numbering them in the order you believe they should be organized into a paragraph.

1. When I have the shot pulled, I use a milk steamer to steam one cup of milk.
2. Every morning I make my coffee in the same way for maximum flavour.
3. Next, I use an espresso machine to pull an espresso shot directly into my coffee cup.
4. And that's how I start my day with my perfect latte!
5. First, I freshly grind my espresso beans.
6. Finally, I slowly pour the steamed milk into my espresso.

Check your answers: [1]

Activity Source: "Self-Practice 5.11 Chronological Order" by Brenna Clark Gray (H5P Adaptation) is based on content from *Writing for Success – 1st Canadian Edition* by Tara Harkoff & [author removed], licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. / Interactive content extracted to plain text.

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

Tip

When using chronological order, your introduction should indicate the information you will cover and in what order, and the introduction should also establish the relevance of the information. Your body paragraphs should then provide clear divisions or steps in chronology.

Order of Importance

Recall from Chapter 3 "The Writing Process: How Do I Begin?" 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.

Using Order of Importance

Using Order of Importance (Text version)

Put the statements in the correct order of importance by numbering them in the order you believe they should be organized into a paragraph.

a. Most importantly, it prevents unexpected harm from coming to the dog or to the people and animals he encounters.
b. Almost as important, though, is the bond that it helps create between the dog and his caretaker.
c. And finally, dogs love the sense of achievement they feel when they master simple tasks.
d. For all of these reasons, proper dog training is important and should not be overlooked.
e. Adequate training is critical to the success of a relationship between a person and their dog.

Check your Answers:[2]

Activity Source: "Self-Practice 5.12 Order of Importance" by Brenna Clark Gray (H5P Adaptation) is

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Spatial Order

As stated in Chapter 3 "The Writing Process: How Do I Begin?", 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, and their 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 color 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 transition words 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

Using Spatial Order

Using Spatial Order (Text Version)

Put the statements in the correct spatial order by numbering them in the order you believe they should be organized into a paragraph.

a. The rest of the area within the gate is a meadow of clover and flowers.
b. Reflecting on this space reminds me that it's nice to have somewhere to go that is so calm and soothing.
c. The farmyard is a peaceful and familiar space.
d. When you first enter the property through the farm gate, there is a red barn to the right.
e. To the immediate left of the red barn is a pig pen and a chicken coup.
f. Across the farmyard from the animals is the farmhouse, which has a duck pond in the backyard.

Check your Answers: [3]

Activity Source: "Self-Practice 5.13 Spatial Order" by Brenna Clark Gray (H5P Adaptation) is based

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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.

Attribution & References

Except where otherwise noted, this chapter is adapted from " 9.3 Organizing your writing" In *Writing for Success* by University of Minnesota licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0.

Notes

1. 1. b, 2. e, 3. c, 4. a, 5. f, 6. d
2. 1. e, 2. a, 3. b, 4. c, 5. d.

3. 1. c, 2. d, 3. e, 4. f, 5. a, 6. b

4.4 - WRITING INTRODUCTORY AND CONCLUDING PARAGRAPHS

Learning Objectives

- Recognize the importance of strong introductory and concluding paragraphs.
- Learn to engage the reader immediately with the introductory paragraph.
- Practice concluding your essays in a more memorable way.

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:

1. Establishes your voice and tone, or your attitude, toward the subject
2. Introduces the general topic of the essay
3. States the thesis that will be supported in the body paragraphs

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 the diagram in Figure 1 – "Funnel Technique".

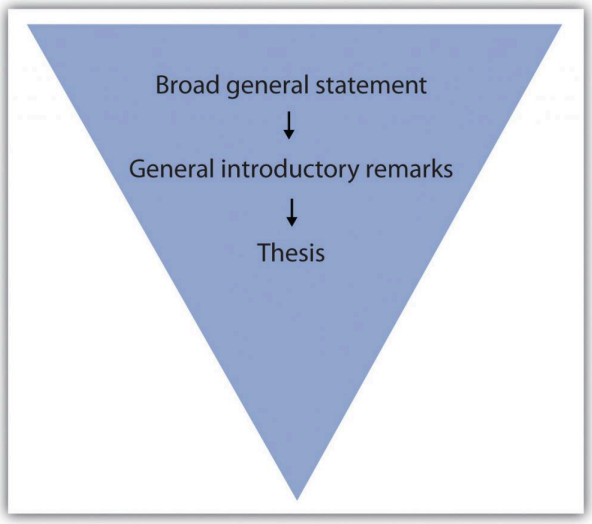


Figure 1. Using the funnel technique, a broad general statement is funnelled down to general introductory remarks, and then to a more specific thesis.

Exercise 1

On a separate sheet of paper, jot down a few general remarks that you can make about the topic for which you formed a thesis in Section 4.1 "Exercise 3".

Immediately capturing your readers' interest increases the chances of having them read what you are about to discuss. You can garner curiosity for your essay in a number of ways. Try to get your readers personally involved by doing any of the following:

- Appealing to their emotions
- Using logic
- Beginning with a provocative question or opinion
- Opening with a startling statistic or surprising fact
- Raising a question or series of questions
- Presenting an explanation or rationalization for your essay
- Opening with a relevant quotation or incident
- Opening with a striking image
- Including a personal anecdote

Don't forget to include an in-text citation and reference if you use anyone else's ideas.

Capturing Attention

Capturing Attention (Text version)

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 (a-i) in the list below to the sample sentence (1-9) that provides the best example.

Appeal

a. Presenting an explanation or rationalization for your essay
b. Opening with a relevant quotation or incident
c. Including a personal anecdote
d. Using logic
e. Opening with a startling statistic or surprising fact
f. Raising a question or series of questions
g. Appealing to their emotions
h. Opening with a striking image

i. Beginning with a provocative question or opinion

Sample Sentences

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.

Check your Answers: [1]

Activity Source: "Self-Practice 6.3 Capturing Attention" by Brenna Clark Gray (H5P Adaptation) is based on content from *Writing for Success – 1st Canadian Edition* by Tara Harkoff & [author removed], licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

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. For more information on diction, see Chapter 14 "Working with Words: Which Word Is Right?".

In Chapter 3 "The Writing Process: How Do I Begin?", 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 in Chapter 3 "The Writing Process: How Do I Begin?". Her thesis statement is underlined.

> Play *PlayStation* games on a plasma TV? Maybe watch *Disney* movies on DVDs? Or read printed newspaper articles? Twenty-five years ago, the average college student did not have as many options when it came to entertainment in the form of technology. Fast-forward to digital technology available today, and consumers are bombarded with endless options for how they do most everything- from buying and reading books to taking photos on their smartphones, to the point of being overwhelmed (Li, 2014). In a society that is obsessed with digital means of entertainment, it is easy for the average person to become baffled. Everyone wants the newest and best digital technology, but the choices are many and the specifications are often confusing.

Mariah's thesis statement, "Everyone wants the newest and best digital technology, but the choices are many and the specifications are often confusing", is located at the end of the paragraph.

Reference

Li., E.A.L. (2014). Test for the real option in consumer behavior. *Research in Economics, 68*(1), 70–83. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rie.2013.11.004

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. Don't forget the in-text citation and reference for your source!

Writing at Work



Photo by fill, used under Pixabay license

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.

Mariah's Strategies for Capturing Attention

Mariah's Strategies for Capturing Attention (Plain text version)
Below you will see the text of Mariah's introduction. Match the appropriate phrase in the introduction (1-4) to the attention-capturing strategy (a-d) used.

Introduction

1. Play *PlayStation* games on a plasma TV? Maybe watch *Disney* movies on DVDs? Or read printed newspaper articles?
2. 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 digital technology available today, and consumers are bombarded with endless options for how they do most everything- from buying and reading books to taking photos on their smartphones, to the point of being overwhelmed (Li, 2014).
3. In a society that is obsessed with digital means of entertainment, it is easy for the average

person to become baffled.
4. Everyone wants the newest and best digital technology, but the choices are many and the specifications are often confusing.

Strategies

a. Using logic
b. Presenting an explanation or rationalization for your essay
c. Raising a question or series of questions
d. Opening with a startling statistic or surprising fact

Reference

Li., E.A.L. (2014). Test for the real option in consumer behavior. *Research in Economics*, *68*(1), 70–83. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rie.2013.11.004

Check your Answers:[2]

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Writing a Conclusion

It is not unusual to want to rush when you approach your conclusion, and even experienced writers may fade. But what good writers remember is that it is vital to put just as much attention into the conclusion as in 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 maneuver 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.

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.

Tip

It is wise to avoid doing any of the following in your conclusion:

- Introducing new material
- Contradicting your thesis
- Changing your thesis
- Using apologies or disclaimers

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.

Exercise 3

On a separate sheet of a paper, restate your thesis from "Exercise 1" of this section and then make some general concluding remarks. Next, compose a final emphatic statement. Finally, incorporate what you have written into a strong conclusion paragraph for your essay.

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 (Li, 2014). 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.

Reference

Li., E.A.L. (2014). Test for the real option in consumer behavior. *Research in Economics*, *68*(1), 70–83. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rie.2013.11.004

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 of the presentation, reviewing its 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.

Attribution & References

Except where otherwise noted, this chapter (text & images) is adapted from "9.4 Writing introductory and concluding paragraphs" In *Writing for Success* by University of Minnesota licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0.

Notes

1. 1. g, 2. d, 3. i, 4. e, 5. f, 6. a, 7. b, 8. h, 9. c.
2. 1. c, 2. d, 3. a, 4. b

4.5 - WRITING ESSAYS: EXERCISES

Exercises

1. 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.
2. Group activity. Choose one of the topics from "Exercise 1" in Section 4.1 "Developing a Strong, Clear Thesis Statement" and form a yes-or-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.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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.

Attribution & References

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CHAPTER 5: RHETORICAL MODES

Communication Essentials for College by Jen Booth, Emily Cramer & Amanda Quibell

- 5.1 – Comparison and Contrast
- 5.2 – Cause and Effect
- 5.3 – Persuasion
- 5.4 – Rhetorical Modes: Exercises

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Please visit the web version of *Communication Essentials for College* to access the complete book, interactive activities and ancillary resources.

5.1 - COMPARISON AND CONTRAST

Learning Objectives

- 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 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 compare and contrast two types of oranges or two types of apples to highlight subtle differences. For example, 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 apples or two oranges because they share so many of the same properties already. Rather, you might try to compare how apples and oranges are quite similar. 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.

Exercise 1

Brainstorm an essay that leans toward contrast. Choose one of the following three categories. Pick two examples from each. Then come up with one similarity and three differences between the examples.

1. Romantic comedies
2. Cell phones
3. Social Media Platforms

Exercise 2

Brainstorm an essay that leans toward comparison. Choose one of the following three items. Then come up with one difference and three similarities.

1. Online and In-store shopping
2. Fast food chains and fine dining restaurants
3. Dogs and cats

The Structure of a Comparison and Contrast Essay

The compare-and-contrast essay starts with a thesis that clearly states the two subjects that are to be compared, contrasted, or both and the reason for doing so. The thesis could lean more toward comparing, contrasting, or 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.

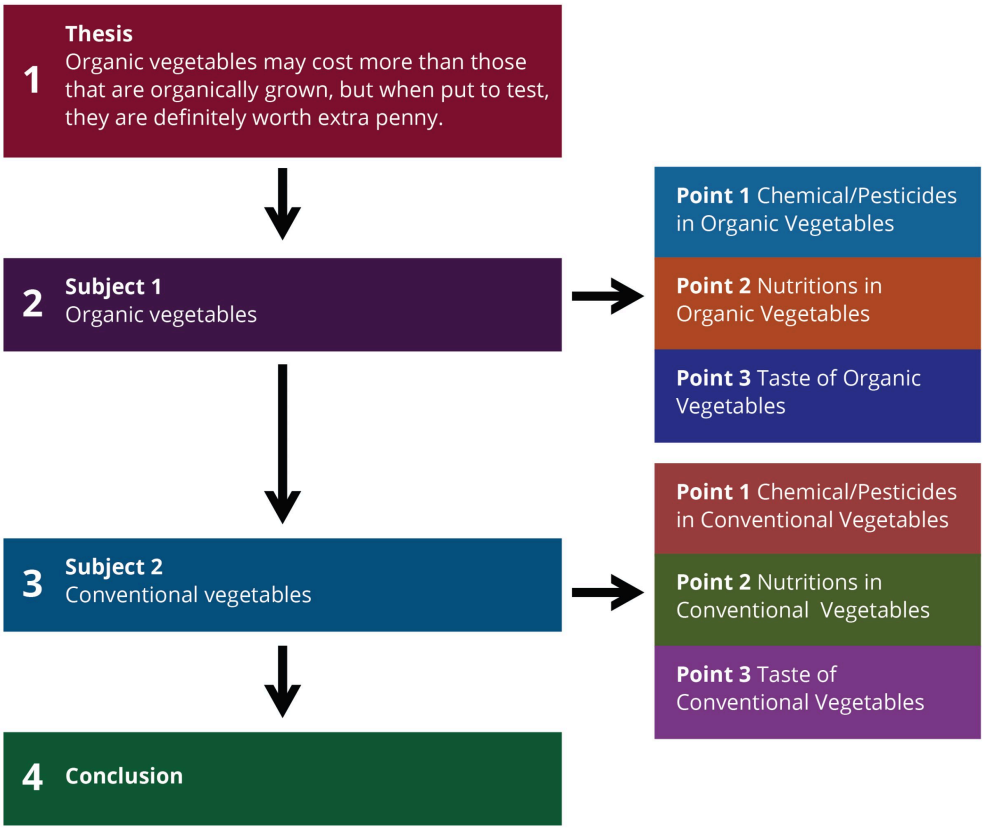
Here the thesis sets up the two subjects to be compared and contrasted (organic versus conventional vegetables), and it makes a claim about the results that might prove useful to the reader.

You may organize compare-and-contrast essays in one of the following two ways:

1. According to the subjects themselves, discussing one then the other
2. According to individual points, discussing each subject in relation to each point

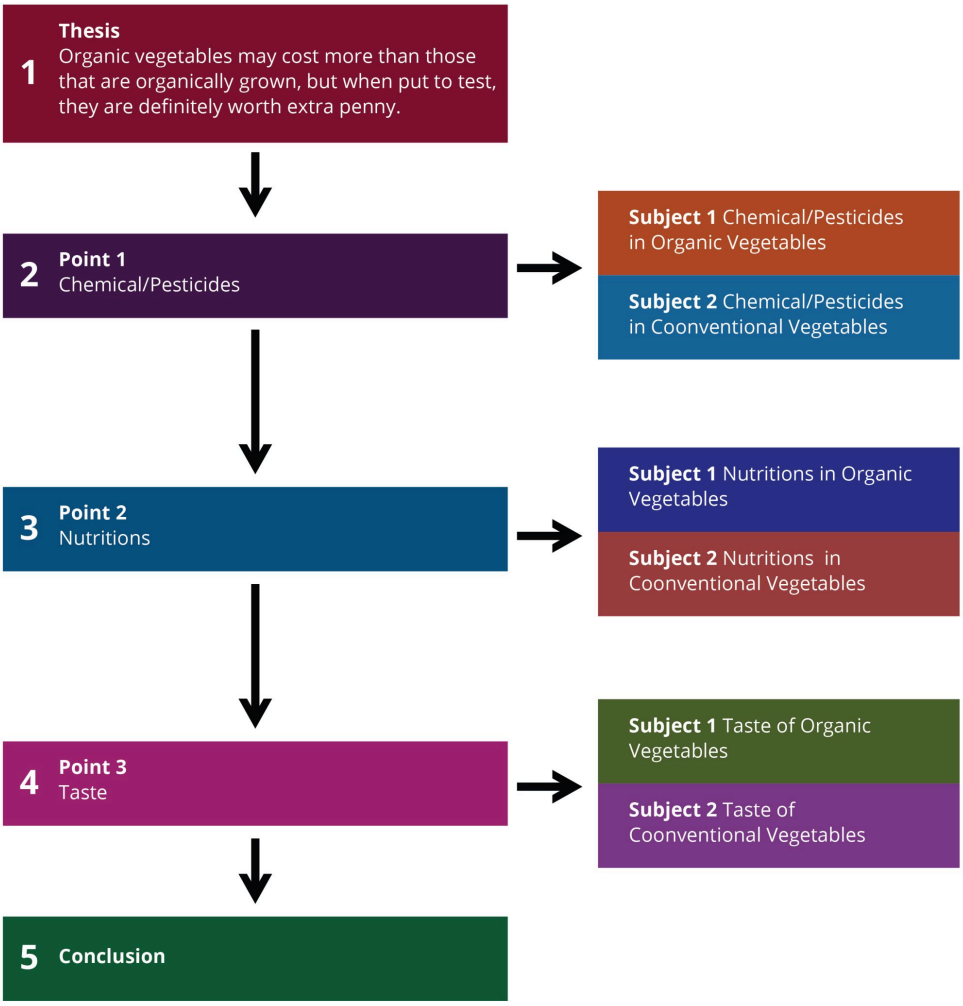
See Figure 1 – “Comparison and Contrast Diagram”, which diagrams the ways to organize our organic versus conventional vegetables thesis.

Organize By Subject



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Organize By Points



Source: Compare and contrast – organize by points by University of Minnesota is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA. / Colours adjusted/images remade by Shaima.

Figure 1 – Text version

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
   a. Chemicals/Pesticides

   b. Nutrition
   c. Taste
3. Subject 2: Conventional Vegetables
   a. Chemicals/Pesticides
   b. Nutrition
   c. 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. Chemicals/Pesticides
   a. Organic
   b. Conventional
3. Nutrition
   a. Organic
   b. Conventional
4. Taste
   a. Organic
   b. Conventional
5. Conclusion

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 1 “Phrases of Comparison and Contrast” for examples.

Table 1 gives examples of phrases you can use to compare 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

Exercise 3

Create an outline for each of the items you chose in "Exercise 1" and "Exercise 2" of this section. Use the point-by-point organizing strategy for one of them, and use the subject organizing strategy for the other.

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. Make 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. Below, you can read a sample compare-and-contrast essay.

Sample compare-and-contrast essay

Read Print vs. eBooks in plain text/HTML

Note: HTML/plain text & Pressbooks do not always display page layout or APA formatting such as page numbers, spacing, margins or indentation accurately. Please review APA formatting rules to ensure you meet APA guidelines with your own work. The text version is included here in HTML format for ease of reading/use. You may also want to View Print vs. eBooks in PDF format.

Compare and Contrast: Print vs e-books

George-Anne Lerner

Reading print books and reading on screens are two different forms of reading that have unique advantages and disadvantages. While print books have been around for centuries and remain a popular choice for reading, digital reading on screens has become increasingly popular in recent years. Conventional print books offer the advantages of a tangible experience, convenience, and deeper learning, but e-books have large storage capacity and accessibility features; both versions carry a similar impact on the environment. Whether a reader chooses a Kindle, or an old-fashioned print book, there are many advantages to each option.

Traditional print books have several advantages, and are often the ones readers say they prefer, as they offer a tangible experience away from digital devices, deeper learning, and are convenient. Readers enjoy being able to hold physical copies of books, enjoying the feel of the texture of the pages.Several surveys show that print books are strongly preferred (Johnston & Salaz, 2019). When average screen time increased during the pandemic, many people saw print books as an opportunity to take a break from their digital devices (Wright, 2020). In addition to offering a rest from screens, print books boost reading comprehension. Several studies show that comprehension increases significantly for students who read printed materials compared to those who read digital texts (Mangen et al., 2013). Print is generally considered better for the learning and deep understanding of complex texts (Stoop et al., 2013). Also, print books are convenient, and they do not need to be plugged in or connected to the internet, making them a more accessible option for those who do not have access to these resources. Furthermore, print books are

often viewed as more reliable and less prone to technical problems, such as malfunctions or lost data. Overall, traditional print books have many advantages and offer several benefits over their digital counterparts.

On the other hand, reading on screens offers several advantages that reading print books does not, including the ability to store multiple books, to adjust accessibility settings, and to navigate easily. Digital reading allows the reader to access and store a large number of books on a single device, which is useful for travel or in small homes. Additionally, e-books often allow the reader to customize the font size, background colour, and other reading settings, such as text to speech, making them easier to read for those with visual impairments or who struggle with reading. Studies show that E-books with audio functions assisted in language learning (Hsieh & Huang, 2020), and digital books with pictures also improved retention of information for learners (Wang & Chiu, 2020). Many findings show that electronic screens are best for quick information gathering, communication, and navigation (Stoop et al., 2013).While print may be preferred by those who want a physical book in their hands, e-books offer several advantages to readers.

The environmental impact of e-books and print books is a complex issue and ultimately, neither format offers a clear advantage. E-books may have a lower impact in terms of production than paper books (Tahara et al., 2018), but the disposal of electronic devices has to be taken into account. While production of print books has a direct environmental impact, they can be recycled and repurposed.Overall, the environmental impact depends on how often the e-book reader is used, and current studies challenge the bias that e-books offer a more environmentally sustainable experience than printed books (Kang et al,. 2021). Research indicates that the environmental impact of both printed and digital books seems to be about the same, showing no clear “winner” in environmental friendliness.

In conclusion, both print books and e-books have their own unique advantages and disadvantages. While print books offer a tangible and more immersive reading experience, digital reading is more convenient and can be more accessible. Neither one has been proven to be a superior option in terms of environmental impact. Ultimately, the best form of reading depends on individual preferences and the specific needs of the reader.

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Exercise 4

Choose one of the outlines you created in "Exercise 3", and write a full compare-and-contrast essay. Be sure to include an engaging introduction, a clear thesis, well-defined and detailed paragraphs, and a fitting conclusion that ties everything together.

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.
    1. Organize by the subjects themselves, one then the other.
    2. 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.

Attribution & References

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5.2 - CAUSE AND EFFECT

Learning Objectives

- 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 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.

Exercise 1

Consider the causes and effects in the following thesis statements. List a cause and effect for each one on your own sheet of paper.

1. The growing childhood obesity epidemic is a result of technology.
2. Much of the wildlife is dying because of the oil spill.
3. The town continued programs that it could no longer afford, so it went bankrupt.
4. More young people became politically active as use of the Internet spread throughout society.
5. While many experts believed the rise in violence was due to the poor economy, it was really due to the summer-long heat wave.

Exercise 2

Write three cause-and-effect thesis statements of your own for each of the following five broad topics.

1. Health and nutrition
2. Sports
3. Media
4. Politics
5. History

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:

1. Start with the cause and then talk about the effects.
2. Start with the effect and then talk about the causes.

For example, if your essay were 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 fully and 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 certain words and phrases that denote such linkage.

Phrases of causation – examples

- as a result

- because
- hence
- this
- consequently
- due to
- since
- therefore

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 such trappings 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.

Exercise 3

Look at some of the cause-and-effect relationships from Exercise 2. Outline the links you listed. Outline one using a cause-then-effect structure. Outline the other using the effect-then-cause structure.

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 terms of 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. Below, you can read a sample cause-and-effect essay.

Sample cause-and-effect essay

Read Cause and Effect: The Impact of Sleep Deprivation on College Success in plain text/ HTML

Note: HTML/plain text & Pressbooks do not always display page layout or APA formatting such as page numbers, spacing, margins or indentation accurately. Please review APA formatting rules to ensure you meet APA guidelines with your own work. The text version is included here in HTML format for ease of reading/use. You may also want to View The Impact of Sleep Deprivation on College Success in PDF format.

Cause and Effect: The Impact of Sleep Deprivation on College Success

George-Anne Lerner

Do you cram for tests and pull "all-nighters" for assignments, hoping to improve your grades? You're not alone. The majority of college students say that they are sleep deprived, and more than 70% of them get less than the recommended 8 hours of rest (Hershner & Chervin, 2014). Unfortunately, by staying up late to study, students may be undermining their goals of improving their grades. Getting enough sleep is vital to a college student's success; sleep deprivation creates challenges for a person's physical, mental health, and learning.

Sleep and physical well-being have a close relationship, especially in regards to the immune system. Lack of sleep can lead to increased stress and inflammation, which can weaken the immune system and make a person likely to get sick (Morris, 2022). Additionally, Besedovksy et al. (2012) reports that sleep deprivation can also disrupt hormones that regulate hunger and physical performance, leading to

potential weight gain and decreased physical performance. Several studies indicate that "the shorter your sleep, the shorter your life span" (MacDonald, 2022, para.7). To ensure physical well-being, college students should try to get a good night's sleep consistently.

Just as sleep deprivation undermines the physical body, a lack of sleep can have a major impact on mental health. Research has shown that good sleep quality is linked to lower rates of depression, anxiety, and even suicidal thinking (Morris, 2022). Taylor et al. (2011) note that this is especially true in college students, who are a population that is particularly susceptible to the onset of mental health disorders. Poor sleep can lead to a range of negative outcomes, including decreased energy levels, impaired memory and attention span, and a general feeling of grumpiness (MacDonald, 2022). There is also a complex relationship between sleep, mood disorders, and suicide, with insomnia and nightmares being potential risk factors for suicidal ideation (Hershner & Chervin, 2014). Additionally, long term difficulty in falling asleep is linked to feelings of loss of pleasure, punishment, and disliking oneself (Hershner & Chervin, 2014). Therefore, it is important to prioritize sleep in order to maintain good mental health.

In addition to supporting mental health, a good night's sleep helps college students succeed academically. A study of college students showed that better sleep quality, quantity, and consistency over the last month was associated with improved grades (Morris, 2022). Studies also reveal that sleep deprivation impairs memory, attention and executive functioning, which are critical skills required for academic success (Okano et al., 2019). Consistent sleep patterns are shown to directly lead to higher test scores (Ho et al., 2022). Many studies highlight the impact that nighttime sleep habits have in predicting future academic performance. Better quality, longer duration, and greater consistency of sleep are strongly associated with success in college.

In conclusion, sleep is a vital aspect of a college student's life that should not be overlooked. The benefits of a good night's sleep extend far beyond just physical and mental health; it also has a positive impact on academic success. Lack of sleep can lead to many problems that diminish the quality and enjoyment of the overall college experience; in contrast, a healthy sleep routine will lead to better grades, improved memory and attention, and better academic performance. In order to achieve success in college and beyond, it is crucial for students to prioritize a good night's sleep.

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Exercise 4

Choose one of the ideas you outlined in Exercise 3 and write a full cause-and-effect essay. Be sure to include an engaging introduction, a clear thesis, strong evidence and examples, and a thoughtful conclusion.

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:
    1. Start with the cause and then talk about the effect.
    2. 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 in signaling links between various elements in the essay.

Attribution & References

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5.3 - PERSUASION

Learning Objectives

- Determine the purpose and structure of persuasion in writing.
- Identify bias in writing.
- Assess various rhetorical devices.
- Distinguish between fact and opinion.
- Understand the importance of visuals to strengthen arguments.
- Write a persuasive essay.

The Purpose of Persuasive Writing

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.

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.

The Structure of a Persuasive Essay

The following five features make up the structure of a persuasive essay:

1. Introduction and thesis
2. Opposing and qualifying ideas
3. Strong evidence in support of claim
4. Style and tone of language
5. A compelling conclusion

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.

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.

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

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

Sample concessionary statement

> 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.

Sample phrases of concession

- although
- of course
- though
- granted that
- still
- yet

Exercise 1

Try to form a thesis for each of the following topics. Remember the more specific your thesis, the better.

1. Truth and Reconciliation Commission
2. Television and advertising
3. Stereotypes and prejudice
4. Gender roles and the workplace
5. Driving and cell phones

Collaboration

Please share with a classmate and compare your answers. Choose the thesis statement that most interests you and discuss why.

Bias in Writing

Everyone has various biases on any number of topics. For example, you might have a bias toward wearing black instead of brightly colored clothes or wearing jeans rather than formal wear. You might have a bias toward working at night rather than in the

morning, or working by deadlines rather than getting tasks done in advance. These examples identify minor biases, of course, but they still indicate preferences and opinions.

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

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

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

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. There are two primary reasons:

1. 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.
2. 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 sentences is bolded:

1. **Smoking** is bad.
2. **I think** smoking is bad.

*Subjects: 1) Smoking 2) I think

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.

Developing Sound Arguments – Checklist

Does my essay contain the following elements?

- An engaging introduction
- A reasonable, specific thesis that is able to be supported by evidence
- A varied range of evidence from credible sources
- Respectful acknowledgement and explanation of opposing ideas
- A style and tone of language that is appropriate for the subject and audience
- Acknowledgement of the argument's limits
- A conclusion that will adequately summarize the essay and reinforce the thesis

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. 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 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.

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.

Exercise 2

On a separate sheet of paper, take three of the theses you formed in “Exercise 1” of this section, and list the types of evidence you might use in support of that thesis.

Exercise 3

Using the evidence you provided in support of the three theses in "Exercise 2" above, come up with at least one counterargument to each. Then write a concession statement, expressing the limits to each of your three arguments.

Using Visual Elements to Strengthen Arguments

Adding visual elements to a persuasive argument can often strengthen its persuasive effect. 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 you can see how the disparity looks 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



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When making a business presentation, you typically have limited time to get across your idea. 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. For more information about visuals in presentations, see Chapter 9 – "Verbal & Visual Communication".

Writing a Persuasive Essay

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.

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

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.

Make sure that your style and tone are 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. Below, you can read a sample persuasive essay.

Water Inequity: Sample Essay

Read Water Inequity in Plain text format

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Water Inequity

Emily Cramer

Clean drinking water is not a luxury and access to it is not a privilege for most people living in the developed world. But for one group of Canadians, it is an elusive resource. Many people living on First Nations reserves across the country are unable to drink or bathe in water from the taps in their homes, and that is where piped water even exists. Lengthy boil advisories have been in place in some cases for more than twenty years. This problem is not merely the result of inadequate water systems but of the ongoing exclusion of Indigenous peoples and the failure to view their rights as equal, and related, to those of other Canadians. The government of Canada has a responsibility to provide clean drinking water to Indigenous reserves not only because access to water is a human right, but also because the lack of water is a direct result of racial marginalization and a failure to recognize that the well-being of one group of Canadians affects the well-being of all.

In 2010, the United Nations acknowledged that access to clean drinking water is a human right, and many other institutions support this definition: “According to both the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, clean drinking water is a fundamental human right” (Erin, 2021, para. 1). In 2015, aware of a vast rights inequity to Indigenous Canadians, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau committed to ending all long-term drinking water advisories in Indigenous communities by March 2021. However, as of February 2022, there were still 38 advisories in place, and the government delayed the deadline to 2026 (Government of Canada, 2022). Canada has 20%

of the world's freshwater reserves, yet many Indigenous communities have gone without access to clean, potable water for decades. This obvious human rights violation should not be occurring in a developed nation, particularly one as committed to equity as Canada.

Why does this water shortage exist? The problem of water access on reserves has many causes, but it stems, at least in part, from the racial marginalization of First Nations people. "Indigenous exclusion... is the bedrock factor in maintaining Indigenous water insecurity" (Hanrahan, 2017, para. 4). Most Canadians benefit from strict government regulations over water supplies, but the Canadian government has been reluctant to extend those benefits to its Indigenous people. Often, reserves are in remote locations, and water treatment plants are required to service those areas. Where they exist, these plants have not been regulated to ensure safety. The resulting systems are not only faulty, they have been inadequately maintained due to a lack of funding. These problems have persisted for so long, minor maintenance is no longer possible; in some cases, total system overhauls are required to finally end boil advisories. To make matters worse, traditional water sources are not an alternative as they are often affected by pollution from high-population areas. "[Waterways have been] degraded by activities that occur far from reserves and traditional lands" (Assembly of First Nations, n.d., para. 7). The resulting potable water shortage on reserves points to the government's racial marginalization of its First Nations people.

Yet in today's global community, it is increasingly clear that marginalizing one group has an impact on everyone because of human interconnectedness. The struggles and successes of one affect all. Apart from obvious outcomes such as the impact on Canada's health care system when people are exposed to unsafe drinking water, the health of Canada's First Nations communities is important to the country in other ways. Indigenous contributions to environmental protection are significant: "Around the world, where Indigenous rights to their lands are strong, biodiversity, and climate-critical carbon stores are better protected" (Skene, 2020, para. 3). First Nations' entrepreneurship has a profound impact on the Canadian economy: "Indigenous people represent the fastest growth segment of the population [and are] a driving force of Canada's long-term economic stability" (Amanto, 2020, para. 1). Moreover, Indigenous culture plays a vital role in the diversity, history, and richness of Canadian culture. The interconnection between living things is emphasized in Indigenous teaching, and it provides a lesson that Western governments need to learn.

The scarcity of clean drinking water on many First Nations reserves in Canada is a stark reminder of ongoing racism and inequity within the country. No one should struggle to access water in a water-rich nation like Canada. This human rights breach points directly to the failure of the government to extend the same protections and funding to First Nations people that it does to the rest of Canada. And although this failure is the product of racial marginalization aimed at one group, its outcome affects all Canadians.

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Online Persuasive Essay Examples

- Alan Dershowitz argues The Case for Torture Warrants [New tab]
- Alisa Solomon argues The Case against Torture [New tab]

Exercise 4

Choose one of the topics you have been working on throughout this section. Use the thesis,

evidence, opposing argument, and concessionary statement as the basis for writing a full persuasive essay. Be sure to include an engaging introduction, clear explanations of all the evidence you present, and a strong conclusion.

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 not only address counterarguments but also do so respectfully.
- It is also 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 will 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.
- Make sure that your word choice and writing style is 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.

Attribution & References

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- "Water Inequity: Evidence of Racial Marginalization in Canada" (sample persuasive essay) by Emily Cramer is licensed under CC-BY-NC 4.0

5.4 - RHETORICAL MODES: EXERCISES

Exercises

1. The thesis statement is a fundamental element of writing regardless of what rhetorical mode you are writing in. Formulate one more thesis for each of the modes discussed in this chapter.
2. Which rhetorical mode seems most aligned with who you are as a person? That is, which mode seems most useful to you? Explain why in a paragraph.
3. Over the next week, look closely at the texts and articles you read. Document in a journal exactly what type of rhetorical mode is being used. Sometimes it might be for an entire article, but sometimes you might see different modes within one article. The more you can detect various ways of communicating ideas, the easier it will be to do yourself.

Attribution & References

Except where otherwise noted, this chapter is adapted from " 10.10 Rhetorical Modes: End-of-Chapter Exercises" In *Writing for Success* by University of Minnesota licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0.

CHAPTER 6: INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH WRITING

Communication Essentials for College by Jen Booth, Emily Cramer & Amanda Quibell

- 6.1 – Introduction to Research Writing
- 6.2 – Developing a Research Topic
- 6.3 – The CRAAP Test and Evaluating Resources
- 6.4 – Popular vs. Scholarly Sources
- 6.5 – Primary and Secondary Sources
- 6.6 – Search Terms
- 6.7 – Internet Searching Tips
- 6.8 – Boolean Operators

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Please visit the web version of *Communication Essentials for College* to access the complete book, interactive activities and ancillary resources.

6.1 - INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH WRITING

Learning Objectives

- Identify reasons to research writing projects.
- Outline the steps of the research writing process.

Why was the Great Wall of China built? What have scientists learned about the possibility of life on Mars? How does the human brain create, store, and retrieve memories? Who invented the game of hockey, and how has it changed over the years?

You may know the answers to these questions off the top of your head. If you are like most people, however, you find answers to tough questions like these by searching the Internet, visiting the library, or asking others for information. To put it simply, you perform research.

You probably perform research in your everyday life. When your boss, your instructor, or a family member asks you a question that you do not know the answer to, you locate relevant information, analyze your findings, and share your results. Locating, analyzing, and sharing information are key steps in the research process, and in this chapter, you will learn more about each step. By developing your research writing skills, you will prepare yourself to answer any question no matter how challenging.

Reasons for Research

When you perform research, you are essentially trying to solve a mystery—you want to know how something works or why something happened. In other words, you want to

answer a question that you (and other people) have about the world. This is one of the most basic reasons for performing research.

But the research process does not end when you have solved your mystery. Imagine what would happen if a detective collected enough evidence to solve a criminal case, but she never shared her solution with the authorities. Presenting what you have learned from research can be just as important as performing the research. Research results can be presented in a variety of ways, but one of the most popular—and effective—presentation forms is the research paper . A research paper presents an original thesis, or purpose statement, about a topic and develops that thesis with information gathered from a variety of sources.

If you are curious about the possibility of life on Mars, for example, you might choose to research the topic. What will you do, though, when your research is complete? You will need a way to put your thoughts together in a logical, coherent manner. You may want to use the facts you have learned to create a narrative or to support an argument. And you may want to show the results of your research to your friends, your teachers, or even the editors of magazines and journals. Writing a research paper is an ideal way to organize thoughts, craft narratives or make arguments based on research, and share your newfound knowledge with the world.

Exercise 1

Write a paragraph about a time when you used research in your everyday life. Did you look for the cheapest way to travel from Toronto to Vancouver? Did you search for a way to remove gum from the bottom of your shoe? In your paragraph, explain what you wanted to research, how you performed the research, and what you learned as a result.

Research Writing and the Academic Paper

Researching and writing a long paper requires a lot of time, effort, and organization. However, writing a research paper can also be a great opportunity to explore a topic that is particularly interesting to you. The research process allows you to gain expertise

on a topic of your choice, and the writing process helps you remember what you have learned and understand it on a deeper level.

Research Writing at Work

Knowing how to write a good research paper is a valuable skill that will serve you well throughout your career. Whether you are developing a new product, studying the best way to perform a procedure, or learning about challenges and opportunities in your field of employment, you will use research techniques to guide your exploration. You may even need to create a written report of your findings. And because effective communication is essential to any company, employers seek to hire people who can write clearly and professionally.

Writing at Work

Take a few minutes to think about each of the following careers. How might each of these professionals use researching and research writing skills on the job?

- Medical laboratory technician
- Small business owner
- Information technology professional
- Freelance magazine writer

A medical laboratory technician or information technology professional might do research to learn about the latest technological developments in either of these fields. A small business owner might conduct research to learn about the latest trends in his or her industry. A freelance magazine writer may need to research a given topic to write an informed, up-to-date article.

Exercise 2

Think about the job of your dreams. How might you use research writing skills to perform that job? Create a list of ways in which strong researching, organizing, writing, and critical thinking skills could help you succeed at your dream job. How might these skills help you obtain that job?

Steps of the Research Writing Process

How does a research paper grow from a folder of brainstormed notes to a polished final draft? No two projects are identical, but most projects follow a series of six basic steps.

These are the steps in the research writing process:

1. Choose a topic.
2. Plan and schedule time to research and write.
3. Conduct research.
4. Organize research and ideas.
5. Draft your paper.
6. Revise and edit your paper.

Each of these steps will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter. For now, though, we will take a brief look at what each step involves.

Step 1: Choosing a Topic

To narrow the focus of your topic, you may try freewriting exercises, such as brainstorming. You may also need to ask a specific research question—a broad, open-ended question that will guide your research—as well as propose a possible answer, or a working thesis. You may use your research question and your working thesis to create a research proposal. In a research proposal, you present your main research question, any related sub-questions you plan to explore, and your working thesis.

Step 2: Planning and Scheduling

Before you start researching your topic, take time to plan your researching and writing schedule. Research projects can take days, weeks, or even months to complete. Creating a schedule is a good way to ensure that you do not end up being overwhelmed by all the work you have to do as the deadline approaches.

During this step of the process, it is also a good idea to plan the resources and organizational tools you will use to keep yourself on track throughout the project. Flowcharts, calendars, and checklists can all help you stick to your schedule.

Step 3: Conducting Research

When going about your research, you will likely use a variety of sources—anything from books and periodicals to video presentations and in-person interviews.

Your sources will include both primary sources and secondary sources. Primary sources provide firsthand information or raw data. For example, surveys, in-person interviews, and historical documents are primary sources. Secondary sources, such as biographies, literary reviews, or magazine articles, include some analysis or interpretation of the information presented. As you conduct research, you will take detailed, careful notes about your discoveries. You will also evaluate the reliability of each source you find.

Step 4: Organizing Research and the Writer's Ideas

When your research is complete, you will organize your findings and decide which sources to cite in your paper. You will also have an opportunity to evaluate the evidence you have collected and determine whether it supports your thesis, or the focus of your paper. You may decide to adjust your thesis or conduct additional research to ensure that your thesis is well supported.

Tip

Remember, your working thesis is not set in stone. You can and should change your working thesis throughout the research writing process if the evidence you find does not support your original thesis. Never try to force evidence to fit your argument. For example, your working thesis is "Mars cannot

support life-forms." Yet, a week into researching your topic, you find an article in the New York Times detailing new findings of bacteria under the Martian surface. Instead of trying to argue that bacteria are not life forms, you might instead alter your thesis to "Mars cannot support complex life-forms."

Step 5: Drafting Your Paper

Now you are ready to combine your research findings with your critical analysis of the results in a rough draft. You will incorporate source materials into your paper and discuss each source thoughtfully in relation to your thesis or purpose statement.

When you cite your reference sources, it is important to pay close attention to standard conventions for citing sources in order to avoid plagiarism, or the practice of using someone else's words without acknowledging the source. Later in this chapter, you will learn how to incorporate sources in your paper and avoid some of the most common pitfalls of attributing information.

Step 6: Revising and Editing Your Paper

In the final step of the research writing process, you will revise and polish your paper. You might reorganize your paper's structure or revise for unity and cohesion, ensuring that each element in your paper flows into the next logically and naturally. You will also make sure that your paper uses an appropriate and consistent tone.

Once you feel confident in the strength of your writing, you will edit your paper for proper spelling, grammar, punctuation, mechanics, and formatting. When you complete this final step, you will have transformed a simple idea or question into a thoroughly researched and well-written paper you can be proud of!

Exercise 3

Review the steps of the research writing process. Then answer the questions on your own sheet of paper.

1. In which steps of the research writing process are you allowed to change your thesis?
2. In step 2, which types of information should you include in your project schedule?
3. What might happen if you eliminated step 4 from the research writing process?

Key Takeaways

- People undertake research projects throughout their academic and professional careers in order to answer specific questions, share their findings with others, increase their understanding of challenging topics, and strengthen their researching, writing, and analytical skills.
- The research writing process generally comprises six steps: choosing a topic, scheduling and planning time for research and writing, conducting research, organizing research and ideas, drafting a paper, and revising and editing the paper.

Attribution & References

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6.2 - DEVELOPING A RESEARCH TOPIC

Learning Objectives

After completing this tutorial, you will be able to:

- identify some goals to keep in mind as you choose a topic,
- choose an approach to further develop, broaden or narrow your topic,
- search for resources to get you started.

The following videos give you information about what to keep in mind at the start of any research assignment.

Research Process Overview:

Watch Developing a research topic – Research process overview on YouTube (1 min)

Research Process Overview

Research Process Overview (Text version)
Choose which process best describes how to choose a research topic.

1. First decide on your topic, do background research, and finally do in-depth research.
2. Think of several topic ideas, do background research, then choose a topic.

3. Think of several topic ideas, do some background research, choose a topic and form it into a question that can be answered.
4. Think of a topic you know something about, and find some sources to support what you know.

Check your Answer:[1]

Goals of Choosing a Topic:

Watch Developing a research topic – Goals on YouTube (1 min)

Goals of Choosing a Research Topic

Goals of Choosing a Research Topic (Text version)
Which of the following should you consider before choosing your topic?

1. Topic meets the assignment requirements.
2. Topic is interesting to me and to my readers.
3. Sources are available on this topic.
4. All of the above.

Check your Answer: [2]

Brainstorming

Watch Developing a research topic – Brainstorming for ideas on YouTube (1 min)

Topic Brainstorming

Topic Brainstorming (Text version)

Brainstorming is a process best done only in your head. True or False?

Check your Answer: [3]

Watch Developing a research topic – Brainstorming approaches on YouTube (1 min)

3 Ways to Approach a Research Topic

3 Ways to Approach a Research Topic (Text version)

Which of the following is true?

1. There are only 3 ways to approach a research topic.
2. These 3 approaches will help me to think about my topic in a new way.
3. I should use all 3 of these approaches in my research essay.

Check your Answer:[4]

Broadening and Narrowing your Topic:

Watch Developing a research topic – Brodening/narrowing on YouTube (1 min)

Narrowing Topics

Narrowing Topics (Text version)

It might be difficult to find sources if your topic is too narrow. True or false?

Check your Answer:[5]

Helpful Resources:

Watch Developing a research topic – Resources on YouTube (1 min)

Overview of Topics

Overview of Topics (Text version)

1. Google and Wikipedia can be helpful when you are getting an overview of topics. True or false?
2. Which of the following is true?
    a. A topic with a narrow scope is easier to research.
    b. You may adapt your thesis statement as you find sources during your research.
    c. Your course description is a good place to find topics for research.
    d. It is best to finalize your thesis statement before you begin researching.

Check your Answers: [6]

Further Resources:

For further information on this topic:

- The Learning Portal by College Libraries Ontario. The Writing Hub – Choose a Topic.
- Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL). Invention: Starting the Writing Process.

Contact your Library for help!

Attributions & References

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Notes

1. #3 is correct. Taking the time to think through your options and formulate a question that interests you will help you succeed at your assignment.
2. 4. All of the above
3. False. It's good to write things down when you brainstorm.
4. #2 is correct! These are 3 of the common ways to focus a topic.
5. True.
6. 1. True, 2. b & c

6.3 - THE CRAAP TEST AND EVALUATING RESOURCES

Learning Objectives

After completing this tutorial you will be able to:

- identify key components to evaluating information,
- apply the CRAAP test as an evaluation tool.

Introduction

This chapter will outline some key concepts to consider when analyzing internet sources. This knowledge will help you do better research for assignments and in daily life.

Watch Evaluating internet sources and fake news with ncLibraries on YouTube (8 mins)

The importance of evaluating sources:

Watch Why is this important on YouTube (1 min)

Evaluating Sources I

Evaluating Sources I (Text version)
Knowing how to evaluate information is only useful for school assignments. True or false?

Check your Answer: [1]

Consider the source:

Watch Consider the source on YouTube (1 min)

Evaluating Sources II

Evaluating Sources II (Text version)
Where can you look to find author information for a website:

1. About
2. Information
3. All of the above
4. None of the above

Check your Answer: [2]

Motivation & Bias:

Watch Motivation/bias on YouTube (2 mins)

Evaluating Sources III

Evaluating Sources III (Text version)
Shortening the URL to find the homepage of the site that you're viewing might also give you information about any groups or organizations that this information is aligned with. True or false?

Check your Answer: [3]

Check the evidence:

Watch Evidence on YouTube (1 min)

Evaluating Sources IV

Evaluating Sources IV (Text version)
The more verifiable evidence that a site uses, the more likely that the information that site is trying to convey is accurate. True or false?

Check your Answer: [4]

Timeliness:

Watch Timeliness on YouTube (1 min)

Evaluating Sources IV

Evaluating Sources IV
Which of the following is important when evaluating a source from the web:

1. The author or creator
2. The date posted
3. Supporting evidence
4. All of the above
5. None of the above

Check your Answer: [5]

The CRAAP/RADAR Test:

Watch Evaluating sources: CRAAP/RADAR on YouTube (1 min)

Evaluating Sources VI

Evaluating Sources VI (Text version)
Which of the following is NOT part of the CRAAP test?

1. Currency
2. Relevance
3. Authority
4. Aptitude
5. Purpose

Check your Answer: [6]

What makes news "fake"?

Watch Fake news on YouTube (2 mins)

Evaluating Resources VII

Evaluating Resources VII (Text version)

You can trust the headline to represent the content of an online news source. True or false?

Check your Answer: [7]

Conclusion: be a skeptic!

Watch Summary on YouTube (1 min)

Evaluating Sources IX

Evaluating Sources IX (Text version)

Fill in the missing words

Evaluating your sources helps you construct stronger (a) _____ and make better (b) _____.

Check your Answer: [8]

Questions?

Contact your college's library!

Attribution & References

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Blakeslee, S. (2010). *Evaluating information – Applying the CRAAP test*. http://www.csuchico.edu/lins/handouts/eval_websites.pdf

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Manadlios, J. (2013). RADAR: An approach for helping students evaluate internet sources. *Journal of Information Science*, 39(4), 470-478. doi: 10.1177/016555151347889

Notes

1. False
2. 3. If author information is not clearly stated elsewhere, check the "about" or "information" pages of a website may provide additional clues.
3. True. Shortening the url to find the homepage of a site is a helpful way to trace back the source.
4. True. The more evidence to support a claim, the better!
5. 4. All of the criteria listed are important for evaluating internet resources.
6. Aptitude is not part of the CRAAP test.
7. False. You should always read beyond the headline.
8. (a) arguments (b) decisions.

6.4 - POPULAR VS. SCHOLARLY SOURCES

Learning Objectives

By the end of this tutorial, you should be able to:

- articulate the differences between popular and scholarly periodicals,
- use these differences to help identify whether or not an article is popular or scholarly when doing a research assignment for class.

What is a Periodical?:

Watch Part one: What is a periodical? on YouTube (3 mins)

Popular vs. Scholarly # 1

Popular vs. Scholarly # 1 (Text version)
Which of the following is NOT an example of a periodical?

1. The Toronto Star
2. Anne of Green Gables
3. Maclean's Magazine
4. The Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice

Check your Answer: [1]

Popular vs. Scholarly Periodicals:

Watch Part two: Popular VS. scholarly periodicals on YouTube (2 mins)

Popular vs. Scholarly # 2

Popular vs. Scholarly # 2 (Text version)

Scholarly periodicals are ...

1. Written by journalists, use common language, and do not rely on advertising dollars.
2. Written by scholars, use complex language, and do not rely on advertising dollars.
3. Written by freelance writers, use complex language, and rely on advertising dollars.

Check your Answer: [2]

Finding Scholarly Articles:

Watch Part three: Finding scholarly articles on YouTube (4 mins)

Popular vs. Scholarly # 3

Popular vs. Scholarly # 3 (Text version)

This type of periodical article can often be found in publications with one or more of these words in its title: Journal, Research, Review or Studies?

a. Scholarly article
b. Popular article

Check your Answer: [3]

Questions?

Contact your library for help!

Attributions & References

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Notes

1. b. *Anne of Green Gables* is a book, not a periodical.
2. b.
3. a.

6.5 - PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES

Learning Objectives

After completing this tutorial, you will be able to:

- distinguish between primary and secondary sources,
- use each type of source appropriately in your research.

Introduction:

Watch Primary and secondary sources with ncLibraries on YouTube (5 mins)

Primary Sources: What are they?

Watch Primary vs. secondary sources: Primary sources defined on YouTube (1 min)

Primary and Secondary Sources I

Primary and Secondary Sources I (Text version)
Which of the following are characteristics of primary sources?

a. Created by direct witnesses

b. Original documents
c. Analyze the work of others
d. Both A & C
e. Both A & B

Check your Answer: [1]

Primary Source Examples:

Watch Primary vs. secondary sources: Primary source examples on YouTube (1 min)

Primary and Secondary Sources II

Primary and Secondary Sources III (Text version)
For a news item to be considered a primary source, it should be written at the time an event is occurring. True or false?

Check your Answer: [2]

When to use Primary Sources:

Watch Primary vs. secondary sources: When to use primary sources on YouTube (1 min)

Primary and Secondary Sources III

Primary and Secondary Sources III (Text version)
Primary sources are useful for which of the following purposes?

1. evidence for theories
2. provide perspectives on topics
3. focal point for discussion
4. all of the above

Check your Answer: [3]

Secondary Sources: What are they?

Watch Primary vs. secondary sources: Secondary sources defined on YouTube (1 min)

Primary and Secondary Sources IV

Primary and Secondary Sources IV (Text version)
Which of the following are characteristics of secondary sources?

a. They analyze primary sources.
b. They are a step removed from what they are describing.
c. They are usually published works.
d. All of the above.

Check your Answer: [4]

Secondary Source Examples:

Watch Primary vs. secondary sources: Examples on YouTube (1 min)

Primary and Secondary Sources V

Primary and Secondary Sources V (Text version)
Which of the following would NOT be considered a secondary source for a paper on Lake Erie yellow perch populations?

a. Raw numeric data containing yellow perch counts from Ontario's Ministry of Fisheries and Natural Resources.
b. Journal article titled, "Estimating the size of historical yellow perch runs in Lake Erie" by Chad Meenings and Robert Lackey.
c. *The Encyclopedia of Great Lakes Fish* edited by Davis Allorman.
d. All of the above.

Check your Answer: [5]

When to use Secondary Sources:

Watch Primary vs. secondary sources: When should you use secondary sources on YouTube (1 min)

Primary and Secondary Sources VI

Primary and Secondary Sources VI (Text version)
Secondary sources are good places to find raw, unanalyzed data. True or false?

Check your Answer: [6]

Primary and Secondary Sources Compared:

Watch Primary and secondary sources compared on YouTube (1 min)

Primary and Secondary Sources VII

Primary and Secondary Sources VII (Text version)
Which of the following would be considered a secondary source (check all that apply)?

a. Hamlet by Shakespeare
b. Article titled "Hamlet's dramatic arras" by Rebecca Olson
c. Article titled "Communication in the 21st Century: The Blog" by Mark Kellen
d. Transcripts of published blogs
e. A documentary on theories of changing owl migratory patterns.
f. Data describing population numbers of the spotted owl.

Check your Answer: [7]

Primary and Secondary Sources: The Importance of Context

Watch Primary vs. secondary sources: Context on YouTube (1 min)

Primary and Secondary Sources VIII

Primary and Secondary Sources VIII (Text version)
If a source is considered primary for one research project, it will be considered primary for all other research projects. True or false?

Check your Answer: [8]

Primary and Secondary Sources: Review

Watch Primary vs. secondary sources: Review on YouTube (1 min)

Primary and Secondary Sources IX

Primary and Secondary Sources IX
Which type of source usually is viewed as analysis or interpretation?

a. Primary
b. Secondary
c. Neither

Check your Answer: [9]

Questions:

Contact your library for support.

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Notes

1. e.
2. True.
3. d. Primary sources can be used as focal points for discussions, evidence for theories, and/or to gain perpective on a topic.
4. d.
5. a.
6. False. Raw, unanalyzed data is a primary source.
7. b, c, & e are all secondary sources.
8. False. A source's classification as primary or secondary can change depending on the topic that you're studying.
9. b. Secondary sources usually interpret or analyze primary sources.

6.6 - SEARCH TERMS

Learning Objectives

After completing this tutorial, you will be able to:

- describe why creating good search terms is important,
- identify different strategies for creating effective search terms.

Introduction

Watch Generating search terms – Introduction on YouTube (1 min)

How Effective Search Terms Help

Watch Generating search terms – How can this help me? on YouTube (1 min)

Generating Search Terms I

Generating Search Terms I (Text version)
What are the advantages of having effective search terms?

1. They improve my search results

2. They help me explore my topic
3. They make my project more interesting
4. All of these answers are correct.

Check your Answer: [1]

The Research Process

Watch Generating search terms – The searching process on YouTube (1 min)

Generating Search Terms II

Generating Search Terms II (Text version)

Once I have chosen my topic, I should not change it while I'm searching for sources. True or false?

Check your Answer: [2]

Identify Main Ideas

Watch Generating search terms – Identify main ideas on YouTube (1 min)

Generating Search Terms III

Generating Search Terms III (Text version)

After you have written a topic sentence/question, which of the following should you do FIRST when brainstorming search terms?

1. Search your library website to find results.
2. Pick out the words from your topic sentence/question that represent the main ideas.
3. Search the internet to find results.
4. Formulate your thesis.

Check your Answer: [3]

Brainstorming Search Words

Watch Generating search terms – Brainstorming on YouTube (1 min)

Generating Search Terms IV

Generating Search Terms IV (Text version)
What is one reason why brainstorming search terms is important?

1. Articles on the same topic always use the same terms.
2. You can't use the same terms to search library databases that you use to search the internet.
3. Authors with different viewpoints will use different terms to describe the same topic.
4. None of these are correct.

Check your Answer: [4]

Synonyms and Related Words

Watch Generating search terms – Summary of related ideas on YouTube (1 min)

Generating Search Terms V

Generating Search Terms V (Text version)
Brainstorming search terms...

1. tells me everything I need to know about my topic.
2. answers my research question.
3. is a waste of time.
4. gives me helpful starting points for further searching.

Check your Answer: [5]

Questions?

Contact your library.

For further information on this topic:

- The Learning Portal by College Libraries Ontario. The Writing Hub – Choose a Topic.

Attribution & References

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Notes

1. d. Effective search terms will give you all of these advantages.
2. False. Searching may lead you to discover new things about your topic. Feel free to change and adapt your topic as you search.
3. b. You should start listing words that represent the main ideas in your research topic/question.
4. c. Authors may use different terms to talk about the same subject, so it's important to have a list of similar words to try.
5. d. Brainstorming search words will save you time and help you research more successfully.

6.7 - INTERNET SEARCHING TIPS

Learning Objectives

- apply advanced search techniques to find appropriate internet resources,
- develop strategies to search the internet efficiently.

Introduction

Watch Internet searching tips: Introduction on YouTube (1 min)

Google Basics

Watch Internet searching tips: Google basics on YouTube (1 min)

Google Search Basics

Google Search Basics (Text version)
Which of the following is NOT true about Google searching:

a. Punctuation is generally ignored
b. Spelling matters
c. AND is assumed between search terms

d. Capitalization doesn't matter

Check your Answer: [1]

Search Strategies

Watch Internet searching tips: Search strategies on YouTube (1 min)

Search Strategies I

Search Strategies I (Text version)
True or false? It's better to not be too specific when you're searching the web.

Check your Answer: [2]

Watch Internet searching tips: More strategies on YouTube (1 min)

Search Strategies II

Search Strategies II (Text version)
True or false? Putting quotation marks around a phrase will INCREASE the overall number of your search results.

Check your Answer: [3]

Watch Internet searching tips: Even more search strategies on YouTube (1 min)

Search Strategies III

Search Strategies III (Text version)
What should you add to your search to eliminate words from your search results:

a. – (minus)
b. & (ampersand)
c. % (percent)
d. None of these

Check your Answer: [4]

Google Advanced Search Features

Watch Internet searching tips: Google advanced on YouTube (1 min)

Search Strategies IV

Search Strategies IV (Text version)
Which of the following is NOT a filter in Google advanced search:

a. last updated date
b. font
c. file type
d. language

Check your Answer: [5]

Other Search Engines to Try

Watch Internet searching tips: Other search engines on YouTube (1 min)

Search Strategies V

Search Strategies V (Text version)

True or false? Duckduckgo doesn't track you when you search.

Check your Answer: [6]

Review

- Use advanced options
- Be specific!
- Try different search engines!

Questions?

Contact your library.

Attributions & References

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References & Credits from videos in this section:

Google. (2017). How to search on Google. https://support.google.com/websearch/answer/134479?hl=en

Google. (2017). Refine web searches. https://support.google.com/websearch/answer/2466433

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Slide 10: Simcoe, J. (Photographer). [Untitled image of book with magnifying glass and pen] [Photograph]. https://unsplash.com/search/ask-more-questions?photo=GxnyOLTxCr8

Notes

1. b. spelling is automatically corrected
2. False. You should try to be as specific as possible for best results.
3. False. The overall of number of your search results will decrease.
4. a. A minus sign will removed unwanted words or phrases from your search results.
5. b. You cannot limit by font.
6. True. Duckduckgo doesn't track you when you search.

6.8 - BOOLEAN OPERATORS

Learning Objectives

This chapter shows you how to

- apply Boolean operators (and, or, not) to help you narrow your search results

Boolean Operators – And, Or, & Not

Databases and search engines use Boolean logic. Named after mathematician George Boole (1815-1864), Boolean logic is the key to successful database searching. By using the Boolean operators **AND, OR,** and **NOT** (sometimes expressed as AND NOT) between search words, a researcher can focus or broaden a search query to create sets of results. The operators are normally expressed in uppercase letters so as not to confuse them with the words used as non-operators.

When you see a simple search box and type in words, the search engine generally inserts the AND operator between every word. By using an advanced search option, you are encouraged to think about the way you want to focus your search.

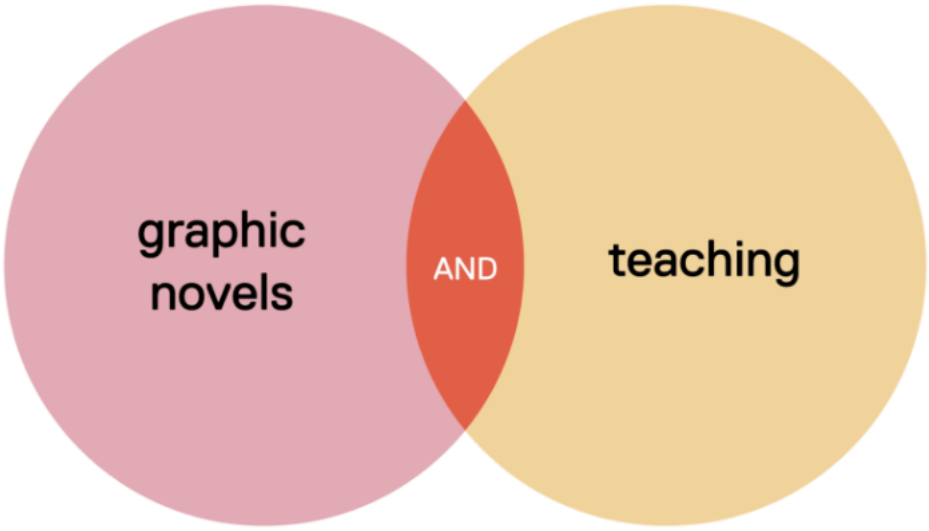
Watch Chapter 8 Video 3 about Boolean searches on YouTube (3 mins)

The And Operator

The operator AND is used to **narrow or focus a search** by finding a subset of results containing all of the keywords or search terms. For simplicity, the example depicted by the Venn diagram that follows contains only two key concepts and no synonyms or related terms. On the left, the pinkish-coloured circle labelled *graphic novels* represents

the hits (articles, books etcetera in the database) that contain the words *graphic novels*. A second, yellowish-coloured circle on the right, represents all of the hits that contain the word *teaching*. The two sets of searches overlap since a small number of the hits contain both *graphic novels AND teaching.* This subset is shown in the diagram in the orange portion where the two circles or sets overlap. It is labelled *AND* because it represents the portion of the hits from the two concepts that contain both the first AND the second concept. The AND operator is the most commonly used Boolean operator.

Example Venn diagram using the AND operator: **graphic novels AND teaching**

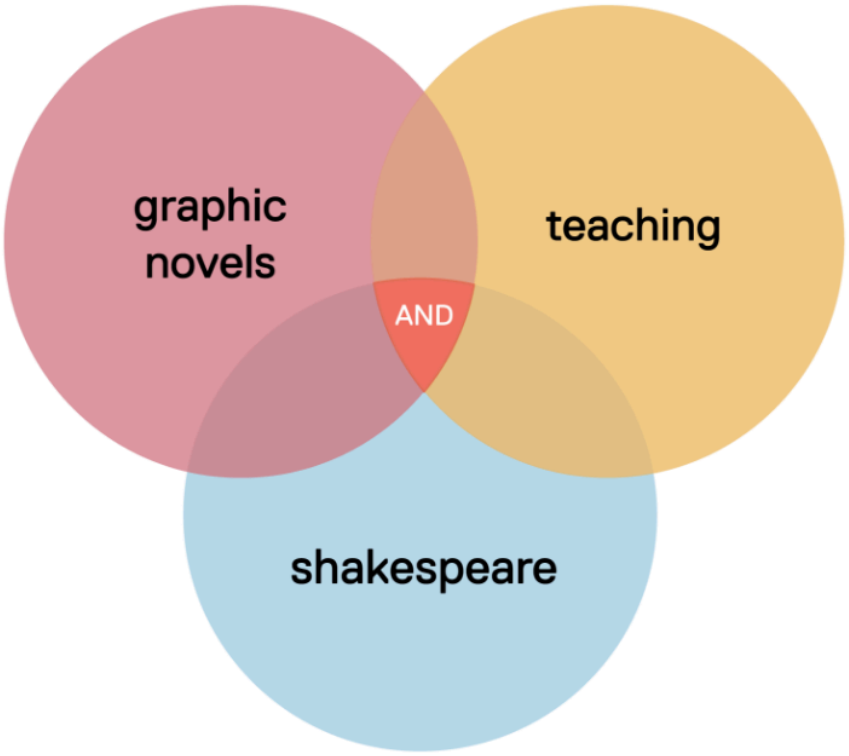


"graphic novels AND teaching" by Aaron Tucker & Paul Chafe is licensed under CC BY 4.0

If you decide that you still have too many results when you searched for only two concepts, you can refine your search by adding a third distinct concept. This will narrow your results considerably because it is more precise. The following Venn diagram demonstrates what happens when you modify the search used in the previous example by adding a third keyword: Shakespeare. [Note that most databases allow both upper and lower case when searching for proper names.]

In this example the set of hits dealing with Shakespeare are represented by the blue-coloured circle shown beneath the pinkish circle representing *graphic novels* and the yellowish circle representing *teaching*. All three circles overlap to some extent since one, two, or all three keywords may be applied to the same articles, books etcetera in the database. In this example, the small, almost triangular-shaped orange patch labelled *AND* in the centre of the diagram represents the relatively small subset of hits that contain all three concepts: *graphic novels AND teaching AND shakespeare.*

Example of a Venn diagram using the AND operator and three distinct concepts: **graphic novels AND teaching AND shakespeare**



"graphic novels AND teaching AND shakespeare" by Aaron Tucker & Paul Chafe, is licensed under CC BY 4.0

The OR Operator

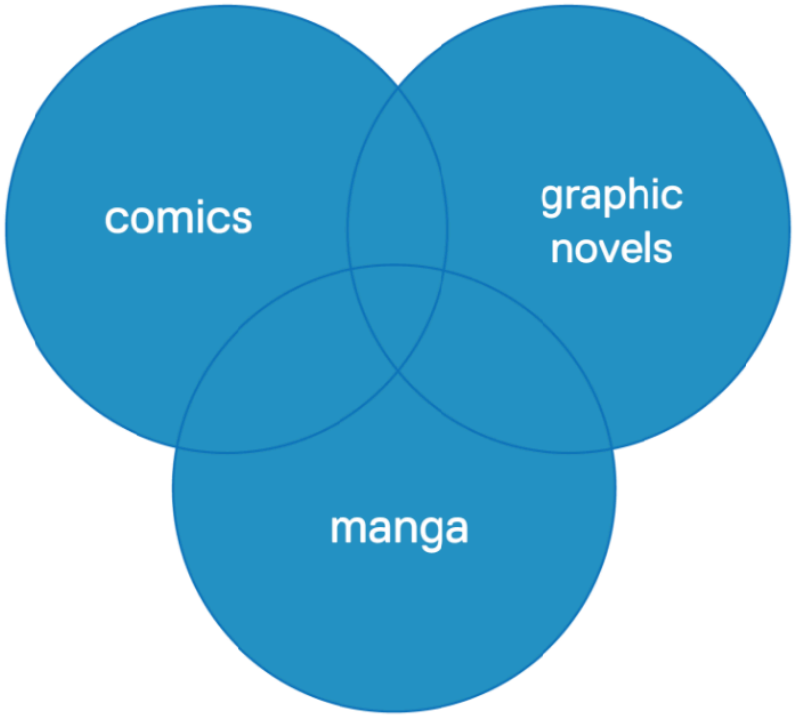
The operator OR is used to **broaden a search** by combining two or more variables into one set. The operator OR is used to combine synonyms and variant spellings (e.g. theatre OR theater) of a word into one search. Any one of the search terms must be present. More than one can be present.

A Venn diagram (also known as a set diagram) can visually display how a database's search engine handles search terms and the Boolean operators. Each term is searched separately and all of the relevant hits (articles, books etcetera identified in the database as containing that term) are grouped into separate sets, one set per term as represented by each circle. In the diagram that follows, three different related terms are being searched: *comics* shown by the circle in the upper left, *graphic novels* shown by the circle in the upper right, with *manga* shown by the circle at the bottom of the diagram. Some of the hits also contain one or both of the other search terms and this is represented by the overlapping of the circles. In the example, since the OR operator is

being used, the search finds all of the hits containing any of terms and combines them all into one large pool of results. Because all of the results in all three sets are included, they are all represented using the same blue colour.

To reiterate, by broadening a search using the OR operator, the results of a search can be much larger and more comprehensive than a set of results from a search that does not make use of related terms, synonyms, and, variant spellings joined with the OR operator.

Example Venn diagram using the OR operator: **comics OR graphic novels OR manga**



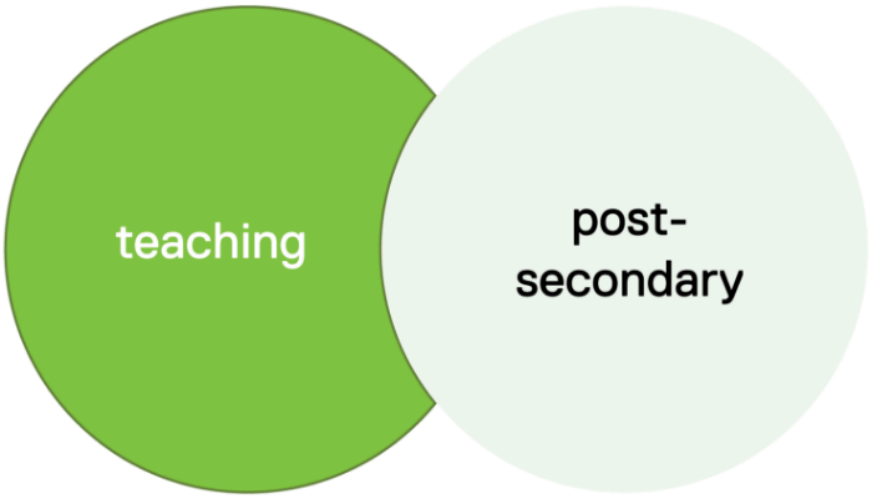
"comics OR graphic novels OR manga" by Aaron Tucker & Paul Chafe, is licensed under CC BY 4.0

The NOT Operator

The operator NOT is used when you want to search for the first term and to exclude items that contain the second term. Teaching is a very broad term that is often qualified by broad levels such as primary, elementary, intermediate, secondary, higher, or, post-secondary. While you may want to specify a level that you want to look for by trying a search such as *teaching AND secondary*, you could decide to qualify or narrow the search by excluding a level that you are not interested in by using the *NOT* operator. The following Venn diagram illustrates the concept *teaching* as shown by the circle in green on the left. The concept *post-secondary* is shown by the light grey-coloured circle on the

right.. While there is some overlap with both concepts shared by some articles and books, when you use the *NOT* operator in the example of ***teaching NOT post-secondary,*** you exclude those hits that had both *teaching AND post-secondary* (not shown). That is why the desired set on teaching resembles a circle with a piece removed. [Remember that the *NOT* operator is sometimes called *ANDNOT.* The Help information in a database will give you directions if you can simply use *NOT* or have to use *ANDNOT* as your Boolean operator.]

Example of a Venn diagram using the NOT operator: **teaching NOT post-secondary**



"teaching NOT post-secondary" by Aaron Tucker & Paul Chafe, is licensed under CC BY 4.0

Your Turn!

Activity

Revise your key concepts using AND and OR Boolean operators. Nest synonyms within parentheses.

The following is a sample search result for an article in an online journal:

Example

How graphic novels support reading comprehension strategy development in children

by Brenna, Beverley

Literacy, 07/2013, Volume 47, Issue 2

.... The primary research questions related to children's applications of metacognitive reading comprehension strategies as well as the potential for graphic novels to support the students...

Journal Article: Full Text Online

More Information

Related Articles

- The first element is the **title of the article,** "How graphic novels ... in children"
- The second element is the **name of the author** in inverted order (last name, first name)
- The third element is the **source,** in this case a journal called *Literacy.* More specifically, it is volume 47, issue 2, of the journal that was published in July 2013. When you cite a source like this, you must include some or possibly all of the information about the source, depending upon the requirements of the citation style that you are using in your paper (MLA, APA, Chicago).
- The fourth element is a **brief excerpt** from the content of the text, such as part of the abstract or a summary of what the article is about.
- The fifth element tells you the **type of source**, in this case a journal article that is available in full text online.
- If you have a More information element, it may show you more information about the resource, including page numbers, DOI (Digital Object Identifier—like a URL that is unique for this article, but more permanent), and keywords used to describe the content of the article.

The next sample search result is for a book published in electronic format:

Example

Graphic novels and comics in the classroom: essays on the educational power of sequential art

by Syma, Carrye Kay; Weiner, Robert G; Smith, Robert V; More...

2013

1. I. Significance of graphic novels and comics: then and now. Using comics to teach the language arts in the 1940s and 1950s / Carol L...

eBook: Full Text Online

- The first element is the **title of the book**, including both the title proper, and following the colon, the subtitle of the book.
- The second element is a complete **list of authors or creators** displayed by last name, first name and middle initial, with individual creators separated by semi-colons. The presence of the *More* option indicates that one or more names are omitted from the display. (Note that it is unclear what roles these creators played. Are they editors, contributing editors, authors of a part of the book, or illustrators? Viewing the cover image or possibly the title page and table of contents may be necessary to clarify the roles of the named creators. It may not be necessary to name all of them depending on your chosen citation style.)
- The third element is the **year** of publication, 2013.
- The fourth element is a **note about the book** that in this case contains the beginnings of the list of contents, starting with part 1.
- The fifth element tells you the **format** i.e. this is an ebook that is available in full-text online.

In order to cite this work properly, you may need more information than what is shown. For example, the name of the publisher is required by most citation styles. If your search engine includes a citation tool, you may find suggested ways to cite this work. Remember that the suggested citation may contain errors and you should carefully verify the information that it provides.

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CHAPTER 7: WRITING A RESEARCH PAPER

Communication Essentials for College by Jen Booth, Emily Cramer & Amanda Quibell

- 7.1 – Creating a Rough Draft for a Research Paper
- 7.2 – Avoiding Plagiarism
- 7.3 – Developing a Final Draft of a Research Paper
- 7.4 – Peer Reviews
- 7.5 – 5 Paragraph Research Essay
- 7.6 – Longer Research Essay – Sample Student Work
- 7.7 – Annotated Bibliography

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Please visit the web version of *Communication Essentials for College* to access the complete book, interactive activities and ancillary resources.

7.1 - CREATING A ROUGH DRAFT FOR A RESEARCH PAPER

Learning Objectives

- Apply strategies for drafting an effective introduction and conclusion.
- Identify when and how to summarize, paraphrase, and directly quote information from research sources.
- Apply guidelines for citing sources within the body of the paper and the bibliography.
- Use primary and secondary research to support ideas.
- Identify the purposes for which writers use each type of research.

After doing all of your research, you are ready to write your research paper. Putting your thinking and research into words is exciting, but can also be challenging. In this section, you will learn strategies for handling 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 Structure of a Research Paper

Research papers generally follow the same basic structure:

1. an introduction that presents the writer's thesis,
2. a body section that develops the thesis with supporting points and evidence,
3. and a conclusion that revisits the thesis and provides additional insights or suggestions for further research.

Your writing voice will come across most strongly in your introduction and conclusion, as you work to attract your readers' interest and establish your thesis. These sections usually do not cite sources at length. They focus on the big picture, not specific details. In contrast, the body of your paper will cite sources extensively. As you present your ideas, you will support your points with details from your research.

Writing Your Introduction

There are several approaches to writing an introduction, each of which fulfills the same goals. The introduction should get readers' attention, provide background information, and present the writer's thesis. Many writers like to begin with one of the following catchy openers:

- A surprising fact
- A thought-provoking question
- An attention-getting quote
- A brief anecdote that illustrates a larger concept
- A connection between your topic and your readers' experiences

The next few sentences place the opening in context by presenting background information. From there, the writer builds toward a thesis, which is traditionally placed at the end of the introduction. Think of your thesis as a signpost that lets readers know in what direction the paper is headed.

Jorge decided to begin his research paper by connecting his topic to readers' daily experiences. Read the first draft of his introduction. The thesis is underlined. Note how Jorge progresses from the opening sentences to background information to his thesis.

Jorge's Introduction

Beyond the Hype: Evaluating Low-Carb Diets

I. Introduction

Over the past decade, increasing numbers of dieters have jumped on the low-carb bandwagon. Some studies estimate that approximately 40 million Americans, or about 20 percent of the population, are attempting to restrict their intake of food high in carbohydrates (Sanders and Katz, 2004; Hirsch, 2004). Proponents of low-carb diets say they are not only the most effective way to lose weight, but they also yield health benefits such as lower blood pressure and improved cholesterol levels. Meanwhile, some doctors claim that low-carb diets are overrated and caution that their long-term effects are unknown. 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.

Exercise 1

Write the introductory paragraph of your research paper. Try using one of the techniques listed in this section to write an engaging introduction. Be sure to include background information about the topic that leads to your thesis.

Tip

Writers often work out of sequence when writing a research paper. If you find yourself struggling to write an engaging introduction, you may wish to write the body of your paper first. Writing the body

sections first will help you clarify your main points. Writing the introduction should then be easier. You may have a better sense of how to introduce the paper after you have drafted some or all of the body.

Writing Your Conclusion

In your introduction, you tell readers where they are headed. In your conclusion, you recap where they have been. For this reason, some writers prefer to write their conclusions soon after they have written their introduction. However, this method may not work for all writers. Other writers prefer to write their conclusion at the end of the paper, after writing the body paragraphs. No process is absolutely right or absolutely wrong; find the one that best suits you.

No matter when you compose the conclusion, it should sum up your main ideas and revisit your thesis. The conclusion should not simply echo the introduction or rely on bland summary statements, such as "In this paper, I have demonstrated that…." In fact, avoid repeating your thesis verbatim from the introduction. Restate it in different words that reflect the new perspective gained through your research. That helps keep your ideas fresh for your readers. An effective writer might conclude a paper by asking a new question the research inspired, revisiting an anecdote presented earlier, or reminding readers of how the topic relates to their lives.

Writing at Work

If your job involves writing or reading scientific papers, it helps to understand how professional researchers use the structure described in this section. A scientific paper begins with an abstract that briefly summarizes the entire paper. The introduction explains the purpose of the research, briefly summarizes previous research, and presents the researchers' hypothesis. The body provides details about the study, such as who participated in it, what the researchers measured, and what results they recorded. The conclusion presents the researchers' interpretation of the data, or what they learned.

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?

You have already taken a step in the right direction by writing your introduction. 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 will 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

When you summarize 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.

Be sure to review the source material as you summarize it. 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. Check your summary to make sure it is accurate and complete.

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.

Trade Magazine Source

Assessing the Efficacy of Low-Carbohydrate Diets

Adrienne Howell, Ph.D.

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.

Jorge's Summary with parenthetical in-text citation

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.

Exercise 2

On a separate sheet of paper, practice summarizing by writing a one-sentence summary of the same passage that Jorge already summarized.

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 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. Read the passage from a website. Then read Jorge's initial attempt at paraphrasing it, followed by the final version of his paraphrase.

Webpage Information – Research Source

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 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).

Exercise 3

On a separate sheet of paper, follow these steps to practice paraphrasing.

1. Choose an important idea or detail from your notes.
2. Without looking at the original source, restate the idea in your own words.
3. Check your paraphrase against the original text in the source. Make sure both your language and your sentence structure are original.
4. Revise your paraphrase if necessary.

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 colorful 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. And 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:

- 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.

- Never use a stand-alone quotation. Always integrate the quoted material into your own sentence.
- Use ellipses (...) if you need to omit a word or phrase. Use brackets [ ] if you need to replace a word or phrase.
- 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.
- Remember to include correctly formatted citations that follow the assigned style guide.

Jorge interviewed a dietician 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 – Interview (Personal communication)

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.

Jorge's Summary – with narrative in-text citation

> Registered dietician D. Kwon (personal communication, August 10, 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 ellipses and brackets did not change the source's meaning.

Documenting Source Material

Throughout the writing process, be scrupulous about documenting information taken from sources. The purpose of doing so is twofold:

1. To give credit to other writers or researchers for their ideas
2. To allow your reader to follow up and learn more about the topic if desired

You will cite sources within the body of your paper and at the end of the paper in your bibliography. For this assignment, you will use the citation format used by the American Psychological Association (also known as APA style).

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 will follow 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.

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.

Jorge's Summary with narrative in-text citation

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 includes the author's name followed by the year of publication in parentheses.

Jorge's Summary with parenthetical in-text citation

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.

Creating a List of References

Each of the sources you cite in the body text will appear in a references list at the end of your paper. While in-text citations provide the most basic information about the source, your references section will include additional publication details. In general, you will include the following information:

- The author's last name followed by his or her first (and sometimes middle) initial
- The year the source was published
- The source title
- For articles in periodicals, the full name of the periodical, along with the volume and issue number and the pages where the article appeared

Additional information may be included for different types of sources, such as online sources.

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 presidential candidates
- A paper for a communications course discussing gender biases 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 nonprint works, such as a movie or a painting), it is crucial to gather information and ideas from the original work, rather than relying 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.

Jorge 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 No Child Left Behind legislation has affected elementary education, 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 purchasing an essay from a website and submitting it as original course work. In other cases, a writer may commit accidental plagiarism due to carelessness, haste, or misunderstanding. To avoid unintentional plagiarism, follow these guidelines:

- Understand what types of information must be cited.
- Understand what constitutes fair use of a source.
- Keep source materials and notes carefully organized.
- Follow guidelines for summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting sources.

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 list. 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.

Fair Use/Fair Dealing

In recent years, issues related to the fair use (USA) and Fair Dealing (Canada) 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 use are reasonably straightforward.

Writers may quote from or paraphrase material from previously published works without formally obtaining the copyright holder's permission. Fair use /Fair Dealing means that the writer legitimately uses 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 at excessive length, to the extent that large sections of the writing are unoriginal, is not fair use or 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.

Jorge's Summary with unoriginal writing

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 4-month period" (para. 7). 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" (Heinz, 2009, para. 8). From this, it can be concluded that "low-carbohydrate diets obtain more rapid results" (Heinz, 2009, p. 82). 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, p. 25).

After reviewing the paragraph, Jorge realized that he had drifted into unoriginal writing. Most of the paragraph was taken verbatim from a single article. Although Jorge had enclosed the material in quotation marks, he knew it was not an appropriate way to use the research in his paper.

Jorge's Revised 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 4 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.

Working with Sources Carefully

Disorganization and carelessness sometimes lead to plagiarism. For instance, a writer may be unable to provide a complete, accurate citation if he didn't 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 bibliography 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.

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.

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 from the university. Employees may be fired for plagiarism and do irreparable damage to their professional reputation. In short, it is never worth the risk.

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 were 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 use and appropriate citation of sources, and review the paper to make sure these guidelines are followed.

Attributions & References

Except where otherwise noted, this chapter is adapted from " 12.1 Creating a Rough Draft for a Research Paper" In *Writing for Success* by University of Minnesota licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0. / Small edits and updates to include "Fair Dealing" were made, adjustments to APA citation.

7.2 - AVOIDING PLAGIARISM

Learning Objectives

- define plagiarism,
- describe some common types of plagiarism,
- name one way to avoid plagiarism in your own work.

Introduction

Unsure of what plagiarism actually is?

Watch Don't lose cite of avoiding plagiarism on YouTube (4 mins)

Plagiarism – Media Sources

Plagiarism – Media Sources (Text version)

True or False? I need to cite media sources including images and videos?

Check your Answer: [1]

Student Responsibilities:

Academic integrity means upholding the values of your school with respect to the

production of your academic work and the completion of quizzes, tests, and exams. Every college in Ontario has an academic integrity policy. Read your college's academic integrity policy and be sure you understand your responsibilities as a student and scholar.

For more information, visit: Academic Integrity – Research – The Learning Portal at Ontario Colleges Library Services (tlp-lpa.ca)

Plagiarism – Consequences

Plagiarism – Consequences (Text version)

The minimum penalty for a first offence of plagiarism at Georgian College is ...?

1. Expulsion from the school.
2. A grade of 0.
3. Automatic course failure.
4. A verbal warning.

Check your Answer: [2]

Types of Plagiarism:

There is more than one way to get accused of committing plagiarism. Watch this video to learn the different types of plagiarism so that you can avoid it in your own work.

Watch Types of plagiarism on YouTube (2 mins)

Plagiarism – Your own work

Plagiarism – Your own work (Text version)

True or False: It is okay to resubmit part of a paper that you have already written as part of a new assignment?

Check your Answer: [3]

The Why, Where, and When of Citing:

One of the easiest ways to avoid being accused of plagiarism is to always cite your sources. Watch this video for more information on why you should cite your sources, as well as where/when to cite your sources.

Watch The why, where and when of citing on YouTube (3 mins)

Avoiding Plagiarism

Avoiding Plagiarism (Text version)

True or False: The best way to avoid being accused of plagiarism is to always cite your sources?

Check your Answer: [4]

Attributions & References

This chapter (text, H5P activities and embedded videos) was adapted from "Avoiding Plagiarism" In *Niagara College Libraries + Learning Commons Information Skills Online Handbook* by Jackie Chambers Page and Siscoe Boschman, licensed under CC BY 4.0.

Notes

1. True. You need to cite all of your sources including images and videos.

2. d. The minimum penalty for a first-time offence of plagiarism at Georgian College is a verbal warning. You can also receive a zero, be asked to complete training, fail your course or be expelled from school.
3. False. This is considered to be self-plagiarism and it is not allowed.
4. True.

7.3 - DEVELOPING A FINAL DRAFT OF A RESEARCH PAPER

Learning Objectives

- Revise your paper to improve organization and cohesion.
- Determine an appropriate style and tone for your paper.
- Revise to ensure that your tone is consistent.
- Edit your paper to ensure that language, citations, and formatting are correct.

Given all the time and effort you have put into your research project, 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 revise and edit it. That is understandable—but leave yourself with enough time to complete this important stage of the writing process. In this section, you will learn the following specific strategies that are useful for revising and editing a research paper:

- How to evaluate and improve the overall organization and cohesion
- How to maintain an appropriate style and tone
- How to use checklists to identify and correct any errors in language, citations, and formatting

Revising Your Paper: Organization and Cohesion

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 to help you.

Revising for Organization – Checklist

At the essay level

- Does my introduction proceed clearly from the opening to the thesis?
- Does each body paragraph have a clear main idea that relates to the thesis?
- Do the main ideas in the body paragraphs flow in a logical order? 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 my conclusion summarize my main ideas and revisit my thesis?

At the paragraph level

- Does the topic sentence clearly state the main idea?
- Do the details in the paragraph relate to the main idea?
- Do I need to recast any sentences or add transitions to improve the flow of sentences?

If you're not sure, continue to revise your work or contact your Professor for help.

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.

Jorge's draft paragraph

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!" displayed prominently on the label. (You can't help but notice that the low-carb 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? Over the past decade, increasing numbers of Americans have jumped on the low-carbohydrate bandwagon. 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 (Sanders & Katz, 2004; Hirsch, 2004). Proponents of low-carb diets

say they are not only the most effective way to lose weight, but also they~~They~~ yield health benefits such as lower blood pressure and improved cholesterol levels. Meanwhile, ~~S~~ome 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.

Summary of revisions:

Insert "Over the past decade, increasing numbers of Americans have jumped on the low-carbohydrate bandwagon." after sentence 4. Revise & combine sentences 7 and 8 to read: "Proponents of low-carb diets say they are not only the most effective way to lose weight, but also they yield health benefits such as lower blood pressure and improved cholesterol levels. Start sentence 8 with "Meanwhile,".

Exercise 1

Follow these steps to begin revising your paper's overall organization.

1. Print out a hard copy of your paper.
2. Read your paper paragraph by paragraph. Highlight your thesis and the topic sentence of each paragraph.
3. 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 create a formal outline on a separate sheet of paper.
4. 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.
5. Review the topics on your outline. Is there a logical flow of ideas? Identify any places where you may need to reorganize ideas.

6. 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.

Collaboration

Please share your paper with a classmate. Repeat the six steps and take notes on a separate piece of paper. Share and compare notes.

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. For an extensive list of transitions, see Chapter 3 "The Writing Process: How Do I Begin?", Section 3.4 "Revising and Editing".

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 the Checklist below to review your essay for cohesion.

Revising for Cohesion: Checklist

- Does the opening of the paper clearly connect to the broader topic and thesis? Make sure entertaining quotes or anecdotes serve a purpose.
- 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 paraphrased and quoted material clearly serve to develop my own points?
- 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?
- 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.

If you're not sure, continue to revise your work or contact your Professor for help.

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.

Jorge's paragraph with source integration & revisions

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 pizza or birthday cake.~~ In commenting on the Gardner study, experts at 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, in to maintain a healthy weight, dieters should try to develop nutrition and exercise habits they can incorporate into their lives in the long term (Mayo Clinic, 2008). Registered dietician D. Kwon (personal communication, August 10, 2010) comments, "For some people, (low-carbohydrate diets) are great, but for most, any sensible eating and exercise plan would work just as well" ~~(Kwon, 2010)~~ .

Summary of revisions: Remove 2nd sentence "Most people enjoy...". Add signal phrase with personal communication citation to last sentence. Delete the parenthetical citation from end of paragraph.

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.

Exercise 2

Follow these steps to begin revising your paper to improve cohesion.

1. Print out a hard copy of your paper.
2. 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.
3. Identify unnecessary information from sources that you can delete.
4. Identify places where you need to revise your writing so that readers understand the significance of the details cited from sources.
5. Skim the body paragraphs once more, looking for any paragraphs that seem packed with citations. Review these paragraphs carefully for cohesion.
6. Review your introduction and conclusion. Make sure the information presented works with ideas in the body of the paper.
7. Revise the places you identified in your paper to improve cohesion.

Collaboration

Please exchange papers with a classmate. Complete step four. On a separate piece of paper, note any areas that would benefit from clarification. Return and compare notes.

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.

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 humor 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 on 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.

Revising for Style: Checklist

- 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*.
- I have used the active voice whenever possible.
- I have defined specialized terms that might be unfamiliar to readers.

- I have used clear, straightforward language whenever possible and avoided unnecessary jargon.
- My paper states my point of view using a balanced tone—neither too indecisive nor too forceful.

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 biases. 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
- Exclusive use of masculine pronouns or awkward use of *he* or *she*
- 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 just 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.
- **Line-edit your paper slowly, sentence by sentence.** You may even wish to use a sheet of paper to cover everything on the page except the paragraph you are editing—that 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.

Jorge's first paragraph with academic style revisions

I. Introduction

Picture this: You're standing in the aisle of your local grocery store when you see ~~a chubby guy~~ an

overweight man nearby staring at several brands of ketchup on display. After deliberating for a moment, he reaches for the bottle with the words "Low-Carb!" displayed prominently on the label. ~~(You can't help but notice that the low-carb 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?

Summary of revisions: replace "a chubby guy" in sentence 1 with "an overweight man". Remove 3rd sentence.

Exercise 3

Using the Style Checklist, line-edit your paper. You may use either of these techniques:

1. Print out a hard copy of your paper, or work with your printout. Read it line by line. Check for the issues noted on the Style Checklist, 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.
2. 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 only 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.

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.

Editing Your Paper

After revising your paper to address problems in content or style, you will complete one final editorial review. Perhaps you already have caught and corrected minor mistakes during previous revisions. Nevertheless, give your draft a final edit to make sure it is error-free. Your final edit should focus on two broad areas:

1. Errors in grammar, mechanics, usage, and spelling
2. Errors in citing and formatting sources

Correcting Errors

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—but this 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 to help you as you edit:

Grammar, Mechanics, Punctuation, Usage, and Spelling Checklist

- My paper is free of grammatical errors, such as errors in subject-verb agreement and sentence fragments. (For additional guidance on grammar, see "Writing Basics: What Makes a Good Sentence?".)
- My paper is free of errors in punctuation and mechanics, such as misplaced commas or incorrectly formatted source titles. (For additional guidance on punctuation and mechanics, see "Punctuation".)
- My paper is free of common usage errors, such as *alot* and *alright*. (For additional guidance on correct usage, see "Working with Words: Which Word Is Right?".)
- My paper is free of spelling errors. I have proofread my paper for spelling in addition to using the spell-checking feature in my word-processing program.

- I have checked my paper for any editing errors that I know I tend to make frequently.

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 and foremost, citing sources correctly ensures that you have given 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. Modern Language Association (MLA) is also a standard style in many fields. Use Checklist 12.5 to help you check citations and formatting.

Citations and Formatting Checklist

- Within the body of my paper, each fact or idea taken from a source is credited to the correct source.
- 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.
- 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.
- Each entry in my references section includes all the necessary information for that source type, in the correct sequence and format.
- My paper includes a title page.
- The margins of my paper are set at one inch. Text is double spaced and set in a standard 12-point font.

For detailed guidelines on APA citation and formatting, see Chapter 8 – APA Style Citations – Tutorial

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.

Read Jorge's final essay

Read Jorge's essay in plain text/HTML

Note: HTML/plain text & Pressbooks do not always display page layout or APA formatting such as page numbers, spacing, margins or indentation accurately. Please review APA formatting rules to ensure you meet APA guidelines with your own work. The text version is included here in HTML format for ease of reading/use. You may also want to View Jorge's paper in PDF format.

Beyond the Hype: Evaluating Low-Carb Diets

Jorge Ramirez

Picture this: You're standing in the aisle of your local grocery store when you see an overweight man nearby staring at several brands of ketchup on display. After deliberating for a moment, he reaches for the bottle with the words "Low-Carb!" displayed prominently on the label. 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?

Over the past decade, increasing numbers of Americans have jumped on the low-carb bandwagon. As of 2004, researchers estimated that approximately 40 million Americans, or about one-fifth of the population, were attempting to restrict their intake of food high in carbohydrates (Sanders & Katz, 2004). Proponents of low-carb diets say they not only are the most effective way to lose weight but also yield health benefits such as lower blood pressure and improved cholesterol levels. Meanwhile, some doctors claim that low-carb diets are overrated and caution that their long-term effects are unknown. Although following a low-carbohydrate diet can benefit some people, these diets are not necessarily that best option for everyone who wants to lose weight or improve their health.

Purported Benefits of Low-Carbohydrate Diets

To make sense of the popular enthusiasm for low-carbohydrate diets, it is important to understand proponents' claims about how they work. Any eating plan includes a balance of the three macronutrients—proteins, fats, and carbohydrates—each of which is essential for human health. Different foods provide these macronutrients in different proportions; a steak is primarily a source of protein, and a plate of pasta is primarily a source of carbohydrates. No one recommends eliminating any of these three macronutrient groups entirely.

However, experts disagree on what protein: fats: carbohydrate ratio is best for optimum health and for maintaining a healthy weight. Since the 1970s, the USDA has recommended that the greatest proportion of one's daily calories should come from carbohydrates—breads, pastas, and cereals—with moderate consumption of proteins and minimal consumption of fats. High-carbohydrate foods form the base of the "food pyramid" familiar to nutrition students.

Those who subscribe to the low-carb philosophy, however, argue that this approach is flawed. They argue that excess weight stems from disordered metabolism, which in turn can be traced to

overconsumption of foods high in carbohydrates—especially refined carbohydrates like white flour and sugar (Atkins, 2002; Agatson, 2003). The body quickly absorbs sugars from these foods, increasing the level of glucose in the blood. This triggers the release of insulin, delivering energy-providing glucose to cells and storing some of the excess as glycogen. Unfortunately, the liver turns the rest of this excess glucose into fat. Thus, adherents of the low-carb approach often classify foods according to their glycemic index (GI)—a measurement of how quickly a given food raises blood glucose levels when consumed. Foods high in refined carbohydrates—sugar, potatoes, white breads, and pasta, for instance—have a high glycemic index.

Dieters who focus solely on reducing fat intake may fail to realize that consuming refined carbohydrates contributes to weight problems. Atkins (2002) notes that low-fat diets recommended to many who wish to lose weight are, by definition, usually high in carbohydrates, and thus unlikely to succeed.

Even worse, consuming high-carbohydrate foods regularly can, over time, wreak havoc with the body's systems for regulating blood sugar levels and insulin production. In some individuals, frequent spikes in blood sugar and insulin levels cause the body to become insulin-resistant—less able to use glucose for energy and more likely to convert it to fat (Atkins, 2002). This in turn helps to explain the link between obesity and Type 2 diabetes. In contrast, reducing carbohydrate intake purportedly helps the body use food more efficiently for energy. Additional benefits associated with these diets include reduced risk of cardiovascular disease (Atkins, 2002), lowered blood pressure (Bell, 2006; Atkins, 2002), and reduced risk of developing certain cancers (Atkins, 2002).

Given the experts' conflicting recommendations, it is no wonder that patients are confused about how to eat for optimum health. Some may assume that even moderate carbohydrate consumption should be avoided (Harvard School of Public Health, 2010). Others may use the low-carb approach to justify consuming large amounts of foods high in saturated fats—eggs, steak, bacon, and so forth. Meanwhile, low-carb diet plans and products have become a multibillion-dollar industry (Hirsch, 2004). Does this approach live up to its adherents' promises?

Research on Low-Carbohydrate Diets and Weight Loss

A number of clinical studies have found that low-carbohydrate diet plans are indeed highly effective for weight loss. Gardner et al. (2007) compared outcomes among overweight and obese women who followed one of four popular diet plans: Atkins, The Zone, LEARN, or Ornish. After 12 months, the group that had followed the low-carb Atkins plan had lost significantly more weight than those in the other three groups. McMillan-Price et al. (2006) compared results among overweight and obese young adults who followed one of four plans, all of which were low in fat but had varying proportions of proteins and carbohydrates. They found that, over a 12-week period, the most significantly body-fat loss occurred on plans that were high in protein and/or low in "high glycemic index" foods. More recently, the American

Heart Association (2010) reported on an Israeli study that found that subjects who followed a low-carbohydrate, high-protein diet lost more weight than those who followed a low-fat plan or a Mediterranean plan based on vegetables, grains, and minimal consumption of meats and healthy fats.2 Other researchers have also found that low-carbohydrates diets resulted in increased weight loss (Ebbeling et al., 2007; Bell, 2006; HealthDay, 2010).

Although these results are promising, they may be short-lived. Dieters who succeed in losing weight often struggle to keep the weight off—and unfortunately, low-carb diets are no exception to the rule. HealthDay (2010) cites a study recently published in the Annals of Internal Medicine that compared obese subjects who followed a low-carbohydrate diet and a low-fat diet. The former group lost more weight steadily—and both groups had difficulty keeping weight off. Similarly, Swiss researchers found that, although low-carb dieters initially lost more weight than those who followed other plans, the differences tended to even out over time (Bell, 2006). This suggests that low-carb diets may be no more effective than other diets for maintaining a healthy weight in the long term.

One likely reason is that a low-carbohydrate diet—like any restrictive diet—is difficult to adhere to for any extended period. 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. 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, 2010). Registered dietician D. Kwon (personal communication, August 10, 2010) comments, “For some people, [low-carbohydrate diets] are great, but for most, any sensible eating and exercise plan would work just as well”.

Other Long-Term Health Outcomes

Regardless of whether low-carb diets are most effective for weight loss, their potential benefits for weight loss must be weighed against other long-term health outcomes such as hypertension, the risk of heart disease, and cholesterol levels. Research findings in these areas are mixed. For this reason, people considering following a low-carbohydrate diet to lose weight should be advised of the potential risks in doing so.

Research on how low-carbohydrate diets affect cholesterol levels in inconclusive. Some researchers have found that low-carbohydrate diets raise levels of HDL, or “good” cholesterol (Ebbeling et al., 2007; Seppa, 2008). Unfortunately, they may also raise levels of LDL, or “bad” cholesterol, which is associated with heart disease (Ebbeling et al., 2007; Reuters Health, 2010). A particular concern is that as dieters on a low-carbohydrate plan increase their intake of meats and dairy products—foods that are high in protein and fat—they are also likely to consume increased amounts of saturated fats, resulting in clogged arteries and again increasing the risk of heart disease. Studies of humans (Bradley et al., 2009) and mice (Foo et al., 2009) have identified possible risks to cardiovascular health associated with low-carb diets. The

American Heart Association (2010) and the Harvard School of Public Health (2010) caution that doctors cannot yet assess how following a low-carbohydrate diet affects patients' health over a long-term period.

Some studies (Bell, 2006) have found that following a low-carb diet helped lower patients' blood pressure. Again, however, excessive consumption of foods high in saturated fats may, over time, lead to the development of clogged arteries and increase risk of hypertension. Choosing lean meats over those high in fat and supplementing the diet with high-fiber, low-glycemic-index carbohydrates, such as leafy green vegetables, is a healthier plan for dieters to follow.

Perhaps most surprisingly, low-carbohydrate diets are not necessarily advantageous for patients with Type 2 diabetes. Bradley et al. (2009) found that patients who followed a low-carb or a low-fat diet had comparable outcomes for both weight loss and insulin resistance. The National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (2010) advises diabetics to monitor blood sugar levels carefully and to consult with their health care provider to develop a plan for healthy eating. Nevertheless, the nutritional guidelines it provides as a dietary starting point closely follow the USDA food pyramid.

Conclusion

Low-carb diets have garnered a great deal of positive attention, and it isn't entirely undeserved. These diets do lead to rapid weight loss, and they often result in greater weight loss over a period of months than other diet plans. Significantly overweight or obese people may find low-carb eating plans the most effective for losing weight and reducing the risks associated with carrying excess body fat. However, because these diets are difficult for some people to adhere to and because their potential long-term health effects are still being debated, they are not necessarily the ideal choice for anyone who wants to lose weight. A moderately overweight person who wants to lose only a few pounds is best advised to choose whatever plan will help him stay active and consume fewer calories consistently—whether or not it involves eating low-carb ketchup.

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Key Takeaways

- 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 with appropriate in-text citations.
- 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.

Attribution & References

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7.4 - PEER REVIEWS

Learning Objective

- Describe techniques for effective peer review

Revision doesn't have to happen by yourself. You can (and should!) call upon your peers to help you develop and clarify your draft.

Writers, particularly new writers, often find that letting other writers review their work is tremendously helpful. Most universities have writing centers, where students can have their essays reviewed for free by experienced student writers or tutors. These tutors can work with you one-on-one to help you improve your writing and earn better grades.

You should realize that reviewing your work, like planning, drafting, or revising, is a recursive process. It is not something a writer does just at the end of his work. For instance, you may want to write an introduction to an essay and have it reviewed by a teacher or classmate before trudging forward. If you're on the wrong track, you'd be better off knowing about it sooner rather than later — especially if a deadline or due date is looming.

Talk it Out

Even if it is optional, it's a good idea to have a conversation about your piece of writing with someone else. First, you could ask a friend to read through your draft, and mark places where difficult or complicated ideas don't seem to be coming through clearly. Then, look at each passage and explain to your friend what you meant to say in that passage. Sometimes verbally articulating an idea helps to clarify it. What did you say more clearly in the conversation than you wrote in the draft? What did you say that

needs to be included in your draft? What kinds of questions or points did your peers make that could be included in your draft? The insights you can from having someone else read your paper can make you aware of any shortcomings or weaknesses in your paper.

Watch It

Some classes may require a peer review as part of an essay project. Even when not strictly required, though, peer review can be valuable for many reasons, as the video below explains.

Watch Peer writing review process | Otis College of Art and Design on YouTube (5 mins)

You can view the transcript for "Otis College: Peer Writing Review Process" here [RTF file].

Who better to ask if your essay is meeting its goals than someone else working on the same task? Consider reaching out to a classmate to offer to exchange insights on drafts before the due date.

The Need for Specific Feedback

> *"There are two kinds of editors, those who correct your copy and those who say it's wonderful."*<— Theodore H. White

Let's suppose that you just gave your paper to your roommate and asked her to look it over. You explain that you've been working on the paper for three days and that you really want to earn an A. "I want your honest opinion," you say. "Don't worry about hurting my feelings. What do you think?" You watch your roommate's face as she reads your paper. She grimaces. Laughs. Yawns.

Finally, she hands you the paper back and says, "This sucks."

This may be the type of "review" you are accustomed to receiving — overly critical and not very helpful. Perhaps you agree that your paper is in trouble and needs help, but without a better understanding of what's wrong, you aren't likely to be able to do much about it. Furthermore, how can you trust your roommate's judgment of your paper? What if it just so happens that your roommate strongly dislikes sentences that start with

"However," and, seeing such sentences in your paper, decided right there that the paper was terrible?

Ultimately, what makes an evaluation worthwhile is the soundness of its criteria. As a writer, you want to know not just whether someone likes your paper, but also what factors they are taking into consideration when they review your paper. Both the reviewer and the person being reviewed need to be as clear as possible about the criteria that will be used to evaluate the work. Are your reviewers only looking at your grammar, or are they also determining the rationality of your arguments? Does a comma splice make a bigger difference than a rough transition between paragraphs?

All of these matters should be spelled out clearly beforehand, either by the writer or the reviewer. As a writer, what are you personally working on? It's not a bad idea to think about your strengths and challenges as a writer before handing over your paper to a reviewer, or to use work that has been returned to you in the past with feedback.

For example, if you're writing a paper for a professor you've had before, and who has made comments on your past work, use those comments to provide your reviewer with a focus. If you are the reviewer in this situation, ask to see the assignment and rubric, if possible. You can also ask the writer for specific guidelines, areas of greatest need, or even anything s/he might know about the grader.

Being a Good Peer Reviewer

Sooner or later, someone is going to hand you a piece of writing and ask for your opinion. You may be asked to review another student's essay as part of your classwork. Perhaps a friend or a younger brother or sister has come to you for help. If you develop a reputation for being a good writer, then the chances are good that even your boss might ask you to look over letters or policy statements and offer your professional opinion.

In any case, if you really want to do a good job in these situations, you're going to need reviewing skills. You're going to need to be able to identify problems, suggest alternatives, and, more importantly, support everything you say with reasonable claims. Furthermore, you must do all this in a convincing way that makes the writer want to make the changes you suggest. You must know what's wrong with a document, why it's wrong, and how to fix it. One way you can get better at self-reviewing is to spend time reviewing other people's work. Eventually, you'll develop a knack for spotting errors that will serve you well as you edit and revise your own work.

Reviewing Criteria

In the example above, you were not able to gain any insights or knowledge from your roommate letting you know that your paper "sucks." What you wanted was some kind of feedback that would help you improve your paper, so you could get a good grade. You don't know if your paper "sucks" because it lacked a strong thesis, because your writing strayed from the assignment, or because of grammatical errors. You can be a better self- and peer-reviewer than your roommate was. When you're reviewing your own paper or the paper of a friend or classmate, ask yourself a few questions:

Organization

1. What are your initial thoughts? What strengths and weaknesses does the paper have? What parts confused you, or might be confusing to other readers? What's the most important thing that the writer is trying to say?
2. How is the paper you're reviewing organized? Again, does it start with the broad and move to specifics? Do all sentences support the paragraph's topic sentence, and do all paragraphs support the thesis? Is there an Introduction that draws in the reader, or does it restate the assignment and become redundant? Is the paper organized in a way that will make sense to readers? Does the writer employ transitions effectively? Does the paper flow from beginning to end?

Focus

1. Is the paper focused on the assignment? Does it follow the same thought throughout the paper, or does it jump from subject to subject? Do I feel like I'm still learning about/thinking about the same subject at the end of the paper that I was at the beginning of the paper?
2. Try to paraphrase the thesis of the paper as a promise: In this paper, the writer will... Does the writer fulfill his/her obligation stated in the thesis?
3. What's the writer's position on the issue? What words does the writer use to indicate his/her position?

Style

1. In what style is the paper written? Does it work for the subject matter and assignment? Will the paper appeal to its intended audience? Is the writing at an

appropriate level for the target audience?

Development

1. Does the title indicate what the paper is about? Does it catch your interest? Does the opening paragraph draw you in? If not, can you suggest a different approach to catch the readers' attention?
2. How is the development of the paper carried out? Does it start with a broad subject and then move to something more specific?
3. Does the concluding sentence draw the argument of the paper to a close by bringing together the main points provided in the paper, or does it just end? Does the writer conclude in a memorable way, or does he/she simply trail off? If the ending is too abrupt or too vague, can you suggest some other way to conclude the paper? Does the ending introduce any new topics?

Conventions

1. Are common or appropriate writing conventions followed? Are grammar, spelling, punctuation and other mechanics observed?

While reviewing the paper, make notes in the margins of any problems you find. If you believe that developing a paragraph a little bit more would be helpful to the argument, write <more>. If you are unclear of something, write <? not sure>. If you notice a missing comma, insert it in the correct spot, but be sure to set it off somehow so that you or your friend will notice the correction. If another word might work better, write <WC> to indicate inappropriate word choice.

Please note: It is important not to overwhelm your writer with comments. As much as possible, try to avoid repeating similar comments (e.g. don't correct every single comma error you find). Also, although it can be tempting to make some of the changes you suggest yourself, you never want to rewrite the work you are reviewing.

CARES Peer Review

The least helpful comment to receive from a peer reviewer is, "It looks good to me." The CARES method helps you to articulate useful things that can benefit the author when they revisit their draft. Keep in mind that as a reviewer or reviewee, you want to make and take comments in the spirit of helpfulness.

- **C: Congratulate.** What does the writer do well in this assignment? (List one or more aspects.) Also, please write the writer's main claim or focus (thesis) according to what you have read. (It may not be the last sentence of the first paragraph – the traditional place for the thesis.)
- **A: Ask clarifying questions.** What part(s) of the essay were a bit confusing? Why? What specific suggestions (3 or fewer) do you have for revising the unclear parts of this writing?
- **R: Request** more. What would you like to know more about the topic that can enhance the essay and that supports the thesis?
- **E: Evaluate** its value. What specific detail(s) do not work with the essay (e.g. doesn't support the thesis) or can be moved within the essay?
- **S: Summarize.** Overall, what new information have you learned or how are you thinking differently after this reading?

Visit the Excelsior Online Writing Lab to watch a video [New Tab] of students using the CARES method.

Try It – Peer Feedback

Try It – Peer Feedback

In a peer workshop, Asher is reluctant to provide feedback on your paper. He writes "Good job" at the top and hands it back. What could you say to encourage more helpful feedback from him?

a. Don't waste your time saying anything, you should go straight to the writing lab to get feedback.
b. Thanks for looking at my paper. Do you think I'll get an A?
c. Thanks for taking the time to look over my paper! Can I read this paragraph out loud to you, and you tell me what you think? I'm worried it doesn't make much sense.
d. I think your paper was really good too. See you later!

Check your Answer: [1]

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Notes

1. c. Engaging in conversation might be a more comfortable and helpful way for some people to provide feedback.

7.5 - 5 PARAGRAPH RESEARCH ESSAY

Amanda Quibell

In a college research and writing course, George-Anne was given a research assignment that asked her to write a 5 paragraph essay that integrated reliable research sources.

The Writing Process

Research:

George-Anne took the time to do an internet search, where she found links to radio podcasts and news articles. Then, she used her college library's database to find some scholarly articles.

For more information on the Research Process, review Chapter 6.1 – Introduction to Research Writing and Chapter 6.2 – Developing a Research Topic

Outline Ideas:

After researching her topic and learning what experts on the subject had to say, George-Anne created a sentence outline for her paper, following the advice shown in Chapter 3.2 – Outlining. While planning her paper, George-Anne notes what sources might support each of the sections of her paper.

George-Anne's Sentence Outline

I. **Introduction** – Land acknowledgements are for showing respect towards Indigenous communities, but they fall short when they only seem insincere and include no action.

II. **Land acknowledgements are meant to show respect for Indigenous communities and are becoming standard practice**:
Information from (Friesen, 2019), (Maga, 2019), (Wilkes et al, 2019)

   a. Schools and government institutions do them before gathering
   b. They increase awareness of Indigenous communities and their land rights.
   c. They are intended to honour Truth & Reconciliation.

III. **While land acknowledgements are becoming more common, they are sometimes flawed and even disrespectful**:
Information from (Friesen, 2019), (Maga, 2019), (Blenkinsop & Fettes, 2019)

   a. First Nations names are mispronounced or incorrect names are given.
   b. They can be a barrier to learning and give a false sense of something being accomplished, which can actually cause harm to the people they are supposed to honour.
   c. They lack meaning because they don't require any action

IV. **To ensure that land acknowledgements help rather than harm, Indigenous scholars demand changes to the current approach:**
Information from (Friesen, 2019), (Maga, 2019), (Blenkinsop & Fettes, 2019)

   a. These land acknowledgements should avoid the colonial way of viewing land and strive to reflect an Indigenous way of understanding.
   b. Scripts shouldn't be simply read; personal connections should also be made
   c. Land acknowledgements should reflect on the harms of colonialism and express ways to disrupt the system to stop these harms.

V. **Conclusion:** Land acknowledgements must go beyond a scripted list of Indigenous communities and treaties.

References

Blenkinsop, S., & Fettes, M. (2020). Land, language and listening: The transformations that can flow from

acknowledging Indigenous land. *Journal of Philosophy of Education, 54*(4), 1033–1046. https://doi-org.georgian.idm.oclc.org/10.1111/1467-9752.12470

Friesen, J. (2019, June 27). As Indigenous land acknowledgements become the norm, critics question whether the gesture has lost its meaning. *Globe & Mail* (Toronto, Canada), A1.

Maga, C. (2019, April 10). Land acknowledgements capture the mood of an awkward stage; Anishinaabe writer Hayden King says statements concerning Indigenous recognition don't negate "ongoing disposition" of people. *The Toronto Star* (Toronto, Ontario), E1

Wilkes, R., Duong, A., Kesler, L., & Ramos, H. (2017). Canadian University Acknowledgment of Indigenous Lands, Treaties, and Peoples. *Canadian Review of Sociology, 54*(1), 89–120. https://doi-org.georgian.idm.oclc.org/10.1111/cars.12140

Drafting Ideas & Integrating Sources

Once her outline was completed, George-Anne followed the steps shown in Chapter 7.1 – Creating a Rough Draft of a Research Paper. She expanded on the sentences of her outline, took care to integrate sources using APA in-text citations, and set up her Reference list following APA conventions for references.

Revising

George-Anne followed the advice in Chapter 7.3 – Developing a Final Draft but also decided to book a session with her college Writing Centre. During her appointment, her tutor encouraged her to read her work aloud; this helped her identify and edit some problems with her sentence structure. Her tutor drew her attention to the fact that she needed stronger transitions between her paragraphs. Adding the transitions helped improve the cohesion of her essay. She also learned about some small errors with her reference list. Finally, her essay was ready to submit.

Read George-Anne's Final Essay: Land Acknowledgements

Read George-Anne's Final essay on Land Acknowledgements in Plain text

Note: HTML/plain text & Pressbooks do not always display page layout or APA formatting such as page numbers, spacing, margins or indentation accurately. Please review APA formatting rules to ensure you meet APA guidelines with your own work. The text version is included here in HTML format for ease of reading/use. You may also want to View George-Anne's paper in PDF format.

Land Acknowledgements

George-Anne Lerner

The remains of thousands of murdered Indigenous children are being discovered on the grounds of former Residential Schools. In 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission called for the Canadian government to recognize the tragic history of residential schools and the ongoing problems faced by Indigenous people. One response to this call to action is the land acknowledgement. Announcements that name the territories, communities, and treaties are now heard at the beginning of many events and gatherings. Even though these statements are made to show respect and to raise awareness about Indigenous communities, mistakes are sometimes made, and the reading of a script can seem like an empty gesture. Indigenous scholars and leaders are asking that institutions go beyond just reading a land acknowledgement; they hope for a stronger focus on taking action. Land acknowledgements are intended to show respect towards Indigenous communities and their land rights, but these announcements can feel like empty words to the people they are meant to honour; to truly show respect, land acknowledgements need to take action beyond reciting a script.

Land acknowledgements show respect for Indigenous communities and they are becoming standard. Colleges, Universities, school boards, governments and other institutions across Canada now make public acknowledgements of Indigenous peoples, lands, and treaties. Many public gatherings, events, and even email signatures include a land acknowledgement (Friesen, 2019). For example, as Maga (2019) reports, the City of Toronto's statement reads: "We acknowledge that we are gathered on the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishinaabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples, now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples" (para. 1). Land acknowledgements are intended to increase awareness of Indigenous presence and land rights, and to improve the experience of Indigenous students and communities. They are done in an effort to honour the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's final report (Wilkes et al., 2019), which calls for significant changes in order to reconcile Canada's unjust treatment of Indigenous people.

While land acknowledgements are becoming more common, some concerns are being raised; they are sometimes flawed and even disrespectful. Friesen (2019) shows that land acknowledgements are criticized as empty gestures as First Nations names are often mispronounced and incorrect nations are named. Anishinaabe scholar Hayden King regrets helping Ryerson write its land acknowledgement; he fears that these acknowledgements actually prevent learning about Indigenous people and treaty relationships (Friesen, 2019). King points out that the current style of land acknowledgement can sound "detached, shallow and give a false sense of progressive accomplishment" (Maga, 2019, para. 2). They may "cause harm to the people they're supposed to celebrate" (Maga, 2019, para. 3). Blenkinsop & Fettes (2019) state that the problem with these acknowledgements is that "they stop with a notion of land as something one lives on, rather than continuing on into an understanding of land as something we are part of" (p. 1036). The acknowledgements lack meaning because they do not demand any action from the speakers or listeners. Indigenous leaders argue that these land acknowledgements do not acknowledge the privileges that settlers have due to the legacy of colonialism, or recognize the trauma that continues as a result of colonialist societal structures, which actually can harm the same people these acknowledgements are meant to respect.

In order to ensure that land acknowledgements help rather than harm, Indigenous

scholars demand a change to the current approach. Land acknowledgements "have a vital function when done correctly" (Maga, 2019, para. 7), but must do more than naming Indigenous territories, languages and treaties. These land acknowledgements should not express the colonial way of viewing land as a resource or commodity, a thing that is owned. Instead, they should emphasize an Indigenous way of understanding. Blenkinsop & Fettes (2019) explain that the Land is more than an object; it is a teacher, offering a dialogue:

> The land is there, outside our windows, under our feet, all around us, thinking, feeling, conversing and offering its teachings. When we start to really listen, to the land and to the people whose identities and traditions are fundamentally shaped through long dialogue with the land, transformation follows (p. 1043).

Scripts should not be simply read without any reflection. Instead, an effort should be made to include Indigenous ways of thinking and people should expand on them to include personal information. People delivering land acknowledgements should speak about "their own connections to the land and communities they are attempting to honour" (Friesen, 2019, para. 20). A speaker who expands on their own family history will give deeper insights and connections, which leads to a more meaningful acknowledgement. Additionally, speakers should acknowledge both the impact of colonialism and express an intention to disrupt the current injustices that are part of society.

As land acknowledgements become more routine across institutions, Indigenous leaders ask that these statements be approached with respect. Land acknowledgements must go beyond a scripted list of Indigenous communities and treaties. For reconciliation to begin, land acknowledgements must become part of a conversation that calls attention to our responsibilities as caretakers of the land, and sets intentions for action in ending the systematic harms on Indigenous peoples.

References

Blenkinsop, S., & Fettes, M. (2020). Land, language and listening: The transformations that can flow from acknowledging Indigenous land. *Journal of Philosophy of Education, 54*(4), 1033–1046. https://doi-org.georgian.idm.oclc.org/10.1111/1467-9752.12470

Friesen, J. (2019, June 27). As Indigenous land acknowledgements become the norm, critics question whether the gesture has lost its meaning. *Globe & Mail* (Toronto, Canada), A1.

Maga, C. (2019, April 10). Land acknowledgements capture the mood of an awkward stage; Anishinaabe writer Hayden King says statements concerning Indigenous recognition don't negate "ongoing disposition" of people. *The Toronto Star* (Toronto, Ontario), E1

Wilkes, R., Duong, A., Kesler, L., & Ramos, H. (2017). Canadian University Acknowledgment of Indigenous Lands, Treaties, and Peoples. *Canadian Review of Sociology, 54*(1), 89–120. https://doi-org.georgian.idm.oclc.org/10.1111/cars.12140

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Key Takeaways

- Writing a good research essay will require you to spend time researching and learning about your topic. Use the internet and your college library to make sure you have a good variety of sources.
- Outlining your ideas will help you to structure your essay.
- You build your draft by expanding the ideas from your outline, supporting your points with evidence from your research sources.
- Taking the time to revise for cohesion, sentence structure, and proper citations is important. Visiting your college Writing Centre can be very beneficial, as you'll get help identifying problems you may not notice on your own.

Attribution & References

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7.7 - ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Jen Booth

The following annotated bibliography is an example of how the skills taught in Communication Essentials (COMM1016) might be applied to different types of writing. The research question explored in this annotated bibliography was: What effect does peanut butter have on nutrition around the world?

Read *The Effect of Peanut Butter on Nutrition* Annotated Bibliography

Read *The Effect of Peanut Butter on Nutrition* Annotated Bibliography in Plain text

Note: HTML/plain text & Pressbooks do not always display page layout or APA formatting such as page numbers, spacing, margins or indentation accurately. Please review APA formatting rules to ensure you meet APA guidelines with your own work. The text version is included here in HTML format for ease of reading/use. You may also want to view *The Effect of Peanut Butter on Nutrition* in PDF format.

The Effect of Peanut Butter on Nutrition

Jen Booth

Davis, J. P., & Dean, L. L. (2016). Chapter 11: Peanut composition, flavor and nutrition. In H. T. Stalker & R. F. Wilson (Eds.), *Peanuts: Genetics, processing, and utilization* (pp. 289-345). AOCS Press. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/B978-1-63067-038-2.00011-3

In this book chapter, Davis & Dean (2016) discuss the nutritional content of peanuts extensively, along with the components of the peanut and how the overall flavor affects their popularity. Davis & Dean (2016) also discuss how "as a whole food and ingredient, **peanuts** are nutritionally dense, for example, providing the highest protein content of all commonly consumed snack nuts, serving as a rich source of heart-healthy, monounsaturated oil, and also providing a variety of healthy micronutrients and

bioactive compounds" (p. 289). This chapter will help in my paragraphs where I discuss why peanuts are very nutritious, and how they could be implemented to help improve diet and nutrition in developing worlds. The authors of this book chapter are associated with government departments and a prominent university in North Carolina, as well as a research lab, which makes this source seem credible. The publication date also indicates that the research is quite current, also adding to the source's credibility.

Enserink, M. (2008, October 3). The peanut butter debate. *Science (New York, N.Y.)*, *322*(5898), 36-38. http://science.sciencemag.org/content/322/5898/36.full?rss=1

Enserink (2008) discusses how peanut butter products are being used in the developing world to fight malnutrition. The article also discusses a scientific debate that surrounds whether or not these types of products can also be used to prevent malnutrition. It outlines strengths and also discusses other nutritional interventions commonly used. The information in the article will be helpful as I discuss how peanut butter is already being used in developing countries to address malnutrition, as well as provide background information on other foods that are also used. It may also provide some counter arguments and further guide my research. This article is a little bit older, so it may not present the most recent research on the topic. However, because the article is published in a well-established journal, the information is still credible and useful for this topic.

Pelletier, J. E., Schreiber, L. N., & Laska, M. N. (2017). Minimum stocking requirements for retailers in the special supplemental nutrition program for women, infants, and children: Disparities across US states. *American Journal of Public Health*, *107*(7), 1171-1174. https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2017.303809

Pelletier et al. (2017) conducted a study to determine the availability of enough healthy foods for participants in the "Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)" program in the United States (p. 1171). Peanut butter was noted as one of the staples that the majority of states across the U.S. required to be available for this program. This article is helpful for my essay because it discusses a variety of staple/healthy foods that are considered important to nutrition across the United States. This might help me to discuss the differences between staples in the United States and developing countries. This article is credible because it comes from a peer reviewed journal (American Journal of Public Health) and is fairly recent (2017). This article provides up to date information about nutritional standards and the challenges faced by lower income families in the U.S.A.

Simms, J. T. (2010). Ingenuity, peanut butter, and a little green leaf. *World Policy Journal*, *27*(3), 75-77.

This article from *World Policy Journal* discusses how peanut products are being used in Niger to improve traditional foods and drinks. Written from the perspective of a Peace Corps volunteer, the article gives a good overview of the benefits of adding peanut butter/peanut products to these traditional diets. This will be helpful in my essay as I discuss ways of implementing peanut butter as a nutritional staple. I can use some of the examples in this article to illustrate my points and add credibility to my ideas. This article is a little bit older, but the first-hand experience of the author is quite

valuable. The journal has been published in the United States for 30 years on a regular schedule and seems to have a credible background, making this information credible for my essay.

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7.6 - LONGER RESEARCH ESSAY - SAMPLE STUDENT WORK

Nicole Lynn Deschaine

Longer Research Essay

Submitted by Georgian College student Nicole Lynn Deschaine, this essay represents a sample of student writing for a longer essay. While many of the essay samples in *Communication Essentials for College* are written in a traditional 5 paragraph essay format, the skills you learn in COMM1016 can be applied to different types of research writing.

This paper is an exemplar of student work, but could still contain small errors. Review all of your own work carefully to ensure it meets APA guidelines and assignment expectations before submitting.

Read *Do vaping products have adverse effects on youth?*

Read *Do vaping products have adverse effects on youth?* in Plain text

Note: HTML/plain text & Pressbooks do not always display page layout or APA formatting such as page numbers, spacing, margins or indentation accurately. Please review APA formatting rules to ensure you meet APA guidelines with your own work. The text version is included here in HTML format for ease of reading/use. You may also want to view *Do Vaping Products Have Adverse Effects on Youth?* in PDF format.

Do Vaping Products Have Adverse Health Effects on Youth?

Nicole Lynn Deschaine

The adverse side effects of vaping are proving themselves a danger to physical and developmental

health in youth. In this article, the contents of electronic nicotine delivery systems will be explained. The harmful marketing of vaping products, reasons for high addiction rates, an analysis of pathological findings of EVALI (E-Cigarette or Vaping product Associated Lung Injury) and how it relates to adolescents will all be presented. Vaping products have adverse effects for youth and young adults such as high rates of addiction exacerbated by youth targeted advertising, impairments on cognitive development due to higher rates of nicotine in vaping products and fostering potentially fatal acute respiratory illnesses (Becker & Rice 2021).

"Electronic nicotine delivery systems which contain a battery, an atomizer (or heating element), and a reservoir for e-liquid in the form of cartridges, tanks, or pods, deliver an aerosol (usually containing nicotine) to the user through the lungs" (Wold et al., 2022). The aerosols that are inhaled by the user contain many harmful ingredients, some of which are considered carcinogens, dozens of which are not found in traditional cigarettes (Marques, Piqueras & Sanz, 2021). These chemicals include but are not limited to acetaldehyde, formaldehyde, acetamide, silicate particles, vitamin e acetate and metal particles including copper, nickel, and silver (Marques, Piqueras & Sanz, 2021). These ingredients inhaled on their own are harmful to a person's physical health, which means that even nicotine free vaping products can still be detrimental (Marques, Piqueras & Sanz, 2021).

The tobacco industry funds research claiming that nicotine and non-nicotine vaping products are a less harmful alternative to traditional combustible cigarettes, that vaping can be utilized as a smoking cessation aid and that non-nicotine vaping products pose no threat of addiction (Tsai et al, 2020). These claims come with serious consequences: One study concluded that 1 in 3 teenagers in the U.S believe that vaping is a safe alternative to combustible cigarettes (Tobore, 2019), another study found that 63% of its youth participants didn't realize that some vaping products have nicotine in them (Jones & Salzman, 2020) and in a third study 40% of adolescents who claimed that they only vaped non-nicotine products were found to have nicotine in their urinary samples (Becker & Rice, 2022). Dr. Kristen Jones & Dr. Gary Salzman, who are a Pediatric Physician and Professor of Medicine respectively (2020) say that this is exacerbated further by the fact that most marketing for vaping products is heavily targeted, especially through social media, at teens and young adults. Pods for vaping devices "come in fun packaging and the different pods are flavoured to be attractive to adolescents, with everything from mint to gummi bear to frosted sugar cookie" (Jones & Salzman, 2020). Flavouring has been cited by numerous studies as being a major deciding factor for a teenager trying a vape product (Jones & Salzman, 2020).

A major reason for teenage nicotine addiction by use of vaping products is that most teens are unaware that nicotine-based pods for vaping devices have a higher concentration of nicotine than traditional cigarettes (Jones & Salzman, 2020). For example, JUUL pods, which are the most widely used brand by teens in North America, "contain 5% or 59mg/ml of nicotine" which is comparable to 20 combustible cigarettes (Jones & Salzman, 2020). Another point of contention is the fact that vaping is sometimes marketed as harmless because of non-nicotine vaping products, therefore, teenagers who were previously not at risk for trying nicotine via cigarettes are now trying it via vape products

(Jayakumar et al, 2020). The consequences of lack of awareness about vaping products and the marketing tactics used are as Dr. Timothy Becker and Dr. Timothy Rice, both of whom are psychiatrists specializing in pediatrics, stated in 2021; "a new generation is becoming addicted to nicotine." In a cross-sectional survey that was administered "in 2019 which included 19, 018 participants who were in grades 6 to 12 respectively, the prevalence of self-reported current e-cigarette use was 27.5% among high school students and 10.5% among middle school students" (Cullen et al, 2019).

What makes higher rates of nicotine addiction among youth a cause for concern is that nicotine has been proven to affect brain development in people ages 25 and younger (Jones & Salzman, 2020). Exposure to nicotine in developing brains "has been linked with cognitive deficits and impairment in memory and executive function" (Jones & Salzman, 2020). Another study on the effects of smoking and vaping on adolescents concluded that they were at higher risk for suicide attempts, physical confrontations, alcohol/marijuana/illicit drug use and reckless behaviour compared to non-vaping teens (Jones & Salzman, 2020).

Perhaps the most alarming consequence of vaping among youth is EVALI or "E-Cigarette, or Vaping Product Associated Lung Injury" (Belok et al, 2020). According to the Centre for Disease Control (2020) EVALI began as an outbreak in 2019 and by 2020, 2,688 hospitalized cases and 68 deaths were reported from 29 of the American states, however, more cases are suspected. 62% of these cases were people between the ages of 18 and 34, and 20% were under the age of 18. (CDC, 2020). Most of these cases also had no previous pulmonary issues or history of smoking (King et al, 2020). Most youth patients of EVALI admitted that they obtained their vaping products through online delivery systems that don't require age verification and from non-regulated sources, such as friends, peers, family and illicit dealers that sometimes sell homemade e-liquids (King et al, 2020).

EVALI usually presents with the following symptoms: pneumonia like illness, progressive dyspnea (difficult breathing), tachypnea (rapid breathing) and/or worsening hypoxemia (poor oxygen saturation in the blood) (Belok et al, 2020). If the person presenting with these symptoms has vaped in the last 90 days, Dr. Samuel Belok et al (2020) says that "EVALI should be suspected." Some of the more serious conditions of EVALI include acute fibrinous pneumonitis, organizing pneumonia and diffuse alveolar damage, all of which are severe forms of pneumonia that usually require mechanical ventilation due to severe hypoxemia (Belok et al, 2020). Once a person with these conditions requires a ventilator, mortality rate becomes 43% – 50% (Belok et al, 2020). These injuries are mainly caused by Vitamin E Acetate which is used as a thickener in most e-liquids, experts believe there may be other chemicals and compounds also responsible, but evidence is limited (King et al, 2020). "When heated Vitamin E Acetate generates ketene, a highly reactive compound that acts as a lung irritant" (Belok et al, 2020). Hanjun Lee (2020), a computational biologist, says "Vitamin E Acetate can alter lung surfactant function" which is the lungs ability to not collapse at the end of respiration. Alteration of the surfactant function due to vaping has also resulted in pneumothorax (collapsed lung) in cases where there were no previous pulmonary diseases, the patient was relatively healthy and was 24 years of age or younger (Wieckowska, 2021).

Vaping among youth is a continuing public health concern (Becker & Rice, 2021), with 5.2 million American adolescents reporting current use as of 2020 (King et al, 2020). The advertising for vaping, which is mainly targeted at youth and young adults, is working (Jones & Salzman, 2020); more teens and young adults are addicted to nicotine than past decades thanks to vaping (Becker & Rice, 2021). Regular nicotine exposure before the age of 25 has been proven to cause impairments on cognitive development (Jones & Salzman, 2020), couple this with the fact that the most severe health effects of vaping, such as EVALI, are being seen among vaping's youngest participants (King et al, 2020), and it's easy to see why experts are calling vaping among youth a fast-growing epidemic (King et al, 2020).

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CHAPTER 8: APA STYLE TUTORIAL

Communication Essentials for College by Jen Booth, Emily Cramer & Amanda Quibell

- 8.1 – Why Do We Cite?
- 8.2 – Exploring Source Types
- 8.3 – Source Type: Journal Article Cues
- 8.4 – Source Type: Trade Publication Cues
- 8.5 – Source Type: Webpage Cues
- 8.6 – Source Type: Book & eBook Cues
- 8.7 – Source Types Summary
- 8.8 – Two Types of Citation
- 8.9 – What is a Reference List Citation?
- 8.10 – Creating Reference List Citations
- 8.11 – Creating Reference List Citations Activity
- 8.12 – What is an In-Text Citation?
- 8.13 – In-Text Citations Activity
- 8.14 – How it All Works Together
- 8.15 – Matching Reference and In-Text Citations Activity
- 8.16 – APA Document Formatting

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Please visit the web version of *Communication Essentials for College* to access the complete book, interactive activities and ancillary resources.

8.1 - WHY DO WE CITE?

Learning Objective

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

- Identify why using citations is important.

It's important to understand why citations are a fundamental part of any research assignment, aside from being a requirement. A citation is a reference to a source that contains key pieces of information about that source in order to find them.

The following are 3 key reasons why citing is important.

Reason 1: For Scholarly Communication

By reading, analyzing, and including scholarly sources in your assignments, you are contributing to and participating in scholarly communication!

You grow in your understanding of a field of study by learning from its subject experts.

Reason 2: To Give Credit and Show Professionalism

This is key for showing professionalism and evidence in your paper.

You will mainly use scholarly and professional sources as evidence to support your research and give credit to their findings. Citations allow others (and you!) to find the sources used in your paper to learn more about them.

Reason 3: To Avoid Plagiarism

Watch this short video to learn about plagiarism and how to avoid it.

Watch What is APA? on YouTube (3 mins)

Key Takeaways

The main reasons why we cite are to:

1. Participate in scholarly communication,
2. Give credit to our sources,
3. Avoid plagiarism.

Attributions & References

This chapter (images, text & video) is adapted from "Why do we cite?" In *APA Style Citation Tutorial* by Sarah Adams and Debbie Feisst, University of Alberta Library, licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 International License

8.2 - EXPLORING SOURCE TYPES

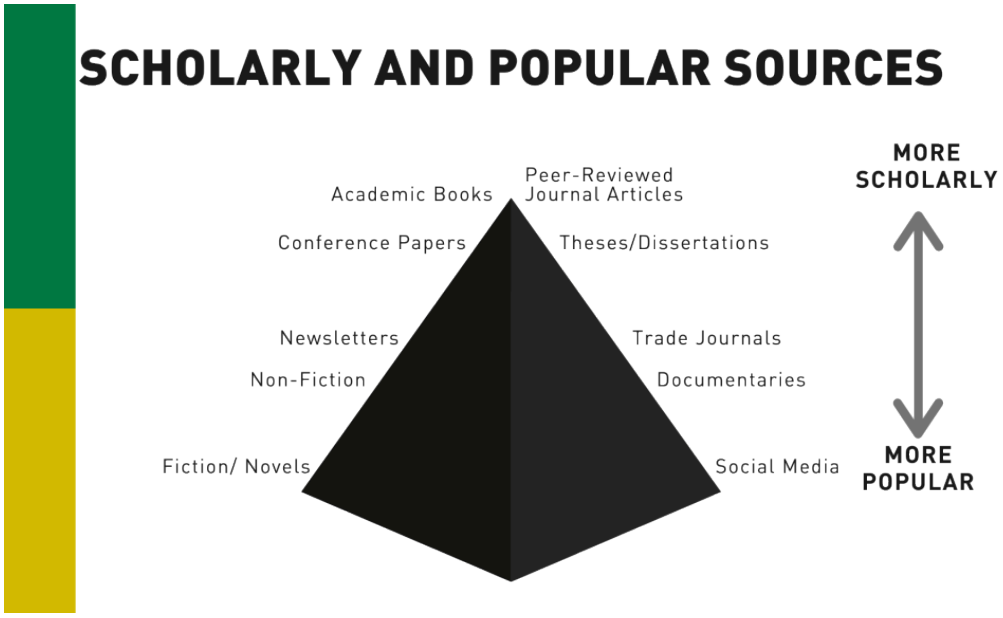
Learning Objective

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

- Recognize cues within sources to identify their source type.

To identify the correct APA citation elements needed for your reference list citation, you first need to know what type of source you have. Looking at a source's visual cues and descriptions from a library catalogue or database can help you figure this out.

Now that so many sources are online, it can be a bit confusing figuring out a source's type. To help, we will go through some examples of source types and cues to look for together.



In the pyramid, examples are displayed on either side of the pyramid and an arrow on the right hand side is labelled more popular at the base of the pyramid and more scholarly at the top. Peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, conference papers, and theses and dissertations are at the top; trade journals, newsletters, non-fiction, documentaries, fiction/novels and social media are at the bottom or widest part of the pyramid.

Attribution & References

This chapter is adapted from "Exploring Source Types" In *APA Style Citation Tutorial* by Sarah Adams and Debbie Feisst, University of Alberta Library, licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 International License. / Adaptations include adjustment of alternate text and CC license updates.

8.3 - SOURCE TYPE: JOURNAL ARTICLE CUES

Learning Objective

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

- Recognize cues within scholarly journal articles, such as name of journal, volume & issue number, author names, and abstracts.

In the following source type examples, examine the different sources and click on the symbol to learn about each cue that helps identify a source's type.

First, we will examine a scholarly journal article.

Explore: A scholarly journal article found in the Library database

Explore: A scholarly journal article found in the Library database (Text version)



A scholarly article found in library database search results.

The record in the library database search results displays the following information:

Name of the article: "Watch Out for Their Home!": Disrupting Extractive Forest Pedagogies in Early Childhood Education. Click on the title of the article to view more information about the resource, a brief description of the work, and options to access, save or email the article.

Expert Authors: Nancy van Groll and Heather Fraser

Journal information: Journal of childhood studies (Prospect Bay), 2022, p.47-53. Peer reviewed. Open Access.

Access options: Click Get PDF to access the whole article in PDF format. Click Available Online for other access options.

Activity Source: "Source Type: Journal Article Cues" In *APA Style Citation Tutorial* by Sarah Adams and Debbie Feisst, University of Alberta Library, used under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 . / Screenshot of peer-reviewed journal article updated. Article displayed: Van Groll, & Fraser, H. (2022). "Watch Out for Their Home!": Disrupting Extractive Forest Pedagogies in Early Childhood Education. *Journal of Childhood Studies (Prospect Bay)*, 47–53. https://doi.org/10.18357/jcs202219894 , licensed under CC BY-NC. Screenshot of Primo database is used under Fair Dealing.

Explore: First page of a scholarly journal article

Explore: First page of a scholarly journal article (text version)

JOURNAL OF CHILDHOOD STUDIES IDEAS FROM PRACTICE

"Watch Out for Their Home!": Disrupting Extractive Forest Pedagogies in Early Childhood Education

Nancy van Groll and Heather Fraser

Nancy van Groll is an instructor in the School of Education and Childhood Studies and a pedagogist at ECEBC (Early Childhood Educators of British Columbia) living, working, and learning on the unceded Coast Salish territories of the səlilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh), sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish), and xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) Nations. In her writing, research, teaching, and advocacy, Nancy pays attention to lively relations and activates slow, situated, and spiralling pedagogical projects with(in) 21st-century contexts. Email: nancyvangroll@capilanou.ca

Heather Fraser is a forest educator and the owner of Saplings Outdoor Programs, located on the traditional territories of Coast Salish peoples, including səlilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh), sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish), and xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) Nations. Her passionate advocacy focuses on working with young children in outdoor contexts as they develop responsive relationships with place.

The frictions of living and learning in times of climate precarity, global unrest, and uncertainty require educators to consider the ways we can collectively engage in speculative pedagogies that respond to the complex, coinherited common world(s) we inhabit. This conceptual and practice-based paper considers the way early childhood education is implicated in ongoing settler colonialism. It aims to notice, generate, and stay with the trouble of stories that disrupt and unsettle the extractive and colonial dialogues about the forest as a resource and pedagogical tool.

Key words: *forest pedagogies; climate precarity; early childhood education; settler colonialism*

Human relationships with old-growth forests saw an increase in public attention and concern in 2021, with news cycles dominated by an extremely active forest fire season in western North America (CBC News, 2021), historic old-growth logging protests (McKeen, 2021) and a landmark call to action by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC; 2021). In these times of climate precarity and uncertainty, educators, instructors, pedagogists, and researchers who work, think, and engage with young children in settler colonial contexts are compelled to engage in speculative pedagogical processes that respond to the complex worlds that are coinherited, coconstructed, and coinhabited by human and more-than-human communities. In this conceptual and practice-based paper we consider the ways early childhood education is implicated in and reproduces ongoing systems of settler colonialism. We aim to notice, generate, and "stay with the trouble" (Haraway, 2016) of stories that disrupt and unsettle colonial dialogues that often reverberate within forest pedagogies. According to Donna Haraway (2016), troubles are tensions, complexities, or knots that challenge us to "stir up potent response" (p. 1) in our pedagogical practice. We see troubles as generative entry points for resisting taken-for-granted practices in early childhood education and for speculating about how we might be able to activate new ways of living well together (Government of British Columbia, 2019). Throughout this piece, we respond to a series of everyday moments that occurred in a forest-based early learning program (forest school) that operates out of a municipal park on unceded Coast Salish territory (land colonially known as coastal British Columbia (BC), Canada). The narrative below illustrates the complicated and, at times, troubling relations between children, educators, and place. As we think carefully with these happenings, we take up David Greenwood's (2016) invitation to pay attention to the paradoxical nature of place as both a concept and a relationship. We see place as meeting ground and contact zone (the collision of conflicting values, discourses, logics, and practices) that locates us within the past, present, and future of settler colonial contexts (Greenwood, 2016).

Image Source: "Watch Out for Their Home!": Disrupting Extractive Forest Pedagogies in Early Childhood Education by Nancy van Groll and Heather Fraser, CC BY-NC 4.0

Name of the Journal: Journal of Childhood Studies

Expert Authors: Nancy van Groll and Heather Fraser

Abstract: The frictions of living and learning in times of climate precarity, global unrest, and uncertainty require educators to consider the ways we can collectively engage in speculative pedagogies that respond to the complex, coinherited common world(s) we inhabit. >This conceptual and practice-based paper considers the way early childhood education is implicated in ongoing settler colonialism. It aims to notice, generate, and stay with the trouble of stories that disrupt and unsettle the extractive and colonial dialogues about the forest as a resource and pedagogical tool

Volume and Issue Number: Vol. 47 No. 3

Activity Source: "Source Type: Journal Article Cues" In *APA Style Citation Tutorial* by Sarah Adams and Debbie Feisst, University of Alberta Library, used under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 . / Screenshot of peer-reviewed journal article updated. **Article displayed:** Van Groll, & Fraser, H. (2022). "Watch Out for Their Home!": Disrupting Extractive Forest Pedagogies in Early Childhood Education. *Journal of Childhood Studies (Prospect Bay)*, 47–53. https://doi.org/10.18357/jcs202219894 , licensed under CC BY-NC.

Source Type: Journal Article Cues

Name of the journal

Journal articles are collected and published in scholarly journals. Often (but not always), the word "journal" in the scholarly journal's name is a good indicator. Look for the name of the journal in the document header (top left or right corner of each page in the article), or document footer.

Volume & Issue number

Volume and issue numbers are most commonly used with journal articles and scholarly journals. Look for these following the name of the journal and the date/year of publication, typically in the header or footer of the document. They may be written as: Volume 35, No. 3 or 35(3). The page numbers of the article are often located near the Volume and issue number.

Expert authors

Articles are written by experts in their field who often have high levels of education and professional experience. Their experience may be included in the article. In journal articles, the author's names are often listed immediately under the article title.

Abstract

Abstracts are usually found in journal articles and provide a summary of an article's research findings. Often this summary of the article will be found in the top half of the first page of the article. Some journals use a shaded box to make the abstract stand out from the rest of the text, and abstracts are usually labeled accordingly.

More information found in the library database entry

If you're looking at journal articles in a library database, you can often find a marker that indicates that the material has been peer reviewed. It may be specifically stated, or you may also see the "source type" indicating a scholarly journal.

- **Peer reviewed:** Scholarly journal articles are peer-reviewed by subject experts. Peer-review indicators may be found in database or library catalogue descriptions or on the journal article (*article received, article accepted*).
- **Source type:** Library catalogue and database descriptions often identify the source type of a work.

Attributions & References

- "Source Type: Journal Article Cues" In *APA Style Citation Tutorial* by Sarah Adams and Debbie Feisst, University of Alberta Library , used under a CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 International License. / Adaptations include updates for accessibility and changed the journal example used to a CC licensed journal.
- Van Groll, & Fraser, H. (2022). "Watch Out for Their Home!": Disrupting Extractive Forest Pedagogies in Early Childhood Education. *Journal of Childhood Studies (Prospect Bay)*, 47–53. https://doi.org/10.18357/jcs202219894 , licensed under CC BY-NC

8.4 - SOURCE TYPE: TRADE PUBLICATION CUES

Learning Objective

After completing the activities in this chapter, you will be able to:

- identify a trade publication based on cues associated with this source type.

Examine the source and click on the symbol to learn about each cue that helps to identify a trade publication.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/gccomm/?p=1112#h5p-18

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/gccomm/?p=1112#h5p-19

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/gccomm/?p=1112#h5p-20

Source Type: Trade Publication Cues

Graphics & Ads

Trade publications are generally more like popular magazines than scholarly journals

due to their use of graphics. Graphics are present on the cover, in articles illustrating their topic, and as advertisements geared towards the journal's audience.

Specific focus

Trade journals and magazines are created for specific professional fields and contain articles that are generally written by professionals in that field.

Discovering Trade Journals

Trade publications can be found in library databases and websites. This example (Teach) was found on the journal's website, but it is also found in multiple library databases.

Professional Authors

Articles may have short descriptions of the author's credentials or no description is provided. These credentials may emphasize their professional experience rather than their academic experience. Authors are typically listed right after the title of the article. Occasionally, you might find the author's name at the end of an article or footer of the page (similar to a magazine).

Short Articles & References

Trade publication articles are usually short, with few or no references cited, and focus on a specific topic within the profession (news, products, trends, professional practices, etc.). Authors are often experts in their field, but their articles are not peer-reviewed (i.e. scholarly). Articles may appear in a similar lay out to magazine articles, use more pictures and visual layouts than scholarly journal articles.

Language used

Trade publications use simple language and specific terminology used within their specific field.

Attribution & References

- This chapter is adapted from "Source Type: Trade Publication Cues" In *APA Style Citation Tutorial* by Sarah Adams and Debbie Feisst, University of Alberta Library, licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 International License
- Stone, A. (2020, January/February). The end of discipline in the classroom. *Teach*, 26-29. https://issuu.com/teachmag/docs/teach_janfeb2020 . [Screenshots of trade publication article are used under Fair Dealing.]

8.5 - SOURCE TYPE: WEBPAGE CUES

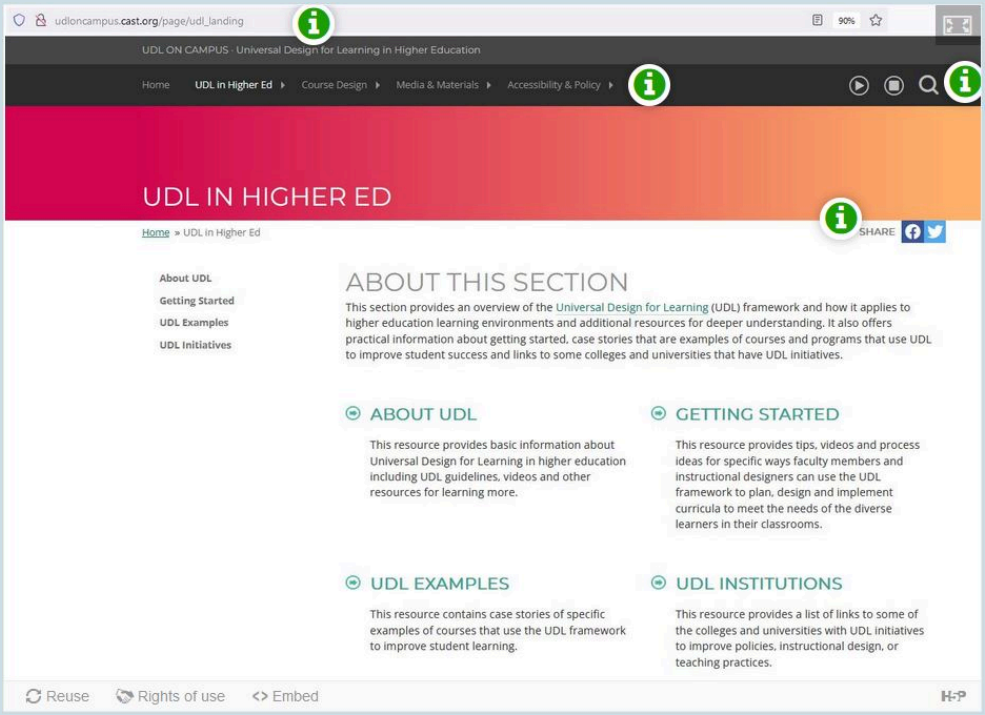
Learning Objective

After completing the activities in this chapter, you'll be able to

- identify the source cues associated with webpages

Examine the source and click on the  symbol to learn about each cue that helps to identify a webpage.

Explore: Identifying features of a webpage



Websites can be identified by visual markers such as a URL, search option, social media and website title.
Image source: Adapted from "UDL On Campus: UDL in Higher Ed by CAST, licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0

Explore: Identifying features of a webpage (Text version)
Title of webpage: UDL in Higher Ed
Web Address (URL):http://udloncampus.cast.org/page/udl_landing
Search Option:located at top of page after the navigation.
Social Media Links:this website links to facebook and twitter

Activity source: "Explore: Identifying features of a webpage" is adapted from "Source Type: Webpage Cues" In *APA Style Citation Tutorial* by Sarah Adams and Debbie Feisst, University of Alberta Library, licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 International License. / Modified to include updated screenshot of CC licensed page from same website.

Source Type: Webpage Cues

Web Address (URL)

This has a web address, so we know that it is a source found online.

Tab-Style Navigation

Websites often use tabs to organize information within the website. Tabs are generally shown within a distinct colour band along the top of the page and may have drop-down menus.

Search Box

Websites provide a search box to find specific topics or keywords on their webpages. This is often located in the top right corner of the screen.

Social Media Links

Many websites and webpages include links to their social media accounts and options for sharing on your social media. Look for these to the left or right side of the webpage on your screen.

Attribution & References

- This chapter is adapted from "Source Type: Webpage Cues" In *APA Style Citation Tutorial* by Sarah Adams and Debbie Feisst, University of Alberta Library, licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 International License

8.6 - SOURCE TYPE: BOOK & EBOOK CUES

Learning Objective

After completing the activities in this chapter, you'll be able

- identify an eBook or book, based on the source cues.

Books and eBooks may be found through your college library's search feature and through web searches. Some books are available in multiple formats (online and in print) and some may be exclusively printed or online. The citation format for a book depends on it's format and where you found it.

Examine the source and click on the ℹ symbol to learn about each cue that helps to identify a Book or eBook.

Explore: Book & eBook cues

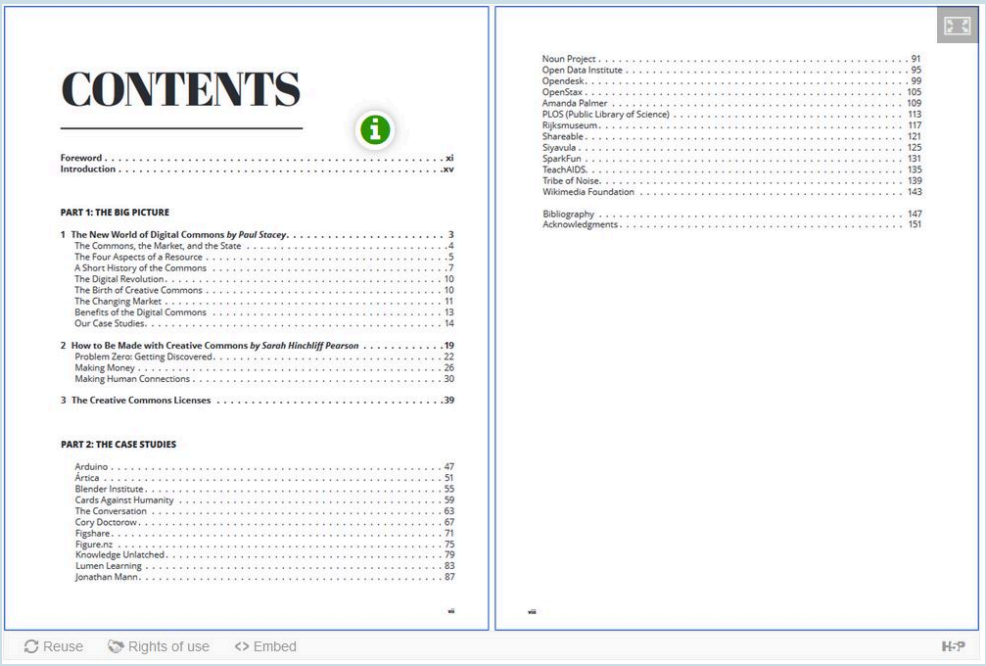


Cover and title page image shows the book title, authors, and publication information. **Image source:** "Made with Creative Commons by Paul Stacey and Sarah Hinchliff Pearson, licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0

Explore: Book & eBook Cues
Title of book: Made With Creative Commons
Authors: Paul Stacey & Sarah Hinchliff Pearson
Edition: This book is a first edition, so it doesn't have an edition number.
Publisher: Ctrl-Alt-Delete

Activity source: "Explore: Book & eBook Cues" is is adapted from "Source Type: Book & eBook Cues" In *APA Style Citation Tutorial* by Sarah Adams and Debbie Feisst, University of Alberta Library, licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 International License. / Adapted to use a CC licensed book.

Explore: Book & eBook Table of Contents/Index



Screenshot of a book's table of contents shows the book sections, front matter and back matter. **Image source:** "Made with Creative Commons by Paul Stacey and Sarah Hinchliff Pearson, licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0

Explore: Book & eBook Table of Contents/Index (Text version)

The table of contents serves as an index for this book. The book is organized into two parts (Part 1: The Big Picture and Part 2: The Case Studies), and each individual section is identified with a starting page number. The beginning of the book has a foreward and introduction, while the end of the book has a bibliography and acknowledgements section.

Activity source: "Explore: Book & eBook Tables of Contents/Index" is is adapted from "Source Type: Book & eBook Cues" In *APA Style Citation Tutorial* by Sarah Adams and Debbie Feisst, University of Alberta Library, licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 International License. / Adapted to use a CC licensed book.

Book & eBook Cues

Authors & Editors

Books and eBooks can have authors, editors, or both. There may be one individual responsible for a work or multiple individuals. Authors and editors names are prominently displayed on the front cover of books, or the first page of an eBook document. Their names are often repeated throughout the book in the header or footer of the print book/or eBook file.

Edition Statement

If a work has an edition, it is likely a book. Edition statements are usually found on the cover or title page. If the book is a first edition, there is usually no edition statement.

Publisher

Books have a publisher responsible for their creation and distribution. Publisher information may be found on the cover, title page, or copyright page.

Table of Contents

Books have a publisher responsible for their creation and distribution. Publisher information may be found on the cover, title page, or copyright page.

Index & Appendices

Books have an index to help find the topic you're interested in. Appendices may also be included where supplementary material helps support the content.

Attribution & References

- This chapter is adapted from "Source Type: Book & eBook Cues" In *APA Style Citation Tutorial* by Sarah Adams and Debbie Feisst, University of Alberta Library, licensed

under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 International License. / Adapted to feature a CC licensed book.

8.7 - SOURCE TYPES SUMMARY



Creating APA references

The first step in creating an APA reference citation is to identify the type of source you are using.

After figuring out the type of source you are citing, you can move on to identifying the information needed to create a reference list citation for that source. Using a previous reference citation example can help!

Attribution & References

- This chapter is adapted from "Source Types Summary" In *APA Style Citation Tutorial* by Sarah Adams and Debbie Feisst, University of Alberta Library, licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 International License

8.8 - TWO TYPES OF CITATION

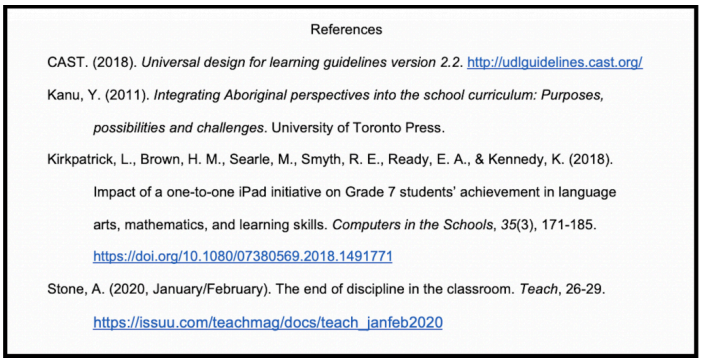
Learning Objective

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

- Create and format reference list citations in APA style.

In APA Style, there are two parts to every citation: an in-text citation and a reference list citation.

Reference list citations are longer citations that provide enough information needed to describe and find your source again, physically or online.



References

CAST. (2018). *Universal design for learning guidelines version 2.2.* http://udlguidelines.cast.org/

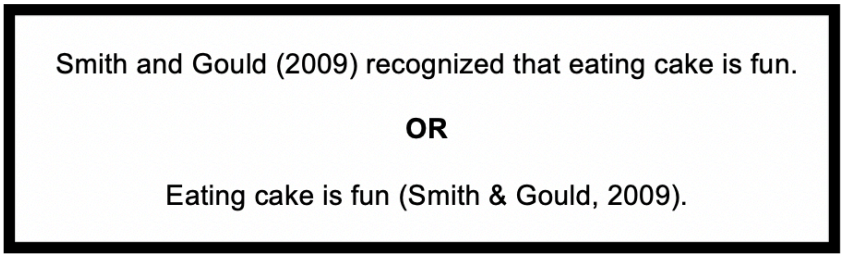
Kanu, Y. (2011). *Integrating Aboriginal perspectives into the school curriculum: Purposes, possibilities and challenges*. University of Toronto Press.

Kirkpatrick, L., Brown, H. M., Searle, M., Smyth, R. E., Ready, E. A., & Kennedy, K. (2018). Impact of a one-to-one iPad initiative on Grade 7 students' achievement in language arts, mathematics, and learning skills. *Computers in the Schools*, *35*(3), 171-185. https://doi.org/10.1080/07380569.2018.1491771

Stone, A. (2020, January/February). The end of discipline in the classroom. *Teach*, 26-29. https://issuu.com/teachmag/docs/teach_janfeb2020

The reference list page shows four reference examples from the previous source type section in alphabetical order.

In-text citations are the shortened form of a reference list citation where a source is credited in your paper. It has enough information to locate its matching reference citation.



The narrative example reads "Smith and Gould (2009) recognized that eating cake is fun. The parenthetical example reads "Eating cake is fun (Smith & Gould, 2009)."

We will discuss both of these separately first and then together later. First, we will discuss reference list citations.

Attribution & References

- This chapter is adapted from "Two Types of Citation" In *APA Style Citation Tutorial* by Sarah Adams and Debbie Feisst, University of Alberta Library, licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 International License / Minor updates for accessibility.
- "[Smith and Gould In-text Citation Example]" In *Intro to APA tutorials* by NorQuest College Library is adapted by Sarah Adams under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 International / Border added and refocused.

8.9 - WHAT IS A REFERENCE LIST CITATION?

Learning Objective

- Identify the key elements of a reference list

Let's begin by discussing what a reference list is. A reference list is an alphabetized list located on a separate page at the end of your paper that lists all the reference citations for the sources used in your paper to support your research.

Each reference citation includes key elements referred to as the **Four W's**:

The 4 W's:

- **WHO:** The author(s) or creator(s) of the work
- **WHEN:** The date of publication of the work (year, month & day if needed)
- **WHAT:** The title of the article, webpage, or other work
- **WHERE:** The source location of the work (journal or newspaper name, book name, website name, etc)

Asking these 4 questions helps identify the key elements needed for a reference list citation. See media attributions at end of page for image licensing information.

Watch APA references on YouTube (10 mins)

You're not expected to memorize APA guidelines. Instead, use available resources (APA Quickguide and this tutorial) to help guide you. Over time you will become more comfortable with creating citations yourself.

Using APA resources to help create a reference citation is like using a recipe. The ingredients are the key pieces of information about a source (4Ws). If you're missing an ingredient, leave it out or substitute it.

Following a recipe's directions is like following a citation example. If you follow the directions and add the ingredients at the right point, then your recipe (i.e. your citation) will turn out!

Attribution & References

This chapter is adapted from "What is a Reference List Citation?" In *APA Style Citation Tutorial* by Sarah Adams and Debbie Feisst, University of Alberta Library, licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 International License / Minor updates for accessibility, CC license notes.

8.10 - CREATING REFERENCE LIST CITATIONS

Learning Objective

- Apply the 4 W's for reference citations
- Identify the correct punctuation and font emphasis for the reference citations of difference source types

Next, we will use the 4 W's to look at each reference citation for the works evaluated during the "Exploring Source Types" section. Pay close attention to the punctuation and font emphasis (italics) used for each source type.

The 4 W's:

- **WHO:** The author(s) or creator(s) of the work
- **WHEN:** The date of publication of the work (year, month & day if needed)
- **WHAT:** The title of the article, webpage, or other work
- **WHERE:** The source location of the work (journal or newspaper name, book name, website name, etc)

The 4W's

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/gccomm/?p=1140#h5p-27

The 4W's (Text version)

Who: Author

- The first part of a reference citation is the author who may be one or more individuals, or a group (organization or government agency).
- To write the work's citation include each author's family name and initials **or** name of the group.

When: Date

- The second part is the date of the work in parentheses. Most works only include the year of publication, but some works are published more frequently.
- APA uses Year-First formatting, followed by Month, Day.

What: Title

- The third part is the title of the work in sentence-case. For books, this may also include an edition statement.
- For stand alone works that are not a part of another source, the title is *italicized*.
- For works that are a part of another source, the source is *italicized* and **not** the work.

Where: Source Location

- The final part is the source location. The information included here has the most variety because it's based on the source type of the work you are citing.

Check your Library to access your school's APA guide. Here's an example: Georgian College's APA Guide is a great resource to have on hand for creating reference citations.

Activity Source: "Creating Reference List Citations" In *APA Style Citation Tutorial* by Sarah Adams and Debbie Feisst, University of Alberta Library, licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 International License

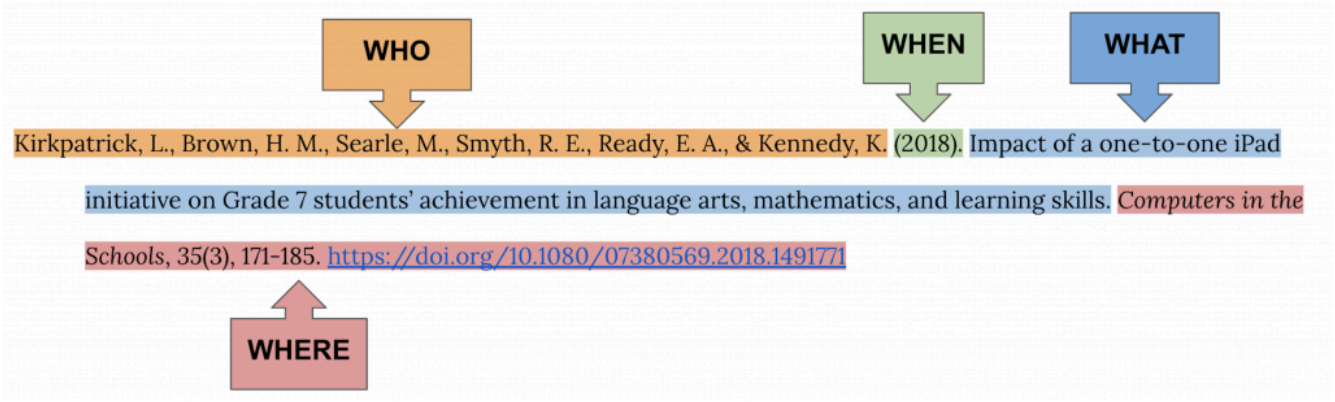


Figure 1. APA reference citation for a journal article with a DOI. **Citation:** Kirkpatrick, L., Brown, H. M., Searle, M., Smyth, R.E., Ready, E.A., & Kennedy, K. (2018). Impact of a one-to-one iPad initiative on Grade 7 students' achievement in language arts, mathematics, and learning skills. *Computers in the Schools, 35*(3), 171-185. http://doi.org/10.1080/07380569.2018.1491771

Figure 1 (Text Version)

- **WHO/Author(s):** Kirkpatrick, L., Brown, H. M., Searle, M., Smyth, R. E., Ready, E. A., & Kennedy, K.
- **WHEN/Publication date:** (2018).
- **WHAT/Article title:** Impact of a one-to-one iPad initiative on Grade 7 students' achievement in language arts, mathematics, and learning skills.
- **WHERE/Journal name, volume/issue, page numbers & DOI:** Computers in the Schools, 35(3), 171-185. https://doi.org/10.1080/07380569.2018.1491771.

The example above is a typical reference citation for a journal article with a DOI.

- **Author**: is the Family name, Initials. for each author, with a comma in between, and ampersand before the last author.
  - Authors are always ordered as they appear on the work.
- **Date**: is the publication date (Year) of the article.
- **Title**: is in sentence-case, as are all titles of works cited in APA Style.
- **Source location**: is the *Scholarly Journal Title* (in Title-Case and italics), *Volume* and Issue number, the article's page range, and hyperlinked DOI.
  - The article is part of a larger source (the scholarly journal), so the source is *italicized* and **not** the article.

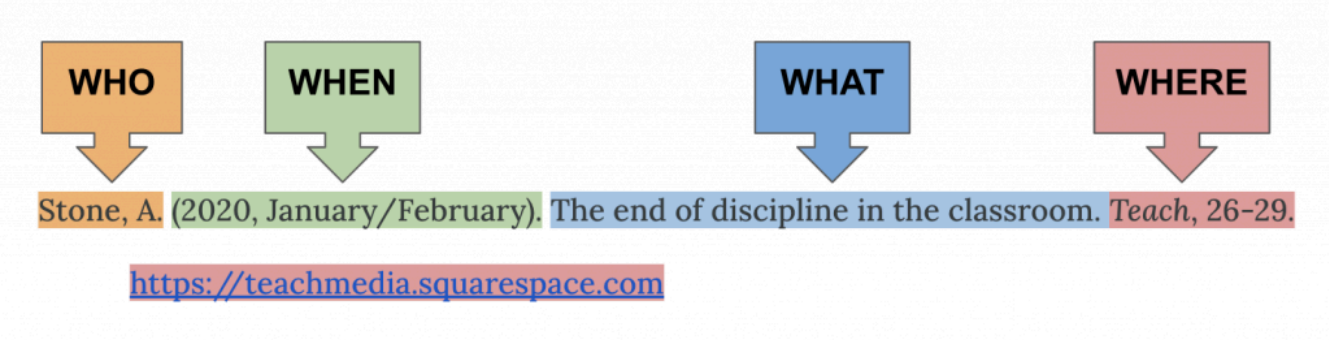


Figure 2. APA reference citation for a trade publication article. **Citation:** Stone, A. (2020, January/February). The end of discipline in the classroom. *Teach*, 26-29. https://teachmedia.squarespace.com

Figure 2 (Text version)

- **Who/Author(s):** Stone, A.
- **When/Publication date:** (2020, January/February)
- **What/Article title:** The end of discipline in the classroom.
- **Where/Trade journal name, volume/issue, page numbers & URL:** Teach, 26-29. https://teachmedia.squarespace.com

The example above is an article in a trade publication accessed through its online version on a website.

- **Author:** the article's individual author.
- **Date:** the journal's publication date, which follows Year-First format, followed by the seasonal publication date.
- **Title:** the article title in sentence-case.
- **Source location:** is the *Magazine's Title* (in Title-Case and italics), the article page range, and hyperlinked URL.
    - This example has no volume or issue numbers, so they are skipped.

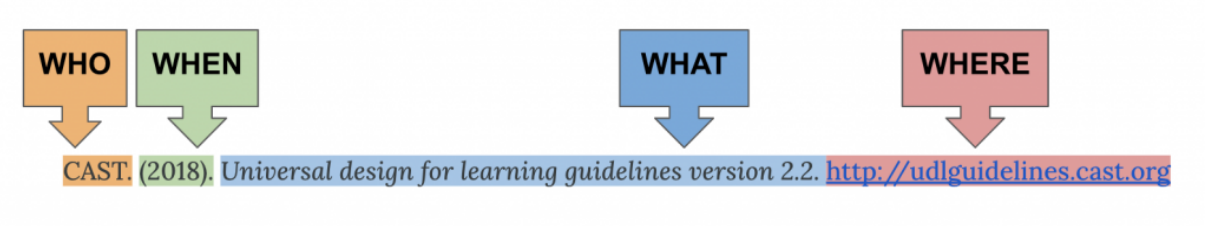


Figure 3. APA reference citation for a webpage with a group author that is the same as the website title. **Citation:** CAST. (2018). *Universal design for learning guidelines version 2.2.* http://udlguidelines.cast.org/

Figure 3 (Text version)

- **WHO/Author(s):** CAST.
- **WHEN/Publication date:** (2018).
- **WHAT/Webpage title:** Universal design for learning guidelines version 2.2.
- **WHERE/URL:** http://udlguidelines.cast.org/

The example above is a webpage with a group author that is the same as the website title.

- **Author:** CAST is the full organization's name, not an acronym.
  - If the author is an acronym, spell out their full name.
- **Date:** the publication date of the webpage.
  - Do not use the website's copyright date for the date.
- **Title:** is in sentence-case and italics as it is an individual work.
- **Source location:** is the URL of the webpage.
  - Webpage citations usually include the website title, but here the author is the same as the title so only the author is included.

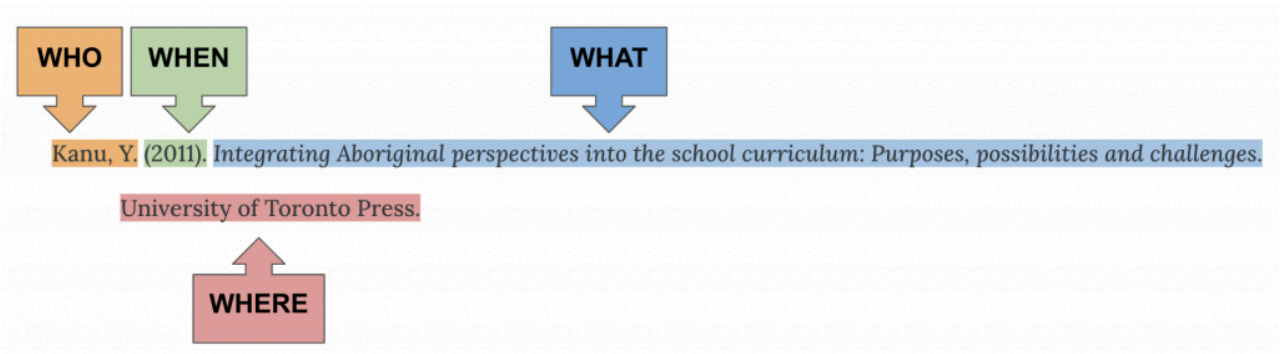


Figure 4. APA reference citation for an eBook. **Citation:** Kanu, Y. (2011). *Integrating Aboriginal perspectives into the school curriculum: Purposes, possibilities and challenges.* University of Toronto Press.

Figure 4 (Text version)

- **WHO/Author(s):** Kanu, Y.
- **WHEN/Publication date:** (2011).
- **WHAT/Webpage title:** Integrating Aboriginal perspectives into the school curriculum: Purposes, possibilities and challenges.
- **WHERE/Publisher:** University of Toronto Press.

The example above is an eBook accessed through a library database with no DOI.

- **Author:** is the book's individual author.
- **Date:** the copyright date of the book, found on the copyright page (©2011).
  - This is the guideline for all books and eBooks. The release date of a book is not used.
- **Title:** is in sentence-case and italics as it is a stand alone work and it includes a subtitle separated by a colon (:) with the first word upper-cased.
- **Source location:** is the book's publisher. The book has no DOI and no URL is included because it's located in a library database.

If a work from a library database does not have a DOI, your instructor may prefer to have its URL. We advise asking your instructor.

Attribution & References

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8.11 - CREATING REFERENCE LIST CITATIONS ACTIVITY

Steps to creating a reference list citation

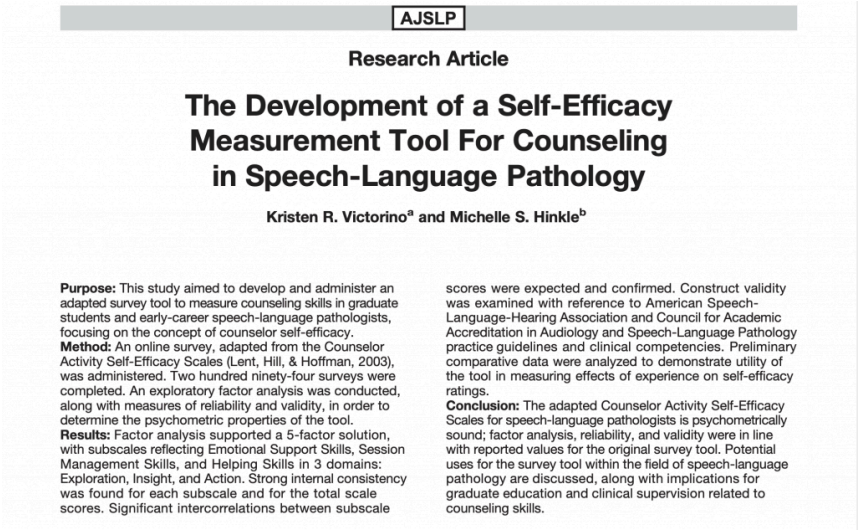
As you've learned, creating a reference citation requires a few steps:

1. Identify the type of source,
2. Identify the 4W's of the work (Who, When, What, Where),
3. Write the reference citation using the 4W's and guidance from a correct example,
4. Lastly, it's also important to proofread your work.

When creating a reference citation, pay attention to the 4W's and how to correctly format each reference citation using punctuation and font emphasis (italics).

Complete the activities below to practice creating reference citations.

Activity 1



AJSLP

Research Article

The Development of a Self-Efficacy Measurement Tool For Counseling in Speech-Language Pathology

Kristen R. Victorino[a] and Michelle S. Hinkle[b]

Purpose: This study aimed to develop and administer an adapted survey tool to measure counseling skills in graduate students and early-career speech-language pathologists, focusing on the concept of counselor self-efficacy.
Method: An online survey, adapted from the Counselor Activity Self-Efficacy Scales (Lent, Hill, & Hoffman, 2003), was administered. Two hundred ninety-four surveys were completed. An exploratory factor analysis was conducted, along with measures of reliability and validity, in order to determine the psychometric properties of the tool.
Results: Factor analysis supported a 5-factor solution, with subscales reflecting Emotional Support Skills, Session Management Skills, and Helping Skills in 3 domains: Exploration, Insight, and Action. Strong internal consistency was found for each subscale and for the total scale scores. Significant intercorrelations between subscale scores were expected and confirmed. Construct validity was examined with reference to American Speech-Language-Hearing Association and Council for Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology practice guidelines and clinical competencies. Preliminary comparative data were analyzed to demonstrate utility of the tool in measuring effects of experience on self-efficacy ratings.
Conclusion: The adapted Counselor Activity Self-Efficacy Scales for speech-language pathologists is psychometrically sound; factor analysis, reliability, and validity were in line with reported values for the original survey tool. Potential uses for the survey tool within the field of speech-language pathology are discussed, along with implications for graduate education and clinical supervision related to counseling skills.

Source: Victorino, K. R. & Hinkle, M. S. (2019, February). The development of a self-efficacy measurement tool for counseling in speech-language pathology. *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology (AJSLP)*, *28*(1), 108-120. [Screenshot used under Fair dealing.]

Reference List Citation Activity – 1

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https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/gccomm/?p=1151#h5p-28

Reference List Citation Activity – 1 (Text version)

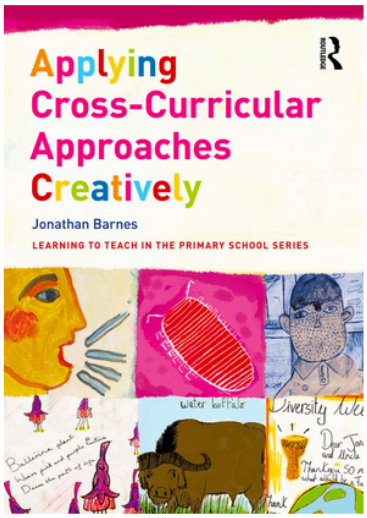
1. You want to write a reference citation for this scholarly journal article. Select all the pieces of information you need to gather in order to write the complete reference citation.

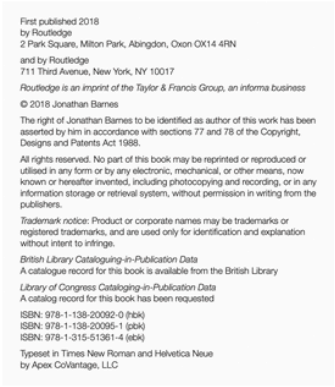
    a. Name of the journal
    b. Year of publication
    c. Author name(s)
    d. Author credentials
    e. DOI
    f. Abstract
    g. Volume and issue numbers
    h. Page range
    i. Title of the article

Check your Answer: [1]

Activity Source: "Creating Reference List Citations Activity" In *APA Style Citation Tutorial* by Sarah Adams and Debbie Feisst, University of Alberta Library, licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 International License

Activity 2




First published 2018
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ISBN: 978-1-138-20095-1 (pbk)
ISBN: 978-1-315-51361-4 (ebk)
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Screenshot source: Jonathan Barnes, Applying cross-curricular approaches creatively. APA reference excluded due to nature of activity. [Screenshots created & used under Fair Dealing by NorQuest College Library,]

You want to create a reference citation for the eBook shown above. Drag and drop each element of the reference citation's 4Ws into their corresponding box to create the eBook's complete reference citation.

Create a Reference List Citation – 1

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/gccomm/?p=1151#h5p-29

Create a Reference List Citation (Text version)

Create a reference list citation by putting the following elements in order:

- https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315513614
- *Applying cross-curricular approaches creatively.*
- (2018).

- Barnes, J.
- Routledge.

Check your Answer: [2]

Activity Source: "Creating Reference List Citations Activity" In *APA Style Citation Tutorial* by Sarah Adams and Debbie Feisst, University of Alberta Library, licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 International License

Activity 3



Image source: The ATA Magazine [Captured & used by University of Alberta Library under Fair Dealing].

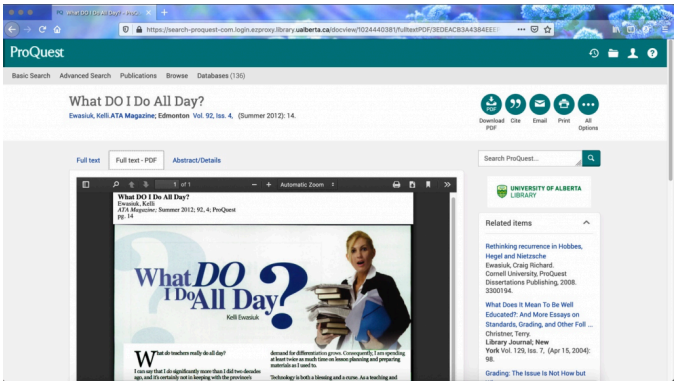


Image source: ProQuest database displaying an article from ATA magazine [Captured & Used by University of Alberta Library under Fair Dealing]

Reference List Citation Activity – 2

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Reference List Citation Activity – 2 (Text version)

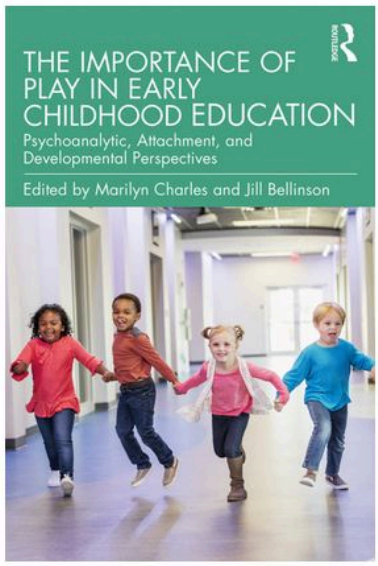
1. Examine the images of the work above. What type of source is this?

    a. Scholarly journal article
    b. Newspaper
    c. Trade publication
    d. eBook

Check your Answer: [3]

Activity Source: "Creating Reference List Citations Activity" In *APA Style Citation Tutorial* by Sarah Adams and Debbie Feisst, University of Alberta Library, licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 International License

Activity 4



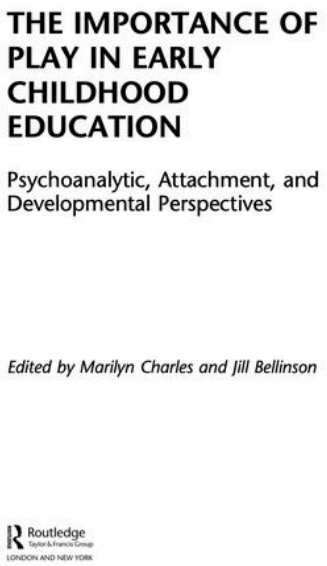


Image source: The Importance of Play in Early Childhood Education (Routledge) [Captured & used under Fair Dealing by University of Alberta Library]

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Image source: Front pages & cover of [The importance of play in early childhood education: Psychoanalytic, attachment, and developmental perspectives](). Routledge. [Captured & used by [University of Alberta Library]() under Fair Dealing].

Reference List Citation Activity – 3

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/gccomm/?p=1151#h5p-31

Reference List Citation Activity – 3 (Text version)

Using the following parts, create the reference list citation for a chapter in an edited book with a DOI.

- *The importance of play in early childhood education: Psychoanalytic, attachment, and developmental perspectives*
- https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315180090
- (2019).
- Creekpaum, S.
- In M. Charles & J. Bellinson (Eds.),

- *(*pp. 11-18).
- Child development through play.
- Routledge

Check your Answer: [4]

Activity Source: "Creating Reference List Citations Activity" In *APA Style Citation Tutorial* by Sarah Adams and Debbie Feisst, University of Alberta Library, licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 International License

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Notes

1. 1. a, b, c, e, g, h, & i are all required.
2. Barnes, J. (2018). *Applying cross-curricular approaches creatively*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315513614
3. c. Trade publication
4. Creekpaum, S. (2019). Child development through play. In M. Charles & J. Bellinson (Eds.), *The importance of play in early childhood education: Psychoanalytic, attachment, and developmental perspectives (*pp. 11-18). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315180090

8.12 - WHAT IS AN IN-TEXT CITATION?

Learning Objective

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

- Create and format in-text citations in APA Style.

You find a great idea or argument in a source that supports your topic and you want to include it. To do this you need to create an in-text citation and add it to your paper where you have discussed evidence from that source, either as a direct quote or a paraphrase. In-text citations tell your reader which ideas belong to you and which ideas belong to someone else.

Watch APA in-text citations on YouTube (9 mins)

There are two different ways that you can include in-text citations into your assignments: as a parenthetical citation or as a narrative citation.

Parenthetical vs. Narrative Citations

The following example (Figure 1) shows how these two types of in-text citations have been included in a paper. Click on the ℹ symbol to learn about them.

Figure 1: Two types of in-text citations included in a paper

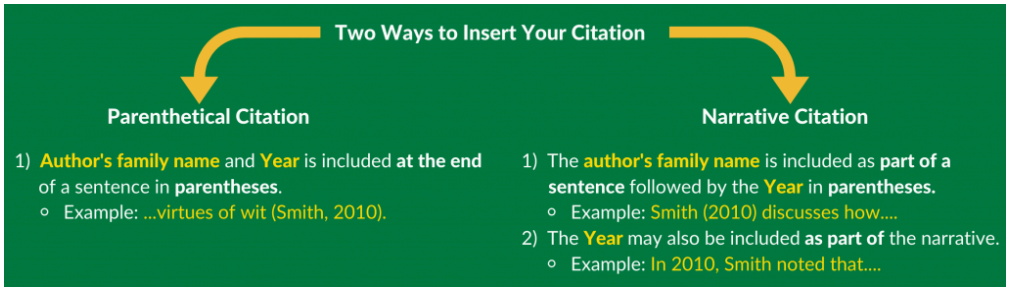


An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/gccomm/?p=1159#h5p-32

- **Citing Multiple Sources of the same information:** Each work is separated with a semicolon and ordered alphabetically, like in this example: (Betoret, 2006; Perrier et al., 2010).
- **Parenthetical In-Text Citation:** (Betoret, 2006; Perrier et al., 2010). This is a parenthetical in-text citation where the writer has paraphrased a common idea from two different works. It's inserted after the paraphrased sentence and before the ending punctuation. The parenthetical citation format for a work is: the family name or group name of the author(s), a comma, and the publication year all in parentheses.
- **Narrative In-Text Citation:** "Berkman and Glass (2000) define social support as having an individual or group of individuals who provide resources, abstract and/or tangible, to another." This sentence has a narrative in-text citation that is paraphrased. It is formatted with the author's family name within the paper's narrative directly followed by the year in parentheses.

Figure 2: An infographic showing the two types of in-text citations: parenthetical and narrative

Figure 2 below provides an overview of these two types.



"Two types of in-text citation" by University of Alberta Library , used under CC BY-NC-SA.

- **Parenthetical citations** include the author's family name, year in parentheses at the end of a sentence. Example: ... virtues of wit (Smith, 2010).
- A **narrative citation** includes the author's family name as part of the sentence followed by the year in parentheses or as part of the narrative. Example: Smith (2010) discusses how...

The year may also be included as part of the narrative. Example: In 2010, Smith noted that...

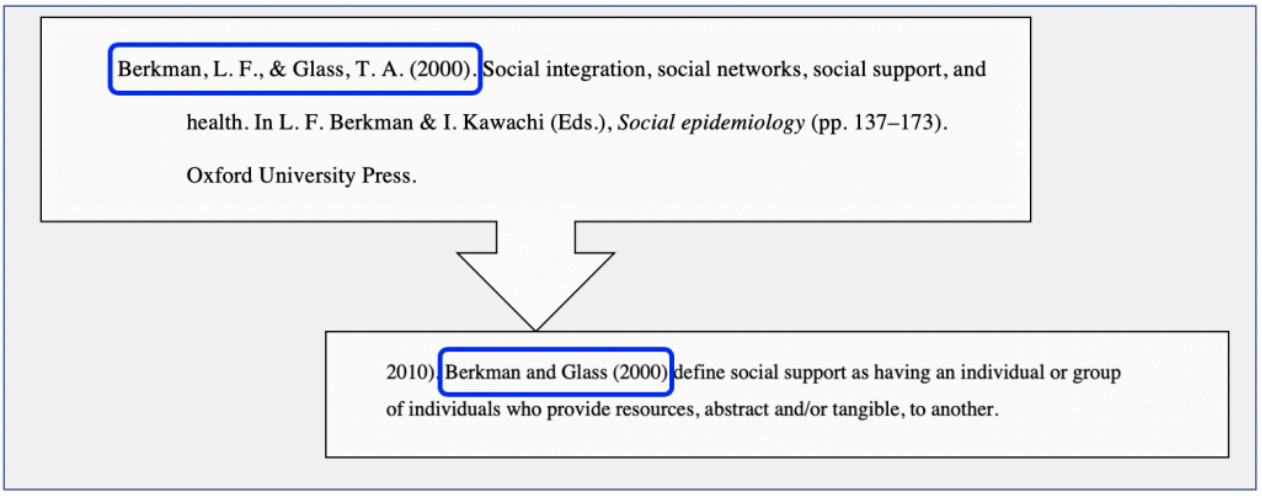
Formatting an in-text citation

As you can see, an in-text citation is formatted using three key pieces:

1. Parentheses,
2. Author's family name or group name, and
3. Year.

In-text citation information is pulled directly from its matching reference list citation. So, it is easiest to create the reference citation first and then its matching in-text citation, as in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Reference page entry vs. narrative in-text citation



"Reference vs. in-text" by University of Alberta Library , used under CC BY-NC-SA.

- A reference page entry for authors Berkman, L. F., & Glass, T. A., (2000) is compared to the coordinating in-text citation that you would use in your paper. While the reference page entry contains all information about the source, the narrative citation in your paper that points to this reference page entry would be written with

just the author's surnames and the year in the format: Berkman and Glass (2000) ...

So far we have focused on paraphrasing examples. So next, we're going to look at quotation examples for in-text citations.

When you use a direct quote instead of a paraphrase, you also need to include the quote's location in the work. Additionally, when you paraphrase specific passages in longer-length works, you include the location. Location information is added to your in-text citation directly after the date. For example, a parenthetical citation would look like: (Smith, 2010, pp. 3-4).

> *Note that instructors often prefer location information for all in-text citations, so check with your instructor.*

For the following quotation examples, click on the ℹ symbol to learn about how to add in-text citations for short quotes and block quotes.

Short Direct Quote In-Text Citation Examples

Figure 4: Narrative Citation

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/gccomm/?p=1159#h5p-33

- **Example text:** While acknowledging the importance of culture, Tronick (2007), a developmental child psychologist, satirically notes that, "Culture is often referred to, even deferred to, but only superficially and rarely well" (p. 6). If we take Tronick's...
- This is a narrative in-text citation (Tronick, 2007) for a short direct quote. For short quotes, they are included in your papers as part of the narrative and must be less than 40 words.
- The general format of a narrative in-text citation for a short quote is:
  - an introductory phrase that includes the author, followed by the year in parentheses: **Tronick (2007), a developmental child psychologist, satirically notes that,**
  - the quote in quotations: **"Culture is often referred to, even deferred to, but only**

superficially and rarely well"

- location information in parentheses, followed by ending punctuation: **(p. 6).**

Figure 5: Parenthetical Citation



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/gccomm/?p=1159#h5p-34

- **Example text:** ... children are better at showing than telling. "When viewed from this perspective, toys are used like words by children and play is their language" (Landreth, 1991, p. 14). Hence, play offers a glimpse into a child's mind.
- This is a parenthetical citation for a short quote. The parenthetical citation (Landreth, 1991, p. 14) is inserted after the quote and includes the author's family name or group name, year, and page number. The ending punctuation follows after.

Block Direct Quote In-Text Citation Examples

Figure 6: Block Direct Quote – Narrative Citation



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/gccomm/?p=1159#h5p-35

- **Example text:** Court decision ruling outlawing racial school segregation. Clark (1955) noted:

> One of the most characteristic and impressive things about the American people are their dedication to their children ... Almost no sacrifice is too great for parents to make if it will benefit their children. Parents will work, scheme, attend church, buy life and endowment insurance, move from country to city, from city to Suburbs, from one neighborhood to another, from south to north, from east to west – All for the welfare of their children. (p. 3)

- This narrative block quote example is labelled to show how block quotes are formatted. They are used when citing a quote 40 words or more. The quoted block

of text is indented 1/2 inch.
- Location information follows after ending the punctuation. No quotation marks are used as the passage is indented.

Figure 7: Block Direct Quote – Parenthetical Citation



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/gccomm/?p=1159#h5p-36

- **Example text: ...**have been expelled and disintegrated of the child's self, leading to what Archangelo (2007) has called *parroting*. As the author points out, it

> ... would enable the child to delimit and organize his own internal space, so that he can reintroject those parts and, hopefully, the parts he needs in order to learn. What I am suggesting – which I will call the process of parroting – is means of being a good container without being intrusive to the child: a way to help the child listen to what goes on within himself. [...] The parroting approach could metaphorically be expressed as follows: The child would say: "listen to what I'm saying, that's me, these are fragments of myself. I cannot bear and contain what I am." And by parroting, the adult would reply: "Listen to what you've said. There is a unity if we bind the parts. And this unity may not be unbearable at all, though you feel differently." (Archangelo, 2007, pp. 343-344)

- This is a parenthetical citation for a block quote. The citation is added at the very end after the ending punctuation on the same line. The work's quote is on two consecutive pages, so the page numbers include a dash.

Location Information

The chart below details some location information examples and their appropriate abbreviation that you will use when quoting a source or when paraphrasing a specific passage in a longer-length work.

Location information examples and appropriate abbreviations

Type	Use	Example
Page	p.	p. 3
Pages	pp.	pp. 3-5
Paragraph	para.	para. 4
Paragraphs	paras.	paras. 4-5
Table	Table	Table 1
Time stamp	00:00:00	1:30:40
Slide(s)	Slide #	Slide 7
Act, Scene, Line(s)	0.0.00-00	1.3.36-37

Note: Your instructor may prefer you include location information for all in-text citations. We advise asking your instructor.

Now that we've covered the basics of in-text citations, head to the next section to complete a few in-text citation practice activities.

Attribution & References

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References shown in H5P activities:

- Tronick, E. (2007). *The neurobehavioural and social-emotional development of infants and children*. Norton.
- Landreth, G. L. (1991). *Play therapy: The art of the relationship.* Accelerated Development.

- Clark, K. B. (1955). *Prejudice and your child*. Beacon Press.
- Archangelo, A. (2007). A psychoanalytic approach to education: “Problem” children and Bick’s idea of skin formation. *Psychoanalysis, Culture & Society*, *12*(4), 332-348

8.13 - IN-TEXT CITATIONS ACTIVITY

In-text citation practice

In this section, complete the following three activities to practice creating parenthetical and narrative in-text citations by typing in the in-text citation.

In-text citation practice (Text version)

Fill in the missing in-text citation using the reference citation provided above each sentence. Click on the information bubble for help if needed.

1. **Matching reference citation for the following question:**
   Den Heyer, K. (2009). Implicated and called upon: Challenging an educated position of self, others, knowledge and knowing as things to acquire. *Critical Literacy: Theories and Practices*, *3*(1), 26-36. http://www.criticalliteracyjournal.org/**Complete this sentence with the parenthetical citation for this paraphrased sentence:**
   The purpose of information mastery is often to ensure student success on standardized testing in order to show schools and school boards how well students are learning from their teachers (_____).
2. **Matching reference citation for the following question:**
   Peck, C. (2011). Ethnicity and students' historical understandings. In P. Clark (Ed.), *New possibilities for the past: Shaping history education in Canada* (pp. 305-324). UBC Press.**Complete this sentence with the narrative citation for this paraphrased sentence:**
   It is important to consider all perspectives when representing history because, according to _____.
3. **Matching reference citation for the following question:**
   Anderson, C., Carrell, A., & Widdifield, J. L. (2010). *What every student should know about citing sources with APA documentation*. Allyn & Bacon.
   The quote is from page 13.**Complete this sentence with the parenthetical citation for this direct short quote sentence:**

Students can sometimes “get overwhelmed with citation but with experts like librarians to help them learn the basics they are able to succeed” (_____).

Check your Answer: [1]

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Notes

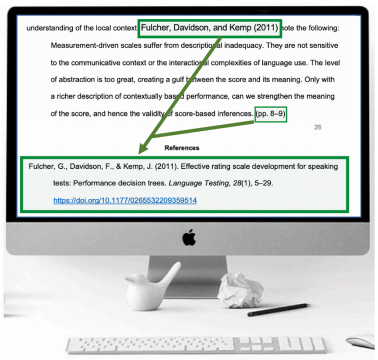
1. 1. (Den Heyer, 2009), 2. Peck (2011), 3. (Anderson et al., 2010, p. 13).

8.14 - HOW IT ALL WORKS TOGETHER

Learning Objective

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

- Create and format reference list and in-text citations in APA Style.



"[In-Text Citation Example in Apple MAC Desktop Computer]" by NorQuest College Library's, licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0

As we have covered, reference list citations and in-text citations should match each other. They work together to clearly indicate which sources provide support to your assignment.



"mismatch socks" by Rik Panganiban , used under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

You wouldn't want to wear mismatched socks, just like you don't want mismatched citations!

You want your in-text and reference list citations (and socks) to match each other!

One exception is personal communication, which is cited as an in-text citation, but is not included in the reference list.



"Opinion" by unknown author is licensed under CC0.



"X-ray socks" by unknown author , used under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 International

Why? Your reader can't access your personal experiences.

In the next section, you will practice matching in-text citations with their reference citation.

Attribution & References

This chapter (text & images) is adapted from "How it all works together" In *APA Style Citation Tutorial* by Sarah Adams and Debbie Feisst, University of Alberta Library, licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 International License. / Adaptations include adjusted CC license notes.

8.15 - MATCHING REFERENCE AND IN-TEXT CITATIONS ACTIVITY

Matching References Practice

For the four questions in this activity, match the reference citation to their corresponding in-text citation by choosing the correct in-text citation from a selection of choices.

Matching References Practice (Text version)

1. Godin, K. M., Patte, K. A., & Leatherdale, S. T. (2018, February). Examining predictors of breakfast skipping and breakfast program use among secondary school students in the COMPASS study. *Journal of School Health, 88*(2), 150-158. https://doi.org/10.1111/josh.12590.Select the correct **in-text citation** that matches the **reference citation** above for a **journal article with a DOI**.
   a. (*Journal of School Health*, 2018)
   b. (Examining predictors of breakfast skipping and breakfast program use among secondary school students in the COMPASS study, 2018)
   c. (Godin, Patte, & Leatherdale, 2018)
   d. (Godin et al., 2018)
2. Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness. (n.d.). *Historical thinking concepts*. Historical Thinking Project. http://historicalthinking.ca/historical-thinking-concepts.Select the correct **in-text citation** that matches the **reference citation** above for a **webpage with no date**.
   a. (Historical thinking concepts, n.d.)
   b. (Center for the Study of Historical Consciousness, n.d.)
   c. (Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness)
   d. (Historical Thinking Project, n.d.)
3. McRae, P. (2020, Winter). Ambiguous but gaining momentum. *ATA Magazine, 100*(2), 30-32. https://www.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/ATA%20Magazine/Vol%20100/Vol100-No2-Winter_2020.pdf.Select the correct **in-text citation** that matches the **reference citation** above for a **trade publication from a webpage.**
   a. (McRae, 2020)

   b. (Ambiguous but gaining momentum, 2020)
   c. (ATA Magazine, 2020)
   d. (McRae, 2020, Winter)
4. Sensoy, Ö., & DiAngelo, R. (2017). *Is everyone really equal?: An introduction to key concepts in social justice education* (2nd ed.). Teachers College Press.Select the correct **in-text citation** that matches the **reference citation** above for an **eBook with an edition** and **no DOI**.
   a. (Teachers College Press, 2017)
   b. (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017)
   c. (Sensoy et al., 2017)
   d. (*Is everyone really equal?: An introduction to key concepts in social justice education*, 2017)

Check your Answer: [1]

Attribution & References

This chapter (text & H5P activities) is adapted from "Matching reference and in-text citations" In *APA Style Citation Tutorial* by Sarah Adams and Debbie Feisst, University of Alberta Library, licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 International License. / Screenshots of references replaced with text versions.

Notes

1. 1. d, 2. b, 3. a, 4. b.

8.16 - APA DOCUMENT FORMATTING

Learning Objectives

- Describe APA document formatting guidelines for the title page and headers

APA Formatting

APA papers should have 1-inch margins at the top, bottom, left, and right of the page. The font should be easy to read and in a standard size, such as 12-point Times New Roman, 11-point Calibri, or 11-point Arial. The paper should be double-spaced with the text aligned on the left margin, with the first lines of paragraphs indented. Page numbers should be listed in the top-right corner of the page.

APA Title Page

APA papers should begin with a title page that includes:

- A page number at the top right corner (title page is page 1)
- The title in bold font centered in the upper half of the page
- Your name centered two double spaces below the title
- Student number if required by your professor (if in doubt, ask!)
- Your affiliation (name of your school) centered below your name
- Your course name
- Your instructor's name
- The due date

Watch It

This video shows you how to set up your APA Style paper.

Watch APA title page and paper format on YouTube (3 mins)

Using Headings in APA

Many APA papers require the use of headings. Headings in your paper are separate from your paragraphs. They work to let readers know what content is coming and to help organize your information in a hierarchical structure.

For most college writers, most of the time, APA first-level headings are all we need (such as the title, abstract, or conclusion) but in some cases, we have to take it to the second level. But, if you have to create a larger project in APA, chances are you really are going to need to know how to use third and fourth-level headings.

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

What headings should look like

Title of Your Paper

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

First Level of Headings

First-level headings can appear throughout your paper as well. They should be centered, in **bold** font, and in Title Case.

Second Level of Headings

Second-level headings are for sections within first-level headings, so you would use second-level headings to break up a bigger section that you have established with a first-level heading. Second-level headings are placed flush against the left margin, in **bold** font, and in Title Case.

Third Level of Headings

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

Fourth Level of Headings. Your paragraph begins right here on the same line. Fourth-level headings are sections inside third-level headings. Fourth-level headings are indented or tabbed once from the left margin, in **bold** font, in Title Case for capitalization, and end with a period. Your text should also appear on the same line as a fourth-level heading.

Fifth Level of Headings. Your paragraph begins right here on the same line. The final level of headings APA describes is the fifth-level heading. This fifth level would be necessary if you need to break up your fourth-level section into additional sections. Fifth-level headings are tabbed once from the left margin, in **bold** and *italic* font, in Title Case for capitalization, and end with a period. Just like fourth-level headings, your text begins after the period.

APA Formatting Checklist

Step through this presentation to review the critical components of authoring a paper in APA style. Download/save a text-based version of the APA Formatting checklist [PDF]

APA Formatting Checklist (Text version)

Title page format

My title page includes the following:

- A page number at the top right corner (title page is page 1)
- My title in bold font centered in the upper half of the page
- My name centered two double spaces below my title
- My affiliation (name of my school) centered below my name

- My course name centered below my affiliation
- My instructor's name centered below my course name
- The due date centered below my instructor's name

Abstract

I have included an abstract page (summary of the contents of your essay) if required.*

- The APA recommends no more than 250 words.
- Place the abstract on its own page.
- Center "Abstract" in bold, at the top of the page.
- The first line is not indented.
- Double space the text.
- Below the abstract are keywords. List key words or concepts that are covered in your essay.

***Note:** Abstracts are not normally required for student papers. Always follow your professor's instructions.

Alignment

- My text is aligned at the left margin but ragged at the right margin. This is called flush-left style

Blocked Quotations

I have used the block format for all quotations that are 40 words or more in length.

- Double spaced
- No quotation marks
- Indented 1/2 inch from left margin
- Period

Body of Essay Format

- I have included an abstract page (if required) and an introduction and conclusion to frame the ideas presented in my body paragraphs.

Headings

- I have used at least one level of headings with the first level being centered and in bold with upper- and lower-case letters. If I have used a second level of heading, those headings are aligned on the left and in bold with upper- and lower-case letters.

Indenting for paragraphs

- I have indented the first line of every paragraph 1/2" using the tab key for consistency.
- The remaining lines of my paragraph are left aligned.

In-Text Citations

- I have documented all summarized, paraphrased, and quoted material with a correct in-text citation.
- I have placed the period after my citations in all cases, except for block quotes.
- Examples:
    - o Narrative citation – If author(s) mentioned in text, only bracket the year of publication: **Stapleton and Helms-Park (2006)** introduced a multi-trait instrument to help students...
    - o Parenthetical citation – If author(s) not mentioned in text, bracket author(s) and year of publication: "... considered independently of intellectual mastery of that subject" **(Booth, 1963, p. 139).**

Italics

- I have placed titles of longer works, such as books and journals, in italics in both my text and in my references list.

Line spacing

- My lines of text are all double spaced throughout my paper.
- Exceptions:
- There is an exception on my title page where there is an extra double space between my title and the rest of the information on my title page.
- There are also exceptions where I may single space in a table body, figure, footnotes, and equations.

Margins

- My margins are 1 inch on the top, bottom, left, and right sides of each page.

Page numbers

- My page number appears in the top right-hand corner of all of my pages, including my title page.
- This page number should be created using the header function of my word-processing program

and should be flush against the right margin.

Quotation marks

- I have placed quotation marks around all directly quoted material AND any article or chapter titles when these are mentioned in the text.
- **Note:** Article titles are not placed in quotes in the References list, only in the body of the paper.

References

- I have created a separate references page and centered the word “References” at the top.
- I have included a full reference for every source cited in my text.
- I have placed my references in alphabetical order, and used a hanging indent for all lines after the first line of each entry.

Text spacing

- I have inserted one space after punctuation marks, including those at the ends of sentences.
- I have inserted no spaces between internal periods in abbreviations, such as U.S. and a.m.

Typeface

- I have used a clear, accessible font and have used the same font throughout my paper.
- Options include but are not limited to
- san serif fonts like 11-point Calibri, 11-point Arial, and 10-point Lucida Sans Unicode or
- serif fonts like 12-point Times New Roman or 11-point Georgia.

URLs & DOIs

- I have formatted all of my URLs and DOIs to appear in black without underlining or with the default settings in my word-processing program.
- If my work will be viewed online, I have used live links.
- **Note:** URL stands for Uniform Resource Locators (web address). DOI stands for Digital Object Identifier.

Writing lists

- I have ensured that my numbered, bulleted, or lettered list items are parallel and that I have reviewed the APA guidelines for lists.

Writing Numbers

- I have used words to express numbers below 10.
- I have used numerals to express any numbers 10 or greater.
- I have also used numerals to express any times, dates, or ages

Writing Style

- I have aimed for a clear, clean writing style and have used first-person pronouns only when necessary and appropriate for my assignment.
- I have also used the singular "they" as a generic, third-person singular pronoun.

Activity source: APA Formatting Checklist by Excelsior Online Writing Lab, licensed under CC BY 4.0. / Minor updates for accessibility and user experience.

Attribution & References

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- APA Formatting Guide. **Provided by:** Excelsior OWL. **License:** *CC BY: Attribution*

CHAPTER 9: PRESENTATIONS

Communication Essentials for College by Jen Booth, Emily Cramer & Amanda Quibell

- 9.1 – Why should I learn public speaking?
- 9.2 – Why am I so nervous?
- 9.3 – How to be clear
- 9.4 – How to structure your presentation
- 9.5 – How to deliver your presentation
- 9.6 – How to make slides & visuals

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Please visit the web version of *Communication Essentials for College* to access the complete book, interactive activities and ancillary resources.

9.1 - WHY SHOULD I LEARN PUBLIC SPEAKING?

Learning Objectives

- Describe the many benefits of public speaking
- Explain why public speaking is important to your career

The benefits of public speaking

Learning to present effectively has many benefits that will positively affect your career, education and personal life. These benefits include:

- Communicating clearly with others
- Increased self-esteem and confidence
- Managing stress
- Improved polish and professionalism
- Teamwork
- Listening skills
- Giving feedback
- Being able to "think on your feet"

What are you most excited about learning in this course?

Why are public speaking skills so important? An incredibly brief history of communication

A time before reading & writing

Long ago there was no writing. Information, culture and history were passed down orally. In other words, people told stories. If you wanted power or influence you had to be a great presenter.

An example of this is Canada's Indigenous peoples, including Vancouver's Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh communities. They had no written language, so they used stories, such as the ones symbolized in these totem poles in Stanley Park, to pass down wisdom.

The rise of written communication

Then came a major shift – the rise of written communication. The printing press was introduced to Europe in the mid-1400's, which meant that books could be mass produced. The western world became more and more literate over the following centuries, and the influence of written communication grew. Instead of just stories and presentations, reading and writing became a major way of wielding power. If you wanted to influence people, you'd write books or own a newspaper.

Radio, television, and the return to presentations

The arrival of radio and television marked another major shift – this time away from the written word and back towards presentations. People still read books and newspapers, but radio and TV allowed them to see and hear other people presenting live.

More and more channels grew as we continued this trend away from just words and towards media presentations. In the 1980s and 1990s, if you wanted power, or to influence people, you'd own a TV network.

Today, and new media

This brings us today. People have shorter attention spans and don't want to read as a much. We love to watch content (YouTube, TikTok, Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook

videos). And all of that content is basically other people presenting – speaking in public. Tons of people are doing it, and in super engaging ways.

In many ways we've come full circle since the ancient days of needing to be a good presenter in order to influence people. The difference today is that instead of influencing small groups, you can reach millions of people.

Because we see so many engaging presentations every day, being able to present well is becoming an expectation – not just on social media, but in real life. Reading and writing still counts, but many situations – including video applications and online interviews – require strong presentation skills.

Presentation skills – the ability to communicate clearly, professionally and confidently – are crucial to compete in today's job market and progress in your career.

Test your knowledge

Test your knowledge (Text version)

Match the words to the correct blanks

- social media
- written word
- telling stories
- radio and television

Long ago, before written language, people communicated through (1) _____. After the invention of the printing press and with increased literacy, people wielded power and controlled information through (2) _____. The invention of (3) _____ started a trend back towards people hearing and seeing presentations in their own homes. Today, there is an increasing expectation that everyone will present well because of (4) _____.

Check your Answer: [1]

Activity Source: "Why should I learn public speaking?" In *Business Presentation Skills* by Lucinda Atwood & Christian Westin licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0.

Attribution & References

Except where otherwise noted, this chapter (H5P & text) is adapted from "Why should I learn public speaking?" In *Business Presentation Skills* by Lucinda Atwood & Christian Westin licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0.

Notes

1. 1. Telling stories, 2. written word, 3. radio and television, 4. social media

9.2 - WHY AM I SO NERVOUS?

Learning Objectives

- describe some of the causes for the fear of public speaking
- identify some coping strategies to help build your confidence

Why do we get so nervous?

If you feel nervous when speaking in public, or even just *thinking* about speaking in public, you're not alone. In fact, public speaking is a common fear; some people are terrified just thinking about it.

Most of us can talk to our family and friends without fear, but when facing an audience – especially if it's people we don't know – we get nervous. Why?

Four things contribute to our public speaking fears:

1. Experiences
2. Expectations
3. Biology
4. Lack of practice

1. Experiences

We tend to remember situations in which we have been hurt or suffered in some way; it's our brain's way of protecting us from being hurt again. When we think about presenting, we remember past experiences of presenting. If you didn't know how to present well, maybe you were boring or forgot what to say. Maybe people laughed at

you, or you felt embarrassed and ashamed. Your brain will remember presenting as painful and embarrassing – something to avoid.

The good news is that as you create new, positive memories of presenting in public, they'll replace those earlier negative memories.

2. Expectations

We may have beliefs about what will happen when we speak in public. These are sometimes reinforced by past experiences, and can include the following:

I might...

- *Forget what to say*
- *Look nervous*
- *Be boring*
- *Not make sense*
- *Be shy*
- *Be the only bad presenter in the class*
- *Say the wrong thing*
- *Forget how to speak English*

What beliefs do you have about speaking in public?

3. Biology

When faced with a stressful situation, our brain activates the ***fight or flight*** response, an ancient mechanism designed to protect us from danger. When we go into fight or flight response, our body releases adrenaline, which can cause:

- Rapid, shallow breathing
- Increased heartbeat
- Sweating
- Stomach discomfort, dry throat
- Feeling like you need to pee
- Mind going blank
- Tunnel vision
- Muscles tense or tremble
- Feeling too hot or too cold

- Goosebumps
- Hunching
- Changed perception of time
- Difficulty sleeping the night before your presentation

The fight or flight response is useful if we're under attack and need to protect ourselves, but not if we're delivering a presentation! These reactions are the exact opposite of what helps us present well. But they *are* normal – even professional presenters experience them. And they don't mean that you're a bad speaker; it's just biology! Luckily there are lots of strategies to reduce or eliminate your fight or flight symptoms.

Take a moment to think about what happens to your body when you're feeling nervous. Imagine that you're about to present in front of a large audience. What physical symptoms do you notice?

4. Lack of practice

If we don't have a lot of public speaking experience, or haven't done it for a long time, it can be scary. And if we don't know how to manage our fears, it can become terrifying. One of the great benefits of taking this this course is that you'll a chance to present in a safe environment. We'll work on how to present well, how to manage the fear, and offer some opportunities to practice your skills. The more you present, the easier it gets. Promise!

Coping strategies

These practices help keep your nerves in check before, during and after your presentation.

Practice

Practice is the most effective coping strategy. When you know your content, you're more confident. And because you're not struggling to remember the content, you can focus on delivery. We recommend that you practice any presentation at least ten times.

- Practice delivering & timing your speech: rehearse in front of family, friends, pets, a mirror
- Practice silently on transit or walking down the street

- Record yourself
- Practice until you don't need notes

Before your presentation

Calming techniques

- Take slow, deep breaths
- Meditate
- Visualize success
- Workout earlier in the day to regulate your hormones
- Substitute negative thoughts with positive ones
- Remind yourself that you're only presenting to a few classmates, not thousands of people
- Remind yourself that your audience wants you to succeed

Biology hacks

- Stay hydrated
- Use the bathroom
- Ensure you're cool / warm enough (wear layers or adjust thermostat)
- Adopt power poses, as described by Dr Amy Cuddy in her famous TED Talk [New tab]

Preparation

- Create a presentation that uses *your* language (don't try to be someone you're not) Speak like you do in conversation; don't be formal or try to impress your audience with fancy words.
- Practice! (At least 10 times is best)
- Familiarize yourself with the setting/room ahead of time
- Familiarize yourself with the equipment ahead of time
- Dress comfortably & appropriately
- Bring water to drink
- Arrive early

During your presentation

- Remember to breathe. If you get anxious, pause and take a long slow breath in through your nose.
- Have water nearby (in a spill-proof container)
- Nobody knows exactly what you're planning to say, so if you stumble, just continue on
- If you feel overwhelmed, try to concentrate on *what* you're saying, not *how* you're saying it

When to seek help for anxiety

It's natural to experience some nervousness when speaking in public. But for some people, significant anxiety makes it really difficult to "press through the fear." If you're feeling distressed, overwhelmed, or have concerns about your wellbeing, please know that there are many resources available. You may want to start by speaking with your instructor, health care provider, or contacting the your college's Counseling Department.

Shame Waves

Shame Waves – Article/Text

You just gave the best presentation ever. You were calm, confident and engaging. The audience loved you!

But now you're done. Flooded with adrenaline, your brain works quickly, evaluating your performance — your dreadful, awful performance. In high resolution, your brain replays the errors, the omissions, the failures. Moments ago you were proud, now you're embarrassed.

What happened?

You've been hit by a shame wave. It may feel like you're drowning in shame, but you can and will survive.

What's a shame wave?

A shame wave is a strong, sudden tidal wave of shame and embarrassment that slams into many people right after they do something in public, whether it's giving a presentation or speaking up in class. Shame waves attack beginners and experts.

Where do shame waves come from?

Humans are social creatures. We crave community. Community helps us survive and thrive.

But our community has to accept us or they might abandon us. Public actions – like giving a presentation – are risky. If the community doesn't like our performance, they might not want us. So our brains use embarrassment as a tool to stop us from doing things the community might not like.

Embarrassment keeps us safe, but too much can cause a shame wave.

Why are shame waves bad?

Although their intentions are good — to protect us — shame waves drown us in powerful negative messages. Shame Waves tell us "for our own good" that:

- You're not perfect
- Failure is bad
- Because you're not perfect, you're a failure

Those messages are evil. Failure is a normal, necessary part of learning. We do very few things perfectly the first time — almost everything you've learned took more than one attempt. If you refuse to do things you're not good at, you won't learn. And you need to be a lifelong learner to have a great life.

How do shame waves affect our confidence?

It's human nature to evaluate our own performance. This helps us learn and improve. But shame

waves are destructive. Not to be confused with useful feedback, which is gentle, timely and appropriate, shame waves are violent, inconsiderate and hateful.

- Shame Waves damage your self-confidence
- They also damage your learning-confidence — the belief that you can improve at something
- Shame waves can make you give up

Shame waves focus on the negative. Reviewing our performance, we tend to remember only mistakes and problems. Even if 99% was perfect, shame waves focus on the 1% that wasn't.

Try this simple perspective trick: Hold your hand at arm's length. How big is it? Now hold it right in front of your eyes. How big is it now? Huge, right? It's the same with shame waves; if we focus on the 1%, it feels like *everything* was terrible. Now we feel ashamed, embarrassed and hopeless.

Grab a strategy and enjoy the ride

We need coping strategies to support ourselves. Good coping strategies are like surfboards that help us ride shame waves to safety. Good strategies can decrease the number of shame waves that hit, and the amount of damage done.

Coping strategies can be simple, like taking a few slow breaths. They can be complex, like retraining our thoughts. Here are some useful coping strategies:

Coping strategies

1. Expect shame waves. They're normal; most people experience them. When it hits, just say to yourself, *There's my shame wave, right on schedule.*
2. Remind yourself that your brain's being mean but its intentions are good. Thank your brain and tell it to be nicer.
3. Expect to be imperfect, and to make mistakes. Focus on what you learned from the experience.
4. Think about next time: What will you do better next time?
5. Meditate. Do nothing except sit with the shame. Allow it to wash over you. Don't try to fix it. Just sit and feel shame's heat. Let it blaze and rage until it burns itself out.
6. Breathe. A long, deep, slow breath in through your nose, then out through your mouth. Relax.
7. Tell someone you trust about your shame wave. Talking can help weaken its power. And you'll probably discover that you're not alone.
8. Practice the 10-10-10 rule: How will you feel about your performance in 10 hours? 10 weeks?

10 years? Adjust as necessary.

You'll find that some of these strategies resonate with you and some don't. That's fine. Find what works, and make your own surfboard of strategies. Next time a shame wave hits, grab your coping strategies surfboard and ride to the Beach of Calm Self-Acceptance.

Audio & transcript source: "Why am I so nervous?" In *Business Presentation Skills* by Lucinda Atwood & Christian Westin licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0.

Fears Quiz – Test your knowledge

Fears Quiz – Test your Knowledge (Text version)

1. True or false? Fears associated with public speaking are normal. They can stem from past experiences, beliefs about ourselves, our biology, and a lack of practice.
2. Complete the sentence by adding the following words in the correct place: equipment, practise, early, dress, setting:
   In order to set yourself up for success in advance of a presentation, familiarize yourself with the (a) _____, such as where you and the audience will be situated, and the (b) _____, such as a microphone or presentation remote control. You should also arrive (c) _____, (d) _____ comfortably and appropriately, and (e) _____ ahead of time.
3. Some calming techniques that you can engage in before your presentation include:
   a. Working out earlier in the day to regulate your hormones, visualizing success, and replacing negative thoughts with positive ones.
   b. Working out after your presentation, visualizing a past time when you were nervous, and replacing positive thoughts with negative ones.
   c. Taking quick, shallow breaths.
   d. Drinking lots of tea or coffee
4. Fill in the missing words:

Some biology hacks when getting ready to deliver your presentation include: drinking water to ensure you're properly (a) _____, wearing layers or adjusting the room temperature to ensure you're comfortable, and adopting power (b) _____, as recommended by Dr. Amy Cuddy.

5. Complete the sentence by adding the following words in the correct place: talking, breathe, perspective, learned
   Shame Waves are normal. Some coping strategies for dealing with them include: Focusing on what you (a) _____ from the experience, remembering to (b) _____ deeply, (c) _____ to someone you trust about the experience, and taking (d) _____ to remember that you may not feel this shame as intensely in the future.

Check your Answers: [1]

Activity Source: "Why am I so nervous?" In *Business Presentation Skills* by Lucinda Atwood & Christian Westin licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0.

Attribution & References

Except where otherwise noted, this chapter (H5P & text) is adapted from "Why am I so nervous?" In *Business Presentation Skills* by Lucinda Atwood & Christian Westin licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0.

Notes

1.
   1. a
   2. a) setting, b) equipment, c) early, d) dress, e) practise.
   3. (a). perspective.
   4. a) hydrated, b) poses.
   5. a) learned, b) breathe, c) talking, d)

9.3 - HOW TO BE CLEAR

Learning Objectives

- identify methods to engage an audience by being easy to understand

What is Clear Communication and why is it important?

Watch Clear communication for Presenters on YouTube (2 mins)

Tips for presenters:

1. Think from the audience's point of view:
    - What do they need to know?
    - What do they already know?
    - What interests them?
    - How much background info do they need?
2. Avoid bland words such as *really* or *very*. Use strong words instead. For example: *brilliant* is stronger (and more interesting) than *very smart*
3. Speak to the senses: use descriptive words that help your audience see, hear, feel, taste and smell what you're talking about

Clear Communication – Test your Knowledge

Clear Communication – Test your Knowledge (Text version)

1. What is clear communication?
    a. Speaking really loudly
    b. Making your message easy to understand
    c. Clear communication is easy for your audience to quickly understand
    d. Dumbing down your message
    e. Speaking really slowly
2. Finish the sentence by inserting the following words into the right place: included, audience, respect, easy
   Clear communication: makes you (a) _____ to understand, shows (b) _____ for your (c) _____ and helps everyone feel (d) _____.
3. True or false? Clear communication includes gestures.
4. True or false? Knowing your audience helps you give precise information
5. True or false? When presenting you should speak formally and use big words to impress the audience.

Check your Answer: [1]

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Attribution & References

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Notes

1.

1. b) Clear communication is easy for your audience to quickly understand.
2. a) easy, b) respect, c) audience, d) included.
3. True. Clear communication includes gestures, writing, design and presentation slides.
4. True. When you know your audience you can provide content that they want and need.
5. False. Speak like you do in conversation and use simple, common words. Your audience will appreciate it.

9.4 - HOW TO STRUCTURE YOUR PRESENTATION

Learning Objectives

- organize your presentation into a clear, simple structure
- use valid resources and avoid plagiarism

Structure

There are lots of ways to structure a presentation, but we like this one best. It's clear, simple and fits most presentations. This structure has 10 parts:

1. Grabber/hook: A very brief and interesting statement or question that grabs the audience's attention
2. Self-introduction including full name & credential: Who you are and why you're qualified to present this content
3. Thesis: What you're going to speak about
4. Overview of main points
5. Key point 1
6. Key point 2
7. Key point 3
8. Conclusion: Restate the thesis
9. Summary of main points: Restate the overview
10. Call to action: What you want the audience to do

Beginning

In this part of your presentation, you'll capture the audience's attention, tell them who you are, and give them a preview of your presentation.

- **Grabber/hook** (Goes before or after the self-introduction) A very brief and interesting statement or question that grabs the audience's attention. See Grabber Types below for more details.
- **Self-introduction** (Goes before or after the grabber*)* Tell the audience your name and credentials. For example: *I'm Minh and I've been a professional presenter for 10 years.*
- **Thesis** The main point or argument of your presentation. Be brief and precise, not general or vague. For example: *I'm going to show you how practicing your presentation 10 times will improve your grade by 20%.*
- **Overview of main points** Briefly outline the main points that you'll cover in your presentation. To help your audience, do list these in same order that you'll deliver them later on. For example: *First, we'll talk about what makes presentations great, then I'll share some data on how practice affects your confidence and performance, and finally we'll look at how to practice.*

Body

In this part of your presentation, you'll deliver the detailed information of your presentation.

- **Key point 1** A major point that supports your thesis and may have supporting sub-points
- **Key point 2** Another major point that supports your thesis and may have supporting sub-points
- **Key point 3** The final major point that supports your thesis and may have supporting sub-points

Ending

In this part you'll remind the audience of what you told them, and tell them what to do next.

- **Summary of main points** (Can be merged with your conclusion) Clearly restate your three main points in the same order you delivered them. It's the same as your overview but in past tense. *First, I described what makes presentations great, then I shared data on how practice affects confidence and performance, and finally we looked at how to practice.*
- **Conclusion** Restate your thesis in past tense. For example: *I'm showed you that practicing your presentation 10 times will improve your grade by 20%.*
- **Call to action** Give your audience clear, active and compelling direction, based on what you told them. For example: *Practice your presentations ten times and start collecting those A-plusses!*

Grabber types

Remember that the grabber's job is *grabbing* the audience's attention, so it must be surprising, fascinating or intriguing. It must also be related to your presentation's topic. Here are some descriptions and examples:

Bold statement

- An opinion or view that may be extreme, perhaps even shocking.
  "Gambling in all forms should be completely banned!"

Strong statistic

- A strong statistic is a *fact* from a reputable source.
  "More Canadians die each year as a result of a tobacco-related disease than due to traffic accidents in Canada and the US combined." Source: The Canadian Lung Association [New tab]

Story

- A story is a great way to capture your audience's imagination and get them to "project" themselves into your presentation. Powerful stories are often emotional. They could be about you or someone else, or may be allegorical.
  In 1964, I was a little girl sitting on the linoleum floor of my mother's house in Milwaukee, watching Anne Bancroft present the Oscar for best actor at the 36th Academy Awards. She opened the envelope and said five words that literally made history: "The winner is Sidney Poitier." Up to the stage came the most elegant man I had ever seen. I

remember his tie was white, and of course his skin was black. I'd never seen a black man being celebrated like that. And I've tried many, many, many times to explain what a moment like that means to a little girl — a kid watching from the cheap seats, as my mom came through the door bone-tired from cleaning other people's houses. … In 1982, Sidney received the Cecil B. DeMille Award right here at the Golden Globes, and it is not lost on me that at this moment there are some little girls watching as I become the first black woman to be given this same award!
~ Oprah Winfrey accepting the Cecil B. DeMille Award at the 2018 Golden Globe Awards

Question

- Questions can be powerful because they prompt the audience to think and interact. There are different types of questions:
  - Rhetorical: you ask a question without expecting an answer. For example: *Have you ever wondered how electricity works?*
  - Closed-ended: you ask the audience to respond. For example: *Raise your hand if you've ever wondered how electricity works.*
  - Open-ended: where you don't give options to the audience and they can answer freely. For example: *What's your favourite candy?*
- It's important to consider that they audience might not respond exactly as you expect. So prepare responses for what you'll do based on a variety of responses.

Invitation to imagine something

- Similar to a story, an invitation to imagine something is powerful because it gets the audience to use their imaginations, and can transport them "into" your presentation. You could ask the audience to imagine something extremely positive, or could have them imagine something very negative.Example*: "I want to invite you all to close your eyes and imagine that the term is over. You earned an A+ in 1500, Covid is over, and you're on vacation on a lovely tropical beach. You can hear the soft ocean waves and feel the warm breeze as you sip an ice cold drink. You're in paradise, and think to yourself… I don't have a care in the world… everything is perfect."*

Quote

- A quote is something that a famous person said. The person should be credible / well known.
  Example*: "Life is what happens when you're busy making other plans." John Lennon*
  Example*: "You miss* 100 percent of the shots you never take*." Wayne Gretzky*

Proverb

- A proverb is a common saying. These can be somewhat cliché, and less than exciting because we've heard them a lot. To keep things interesting, you could consider introducing a foreign proverb to the audience:Example*: "the first pancake is always ruined" (Russian proverb conveying that things might not be perfect at first, but will improve as you continue to practice. Used in a presentation designed to convey that you should never give up)*
- Alternatively, you could "twist" a common proverb and contradict it:Example*: "I'm here to tell you that an apple a day doesn't keep the doctor away!" (Used in a presentation on diabetes and being mindful of sugar intake)*

Prop

- A prop is a physical item that you can show to the audience. Make sure the item is large enough to be easily seen.Example*: Wearing a jersey and showing a basketball for a presentation on Michael Jordan*

Media

- In presentations that include slides or other media, you can briefly show or play video, audio or images. Make sure the media isn't too long – remember the audience is here to see *you* speak.Example: *A short drone video of beautiful Thai beaches for a presentation designed to convince people to visit Thailand*

Humour

- You can use humour or a joke as a grabber, but be careful that that everyone will get the joke and it won't offend anyone.

Other creative idea

- Some presenters have done other unexpected and creative things for their

grabbers.

- Example*: Playing a guitar and singing (for a presentation on the mental health benefits of music)*
- Example*: Beatboxing (for a presentation on the basics of beatboxing)*
- Example*: Describing a lovely scene, then making a shocking noise (at the start of a presentation on the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster)*

You can also mix and match grabbers. For example, you could show an image and ask the audience to guess what it is.

The length of your grabber is relative to your total presentation time. For a 2-minute presentation, it should be quite brief – maybe one sentence. For a 16-minute team presentation, a 45-60 second grabber would be appropriate.

Outline your presentation

The fastest way to create a successful presentation is to start with an outline.

Use an outline, not a script; this will allow you to be more natural and let you look at the audience or camera. Reading is a guaranteed way to make your presentation boring.

The easiest way to create your outline is to work in this order:

1. Determine your thesis and write this as a full sentence
2. Determine your 3 Main Points
3. Add key supporting points for each of your Main Points
4. Complete the other parts – introduction, grabber, call to action, etc.

Working in this order is fast because it's easier to create the conclusion and grabber when you've already decided on the content. Also, after you have the main structure it's easy to add details, examples and stories that make your presentation interesting and convincing.

Another benefit of outlining is that you can use the outline as your presentation notes.

Presentation Model – Test your Knowledge

Presentation Model – Test your Knowledge

Label each part of the presentation correctly.

Labels:

a. Call to Action
b. Key Point 2
c. Thesis
d. Summary
e. Key Point 1
f. Overview
g. Grabber
h. Key Point 3
i. Conclusion
j. Introduction

Presentation part

1. Hello, my name is Sarah Green and I have been a barista for two years
2. There is a famous company that was founded in Seattle, has a mermaid for its logo, and has over 31,000 stores worldwide. Can you guess which company it is?*
3. I am here today to tell you why you should patronize Starbucks Coffee*
4. because of convenience, quality, & amazing food
5. Starbucks is Convenient~ many locations, mobile app, quick service*
6. Starbucks has Quality~ arabica beans, top ingredients, staff trained to make drinks and food properly*
7. Starbucks has amazing food~ grab and go, hot food, prepackaged meals*
8. Today I told you why you should patronize Starbucks*
9. because of its *convenience*, *quality*, and *amazing food*
10. So, what are you waiting for? Go to a Starbucks store today and order an amazing coffee!*

Check your Answer: [1]

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Notes

1. 1. j, 2. g, 3. c, 4. f, 5. e, 6. b, 7. h, 8. i, 9. d, 10. a

9.5 - HOW TO DELIVER YOUR PRESENTATION

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, you'll be able to

- identify voice and body language skills that keep an audience engaged and inspired.

What makes good presenters engaging? What makes you want to watch and listen? Great delivery includes:

- Confidence
- Passion
- Proficient body language
- Eye contact
- Speaking clearly, being easy to understand
- Effective pauses
- Few hesitations or filler words
- Using words and phrases that are appropriate for the audience
- Accurate timing: not going overtime or ending too early
- Smooth transitions between sentences and sections

Delivery

Excellent presenters use many delivery skills. Don't worry about being perfect at all of

them; start by working on a few of them. When those skills feel improved, choose three more to work on.

Voice

Volume Speak loudly enough so that we can hear you. Good volume also makes you sound confident

Clarity Enunciate your words, and avoid mumbling, so the audience can easily understand what you're saying

Tone Match your tone to the content. Typically, tone goes higher when we are unsure or are asking a question, and goes lower when we are stating a fact or being authoritative

Pace Speak slowly enough to be understood, and vary your pace to add interest

- Choppiness – Speak as fluidly as possible, avoid hesitations and unusual pacing
- Speed – Speak smoothly and confidently, but a little slower than in normal conversation. In multicultural situations (where we might not be familiar with each others' accents) speak even slower, and watch your audience to make sure they understand you.
- Pauses – Listening can be tiring. Brief pauses let your audience absorb information. You can also use pauses to add emphasis or anticipation.

Vocal variety Vary your tone, pace and volume to add interest, emphasis and clarity. For example, speak a little faster to add excitement or anticipation, or speak a little louder to show emphasis. Some cultures and languages tend to be more monotone, so some students may have to work a little bit harder to ensure they vary their tone.

Body language

Professional posture Good posture supports your voice, and makes you look professional and confident (when we're nervous we tend to hunch and cross our arms). Face the audience most of the time, and avoid turning your back on them to look at your slides.

Manage your movement Repetitive body movements, such as tapping your foot or swaying, can also distract the audience. If you're presenting in person, slowly move

around the physical space, such as moving towards the audience, or from one part of the room to another.

Use gestures Use gestures to add interest, emphasis, and help explain what you're saying, such as indicating part of a slide or demonstrating an action.

Eyes & face

Make eye contact most of the time Eye contact shows confidence and helps everyone in the audience feel included. Look at all parts of the room. Secret tip for shy presenters: look at people's foreheads – it has the same effect as eye contact. If you're presenting online, this means looking at the camera. If you're using notes should be point form – not full sentences – that you can quickly glance at, not read.

Manage your facial expressions You can show passion and emotion through facial expressions. But be careful, sometimes presenters show how nervous they are by having a look of worry on their face.

Passion

Your passion will engage the audience. Show your enthusiasm, energy and interest through appropriate use of tone, pace, volume, facial expressions, gestures, and body language.

Your level of energy can be infectious, and inspire the audience. Even if your topic is serious, like mental health or a tragedy, you can still convey conviction and interest in the subject matter. Conversely, without passion, you can make even the most fascinating content boring, and cause your audience to disengage.

Words

Filler words Fillers distract the audience and make you seem nervous, unprepared or professional. These include *uhh*, *umm*, *like, you know,* and any other words or noises that are not actual content. Real words like *and* and *so* can also be used as filler words.

Vocabulary Use words and phrases your audience understands; language that is appropriate for them. Will they understand abbreviations, acronyms, slang and jargon?

Transitions Use transitions to connect sentences to each other, indicate that you're moving to the next major point, or in group presentations, that you're moving to the next speaker.

Timing

Make sure the length of your presentation matches your audience's expectations. If your presentation is a lot shorter, the audience (and instructor!) might be disappointed; if you go overtime they might resent you.

Pro Tip

After each presentation, make a note of 3 things that you did well, and 3 things you want to improve.

If you have a speech impediment or accessibility needs

If you have a speech impediment, visual impairment, hearing difficulty, physical disability, or other health issue, there are many resources available. You may want to start by speaking with your instructor and contacting Accessibility Services at your college.

If you stutter, you're not alone. Many famous people have found ways to become great presenters while managing their stutter, including President Joe Biden, James Earl Jones (the voice of Darth Vader) and Nicole Kidman. Some basic coping strategies include speaking slowly, managing stress and thoroughly knowing your material. Additional resources are available from The Canadian Stuttering Association [New Tab].

Test your knowledge

Watch each of these videos and test your understanding of the presenter's skills.

Watch Why 1.5 billion people eat with chopsticks on the TED Website (3 mins)

Jennifer 8. Lee – What did you notice?

Jennifer 8. Lee – What did you notice? (Text version)

1. Complete the sentences by filling in the blanks with the following words: confident, hesitations, clearly, practiced
   The speaker has obviously (a) _____ until she knows the content well. She seems (b) _____ and speaks (c) _____ without (d) _____ .
2. Complete the sentences by filling in the blanks with the following words: eye contact, passion, varies
   The speaker shows (a) _____ for the topic. She makes frequent (b) _____with the camera, and (c) _____ her tone, pace and volume to add interest.
3. Complete the sentences by filling in the blanks with the following words: high quality, easy
   The visuals are (a) _____ and (b) _____ to see and understand.

Check your Answers: [1]

Activity source: "Jennifer 8. Lee – What did you notice?" is adapted from "How to deliver your presentation" In *Business Presentation Skills* by Lucinda Atwood & Christian Westin licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0. / Text version created.

Watch Looking for a job? Highlight your ability, not your experience (6 mins)

Jason Shen – What did you notice?

Jason Shen – What did you notice? (Text version)

1. Complete the sentences by filling in the blanks with the following words: call to action, three, story
   The speaker starts with a (a) _____to grab the audience's interest. His presentation includes (b) _____ key ideas. He ends with a (b) _____.
2. Complete the sentences by filling in the blanks with the following words: understand, enunciates, slowly
   The speaker (a) _____clearly and speaks (b) _____enough so that the audience can (c) _____him.
3. Complete the sentences by filling in the blanks with the following words: practiced, filler words, posture
   The speaker's (a) _____ shows confidence. He obviously has (b)_____his presentation because he doesn't hesitate or use (c) _____.

Check your Answers: [2]

Activity source: "Jason Shen – What did you notice?" is adapted from "How to deliver your presentation" In *Business Presentation Skills* by Lucinda Atwood & Christian Westin licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0. / Text version created.

Bad Presentation Example

Watch the following presentation and respond to the interactive questions by clicking on your screen.

Bad Presentation Example

Bad Presentation Example (Text version)
Watch Bad Presentation Video on Pressbooks (1 min)

1. True or false? This video starts with a grabber.
2. How's the camera angle?
    a. Too low
    b. Too high
    c. Perfect
3. What would make the speaker look more confident? Select all that apply.
    a. Looking at the camera
    b. Better posture – not hunching
    c. Not reading
    d. Smiling occasionally
    e. Keeping hands off face
    f. Few filler words
4. What else would improve this presentation? Select all that apply.
    a. Tidy the background
    b. Show passion for her topic
    c. Practice until she doesn't have to read
    d. Turn her body to the camera
    e. Use some gestures
5. True or false? The presentation ended with a conclusion and call to action

Check your Answers: [3]

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Notes

1. Jennifer 8. Lee:
    1. a) practiced, b) confident, c) clearly, d) hesitations.
    2. a) passion, b) eye contact, c) varies.
    3. a) high quality, b) easy.
2. Jason Shen:
    1. a) story, b) three, c) call to action.
    2. a) enunciates, b) slowly, c) understand.
    3. a) posture, b) practiced, c) filler words
3. Bad presentation example:
    1. False,
    2. a,
    3. a, b, c, d, e.
    4. All of the above.
    5. False.

9.6 - HOW TO MAKE SLIDES & VISUALS

Learning Objectives

In this chapter, you'll learn how to

- identify the basics of visual design to make clear, compelling and well-organized presentation slides and images
- find great images
- storyboard your presentation.

Getting started

Before starting on your slides create a storyboard that's based on your presentation outline. The storyboard helps you organize and plan your slide deck, including the order slides appear and what text or images you'll include on each slide.

We recommend using sticky notes to create your storyboard, with one sticky note representing one slide. Sticky notes help you organize your slides because they're so easy to move around, edit and delete. They'll save you lots of time!

In the example below you can see that you don't need to be an artist or expert to make an effective storyboard.

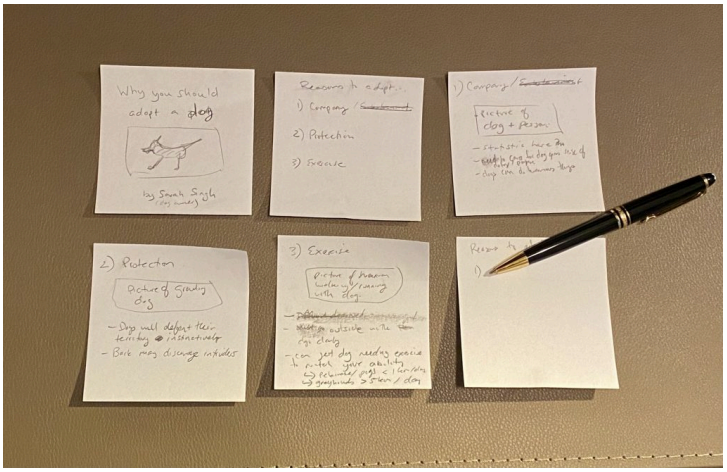


Photo by Christian Westin, used under CC BY-NC 4.0

You can use sticky notes to create your storyboard, with each sticky note representing a single slide. This will allow you to quickly change the order or replace a draft slide without having to erase or start from scratch.

Creating slides

When making slides, make sure to include these five elements: organization, titles & text, visual design, content and user experience.

Tip: Need help making slides?

Check with your school's peer tutors or Academic Success department. The tutors can help you with PowerPoint, Google Slides and other apps. They won't create your presentation for you, but they can help you get started, and answer specific questions.

Organization

Your slide deck must be logically organized to match the order of your presentation. Make sure that information is presented in a logical way. For example, if you're talking about something that happens in a sequence, make sure it's in the correct order in your slides. And present information based on its importance. The size and list format of key points, sub-points and sub-subpoints should be consistent with their importance.

Titles & text

Consistent Throughout your slide deck, titles and text should be consistent in title & text size, shape, placement, bullet & heading hierarchy, and formatting. If any of this does change, it should be an intentional design choice that reflects the presentation. Be especially careful with team projects – it's easy to lose consistency when more than one person creates the slides.

Brief Your slides are not a script. If you include too much information on them, your audience will be reading, not listening to you. Slides should reinforce your key points, highlighting only the most important information. Share the rest verbally – anecdotes, smaller details and extra information.

Pro Tip

There are two great ways to help you keep slides brief: The 1-6-6 Method recommends that each slide have a maximum of 1 idea, 6 bullet points, and 6 words per bullet. The 1-3-5 Method is similar: it suggests 1 idea, 3 bullet points and 5 words per bullet, per slide

Fonts Your audience might have less than perfect vision or a small device, so make type easy to read. If you're not sure which font to use, avoid fancy decorative fonts and use a standard font like Arial, Helvetica or Times. Unless you're a trained designer, limit the number of fonts you use to about three per slide deck.

Use high-contrast colours for text, such as black on white, or white on navy blue. If you're placing text on an image, use a solid background colour in the text box.

We recommend using at least size 32 for your text. If you're using a font size smaller than 32, test your slides to make sure text is visible from the back of the room or an a small device.

Spelling & grammar Checking your spelling and grammar! (Most presentation apps include spell-check tools.) Typos and grammar errors make you look sloppy and unprofessional.

Animations You can use the app's animation tools to move objects and text on, off or around a slide. You've probably seen slides with bullet points that appear one at a time. Animations are useful when you want to gradually reveal information. For example if you want the audience to focus on one point at a time, or when you want to ask a question before showing the answer.

Limit the number of animations you use, and avoid whimsical or unnecessary ones – they can make your slides annoying and unprofessional.

Transitions You can use transitions, like fade-in or fade-out, when you're moving from one slide to the next. To avoid distracting your audience, don't use too many different types of transitions, and avoid overly dramatic transitions. Just like animations, a little goes a long way.

Visual design

You don't have to be a designer to make professional slides – most apps include professionally-designed templates, or you can start with a blank slide. Whichever you choose, make sure the visual design supports your content and strengthens your message. Slides should relate to each other visually: colours, layout, text and images should be consistent.

Consistent All slides should have a consistent design as though they were created by one person, not cobbled together from multiple sources. If any of this does change, it should be an intentional design choice that reflects the presentation. Be especially careful during team projects – it's easy to lose consistency when more than one person creates the slides.

Alignment Keep slides looking clean and professional by aligning various text or image elements. For example, text is almost always left-aligned (except captions and titles). Space text and images so they're balanced and visually pleasing. PowerPoint shows alignment markings to help with this.

Branding Branded elements make your slides look professional. You can use your brand's colours and logo on the title page, and/or at the top or bottom of each slide. Your branding may include fonts, text size and colour. Whatever you choose, make sure all text is easy to read and not distracting.

Images Human brains love images! Include images in your slides to add interest and explain key points. Make sure every image is high quality, high resolution, relevant and appropriate, large enough to be easily seen from afar, not stretched or distorted, and free of watermarks. (More about watermarks in *Using other people's images* below)

Single images are generally better than collages because you want slides to be uncluttered. No matter how cute they are, *don't* include images that are unprofessional or unrelated to your subject – such as emojis, minion pictures, and bad clip art.

Charts & graphs Well-displayed information can enhance your audience's understanding and help to convince them that you're a professional expert. Charts and graphs are fantastic ways to show data, describe relationships, and help your audience

understand a key point. Make sure the labels and titles are large enough to be easily read, and remove unnecessary details; you can verbally explain details and background information. If your presentation includes handouts, you can show the basic chart or graph on screen, and add a more detailed version in the handout. See *Which chart, or visual should I use?* below for examples and additional guidelines.

Content

Complete Your presentation should include at least one slide for each key point. Make sure the most important information of your presentation is on your slides.

Makes sense Information presented is well researched & makes sense. Your content should also be interesting or exciting.

Fits audience Assume that your audience is smart like you, but doesn't have specialist knowledge. Take the time to explain anything that the majority of people might not know.

Citations and references For facts, quotes, or other statistics, you may want to include your source on the slide, especially if it adds credibility. Otherwise, sources (including for images) are listed in 1) the notes section; and 2) in a list of sources at the end of your presentation.

Authorship Include your full name at the start of your slides. You may want to include your name and contact information on your last slide.

Engages the left & right brain Audience members engage and remember better when you engage the "left brain" – logic, facts, science, numbers, and hard data – and the "right brain" – emotion, colour, artistic and sensory information like music, videos, and other media.

Audience experience

This element is a bit different from the ones above because it focuses on the live integration of your slides and your presentation.

Slides enhance the presentation Remember that you're the star of the show, and your slides are there to support your live delivery. For this reason it's important to ensure that you don't use the slides as a teleprompter – always practice and know your entire presentation and slideshow thoroughly.

Number of slides is reasonable As a general rule, 1-2 slides per minute is appropriate.

Practise delivering your presentation to ensure you're not rushing through too many slides, or forcing the audience to stare a the same slide for several minutes.

Agenda / overview Longer or more complex presentations often include an agenda or overview slide. Shorter presentations typically don't use them.

Animations & transitions executed When practicing your presentation, remember which slides have animations or transitions, and practice advancing your slides at the right time. Sometimes presenters get caught up in their content and forget to move the slides ahead. This is especially common during online presentations.

Using other people's images

You can use your own images in your presentations. You can also use downloaded images, but be careful to use copyright-free images, and credit them properly.

Many images that you see online are copyrighted, meaning you can't use them without the creator's permission. A lot of those images have watermarks to make sure people don't use them, or pay to use them. Don't use watermarked images—it's illegal and unethical. A watermark looks like this:



A watermark often states the name of the photography collection or the word Copyright, and is layered over top of the image to create a visual cue that the image is not free. Image courtesy of Lucinda Atwood

Where to find images

Many high-quality images are freely available online. Carefully check your image to

ensure it is marked as *free to use*, as many of these collections often offer images for purchase! Here are some places to find them:

1. [New tab]
2. Pexels [New tab]
3. Unsplash [New tab]
4. Pixabay [New tab]
5. Flicker – Creative Commons license [New tab]
6. Google [New tab]: Enter your search words and click *Search*. Then click *Images,* and *Tools* (underneath the search bar). Then click *Usage Rights* and select *Creative Commons Licenses*.

How to give credit

Always give credit to the creators of anything you didn't create – including images, charts, graphs, video, audio and gifs. You don't need to credit anything you made, but you might want to include a note so your instructor knows it's your creation.

1. Provide the credit **on the slide where the image appears.**
2. Include a final slide that includes the full APA reference list entry.

Free to use with no attribution required

In an APA style paper, you should provide a figure number and title before the image. Figure numbers and titles for images like the example below are OPTIONAL for presentations (like PowerPoint).

Figure 1: *Dog sitting in front of a book*



Photo by Jamie Street, used under Unsplash license

The APA Style book indicates that when you use a clip art or a stock image, that says "No Attribution required" a citation is optional. Because Unsplash provides author information, even though it's not mandatory, it's considered good practice to list the details that are provided with the image. In this case, "Photo by Jamie Street used under Unsplash license" can be included on your slide.

Image that requires attribution

Figure 1*: Butterfly.*



From Butterfly [Photograph], by John Fowler, 2011, Flickr. (https://flic.kr/p/acU6L8). CC BY 2.0.

The APA Style book indicates that when you use an image like the one above that requires an attribution, you should provide the following details on your slide:

- From *Title* [Photograph], by creator's name, date, source (url). Creative Commons information.
- Figure Number and Title, like the ones shown above, are optional on your slides

On your final reference slide, you should include a reference list entry that includes Author, Intial. (date). Title. [Descripton]. Source. url.

Example:

Fowler, J. (2011). *Butterfly.* [Photograph]. Flickr. https://flic.kr/p/acU6L8

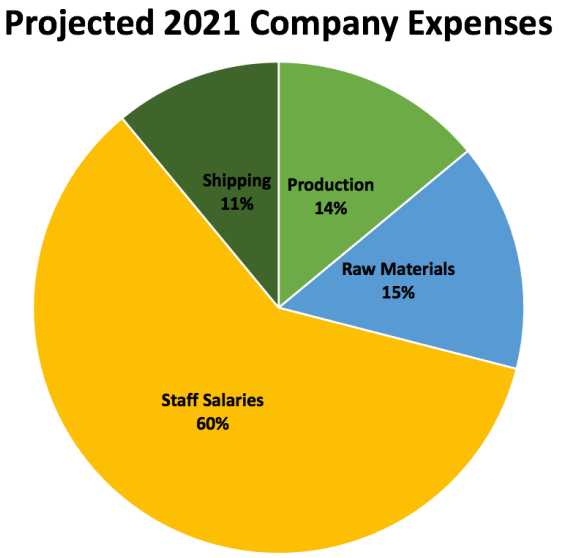
Which graph, chart, or visual should I use?

You can easily make charts and graphs for your presentation, using Excel or Google Spreadsheets. Add the data to the spreadsheet, then decide which type of chart or graph to use.

No matter what type you use, always include a title, clear labels, and high-contrast colours that are visible to all users. For example, many people can't see the difference between red and green, so avoid using them together.

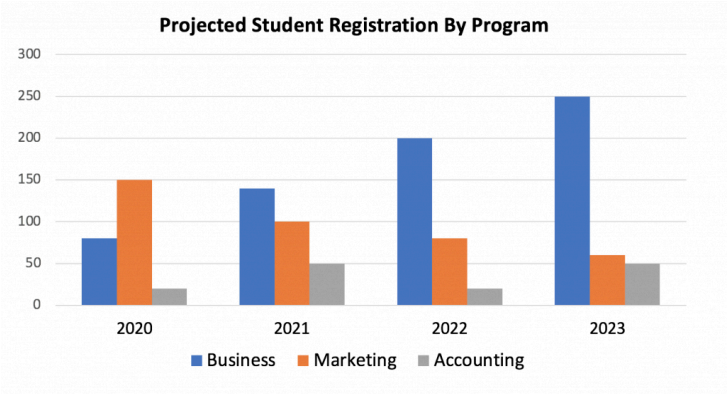
Here the most common types:

Pie chart Shows percentages – portions of a whole. The total segments should add up to 100% or a complete whole. Pie charts are excellent for showing relationships. In the example below we quickly see that Staff Salaries are a huge portion of the company expenses.



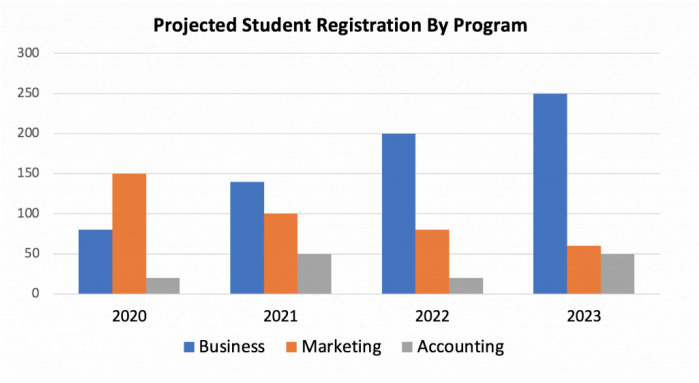
"Pie chart ", by Lucinda Atwood & Christian Westin, licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0

Bar graph Allows comparison between different values, and can show changes over time (if the difference in values are large). The horizontal and vertical axis must always be labelled. This graph show that the number of Business students is expected to rise, while the number of Marketing students will decrease.



"Sample bar graph" by by Lucinda Atwood & Christian Westin, licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0

Line graph Shows a trend or progress over time. They can show small changes over time better than a bar graph. Note that the example below shows the same data used in the chart above, but emphasizes the trend of business registrations growing, marketing registrations declining, and accounting registrations remaining low with a bit of fluctuation. This would better if you wanted to focus on changes over time.



"Sample bar graph" by Lucinda Atwood & Christian Westin, licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0

Heatmap chart Uses colour to convey the magnitude of certain values. Examples include a risk management heatmap showing low, medium, and high risk based on the likelihood and impact of various outcomes, or an atlas heatmap as displayed below. Because heatmaps depend only on colour – not shape or size – be very careful to use colours that all users can see.



"Sample heat map" by Lucinda Atwood & Christian Westin, licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0

Which chart? An example

Imagine that our team is excited to share the success of our recent marketing campaign to promote bluebell flower sales during the month of March. Here are two ways we

might display the data. Look at both and note your response: which one is easier to understand? Which do you prefer to look at?

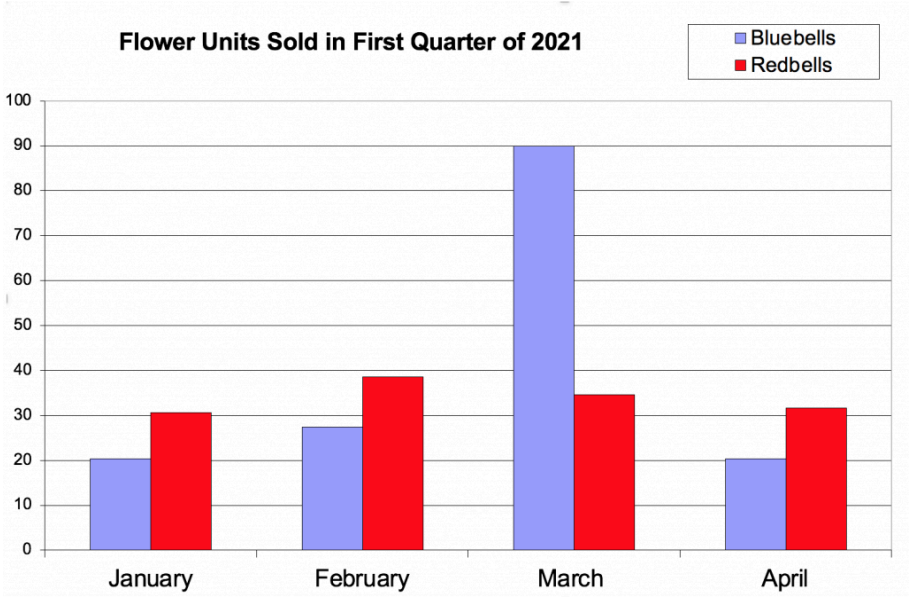
Example 1

	January	February	March	April
Bluebells	20.4	27.4	90	20.4
Redbells	30.6	38.6	34.6	31.6

"Flower Fix" by Lucinda Atwood & Christian Westin, licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0

EXAMPLE 1: It isn't as easy for the audience to quickly interpret the information displayed above because it is not displayed in a visual way that emphasizes the difference between various months. This example also lacks a title or indication of what the data is conveying.

Example 2



"Flower Fix 2" by Lucinda Atwood & Christian Westin, licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0

EXAMPLE 2: This example shows the same information, but displays it in a more effective way for this particular purpose. This version allows the audience to quickly see the dramatic success of our bluebell flower marketing campaign, which boosted sales during the month of March. Also notice the inclusion of a title, legend, clear labels, and

colour coding, which all help audience the audience to understand what we are showing them. From

Example 1 is harder to read because it's not visual. There are lots of percentages, no hierarchy or colour, and the heavy lines compete with the content. It's not easy for the viewer to quickly understand the information. This example also lacks a title or legend (a description of what the data is conveying).

Example 2 shows the same information, but in a way that's easy to quickly understand. This version emphasizes the dramatic success of our marketing campaign, which boosted sales of bluebells during March. Also notice the inclusion of a title, legend, clear axis labels, and colour coding – all of which help the audience's understanding.

Slides Quiz – Test your Knowledge

Slides Quiz – Test your Knowledge (Text version)

1. The first step in creating a presentation is:

    a. Finding images
    b. Creating a presentation outline and storyboard
    c. Designing charts and graphs for the slides
    d. Ensuring you have selected the correct font and font size

2. Complete the sentences by placing the following words in the correct blank: watermarks, contrast, logos
   When considering visual design, you should ensure enough (a) _____between text and the background. Branding can also be incorporated into the slide design, including font, colour use, and (b) _____. When choosing images, avoid (c) _____, which indicate that the image belongs to someone else.
3. How could this slide above be improved? (select all that apply)

a. Increase the contrast between the background and text & select a less distracting background
b. Reduce the length of text used in the second bullet point
c. Correct the spelling error
d. Use a higher quality image, and enlarge and align it more uniformly

4. True or false? You should use your slides as a script that you can read from during your presentation.
5. When creating slides, the following elements should be considered first:



Slide has a bright, diagonal rainbow background with lengthy grey writing, "Speaking" Is misspelled, and a blurry photo in one corner. Slide image by Lucinda Atwood is licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0.

a. Organization, titles & text, visual design, content, and audience experience
b. Spelling, Brevity, Animations, Images::These are indeed important considerations for slides, but don't fall under the category of "Organization"
c. Including as much text as is possible to demonstrate that you've done lots of research
d. Using watermarked images

Check your Answer: [1]

Attribution & References

Except where otherwise noted, this chapter (text, images & H5P activities) is adapted from "How to make slides & visuals" In *Business Presentation Skills* by Lucinda Atwood & Christian Westin licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0.

Notes

1. 1. b
   2. a) contrast, b) logos, c) watermarks.
   3. All suggestions would help.
   4. False.
   5. a.

CHAPTER 10: WORKING IN TEAMS

Communication Essentials for College by Jen Booth, Emily Cramer & Amanda Quibell

- 10.1 – Team and Group Work
- 10.2 – How to present as a team
- 10.3 – Constructive Criticism

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Please visit the web version of *Communication Essentials for College* to access the complete book, interactive activities and ancillary resources.

10.1 - TEAM AND GROUP WORK

Learning Objectives

- Discuss the advantages and challenges of working in groups
- Identify the characteristics of effective working groups.
- List the stages of group formation.

Working in groups is a necessary and important skill. We will find ourselves having to work in groups in various situations—at home, at work, at play, and at school.

Working in groups in educational settings is a common occurrence. Instructors often require group work because it is such an important skill, particularly moving forward into the workplace. Working on labs together, group project work, group assignments, even online group work with classmates who are all over the world, are all standard situations. Getting along is important, but working effectively together can make a better project when each team member contributes according to their strengths, resulting in a better project than each could have done on their own. When we find ourselves working in groups—whether in a formal or informal situation—certain things tend to happen. Often the natural leaders will emerge to provide guidance and direction, and those who are natural followers will act accordingly. Conflicts will inevitably occur, as people have different visions for the outcome.

Working in groups has advantages and disadvantages and works better in some situations than others. Here are some reasons why you might choose to work alone or in a group:

Table 1: Working alone versus working in groups

Working Alone	Working in Groups
Free to make all the decisions	Can collaborate
Can use your own methods	Can share responsibility
Can be creative	Can share ideas and talents
Can do things on own time schedule	Can spread the workload
No disagreements	A more sociable way to work
No compromising – can do everything your way	Able to do something bigger and better
Can take all the credit	Can demonstrate ability to work in teams

Effective Working Groups

Groups that work effectively have the following characteristics:

- The atmosphere is relaxed, engaged, open, comfortable and non-threatening.
- Group members share a sense of purpose or common goals that each member is willing to work toward. The tasks or objectives are understood and accepted by everyone. There is free discussion leading to group commitment and no hidden agendas.
- The group is concerned not only with the task, but also with its own processes and operating procedures. The group periodically evaluates its performance.
- The group members use one another as a resource. Roles are balanced and shared to ensure that the tasks are accomplished and that group cohesion and morale are enhanced. The group comes up with clear assigned tasks for people in the group.
- Communication is clear, direct, open and honest. Group members continually try to listen to and clarify what is being said, and show interest in what others say and feel. They feel freedom to build on each other's ideas. Differences of opinion are encouraged and freely expressed.
- The group focuses on problem solving rather than expending energy on competitive struggles or interpersonal issues. The group is willing to deal with conflict, and focus on it until it is resolved or managed in a way that does not reduce the effectiveness of the group and its members. Confrontation is accepted as a challenge to examine one's behaviour or ideas. It is not viewed as an uncaring personal attack.

- Mistakes are seen as sources of learning rather than reasons for punishment. This encourages creativity and risk taking.
- Conflict is seen as natural, even helpful. People work through problems together.
- The group has a clear set of expectations and standards for the behaviour of group members.
- The group that understands developing a climate of trust is important. In order to trust one another, individuals in a group must understand and get to know one another.

Stages in Group Formation

Groups that form to accomplish a certain goal go through stages in getting to that goal. It's not a bad thing that conflict happens along the way. In fact, it's almost inevitable. How people handle the conflict will determine whether or not the process is a positive and successful one.

In the video *Forming, Storming, Norming and Performing*, the narrator describes Bruce Tuckman's simple model to explain the stages of team formation. Watch the video below to learn about the stages for group process:

Watch Forming, Storming, Norming, and Performing: Bruce Tuckman's Team Stages Model Explained on YouTube (2 mins)

Exercise: Groups

Think about some of the groups that you are involved in. What qualities do you have that helps in the group process? Is the group effective? What qualities of an effective team does your group have?

Attribution & References

Except where otherwise noted, this chapter is adapted from " 4.4 Team and Group Work" In *Student Success* by Mary Shier licensed under CC BY. Adaptations include adjustments to the attributions and references.

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Video Attributions from original source

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10.2 - HOW TO PRESENT AS A TEAM

Learning Objectives

- Identify key teamwork skills for presentations, including:
  - Strategies for project planning, process conversations, and conflict resolution
  - Ways to plan for presenting as a group.

Believe it or not team projects can be fun and rewarding. In this chapter we'll look at how to make team projects efficient and successful.

Teamwork is a huge part of most jobs, so being able to work well with others and manage team projects is an essential skill that will enhance your career. In school, team projects help you learn key teamwork and project management skills.

Teamwork skills

Being a productive part of an effective team requires these skills:

- Understand group dynamics
- Flexibility: accept and adapt to others and their contributions
- Respect: support your teammates' diversity, perspectives and contributions
- Give kind, useful feedback and accept feedback graciously
- Contribute proactively and positively
- Be a leader but allow others to lead when appropriate
- Plan for and manage conflict

Project planning

Planning can make your team project successful and enjoyable. Create an effective team with pre-project planning:

1. Read the project assignment and rubric or grading plan
2. Create or join a team based on similar grade goals, ways of working, amount of time you're willing to invest, and team organization / leadership style. Avoid joining a team just because your friends are on it.
3. Organize your first meeting. Everyone must attend.
4. Create a team charter or have a process conversation (details below).
5. Record your plans: team organization / leadership; working style; roles & tasks; deadlines, etc
6. Schedule the project, working backwards from the due date. Allow time for personnel or tech problems.

Process conversations

Process conversations make teamwork more productive and less frustrating. They're simple conversations where you discuss and agree how your team will function.

Process conversations are strengthened when the outcomes are documented and saved to the for later reference. Create one central place that all teammates can access and store all your files and decisions there.

Strong process conversations answer questions such as:

Team format

- Who's in charge; will we have a leader or be democratic?
- How will we make decisions?

Communication & work

- How will our team communicate? In person, by email, chat, text, zoom or other
- How often will we communicate? Daily check-ins, or only as needed
- How often will we meet? Daily, weekly, or only when necessary
- Where will we meet? Online, in a meeting room, at Tim Horton's
- Will we share a google doc, or work on individual files?
- What is our team home where all records, tasks and agreements are kept? A shared

document, Brightspace locker, Slack chat, Facebook group, or other

Conflict Avoidance

- What's our plan to avoid conflict, and how will we deal with it when it arises? What if someone gets sick or isn't performing? What if we can't solve our conflict?
- How do each of us like to give and receive feedback?
- How closely does each of us like to be managed?
- What do deadlines mean to each of us: Do we wait until just before a deadline, or complete tasks in advance?

At the end of your team process conversation, make sure to ask if there's anything else: What else do we need to discuss?

The 5-finger vote

Sometimes a simple *yes* or *no* isn't enough. The 5 finger vote gives useful nuance to discussions and decisions.

Instead of asking *yes/no* or *for/against* questions, ask team members to vote with their fingers. The scale is:

5 fingers – 100% support the idea or action
4 fingers – Strongly agree
3 fingers – Slightly in favour
2 fingers – Mildly disagree
1 finger – Strongly disagree
0 – 100% disagree

For example, your team is trying to choose a topic – will it be topic A, B or C? So you take a 5 finger vote. Most members are: 3 fingers for topic A, 5 fingers for topic B, and 2 fingers for topic C. Topic B is the clear winner.

Or you can add up all the fingers and use the total to decide. For example, *That's 12 fingers for topic A, 19 fingers for topic B, and 7 fingers for topic C. Topic B's the winner.*

Team Conflict

Conflict is almost inevitable in teams of busy, stressed students. Do your best to avoid conflict by:

- Supporting each other (Remind yourself that you'll all do better if you cooperate)
- Communicating clearly and frequently, ensuring that everyone is clear on expectations
- Using a team charter or process conversation
- Being open-minded and respectful
- Addressing concerns or frustrations early

Teams that prepare for conflict can deal with it quickly and effectively when it happens.

During the presentation

Introduce each other & remember transitions

Introduce each other at the start of your presentation. You can take turns introducing a teammate, or designate one person to act as the host, and introduce everyone. (Make sure you know each other's names and how to pronounce them!)

If you have a host, they can handle the introductions, thesis, overview, transitions and conclusion. This adds consistency to your presentation and helps the audience understand what's happening. If you're not using a host, ensure that you practice strong transitions from one teammate to another. For example: "*Now that I've explained the reasons you should have a LinkedIn profile, Sharika will explain how to make your LinkedIn profile*."

Keep time

It's also a good idea to designate one teammate as timekeeper. They can make sure you don't go overtime, and help make sure all teammates have an equal chance to contribute.

Present as a unified team

A team presentation is very different from an individual presentation. One of the biggest problems we see is team presentations that don't feel unified. You've got a team, present like a team!

For this reason, it is important to ensure that everyone is aware of what their teammates will be presenting, and know when transitions are meant to occur.

It is also important to show that you're paying attention to teammates when they are presenting, and avoid fidgeting, talking, looking bored, or turning off your camera (just because you're not talking doesn't mean that you disappear). You can suggest to the audience that your group is doing a good job by nodding when a teammate delivers a strong point.

In some less formal presentations, you may decide to interact with each other: have a conversation, interview each other, argue two sides of an issue, or have some teammates demonstrate what's being described.

Maybe some teammates can demonstrate or hold visual aids.

In online presentations, teammates can be working behind the scenes while others are presenting. One person might be handling the tech, another might be watching the chat, and another might be controlling presentation slides.

Plan the Q&A

If you're including a Q&A at the end of your presentation, decide how your team will handle it. You might designate which teammate will answer different types of questions, or your team might take turns answering.

At the end of each answer, ask the other teammates if they have anything to add.

Teamwork Quiz

Teamwork Quiz (Text version)

1. What's included in a process conversation? Check all that apply.

    a. Discussion about how your team will work
    b. How to add teamwork skills to your resume
    c. How to avoid and deal with conflict
    d. Your team's work schedule

2. True or false? Team projects teach skills you can include in your resume & LinkedIn profile.
3. What can you learn from team projects? (select all correct answers)

    a. Project management
    b. Conflict avoidance & resolution
    c. Compromise
    d. Your teammates' skills

4. True or false? Conflict never happens in a functional team
5. Complete the statement by using the following terms to fill in the blanks: paying attention, time, introduce
   It's important to a) _____ every team member, show that you're b) _____ to teammates when they're presenting, and designate one team member to monitor the c) _____.

Check your Answer: [1]

Activity Source: "How to present as a team" In *Business Presentation Skills* by Lucinda Atwood & Christian Westin licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0.

Attribution & References

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Notes

1.
    1. a & b
    2. True.
    3. All are correct.
4. False. Conflict can happen in any team. It's how you deal with it that's important.
5. a) introduce, b) paying attention, c) time.

10.3 - CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM

Learning Objective

- Demonstrate best practices in delivering constructive criticism and feedback in person.

Receiving Constructive Criticism

No one's perfect, not even you, so your professional success depends on people telling you how to improve your performance. When you receive well-phrased constructive criticism, accept it in good faith as a gift because that's what it is. If a close friend or colleague nicely tells you to pick out the broccoli between your teeth after lunching with them, they're doing you the favour of telling you what you don't know but need to in order to be successful or at least avoid failure. Your enemies, on the other hand, would say nothing, letting you go about your day embarrassing yourself in the hopes that it will contribute to your failure. Constructive criticism is an act of benevolence or mercy meant to improve not only your performance but also that of the team and company as a whole. Done well, constructive criticism is a quality assurance task rather than a personal attack. Be grateful and say *thank you* when someone is nice enough to look out for your best interests that way.

Receiving constructive criticism gracefully may mean stifling your defensive reflex. Important skills not only in the workplace but in basic communication include being a good listener and being able to take direction. Employees who can't take direction well soon find themselves out of job because it puts them at odds with the goals of the team and company. Good listening means stifling the defensive reflex in your head before it gets out and has you rudely interrupting the speaker. Even if you begin mounting defenses in your head, you're not effectively listening to the constructive criticism.

Receiving constructive criticism in a way that assures the speaker that you understand involves completing the communication process. You can indicate that you're listening first with your nonverbals:

- Maintaining **eye contact** shows that you're paying close attention to the speaker's words and nonverbal inflections
- **Nodding** your head shows that you're processing and understanding the information coming in, as well as agreeing
- **Taking notes** shows that you're committing to the information by reviewing it later

Once you understand the constructive criticism, paraphrase it aloud to confirm your understanding. "So you're basically saying that I should be doing X instead of Y, right?" If the speaker confirms your understanding, follow up by explaining how you're going to implement the advice to assure them that their efforts in speaking to you won't be in vain. Apologizing may even be necessary if you were clearly in the wrong.

Of course, if the constructive criticism isn't so constructive—if it's mere criticism (a "poop sandwich" without bread, to use the phrasing below), you would be right to ask for more help and specific direction. If the criticism is just plain wrong, perhaps because your manager is somehow biased or mistaken in thinking you're at fault when really there are other culprits they are unaware of, respectfully correcting them is the right thing to do. You don't want management to get the wrong impression about you in case that means you'll be passed up for promotion down the road. When disagreeing, focus on the faulty points rather than on your feelings even if you've taken the feedback as a personal insult. Always maintain professionalism throughout such exchanges.

Giving "Poop Sandwich" Constructive Criticism

One of the most important functions of a supervisor or manager is to get the best work out of the people working under them. When those employees' work leaves room for improvement, it's the leader's job to convince them that they can do better with a clear explanation of how. As we saw above, clarity and precision are necessary here because the quality of improvement will only be as good as the quality of instruction. As miscommunication, vague and misleading instruction will lead to little-to-no improvement or even more damage from people acting on misunderstandings caused by poor direction. Not only must the content of constructive criticism be of a high quality itself, but its packaging must be such that it properly motivates the receiver.

An effective way of delivering constructive criticism is called the "**poop sandwich**,"

usually said with a more vulgar alternative to "poop." Like sugar-coating bitter medicine, the idea here is to make the receiver feel good about themselves so that they're in a receptive frame of mind for hearing, processing, and remembering the constructive criticism. If the constructive criticism (the poop) is focused on improvement and the receiver associates it with the praise that comes before and after (the slices of bread), the purely positive phrasing motivates them to actually improve. This message types' organization divides into three parts as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Poop Sandwich Feedback

Feedback	Example
1. Sincere, specific **praise**	Your report really impressed me with its organization and visually appealing presentation of your findings. It's almost perfect.
2. Constructive criticism	If there's anything that you can improve before you send it on to the head office, it's the writing. Use MS Word's spellchecker and grammar checker, which will catch most of the errors. Perhaps you could also get Marieke to check it out because she's got an eagle eye for that sort of thing. The cleaner the writing is, the more the execs will see it as a credible piece worth considering.
3. Sincere, specific **praise**	Otherwise, the report is really great. The abstract is right on point, and the evidence you've pulled together makes a really convincing case for investing in blockchain. I totally buy your conclusion that it'll be the future of financial infrastructure.

Of course, this style of feedback may develop a bad reputation if done poorly, such as giving vague, weak praise (called "damning with faint praise") when more specific, stronger praise is possible. If done well, however, the poop sandwich tends to make those receiving it feel good about themselves even as they're motivate to do better.

Poop sandwich feedback can be challenging, however, if the receiver hasn't done enough praiseworthy work to get two pieces of bread together. In such cases, you can always reach for something to flatter them with ("I like your hair today, but . . . ") in an attempt to put them at ease, then carefully word the constructive criticism so that it doesn't put the receiver down. After all, the entire point of the poop sandwich is to make the constructive criticism more palatable by keeping it positive with feel-good sentiment.

Attribution & References

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CHAPTER 11: WRITING BASICS: WHAT MAKES A GOOD SENTENCE?

Communication Essentials for College by Jen Booth, Emily Cramer & Amanda Quibell

- 11.1 – Sentence Writing
- 11.2 – Subject-Verb Agreement
- 11.3 – Verb Tense
- 11.4 – Capitalization
- 11.5 – Pronouns
- 11.6 – Adjectives and Adverbs
- 11.7 – Misplaced and Dangling Modifiers
- 11.8 – Writing Basics: Exercises

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11.1 - SENTENCE WRITING

Learning Objectives

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

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. 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 e-mail or writing a report, it is your responsibility 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.



This passage contains three independent clauses: 1- "We went to the store." 2-"We bought the ingredients on our list" 3-"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 **bold**.

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 **in bold**

Verbs are in *italics.*

LV means linking verb, HV means helping verb, and 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.

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 circled phrases are examples of prepositional phrases.



There are 3 prepositional phrases in this sentence 1- "on a business trip", 2-"with the famous pizza" and 3-"for lunch".

Exercise 1

Exercise 1 (Text Version)

Part 1 – Read the following sentences and click on the subject in each

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

Part 2- Read the following sentences and identify the prepositional phrases.

1. The gym is open until nine o'clock tonight

    a. the gym
    b. until nine o'clock tonight
    c. is open until

2. We went to the store to get some ice.

    a. to get some ice

b. we went to
c. to the store

3. The student with the most extra credit will win a homework pass.

    a. with the most extra credit
    b. will win
    c. homework pass

4. Maya and Tia found an abandoned cat by the side of the road

    a. found an abandoned cat
    b. by the side
    c. by the side of the road

5. The driver of that pickup truck skidded on the ice.

    a. skidded on the ice
    b. of that pickup truck
    c. the driver

6. Anita won the race with time to spare.

    a. Won the race
    b. with time to spare
    c. Anita won

7. We went to the store to get some ice.

    a. we went to
    b. to the store
    c. to get some ice

Check Your Answers: [1]

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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 action verbs are in italics.

The dog *barked* at the jogger.
He *gave* a short speech before we ate.

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 linking verbs are in italics.

The coat *was* old and dirty.
The clock *seemed* broken.

If you have trouble telling the difference between action verbs and linking verbs, remember that an action verb shows that the subject is doing something, whereas 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 *looked* for his glove.
Linking Verb: The boy *looked* 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 *is known* for its variety of dishes.
She *does speak up* when prompted in class.
We *have seen* that movie three times.
She *can tell* when someone walks on her lawn.
(is, does, have, and can are helping verbs and known, speak up, seen, and tell are verbs)

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?

Exercise 2

Exercise 2 (Text Version)

Part 1 – Select the verbs in each sentence

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.

Part 2- Name the type of verb(s) used in the sentence in the space provided (LV, HV, or V). Note: Use comma (,) to separate more than one answer.

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.

Check Your Answers: [2]

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Sentence Structure, Including Fragments and Run-ons

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 (subject) *hum* (verb)

Subject–Linking Verb–Noun

Computers (subject) *are* (linking verb) a tool (noun)

Subject–Linking Verb–Adjective

Computers (subject) *are* (linking verb) expensive (adjective)

Subject–Verb–Adverb

Computers (subject) *calculate* (verb) quickly (adverb)

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 (subject) *rides* (verb) a motorcycle (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 (subject) *gave* (verb) me (indirect object) the reports (direct object)

Exercise 3

Use what you have learned so far to bring variety in your writing. Use the following lines or your own sheet of paper to write six sentences that practice each basic sentence pattern. When you have finished, label each part of the sentence (S, V, LV, N, Adj, Adv, DO, IO).

Collaboration

Find an article in a newspaper, a magazine, or online that interests you. Bring it to class or post it online. Then, looking at a classmate's article, identify one example of each part of a sentence (S, V, LV, N, Adj, Adv, DO, IO). Please share or post your results.

Fragments

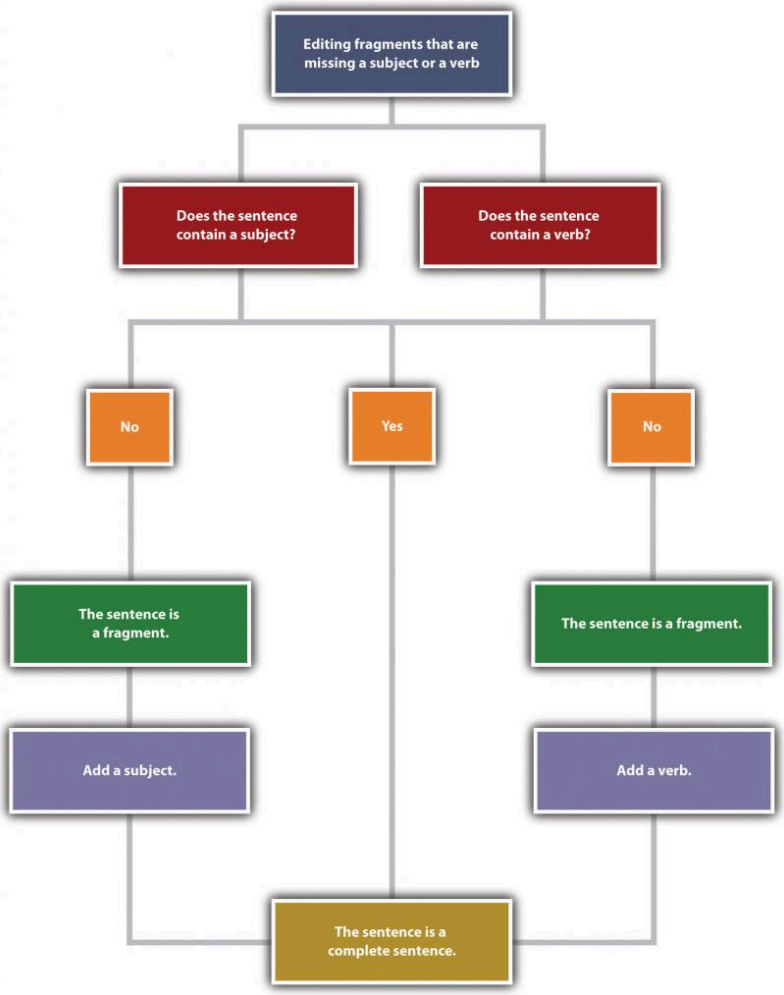
The sentences you have encountered so far have been independent clauses. As you look more closely at your past writing assignments, you may notice that some of your sentences are not complete. A sentence that is missing a subject or a verb is called a fragment . A fragment may include a description or 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 1 – Editing Fragments That Are Missing a Subject or a Verb



Expand Figure 1 image

Text version – Figure 1: Editing Fragments That Are Missing a Subject or a Verb

1. Does the sentence contain a subject AND a verb?
    1. If yes, the sentence is complete.
    2. If no, continue to #2.
2. Does the sentence contain a subject?
    3. If No: the sentence is a fragment & you should add a subject to create a complete sentence before continuing to #3.
    4. If Yes, go to #3
3. Does the sentence contain a verb?
    1. If Yes: the sentence is a complete sentence.

2. If No: The sentence is a fragment & you should add a verb to ensure the sentence is complete. [Return to Figure 1]

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.

Fragment: The store down on Main Street.

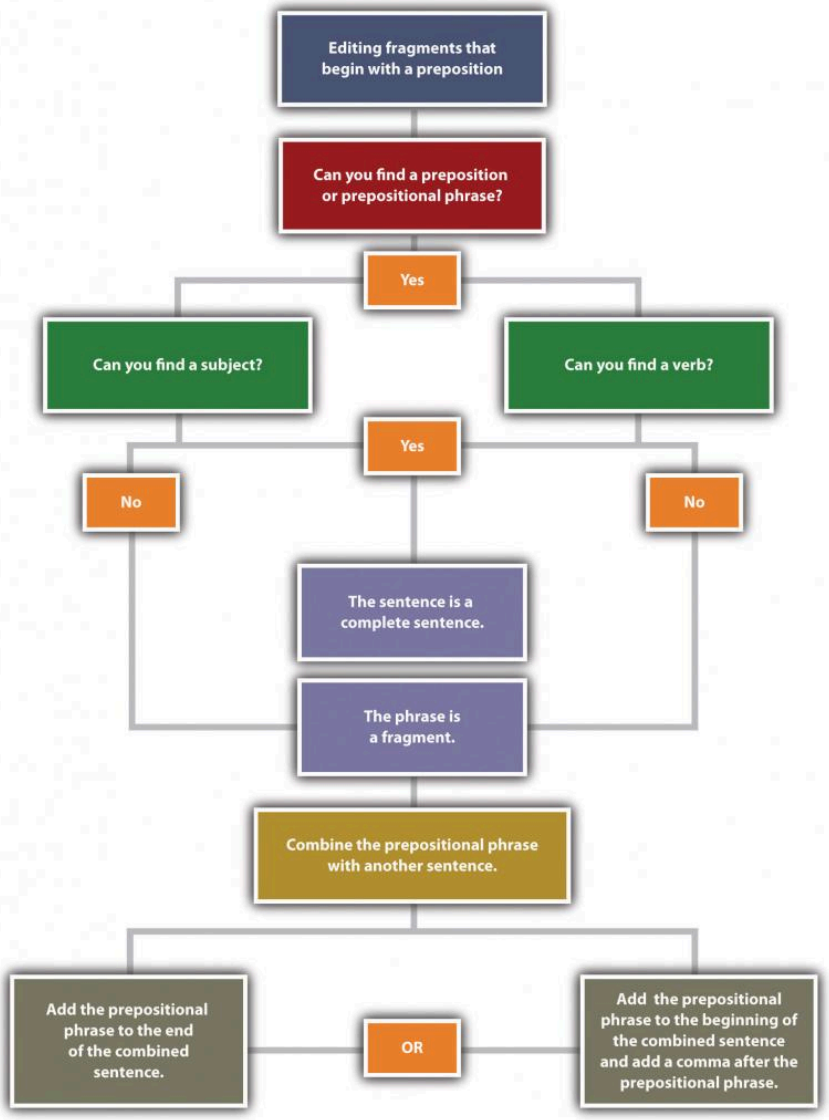
Complete sentence: The store down on Main Street *sells music.*

Common Sentence Errors

Fragments often occur because of some common error, 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.

Figure 2 – Editing Fragments That Begin with a Preposition



Expand Figure 2 image

Text version – Figure 2 Editing Fragments That Begin with a Preposition

1. Can you find a preposition or prepositional phrase?
    a. If yes, can you find a subject AND a verb?
        i. If yes, the sentence is a complete sentence.
        ii. If no, the phrase is a fragment. Continue to #2
    b. If no, continue to #2.
2. Can you find a subject AND a verb?
    a. If No: the sentence is a fragment. Combine the prepositional phrase with another sentence.
        i. Add the prepositional phrase to the end of the combined sentence OR

ii. Add the prepositional phrase to the beginning of the combined sentence and add a comma after the prepositional phrase.

b. If yes: The sentence is a complete sentence. [Return to Figure 2

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.

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.

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.

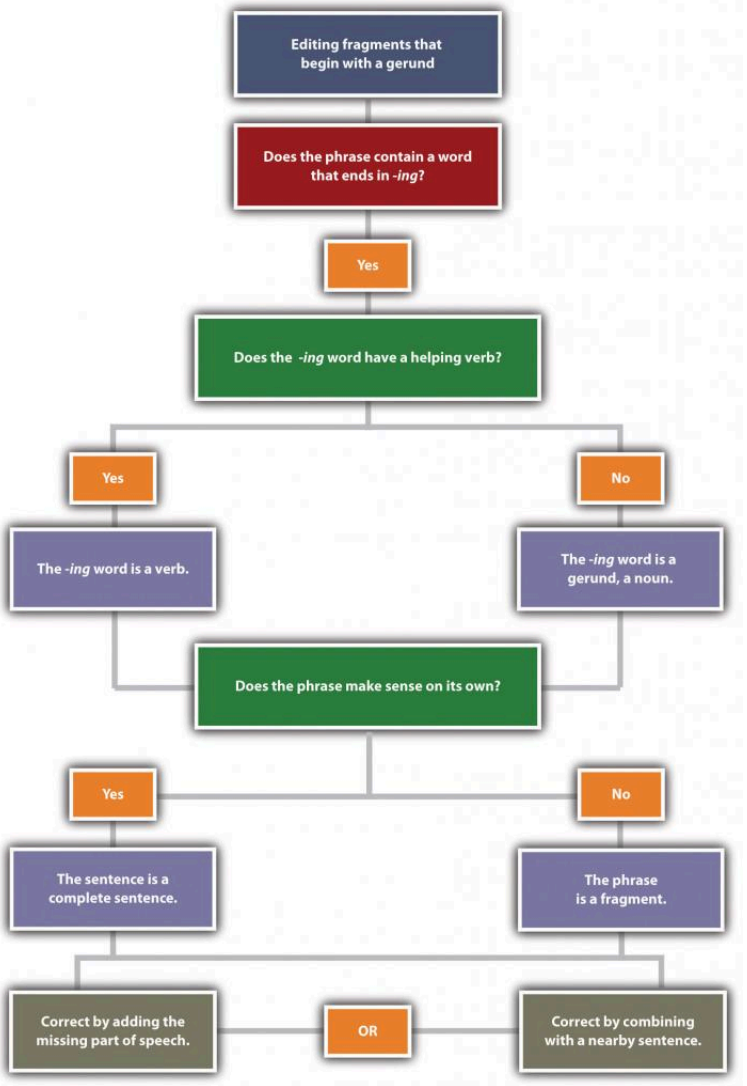
Incorrect: He has been seeing a physical therapist. Since his accident.
Correct: Since his accident, he has been seeing a physical therapist.
Correct: He has been seeing a physical therapist since his accident.

When you encounter a word ending in *-ing* in a sentence, identify whether or not this word is 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 *was* (helping verb) *working* (verb) on homework until midnight.
Noun: *Working* 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 – Editing Fragments That Begin with Gerunds



Expand Figure 3 image

Text version – Figure 3: Editing Fragments That Begin with Gerunds

1. Does the phrase contain a word that ends in *–ing?*
    1. If yes: Does the *-ing* word have a helping verb?
        2. If Yes, the -ing word is a verb. Continue to #2.
        3. If no, the -ing word is a gerund, a noun. Continue to #2.
    2. Does the phrase make sense on it's own?
        1. If yes: the sentence is a complete sentence.
        2. If no: the phrase is a fragment. Correct it by:
            1. Adding the missing part of speech *OR*
            2. Combining with a nearby sentence.

Incorrect: Taking deep breaths. Saul prepared for his presentation.

Correct: Taking deep breaths**,** Saul prepared for his presentation.

Correct: Saul prepared for his presentation. He **was taking** deep breaths.

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 three hundred more paper cranes. To reach the one thousand mark.

Correct: We needed to make three hundred more paper cranes **to** reach the one thousand mark.

Correct: We needed to make three hundred more paper cranes. **We wanted to** reach the one thousand mark.

Exercise 4

Copy the following sentences onto your own sheet of paper and circle the fragments. Then combine the fragment with the independent clause to create a complete sentence.

1. Working without taking a break. We try to get as much work done as we can in an hour.
2. I needed to bring work home. In order to meet the deadline.
3. Unless the ground thaws before spring break. We won't be planting any tulips this year.
4. Turning the lights off after he was done in the kitchen. Robert tries to conserve energy whenever possible.
5. You'll find what you need if you look. On the shelf next to the potted plant.
6. To find the perfect apartment. Deidre scoured the classifieds each day.

Run-on Sentences

Just as short, incomplete sentences can be problematic, lengthy sentences can be problematic too. Sentences with two or more independent clauses that have been incorrectly combined are known as run-on sentences . A run-on sentence may be either a fused sentence or a comma splice.

Fused sentence: A family of foxes lived under our shed young foxes played all over the yard.

Comma splice: We looked outside, the kids were hopping on the trampoline.

When two complete sentences are combined into one without any punctuation, the result is a fused sentence . When two complete sentences are joined by a comma, the result is a comma splice . Both errors can easily be fixed.

Punctuation

One way to correct run-on sentences is to correct the punctuation. For example, adding a period will correct the run-on by creating two separate sentences.

Run-on: There were no seats left, we had to stand in the back.
Correct: There were no seats left. we We had to stand in the back.

Using a semicolon between the two complete sentences will also correct the error. A semicolon allows you to keep the two closely related ideas together in one sentence. When you punctuate with a semicolon, make sure that both parts of the sentence are independent clauses. For more information on semicolons, see Section 11.4 "Capitalize Proper Nouns".

Run-on: The accident closed both lanes of traffic we waited an hour for the wreckage to be cleared.

Complete sentence: The accident closed both lanes of traffic**;** we waited an hour for the wreckage to be cleared.

When you use a semicolon to separate two independent clauses, you may wish to add a transition word to show the connection between the two thoughts. After the semicolon, add the transition word and follow it with a comma. For more information on transition words, see Chapter 3 "The Writing Process: How Do I Begin?".

Run-on: The project was put on hold we didn't have time to slow down, so we kept working.

Complete sentence: The project was put on hold**; however,** we didn't have time to slow down, so we kept working.

Coordinating Conjunctions

You can also fix run-on sentences by adding a comma and a coordinating conjunction . A coordinating conjunction acts as a link between two independent clauses.

Tip

These are the seven coordinating conjunctions that you can use: *for*, *and*, *nor*, *but*, *or*, *yet*, and *so*. Use these words appropriately when you want to link the two independent clauses. The acronym *FANBOYS* will help you remember this group of coordinating conjunctions.

Run-on: The new printer was installed, no one knew how to use it.

Complete sentence: The new printer was installed**, but** no one knew how to use it.

Dependent Words

Adding dependent words is another way to link independent clauses. Like the coordinating conjunctions, dependent words show a relationship between two independent clauses.

Run-on: We took the elevator, the others still got there before us.

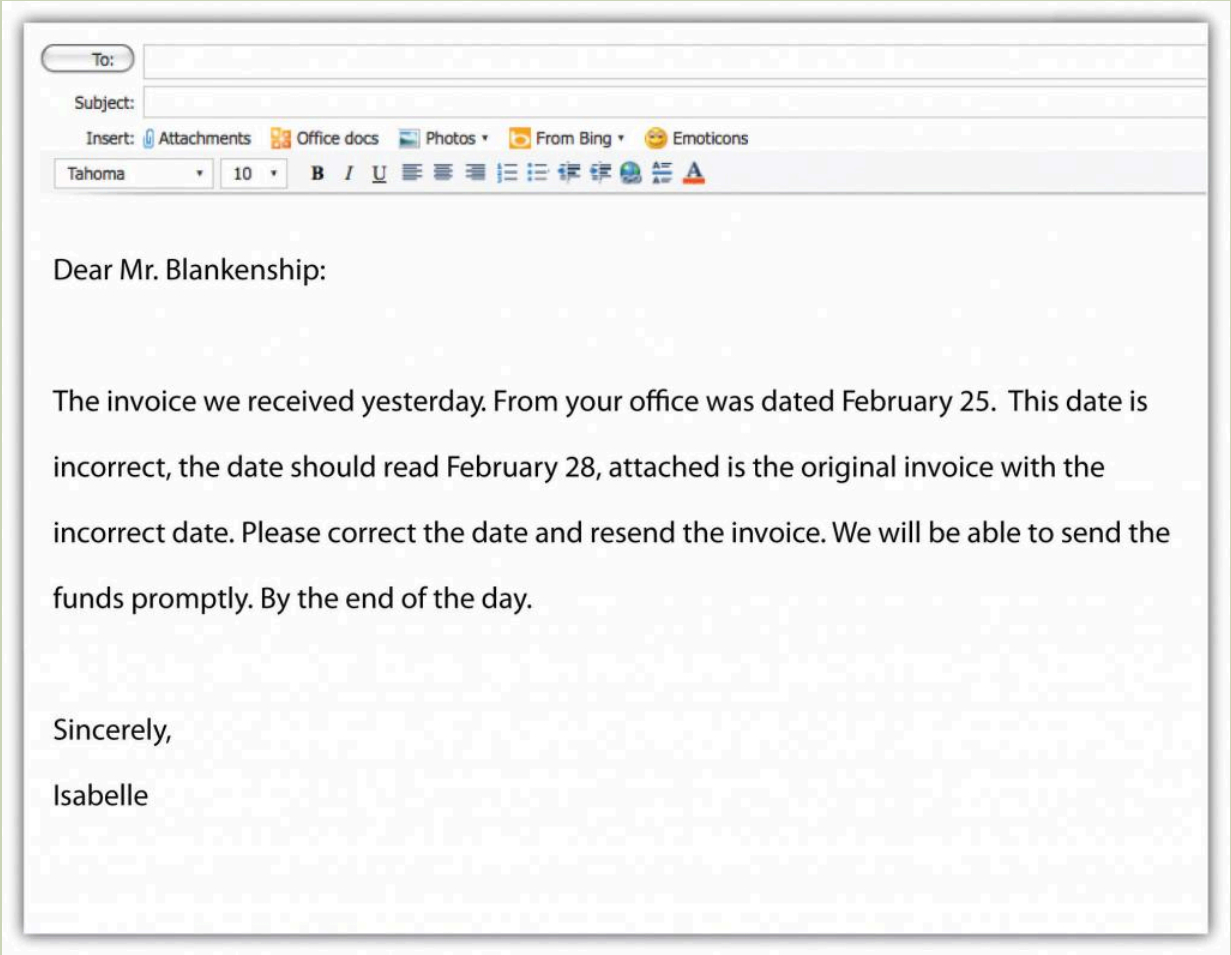
Complete sentence: Although we took the elevator, the others got there before us.

Run-on: Cobwebs covered the furniture, the room hadn't been used in years.

Complete sentence: Cobwebs covered the furniture **because** the room hadn't been used in years.

Writing at Work

Figure 4 – Sample e-mail



A sample e-mail with errors.

Isabelle's e-mail opens with two fragments and two run-on sentences containing comma splices. The e-mail ends with another fragment. What effect would this e-mail have on Mr. Blankenship or other readers? Mr. Blankenship or other readers may not think highly of Isabelle's communication skills or—worse—may not understand the message at all! Communications written in precise, complete sentences are not only more professional but also easier to understand. Before you hit the "send" button, read your e-mail carefully to make sure that the sentences are complete, are not run together, and are correctly punctuated.

Exercise 5

A reader can get lost or lose interest in material that is too dense and rambling. Use what you have learned about run-on sentences to correct the following passages:

1. The report is due on Wednesday but we're flying back from Miami that morning. I told the project manager that we would be able to get the report to her later that day she suggested that we come back a day early to get the report done and I told her we had meetings until our flight took off. We e-mailed our contact who said that they would check with his boss, she said that the project could afford a delay as long as they wouldn't have to make any edits or changes to the file our new deadline is next Friday.
2. Anna tried getting a reservation at the restaurant, but when she called they said that there was a waiting list so she put our names down on the list when the day of our reservation arrived we only had to wait thirty minutes because a table opened up unexpectedly which was good because we were able to catch a movie after dinner in the time we'd expected to wait to be seated.
3. Without a doubt, my favourite artist is Leonardo da Vinci, not because of his paintings but because of his fascinating designs, models, and sketches, including plans for scuba gear, a flying machine, and a life-size mechanical lion that actually walked and moved its head. His paintings are beautiful too, especially when you see the computer enhanced versions researchers use a variety of methods to discover and enhance the paintings' original colors, the result of which are stunningly vibrant and yet delicate displays of the man's genius.

Key Takeaways

- A sentence is complete when it contains both a subject and verb. A complete sentence

makes sense on its own.

- Every sentence must have a subject, which usually appears at the beginning of the sentence. A subject may be a noun (a person, place, or thing) or a pronoun.
- A compound subject contains more than one noun.
- A prepositional phrase describes, or modifies, another word in the sentence but cannot be the subject of a sentence.
- A verb is often an action word that indicates what the subject is doing. Verbs may be action verbs, linking verbs, or helping verbs.
- Variety in sentence structure and length improves writing by making it more interesting and more complex.
- Focusing on the six basic sentence patterns will enhance your writing.
- Fragments and run-on sentences are two common errors in sentence construction.
- Fragments can be corrected by adding a missing subject or verb. Fragments that begin with a preposition or a dependent word can be corrected by combining the fragment with another sentence.
- Run-on sentences can be corrected by adding appropriate punctuation or adding a coordinating conjunction.

Writing Application

Using the six basic sentence structures, write one of the following:

1. A work e-mail to a coworker about a presentation.
2. A business letter to a potential employer.
3. A status report about your current project.
4. A job description for your résumé.

Attribution & References

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Notes

1. **Part 1 -**
    1. Gym
    2. We
    3. Student
    4. Maya, Tia
    5. Driver
    6. Anita
    7. People
    8. You
    9. Soundtrack
    10. His

    Part 2 - 1b, 2a, 3b, 4a, 5a, 6a, 7a
2. **Part 1 -**
    1. Sound
    2. Eaten
    3. Move
    4. Filled
    5. Walked, Inspecting
    6. Expecting
    7. Felt, been
    8. Runs, praised

    Part 2 -
    1. LV, V
    2. LV
    3. V
    4. LV
    5. LV, HV
    6. LV, HV OR V
    7. LV, HV OR V
    8. LV, HV OR V

11.2 - SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT

Learning Objectives

- Define subject-verb agreement.
- Identify common errors in subject-verb agreement.

In the workplace, you want to present a professional image. Your outfit or suit says something about you when meeting face-to-face, and your writing represents you in your absence. Grammatical mistakes in your writing or even in speaking make a negative impression on coworkers, clients, and potential employers. Subject-verb agreement is one of the most common errors that people make. Having a solid understanding of this concept is critical when making a good impression, and it will help ensure that your ideas are communicated clearly.

Agreement

Agreement in speech and in writing refers to the proper grammatical match between words and phrases. Parts of sentences must agree , or correspond with other parts, in number, person, case, and gender.

- **Number.** All parts must match in singular or plural forms.
- **Person.** All parts must match in first person (*I*), second person (*you*), or third person (*he*, *she*, *it*, *they*) forms.
- **Case.** All parts must match in subjective (*I*, *you*, *he*, *she*, *it*, *they*, *we*), objective (*me*, *her*, *him*, *them*, *us*), or possessive (*my*, *mine*, *your*, *yours*, *his*, *her*, *hers*, *their*, *theirs*, *our*, *ours*) forms. For

more information on pronoun case agreement, see Section 12.5 "Pronoun Agreement".

- **Gender.** All parts must match in male or female forms.

Subject-verb agreement describes the proper match between subjects and verbs.

Because subjects and verbs are either singular or plural, the subject of a sentence and the verb of a sentence must agree with each other in number. That is, a singular subject belongs with a singular verb form, and a plural subject belongs with a plural verb form. For more information on subjects and verbs, see Section 11.1 "Sentence Writing".

Singular: The **cat** *jumps* over the fence.
Plural: The **cats** *jump* over the fence.

Regular Verbs

Regular verbs follow a predictable pattern. For example, in the third person singular, regular verbs always end in *-s*. Other forms of regular verbs do not end in *-s.* Study the following regular verb forms in the present tense.

Person	Singular Form	Plural Form
First Person	I live.	We live.
Second Person	You live.	You live.
Third Person	He/She/It lives.	They live.

Tip

Add an *-es* to the third person singular form of regular verbs that end in *-sh*, *-x*, *-ch*, and *-s*. (I wish/He wishes, I fix/She fixes, I watch/It watches, I kiss/He kisses.)

Singular: I *read* every day.
Plural: We *read* every day.

In these sentences, the verb form stays the same for the first person singular and the first person plural.

Singular: You *stretch* before you go to bed.
Plural: You *stretch* before every game.

In these sentences, the verb form stays the same for the second person singular and the second person plural. In the singular form, the pronoun *you* refers to one person. In the plural form, the pronoun *you* refers to a group of people, such as a team.

Singular: My **mother** *walks* to work every morning.

In this sentence, the subject is *mother*. Because the sentence only refers to one mother, the subject is singular. The verb in this sentence must be in the third person singular form.

Plural: My **friends** *like* the same music as I do.

In this sentence, the subject is *friends*. Because this subject refers to more than one person, the subject is plural. The verb in this sentence must be in the third person plural form.

Tip

Many singular subjects can be made plural by adding an *-s*. Most regular verbs in the present tense end with an *–s* in the third person singular. This does not make the verbs plural.

Singular subject, singular verb: The **cat** *races* across the yard.
Plural subject, plural verb: The **cats** *race* across the yard.

Exercise 1

Exercise 1 (Text Version)

On your own sheet of paper, write the correct verb form for each of the following sentences.

1. I (brush/brushes) my teeth twice a day.
2. You (wear/wears) the same shoes every time we go out.
3. He (kick/kicks) the soccer ball into the goal.
4. She (watch/watches) foreign films.
5. Catherine (hide/hides) behind the door.
6. We (want/wants) to have dinner with you.
7. You (work/works) together to finish the project.
8. They (need/needs) to score another point to win the game.
9. It (eat/eats) four times a day.
10. David (fix/fixes) his own motorcycle.

Check Your Answers: [1]

Activity Source: Exercise 1 is adapted from "2.2 Subject-Verb Agreement" In *Writing for Success* by University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing, licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0.

Irregular Verbs

Not all verbs follow a predictable pattern. These verbs are called irregular verbs . Some of the most common irregular verbs are *be*, *have*, and *do*. Learn the forms of these verbs in the present tense to avoid errors in subject-verb agreement.

Be

Study the different forms of the verb *to be* in the present tense.

Person	Singular Form	Plural Form
First Person	I am.	We are.
Second Person	You are.	You are.
Third Person	He/She/It is.	They are.

Have

Study the different forms of the verb *to have* in the present tense.

Person	Singular Form	Plural Form
First Person	I have.	We have.
Second Person	You have.	You have.
Third Person	He/She/It has.	They have.

Do

Study the different forms of the verb *to do* in the present tense.

Person	Singular Form	Plural Form
First Person	I do.	We do.
Second Person	You do.	You do.
Third person	He/She/It does.	They do.

Exercise 2

Exercise 2 (Text Version)

Complete the following sentences by writing the correct present tense form of be, have, or do. Use your own sheet of paper to complete this exercise.

1. I ____ sure that you will succeed.

2. They _____front-row tickets to the show.
3. He ____ a great Elvis impersonation.
4. We ____ so excited to meet you in person!
5. She ____ a fever and a sore throat.
6. You _____not know what you are talking about.
7. You ____ all going to pass this class.
8. She _____ not going to like that.
9. It ____ appear to be the right size.
10. They _____ ready to take this job seriously.

Check Your Answers: [2]

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Errors in Subject-Verb Agreement

Errors in subject-verb agreement may occur when

- a sentence contains a compound subject;
- the subject of the sentence is separate from the verb;
- the subject of the sentence is an indefinite pronoun, such as *anyone* or *everyone*;
- the subject of the sentence is a collective noun, such as *team* or *organization*;
- the subject appears after the verb.

Recognizing the sources of common errors in subject-verb agreement will help you avoid these errors in your writing. This section covers the subject-verb agreement errors in more detail.

Compound Subjects

A compound subject is formed by two or more nouns and the coordinating conjunctions *and*, *or*, or *nor*. A compound subject can be made of singular subjects, plural subjects, or a combination of singular and plural subjects.

Compound subjects combined with *and* take a plural verb form.

Two singular subjects: Alicia and **Miguel** *ride* their bikes to the beach.
Two plural subjects: The **girls** and the **boys** *ride* their bikes to the beach.
Singular and plural subjects: Alicia and the **boys** *ride* their bikes to the beach.

Compound subjects combined with *or* and *nor* are treated separately. The verb must agree with the subject that is nearest to the verb.

Two singular subjects: Neither **Elizabeth** nor **Rianna** *wants* to eat at that restaurant.
Two plural subjects: Neither the **kids** nor the **adults** *want* to eat at that restaurant.
Singular and plural subjects: Neither **Elizabeth** nor the **kids** *want* to eat at that restaurant.
Plural and singular subjects: Neither the **kids** nor **Elizabeth** *wants* to eat at that restaurant.

Two singular subjects: Either **you** or **Jason** *takes* the furniture out of the garage.
Two plural subjects: Either **you** or **the twins** *take* the furniture out of the garage.
Singular and plural subjects: Either **Jason** or the **twins** *take* the furniture out of the garage.
Plural and singular subjects: Either the **twins** or **Jason** *takes* the furniture out of the garage.

Tip

If you can substitute the word *they* for the compound subject, then the sentence takes the third person plural verb form.

Separation of Subjects and Verbs

As you read or write, you may come across a sentence that contains a phrase or clause that separates the subject from the verb. Often, prepositional phrases or dependent clauses add more information to the sentence and appear between the subject and the verb. However, the subject and the verb must still agree.

If you have trouble finding the subject and verb, cross out or ignore the phrases and clauses that begin with prepositions or dependent words. The subject of a sentence will never be in a prepositional phrase or dependent clause.

The following is an example of a subject and verb separated by a prepositional phrase:

The **students** with the best grades *win* the academic awards.
The **puppy** under the table *is* my favourite.

The following is an example of a subject and verb separated by a dependent clause:

The **car** that I bought *has* power steering and a sunroof.
The **representatives** who are courteous *sell* the most tickets.

Indefinite Pronouns

Indefinite pronouns refer to an unspecified person, thing, or number. When an indefinite pronoun serves as the subject of a sentence, you will often use a singular verb form.

However, keep in mind that exceptions arise. Some indefinite pronouns may require a plural verb form. To determine whether to use a singular or plural verb with an indefinite pronoun, consider the noun that the pronoun would refer to. If the noun is plural, then use a plural verb with the indefinite pronoun. View the chart to see a list of common indefinite pronouns and the verb forms they agree with.

Indefinite Pronouns That Always Take a Singular Verb	Indefinite Pronouns That Can Take a Singular or Plural Verb
anybody, anyone, anything	All
each	Any
everybody, everyone, everything	None
much	Some
many	
nobody, no one, nothing	
somebody, someone, something	

Singular: Everybody in the kitchen *sings* along when that song comes on the radio.

The indefinite pronoun *everybody* takes a singular verb form because *everybody* refers to a group performing the same action as a single unit.

Plural: All the people in the kitchen *sing* along when that song comes on the radio.

The indefinite pronoun *all* takes a plural verb form because *all* refers to the plural noun *people*. Because *people* is plural, *all* is plural.

Singular: All the cake *is* on the floor.

In this sentence, the indefinite pronoun *all* takes a singular verb form because *all* refers to the singular noun *cake*. Because *cake* is singular, *all* is singular.

Collective Nouns

A collective noun is a noun that identifies more than one person, place, or thing and considers those people, places, or things one singular unit. Because collective nouns are counted as one, they are singular and require a singular verb. Some commonly used collective nouns are *group*, *team*, *army*, *flock*, *family*, and *class*.

Singular: The **class** *is* going on a field trip.

In this sentence, *class* is a collective noun. Although the class consists of many students, the class is treated as a singular unit and requires a singular verb form.

The Subject Follows the Verb

You may encounter sentences in which the subject comes after the verb instead of before the verb. In other words, the subject of the sentence may not appear where you expect it to appear. To ensure proper subject-verb agreement, you must correctly identify the subject and the verb.

Here or There

In sentences that begin with *here* or *there*, the subject follows the verb.

Here *is* my **wallet**!
There *are* thirty **dolphins** in the water.

If you have trouble identifying the subject and the verb in sentences that start with *here* or *there*; it may help to reverse the order of the sentence so the subject comes first.

My **wallet** *is* here!
Thirty **dolphins** *are* in the water.

Questions

When you ask questions, a question word (*who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *why*, or *how*) appears first. The verb and then the subject follow.

Who *are* the **people** you are related to?
When *am* **I** going to go to the grocery store?

Tip

If you have trouble finding the subject and the verb in questions, try answering the question being asked.

When *am* I going to the grocery store? **I** *am* going to the grocery store tonight!

Exercise 3

Exercise 3 (Text Version)
Correct the errors in subject-verb agreement in the following sentences. If there are no errors in

subject-verb agreement, write OK. Copy the corrected sentence or the word OK on your own sheet of notebook paper.

1. My dog and cats chases each other all the time.
2. The books that are in my library is the best I have ever read.
3. Everyone are going to the concert except me.
4. My family are moving to California.
5. Here is the lake I told you about.
6. There is the newspapers I was supposed to deliver.
7. Which room is bigger?
8. When are the movie going to start?
9. My sister and brother cleans up after themselves.
10. Some of the clothes is packed away in the attic.

Check Your Answers: [3]

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Exercise 4

Exercise 4 (Text Version)

Correct the errors in subject-verb agreement in the following paragraph. Copy the paragraph on a piece of notebook paper and make corrections.

Dear Hiring Manager,

I feels that I am the ideal candidate for the receptionist position at your company. I has three years of experience as a receptionist in a company that is similar to yours. My phone skills and written communication is excellent. These skills, and others that I have learned on the job, helps me understand that every person in a company helps make the business a success. At my current job, the team always say that I am very helpful. Everyone appreciate when I go the extra mile to get the job done right. My current employer and coworkers feels that I am an asset to the team. I is

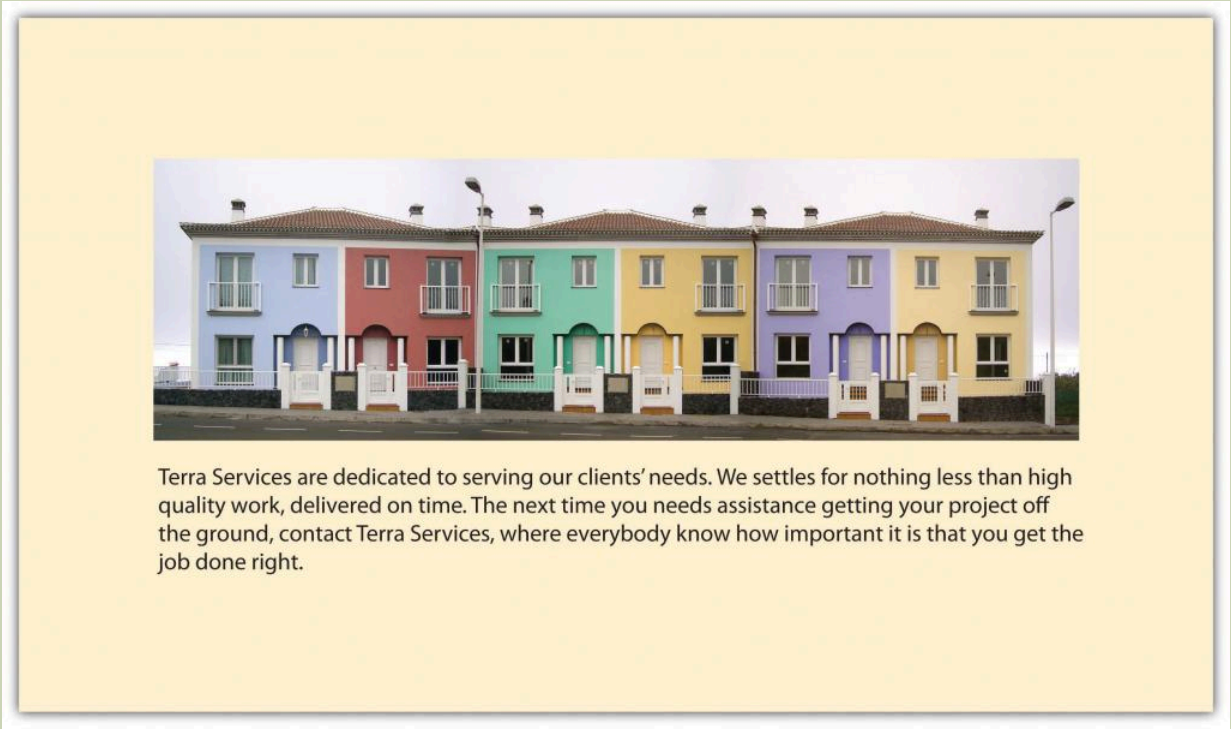
efficient and organized. Is there any other details about me that you would like to know? If so, please contact me. Here are my résumé. You can reach me by e-mail or phone. I looks forward to speaking with you in person.
Thanks,
Felicia Fellini

Check Your Answers: [4]

Activity Source: Exercise 4 adapted from "2.2 Subject-Verb Agreement" In *Writing for Success* by University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing, licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0.

Writing at Work

Figure 1 -Advertisement



Ad text: Terra Services are dedicated to serving our clients' needs. We settles for nothing less than high quality work, delivered on time. The next time you needs assistance getting your project off the ground, contact Terra Services, where everybody know how important it is that you get the job done right.

Imagine that you are a prospective client and that you saw this ad online. Would you call Terra Services to handle your next project? Probably not! Mistakes in subject-verb agreement can cost a company business. Paying careful attention to grammatical details ensures professionalism that clients will recognize and respect.

Key Takeaways

- Parts of sentences must agree in number, person, case, and gender.

- A verb must always agree with its subject in number. A singular subject requires a singular verb; a plural subject requires a plural verb.
- Irregular verbs do not follow a predictable pattern in their singular and plural forms. Common irregular verbs are to be, to have, and to do.
- A compound subject is formed when two or more nouns are joined by the words and, or, or nor.
- In some sentences, the subject and verb may be separated by a phrase or clause, but the verb must still agree with the subject.
- Indefinite pronouns, such as anyone, each, everyone, many, no one, and something, refer to unspecified people or objects. Most indefinite pronouns are singular.
- A collective noun is a noun that identifies more than one person, place, or thing and treats those people, places, or things one singular unit. Collective nouns require singular verbs.
- In sentences that begin with here and there, the subject follows the verb.
- In questions, the subject follows the verb.

Writing Application

Use your knowledge of subject-verb agreement to write one of the following:

1. An advertisement for a potential company
2. A memo to all employees of a particular company
3. A cover letter describing your qualifications to a potential employer

Be sure to include at least the following:

- One collective noun
- One irregular verb
- One question

Attribution & References

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Notes

1.
   1. brush
   2. wear
   3. kicks
   4. watches
   5. hides
   6. want
   7. work
   8. need
   9. eats
   10. fixes

2.
   1. am
   2. have
   3. does
   4. are
   5. has
   6. do
   7. are
   8. is
   9. does
   10. are

3.
   1. My dog and cats chase each other all the time
   2. The books that are in my library are the best I have ever read
   3. Everyone is going to the concert except me
   4. My family is moving to California
   5. OK
   6. There is the newspapers I was suppose to deliver
   7. OK
   8. When is the movie going to start?
   9. My sister and brother clean up after themselves.
   10. Some of the clothes are packed away in the attic

4. Dear Hiring Manager, I ~~feels~~ ***feel*** that I am the ideal candidate for the receptionist position at your company. I ~~has~~ ***have*** three years of experience as a receptionist in a company that is similar to yours. My phone skills and written communication ~~is~~ ***are*** excellent. These skills, and others that I have ~~learned~~ ***learnt*** on the job, ~~helps~~ ***help*** me understand that every person in a company helps make the business a success. At my current job, the team always ~~say~~ ***says*** that I am very helpful. Everyone ~~appreccciate~~ ***appreciates*** when I go the extra mile to get the job done right. My current employer and coworkers ~~feels~~ ***feel*** that I am an asset to the team. I ~~is~~ ***am*** efficient and organized. ~~Is~~ ***are*** there any other details about me that you would like to know? If so, please contact me. Here ~~are~~ ***is*** my résumé. You can reach me by e-mail or phone. I ~~looks~~ ***look*** forward to speaking with you in person. Thanks, Felicia Fellini

11.3 - VERB TENSE

Learning Objectives

- Use the correct regular verb tense in basic sentences.
- Use the correct irregular verb tense in basic sentences.

Suppose you must give an oral presentation about what you did last summer. How do you make it clear that you are talking about the past and not about the present or the future? Using the correct verb tense can help you do this.

It is important to use the proper verb tense. Otherwise, your listener might judge you harshly. Mistakes in tense often leave a listener or reader with a negative impression.

Regular Verbs

Verbs indicate actions or states of being in the past, present, or future using tenses. Regular verbs follow regular patterns when shifting from the present to past tense. For example, to form a past-tense or past-participle verb form, add *-ed* or *-d* to the end of a verb. You can avoid mistakes by understanding this basic pattern.

Verb tense identifies the time of action described in a sentence. Verbs take different forms to indicate different tenses. Verb tenses indicate

- an action or state of being in the present,
- an action or state of being in the past,
- an action or state of being in the future.

Helping verbs, such as *be* and *have,* also work to create verb tenses, such as the future tense.

Present Tense: Tim *walks* to the store. (Singular subject)
Present Tense: Sue and **Kimmy** *walk* to the store. (Plural subject)
Past Tense: Yesterday, **they** *walked* to the store to buy some bread. (Singular subject)

Exercise 1

Exercise 1 (Text Version)
Complete the following sentences by selecting the correct form of the verb in simple present, simple past, or simple future tenses. Write the corrected sentence on your own sheet of paper.

1. The Dust Bowl (is, was, will be) a name given to a period of very destructive dust storms that occurred in the United States during the 1930s.
2. Historians today (consider, considered, will consider) The Dust Bowl to be one of the worst weather of events in American history.
3. The Dust Bowl mostly (affects, affected, will affect) the states of Kansas, Colorado, Oklahoma, Texas, and New Mexico.
4. Dust storms (continue, continued, will continue) to occur in these dry regions, but not to the devastating degree of the 1930s.
5. The dust storms during The Dust Bowl (cause, caused, will cause) irreparable damage to farms and the environment for a period of several years.
6. When early settlers (move, moved, will move) into this area, they (remove, removed, will remove) the natural prairie grasses in order to plant crops and graze their cattle.
7. They did not (realize, realized, will realize) that the grasses kept the soil in place.
8. There (is, was, will be) also a severe drought that (affects, affected, will affect) the region.
9. The worst dust storm (happens, happened, will happen) on April 14, 1935, a day called Black Sunday.
10. The Dust Bowl era finally came to end in 1939 when the rains (arrive, arrived, will arrive).
11. Dust storms (continue, continued, will continue) to affect the region, but hopefully they will not be as destructive as the storms of the 1930s.

Check Your Answers: [1]

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Irregular Verbs

The past tense of irregular verbs is not formed using the patterns that regular verbs follow. Study Table 1 “Irregular Verbs”, which lists the most common irregular verbs.

Tip

The best way to learn irregular verbs is to memorize them. With the help of a classmate, create flashcards of irregular verbs and test yourselves until you master them.

Table 1 – Irregular Verbs

Simple Present	Past	Simple Present	Past
be	was, were	lose	lost
become	became	make	made
begin	began	mean	meant
blow	blew	meet	met
break	broke	pay	paid
bring	brought	put	put
build	built	quit	quit
burst	burst	read	read
buy	bought	ride	rode
catch	caught	ring	rang
choose	chose	rise	rose
come	came	run	ran
cut	cut	say	said
dive	dove (dived)	see	saw
do	did	seek	sought
draw	drew	sell	sold
drink	drank	send	sent
drive	drove	set	set
eat	ate	shake	shook
fall	fell	shine	shone (shined)
feed	fed	shrink	shrank (shrunk)
feel	felt	sing	sang
fight	fought	sit	sat
find	found	sleep	slept
fly	flew	speak	spoke
forget	forgot	spend	spent
forgive	forgave	spring	sprang
freeze	froze	stand	stood
get	got	steal	stole

Simple Present	Past	Simple Present	Past
give	gave	strike	struck
go	went	swim	swam
grow	grew	swing	swung
have	had	take	took
hear	heard	teach	taught
hide	hid	tear	tore
hold	held	tell	told
hurt	hurt	think	thought
keep	kept	throw	threw
know	knew	understand	understood
lay	laid	wake	woke
lead	led	wear	wore
leave	left	win	won
let	let	wind	wound

Here we consider using irregular verbs.

Present Tense: Lauren *keeps* all her letters.
Past Tense: Lauren *kept* all her letters.
Future Tense: Lauren *will keep* all her letters.

Exercise 2

Exercise 2 (Text Version)
Complete the following sentences by selecting the correct form of the irregular verb in simple present, simple past, or simple future tense. Copy the corrected sentence onto your own sheet of paper.

1. Marina finally (forgived, forgave, will forgive) her sister for snooping around her room.
2. The house (shook, shaked, shakes) as the airplane rumbled overhead.
3. I (buyed, bought, buy) several items of clothing at the thrift store on Wednesday.
4. She (put, putted, puts) the lotion in her shopping basket and proceeded to the checkout line.
5. The prized goose (layed, laid, lay) several golden eggs last night.
6. Mr. Batista (teached, taught, taughted) the class how to use correct punctuation.
7. I (drink, drank, will drink) several glasses of sparkling cider instead of champagne on New Year's Eve next year.
8. Although Hector (growed, grew, grows) three inches in one year, we still called him "Little Hector."
9. Yesterday our tour guide (lead, led, will lead) us through the maze of people in Times Square.
10. The rock band (burst, bursted, bursts) onto the music scene with their catchy songs.

Check Your Answers: [2]

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Exercise 3

Exercise 3 (Text Version)

On your own sheet of paper, write a sentence using the correct form of the verb tense shown below.

1. Throw (past)
2. Paint (simple present)
3. Smile (future)
4. Tell (past)
5. Share (simple present)

Check Your Answers: [3]

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Maintaining Consistent Verb Tense

Consistent verb tense means the same verb tense is used throughout a sentence or a paragraph. As you write and revise, it is important to use the same verb tense consistently and to avoid shifting from one tense to another unless there is a good reason for the tense shift. In the following box, see whether you notice the difference between a sentence with consistent tense and one with inconsistent tense.

Inconsistent tense:
The crowd *starts* cheering as Melina *approached* the finish line.
Consistent tense:
The crowd *started* cheering as Melina *approached* the finish line.
Consistent tense:
The crowd *starts* cheering as Melina *approaches* the finish line.

Tip

In some cases, clear communication will call for different tenses. Look at the following example:

When I was a teenager, I *wanted* to be a fire fighter, but not I *am studying* computer science.

If the time frame for each action or state is different, a tense shift is appropriate.

Exercise 4

Edit the following paragraph by correcting the inconsistent verb tense. Copy the corrected paragraph onto your own sheet of paper.

In the Middle Ages, most people lived in villages and work as agricultural laborers, or peasants. Every village has a "lord," and the peasants worked on his land. Much of what they produce go to the lord and his family. What little food was leftover goes to support the peasants' families. In return for their labor, the lord offers them protection. A peasant's day usually began before sunrise and involves long hours of backbreaking work, which includes plowing the land, planting seeds, and cutting crops for harvesting. The working life of a peasant in the Middle Ages is usually demanding and exhausting.

Writing at Work

Read the following excerpt from a work e-mail:

> I would like to highlight an important concern that comes up after our meeting last week. During the meeting, we agree to conduct a series of interviews over the next several months in which we hired new customer service representatives. Before we do that, however, I would like to review your experiences with the Customer Relationship Management Program. Please suggest a convenient time next week for us to meet so that we can discuss this important matter.

The inconsistent tense in the e-mail will very likely distract the reader from its overall point. Most likely, your coworkers will not correct your verb tenses or call attention to grammatical errors, but it is important to keep in mind that errors such as these do have a subtle negative impact in the workplace.

Key Takeaways

- Verb tense helps you express when an event takes place.
- Regular verbs follow regular patterns when shifting from present to past tense.
- Irregular verbs do not follow regular, predictable patterns when shifting from present to past tense.
- Using consistent verb tense is a key element to effective writing.

Writing Application

Tell a family story. You likely have several family stories to choose from, but pick the one that you find most interesting to write about. Use as many details as you can in the telling. As you write and proofread, make sure your all your verbs are correct and the tenses are consistent.

Attribution & References

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Notes

1. 1. is 2. consider 3. affects

4. will continue
5. caused
6. removed
7. realize
8. was
9. affected
10. happened
11. arrived
12. continue

2.
1. forgave,
2. shook,
3. bought,
4. put,
5. laid,
6. taught,
7. will drink,
8. grew,
9. led,
10. bursts

3. Present: I am throwing the baseball to Sara Past: I threw the baseball to Sara Future: I will throw the baseball to Sara

11.4 - CAPITALIZATION

Learning Objectives

- Learn the basic rules of capitalization.
- Identify common capitalization errors.

Text messages, casual e-mails, and instant messages often ignore the rules of capitalization . In fact, it can seem unnecessary to capitalize in these contexts. In other, more formal forms of communication, however, knowing the basic rules of capitalization and using capitalization correctly gives the reader the impression that you choose your words carefully and care about the ideas you are conveying.

Capitalize the First Word of a Sentence

Incorrect: the museum has a new butterfly exhibit.
Correct: The museum has a new butterfly exhibit.
Incorrect: cooking can be therapeutic.
Correct: Cooking can be therapeutic.

Capitalize Proper Nouns

Proper nouns—the names of specific people, places, objects, streets, buildings, events, or titles of individuals—are always capitalized.

Incorrect: He grew up in edmonton, alberta.
Correct: He grew up in **E**dmonton, **A**lberta.
Incorrect: The skydome in toronto has a new name.
Correct: The **S**kydome in **T**oronto has a new name.

Tip

Always capitalize nationalities, races, languages, and religions. For example, Canadian, African American, Hispanic, Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, and so on.

Do not capitalize nouns for people, places, things, streets, buildings, events, and titles when the noun is used in general or common way. See the following chart for the difference between proper nouns and common nouns.

Common Noun	Proper Noun
museum	The Art Gallery of Ontario
theater	Royal Alexandra Theater
country	Malaysia
uncle	Uncle Javier
doctor	Dr. Jackson
book	*Pride and Prejudice*
college	Georgian College
war	World War I
historical event	The Renaissance

Exercise 1

Exercise 1 (Text Version)

Classify the following words as Common noun or Proper Noun: Man, Soccer, Australia, Peter, Atlantic OCean, Fish, Country

Check Your Answers: [1]

Activity Source: Exercise 1 is adapted from "2.4 Capitalization" In *Writing for Success* by University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing, licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0.

Capitalize Days of the Week, Months of the Year, and Holidays

Incorrect: On **w**ednesday, I will be traveling to Halifax for a music festival.
Correct: On **W**ednesday, I will be traveling to Halifax for a music festival.
Incorrect: **c**anada **d**ay is my favourite holiday.
Correct: **C**anada **D**ay is my favourite holiday.

Capitalize Titles

Incorrect: The play, ***c****reeps*, by David Freeman is one of my favourites.
Correct: The play, ***C****reeps*, by David Freeman is one of my favourites.
Incorrect: The **p**rime minister of **canada** will be speaking at my university.
Correct: The **P**rime Minister of the **Canada** will be speaking at my university.

Tip

Computer-related words such as "Internet" and "World Wide Web" are usually capitalized; however, "e-mail" and "online" are never capitalized.

Exercise 2

Exercise 2 (Text Version)

Edit the following sentences by correcting the capitalization of the titles or names.

The prince of england enjoys playing polo.
"Ode to a nightingale" is a sad poem.
My sister loves to read magazines such as maclean's.
The edible woman is an excellent novel written by Margaret Atwood.
My physician, dr. patel, always makes me feel comfortable in her office.

Check Your Answers: [2]

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Exercise 3

Exercise 3 (Text Version)

Edit the following paragraphs by correcting the capitalization.

david grann's the lost City of Z mimics the snake-like winding of the amazon River. The three distinct Stories that are introduced are like twists in the River. First, the Author describes his own journey to the amazon in the present day, which is contrasted by an account of percy fawcett's voyage in 1925 and a depiction of James Lynch's expedition in 1996. Where does the river lead these explorers? the answer is one that both the Author and the reader are hungry to discover.

The first lines of the preface pull the reader in immediately because we know the author, david grann, is lost in the amazon. It is a compelling beginning not only because it's thrilling but also

because this is a true account of grann's experience. grann has dropped the reader smack in the middle of his conflict by admitting the recklessness of his decision to come to this place. the suspense is further perpetuated by his unnerving observation that he always considered himself A Neutral Witness, never getting personally involved in his stories, a notion that is swiftly contradicted in the opening pages, as the reader can clearly perceive that he is in a dire predicament—and frighteningly involved.

Check Your Answers: [3]

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Writing at Work

Did you know that, if you use all capital letters to convey a message, the capital letters come across like shouting? In addition, all capital letters are actually more difficult to read and may annoy the reader. To avoid "shouting" at or annoying your reader, follow the rules of capitalization and find other ways to emphasize your point.

Key Takeaways

- Learning and applying the basic rules of capitalization is a fundamental aspect of good writing.
- Identifying and correcting errors in capitalization is an important writing skill.

Writing Application

Write a one-page biography. Make sure to identify people, places, and dates and use capitalization correctly.

Attribution & References

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Notes

1. Common Noun - Man, Fish, Country Proper Noun - Peter, Atlantic Ocean, Australia, Soccer
2. The Prince of England enjoys playing polo.
3. David Grann's The lost city of Z mimics the snake-like winding of the Amazon river. The three distinct stories that are introduced are like twists in the river. First, the author describes his own journey to the Amazon in the present day, which is contrasted by an account of Percy Fawcett's voyage in 1925 and a depiction of James Lynch's expedition in 1996. Where does the river lead these explorers? the answer is one that both the author and the reader are hungry to discover. The first lines of the preface pull the reader in immediately because we know the author, David Grann, is lost in the Amazon. It is a compelling beginning not only because it's thrilling but also because this is a true account of Grann's experience. Grann has dropped the reader smack in the middle of his conflict by admitting the recklessness of his decision to come to this place. the suspense is further perpetuated by his unnerving observation that he always considered himself a neutral witness, never getting personally involved in his stories, a notion that is swiftly contradicted in the opening pages, as the reader can clearly perceive that he is in a dire predicament—and frighteningly involved.

11.5 - PRONOUNS

Learning Objectives

- Identify pronouns and their antecedents.
- Use pronouns and their antecedents correctly.

If there were no pronouns, all types of writing would be quite tedious to read. We would soon be frustrated by reading sentences like *Bob said that Bob was tired* or *Christina told the class that Christina received an A.* Pronouns help a writer avoid constant repetition. Knowing just how pronouns work is an important aspect of clear and concise writing.

Pronoun Agreement

A pronoun is a word that takes the place of (or refers back to) a noun or another pronoun. The word or words a pronoun refers to is called the **antecedent** of the pronoun.

1. *Lani* complained that *she* was exhausted.

- *She* refers to *Lani*.
- *Lani* is the antecedent of *she*.

2. The potted plant drooped because *it* was overwatered.

- *It* refers to the potted plant
- *The potted plant* is the antecedent of *it*.

3. *Crina and Rosalie* have been best friends ever since *they* were freshman in high school.

- *They* refers to *Crina and Rosalie*.
- *Crina and Rosalie* is the antecedent of *they*.

Pronoun agreement errors occur when the pronoun and the antecedent do not match or agree with each other. There are several types of pronoun agreement.

Agreement in Number

If the pronoun takes the place of or refers to a singular noun, the pronoun must also be singular.

Incorrect: When *a dog* (sing.) feels threatened, *they* (plur.) might bite.
Correct: When *a dog* (sing.) feels threatened, *it* (sing.) might bite.
Correct: When *dogs* (plur.) feels threatened, *they* (sing.) might bite.

Agreement in Person

Person	Singular Pronouns			Plural Pronouns		
First Person	I	me	my (mine)	we	us	our (ours)
Second Person	you	you	your (yours)	you	you	your (your)
Third Person	he, she, it, they	him, her, it, them	his, her, its, theirs	they	them	their (theirs)

If you use a consistent person, your reader is less likely to be confused.

Incorrect: When *a satellite* (3rd person singular) stops working, *they* (3rd person plural) become space junk.
Correct: When *a satellite* (3rd person singular) stops working, *it* (3rd person singular) becomes space junk.
Correct: When *satellites* (3rd person plural) stop working, *they* (3rd person plural) become space junk.

Exercise 1

Exercise 1 (Text Version)
Edit the following paragraph by correcting pronoun agreement errors in number and person.

Over spring break I visited my older cousin, Diana, and they took me to a butterfly exhibit at a museum. Diana and I have been close ever since she was young. Our mothers are twin sisters, and she is inseparable! Diana knows how much I love butterflies, so it was their special present to me. I have a soft spot for caterpillars too. I love them because something about the way it transforms is so interesting to me. One summer my grandmother gave me a butterfly growing kit, and you got to see the entire life cycle of five Painted Lady butterflies. I even got to set it free. So when my cousin said they wanted to take me to the butterfly exhibit, I was really excited!

Check Your Answers: [1]

Activity Source: Exercise 1 is adapted from "2.5 Pronouns" In *Writing for Success* by University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing, licensed under CC BY-NC- 4.0.

Inclusive Language & The Singular "They"

A **pronoun** is a word that stands in for a **noun**—it needs to match that noun in some important ways. This rule leads to the following sorts of examples:

CORRECT: The **box** is heavy, so **it** will break the table.

- "It" agrees with "box" in that it is singular in number—there is ONE box—and it stands in for things, like boxes but not people.

CORRECT: **Students** must bring **their** books to class.

- "Their" agrees with "students" in that there is more than one student and they/their/them stands in for people.

CORRECT: **Thomas** doesn't like to read; **he** prefers to play cricket.

- "He" agrees with "Thomas" in that it is singular in number and gender. Thomas is traditionally a male name, and he is a pronoun for male people.

In traditional grammar lessons, the rule is that pronouns must match their antecedents; however, the singular "they" is a generic third-person singular pronoun in English, which is now widely accepted and endorsed. Using "they" is inclusive and prevents writers from making assumptions about genders.

You might see or hear the following:

CORRECT: **Each writer** must bring to the act of writing poetry their wit and imagination.

CORRECT: When **a student** writes a successful essay, the instructor will ask **them** to submit this piece of work for the annual writing award.

CORRECT: **A scientist** can get into trouble by being too sure of what **they** can do alone.

CORRECT: My friend **Blake** takes **their** schoolwork very seriously.

Learn more about the Singular "They" from the APA Style Guide: https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/grammar/singular-they

In all of these cases, the pronoun "they" (or variations on it like "their" and "them") refers back to a person (singular) whose gender is unknown and/or to a person who identifies as non-binary.

Tip

An easy way to make most English sentences both clear and gender-inclusive is **to revise singular nouns to be plural**—that way, one can use "they/their": a pronoun that is not only plural but also doesn't indicate gender.

CORRECT: **All writers** must bring to the act of writing poetry **their** wit and imagination.

CORRECT: When **students** write successful essays, the instructor will ask **them** to submit **their** work for the annual writing award.

CORRECT: **Scientists** can get into trouble by being too sure of what **they** can do alone.

Collective Nouns

Collective nouns suggest more than one person but are usually considered singular. Look over the following examples of collective nouns.

Common Collective Nouns		
audience	faculty	public
band	family	school
class	government	society
committee	group	team
company	jury	tribe

Collective noun agreement
Incorrect: Lara's *company* (sing.) will have *their* (plur.) annual picnic next week.
Correct: Lara's *company* (sing.) will have *its* (sing.) annual picnic next week.

Exercise 2

Exercise 2 (Text Version)
Complete the following sentences by selecting the correct pronoun. Copy the completed sentence onto your own sheet of paper. Then circle the noun the pronoun replaces.

1. In the current economy, nobody wants to waste money on frivolous things.
2. If anybody chooses to go to medical school, must be prepared to work long hours.
3. The plumbing crew did best to repair the broken pipes before the next ice storm.
4. If someone is rude to you, try giving a smile in return.
5. My family has faults, but I still love them no matter what.
6. The school of education plans to train students to be literacy tutors.
7. The commencement speaker said that each student has a responsibility toward .
8. My mother's singing group has rehearsals on Thursday evenings.

9. No one should suffer pains alone.
10. I thought the flock of birds lost way in the storm.

Check Your Answers: [2]

Activity Source: Exercise 2 is adapted from "2.5 Pronouns" In *Writing for Success* by University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing, licensed under CC BY-NC- 4.0.

Subject and Object Pronouns

Subject pronouns function as subjects in a sentence. Object pronouns function as the object of a verb or of a preposition.

Singular Pronouns		Plural Pronouns	
Subject	**Object**	**Subject**	**Object**
I	me	we	us
you	you	you	you
he, she, they, it	him, her, them, it	they	them

The following sentences show pronouns as subjects:

1. *She* loves the Blue Ridge Mountains in the fall.
2. Every summer, *they* picked up litter from national parks.

The following sentences show pronouns as objects:

1. Marie leaned over and kissed *him*.
2. Jane moved *it* to the corner.

Tip

Note that a pronoun can also be the object of a preposition.

Near them, the children played.

My mother stood between us.

The pronouns us and them are objects of the prepositions near and between. They answer the questions near whom? And between whom?

Compound subject pronouns are two or more pronouns joined by a conjunction or a preposition that function as the subject of the sentence.

The following sentences show pronouns with compound subjects:

Incorrect: *Me and Harriet* visited the Rocky Mountains last summer.

Correct: *Harriet and I* visited the Rocky Mountains last summer.

Correct: Jenna accompanied *Harriet and me* on our trip.

Tip

Note that object pronouns are never used in the subject position. One way to remember this rule is to remove the other subject in a compound subject, leave only the pronoun, and see whether the sentence makes sense. For example, *Me visited the Rocky Mountains last summer* sounds immediately incorrect.

Compound object pronouns are two or more pronouns joined by a conjunction or a preposition that function as the object of the sentence.

Incorrect: I have a good feeling about *Janice and I*.

Correct: I have a good feeling about *Janice and me*.

Tip

It is correct to write Janice and me, as opposed to me and Janice. Just remember it is more polite to refer to yourself last.

Writing at Work

In casual conversation, people sometimes mix up subject and object pronouns. For instance, you might say, "Me and Donnie went to a movie last night." However, when you are writing or speaking at work or in any other formal situation, you need to remember the distinctions between subject and object pronouns and be able to correct yourself. These subtle grammar corrections will enhance your professional image and reputation.

Exercise 3

Exercise 3 (Text Version)
Revise the following sentences in which the subject and object pronouns are used incorrectly. Copy the revised sentence onto your own sheet of paper. Write a C for each sentence that is correct.

1. Meera and me enjoy doing yoga together on Sundays.
2. She and him have decided to sell their house.
3. Between you and I, I do not think Jeffrey will win the election.
4. Us and our friends have game night the first Thursday of every month.
5. They and I met while on vacation in Mexico.
6. Napping on the beach never gets boring for Alice and I.
7. New Year's Eve is not a good time for she and I to have a serious talk.

8. You exercise much more often than me.
9. I am going to the comedy club with Yolanda and she.
10. The cooking instructor taught her and me a lot.

Check Your Answers: [3]

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Who versus *Whom*

Who or *whoever* is always the subject of a verb. Use *who* or *whoever* when the pronoun performs the action indicated by the verb.

Who won the marathon last Tuesday?

I wonder *who* came up with that terrible idea!

On the other hand, *whom* and *whomever* serve as objects. They are used when the pronoun does *not* perform an action. Use *whom* or *whomever* when the pronoun is the direct object of a verb or the object of a preposition.

Whom did Frank marry the third time? (direct object of verb)

From *whom* did you buy that old record player? (object of preposition)

Tip

If you are having trouble deciding when to use *who* and *whom*, try this trick. Take the following sentence:

Who/Whom do I consider my best friend?

Reorder the sentence in your head, using either *he* or *him* in place of *who* or *whom*.

I consider *him* my best friend.

I consider *he* my best friend.

Which sentence sounds better? The first one, of course. So the trick is, if you can use *him*, you should use *whom*.

Exercise 4

Exercise 4 (Text Version)

Complete the following sentences by adding who or whom. Copy the completed sentence onto your own sheet of paper.

1. _____ hit the home run?
2. I remember _____ won the Academy Award for Best Actor last year.
3. To _____ is the letter addressed?
4. I have no idea _____ left the iron on, but I am going to find out.
5. _____ are you going to recommend for the internship?
6. With _____ are you going to Hawaii?
7. No one knew _____ the famous actor was.
8. _____ in the office knows how to fix the copy machine?
9. From _____ did you get the concert tickets?
10. No one knew _____ ate the cake mom was saving.

Check Your Answers: [4]

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Key Takeaways

- Pronouns and their antecedents need to agree in number and person.
- The Singular "They" is widely accepted.
- Collective nouns are usually singular.
- Pronouns can function as subjects or objects.
- Subject pronouns are never used as objects, and object pronouns are never used as subjects.
- Who serves as a subject of a verb.
- Whom serves as an object of a sentence or the object of a preposition.

Writing Application

Write about what makes an ideal marriage or long-term relationship. Provide specific details to back up your assertions. After you have written a few paragraphs, go back and proofread your paper for correct pronoun usage.

Attribution & References

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Notes

1. Over spring break I visited my older cousin, Diana, and ***she*** took me to a butterfly exhibit at a museum. Diana and I have been close ever since she was young. Our mothers are twin sisters, and ***they are*** inseparable! Diana knows how much I love butterflies, so it was ***her*** special present to me. I have a soft spot for caterpillars too. I love them because something about the way it transforms is so interesting to me. One summer my grandmother gave me a butterfly growing kit, and you got to see the entire life cycle of five Painted Lady butterflies. I even got to set it free. So when my cousin said ***she*** wanted to take me to the butterfly exhibit, I was really excited!

2.
1. their
2. they
3. their
4. them
5. its
6. their
7. themselves
8. their
9. their
10. its

3.
1. Incorrect
2. Correct
3. Correct
4. Correct
5. Correct
6. Incorrect
7. Incorrect
8. Correct
9. Incorrect
10. Incorrect

4.
1. Who
2. who
3. whom
4. who
5. Who
6. whom
7. who
8. Whom
9. whom
10. who

11.6 - ADJECTIVES AND ADVERBS

Learning Objectives

- Identify adjectives and adverbs.
- Use adjectives and adverbs correctly.

Adjectives and adverbs are descriptive words that bring your writing to life.

Adjectives and Adverbs

An adjective is a word that describes a noun or a pronoun. It often answers questions such as *which one*, *what kind*, or *how many?*

1. The *green* sweater belongs to Iris.
2. She looks *beautiful*.

- In sentence 1, the adjective *green* describes the noun *sweater*.
- In sentence 2, the adjective *beautiful* describes the pronoun *she*.

An adverb is a word that describes a verb, an adjective, or another adverb. Adverbs frequently end in *-ly*. They answer questions such as *how*, *to what extent*, *why*, *when*, and *where*.

3. Bertrand sings *horribly*.
4. My sociology instructor is *extremely* wise.
5. He threw the ball *very* accurately.

- In sentence 3, *horribly* describes the verb *sings*. How does Bertrand sing? He sings *horribly*.

- In sentence 4, *extremely* describes the adjective *wise*. How *wise* is the instructor? *Extremely* wise.
- In sentence 5, *very* describes the adverb *accurately*. How *accurately* did he throw the ball? *Very* accurately.

Exercise 1

Exercise 1 (Text Version)
Identify if the bolded term is an adjective or adverb (Adj, Adv).

1. Frederick ** choked on the piece of chicken when he saw Margaret walk through the door.
2. His **curious** eyes looked at everyone and everything as if they were specimens in a biology lab.
3. Despite her pessimistic views on life, Lauren believes that most people have **kind** hearts.
4. Although Stefan took the criticism **poorly**, he remained calm.
5. The child developed a **vibrant** imagination because he read a lot of books.
6. Madeleine spoke **softly** while she was visiting her grandmother in the hospital.
7. Akash's most **prized** possession was his father's bass guitar from the 1970s.
8. My definition of a ** afternoon is walking to the park on a beautiful day, spreading out my blanket, and losing myself in a good book.
9. She **secretly** eyed her new coworker and wondered if he was single.
10. At the party, Denise **quickly** devoured two pieces of pepperoni pizza and a several slices of ripe watermelon.

Check Your Answers: [1]

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Comparative versus Superlative

Comparative adjectives and adverbs are used to compare two people or things.

1. Jorge is *thin*.
2. Steven is *thinner* than Jorge.

- Sentence 1 describes Jorge with the adjective *thin*.
- Sentence 2 compares Jorge to Steven, stating that Steven is *thinner*. So *thinner* is the comparative form of *thin*.

Form comparatives in one of the following two ways:

1. If the adjective or adverb is a one syllable word, add *-er* to it to form the comparative. For example, *big*, *fast*, and *short* would become *bigger*, *faster*, and *shorter* in the comparative form.
2. If the adjective or adverb is a word of two or more syllables, place the word *more* in front of it to form the comparative. For example, *happily*, *comfortable*, and *jealous* would become *more happily*, *more comfortable*, and *more jealous* in the comparative.

Superlative adjectives and adverbs are used to compare more than two people or two things.

1. Jackie is the *loudest* cheerleader on the squad.
2. Kenyatta was voted the *most confident* student by her graduating class.

- Sentence 1 shows that Jackie is not just *louder* than one other person, but she is the *loudest* of all the cheerleaders on the squad.
- Sentence 2 shows that Kenyatta was voted the *most confident* student of all the students in her class.

Form superlatives in one of the following two ways:

1. If the adjective or adverb is a one-syllable word, add *-est* to form the superlative. For example, *big*, *fast*, and *short* would become *biggest*, *fastest*, and *shortest* in the superlative form.
2. If the adjective or adverb is a word of two or more syllables, place the word *most* in front of it. For example, *happily*, *comfortable*, and *jealous* would become *most happily*, *most comfortable*, and *most jealous* in the superlative form.

Tip

Remember the following exception: If the word has two syllables and ends in -y, change the -y to an -i

and add -est. For example, happy would change to happiest in the superlative form; healthy would change to healthiest.

Exercise 2

Exercise 2 (Text Version)

Edit the following paragraph by correcting the errors in comparative and superlative adjectives.

Our argument started on the most sunny afternoon that I have ever experienced. Max and I were sitting on my front stoop when I started it. I told him that my dog, Jacko, was more smart than his dog, Merlin. I could not help myself. Merlin never came when he was called, and he chased his tail and barked at rocks. I told Max that Merlin was the most dumbest dog on the block. I guess I was angrier about a bad grade that I received, so I decided to pick on poor little Merlin. Even though Max insulted Jacko too, I felt I had been more mean. The next day I apologized to Max and brought Merlin some of Jacko's treats. When Merlin placed his paw on my knee and licked my hand, I was the most sorry person on the block.

Check Your Answers: [2]

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Irregular Words: *Good*, *Well*, *Bad*, and *Badly*

Good, *well*, *bad*, and *badly* are often used incorrectly. Study the following chart to learn the correct usage of these words and their comparative and superlative forms.

		Comparative	Superlative
Adjective	good	better	best
Adverb	well	better	best
Adjective	bad	worse	worst
Adverb	badly	worse	worst

Good versus *Well*

Good is always an adjective—that is, a word that describes a noun or a pronoun. The second sentence is correct because *well* is an adverb that tells how something is done.

Incorrect: Cecilia felt that she had never done so *good* on a test.

Correct: Cecilia felt that she had never done so *well* on a test.

Well is always an adverb that describes a verb, adverb, or adjective. The second sentence is correct because *good* is an adjective that describes the noun *score*.

Incorrect: Cecilia's team received a *well* score.

Correct: Cecilia's team received a *good* score.

Bad versus *Badly*

Bad is always an adjective. The second sentence is correct because *badly* is an adverb that tells how the speaker did on the test.

Incorrect: I did *bad* on my accounting test because I didn't study.

Correct: I did *badly* on my accounting test because I didn't study.

Badly is always an adverb. The second sentence is correct because *bad* is an adjective that describes the noun *thunderstorm*.

Incorrect: The coming thunderstorm looked *badly*.

Correct: The coming thunderstorm looked *bad*.

Better and *Worse*

The following are examples of the use of *better* and *worse*:

Tyra likes sprinting *better* than long distance running.

The traffic is *worse* in Chicago than in Atlanta.

Best and *Worst*

The following are examples of the use of *best* and *worst*:

Tyra sprints *best* of all the other competitors.

Peter finished *worst* of all the runners in the race.

Tip

Remember better and worse compare two persons or things. Best and worst compare three or more persons or things.

Exercise 3

Exercise 3 (Text Version)
Write good, well, bad, or badly to complete each sentence. Copy the completed sentence onto your own sheet of paper.

1. Donna always felt _____ if she did not see the sun in the morning.

2. The school board president gave a _____ speech for once.
3. Although my dog, Comet, is mischievous, he always behaves _____ at the dog park.
4. I thought my back injury was _____ at first, but it turned out to be minor.
5. Steve was shaking _____ from the extreme cold.
6. Apple crisp is a very _____ dessert that can be made using whole grains instead of white flour.
7. The meeting with my son's math teacher went very _____.
8. Juan has a _____ appetite, especially when it comes to dessert.
9. Magritte thought the guests had a _____ time at the party because most people left early.
10. She _____ wanted to win the writing contest prize, which included a trip to New York.

Check Your Answers: [3]

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Exercise 4

Exercise 4 (Text Version)

Write the correct comparative or superlative form of the word in parentheses. Copy the completed sentence onto your own sheet of paper.

1. This research paper is _____ (good) than my last one.
2. Tanaya likes country music _____ (well) of all.
3. My motorcycle rides _____ (bad) than it did last summer.
4. That is the _____ (bad) joke my father ever told.
5. The hockey team played _____ (badly) than it did last season.
6. Tracey plays guitar _____ (well) than she plays the piano.
7. It will go down as one of the _____ (bad) movies I have ever seen.
8. The deforestation in the Amazon is _____ (bad) than it was last year.
9. Movie ticket sales are _____ (good) this year than last.

10. My husband says mystery novels are the _____ (good) types of books.

Check Your Answers: [4]

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Writing at Work

The irregular words *good*, *well*, *bad*, and *badly* are often misused along with their comparative and superlative forms *better*, *best*, *worse*, and *worst*. You may not hear the difference between *worse* and *worst*, and therefore type it incorrectly. In a formal or business-like tone, use each of these words to write eight separate sentences. Assume these sentences will be seen and judged by your current or future employer.

Key Takeaways

- Adjectives describe a noun or a pronoun.
- Adverbs describe a verb, adjective, or another adverb.
- Most adverbs are formed by adding -ly to an adjective.
- Comparative adjectives and adverbs compare two persons or things.
- Superlative adjectives or adverbs compare more than two persons or things.
- The adjectives good and bad and the adverbs well and badly are unique in their comparative and superlative forms and require special attention.

Attribution & References

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Notes

1.
   1. adverb
   2. adjective
   3. adjective
   4. adverb
   5. adjective
   6. adverb
   7. adjective
   8. adjective
   9. adverb
   10. adverb

2. Our argument started on the ~~most sunny~~ ***sunniest*** afternoon that I have ever experienced. Max and I were sitting on my front stoop when I started it. I told him that my dog, Jacko, was ~~more smart~~ ***smarter*** than his dog, Merlin. I could not help myself. Merlin never came when he was called, and he chased his tail and barked at rocks. I told Max that Merlin was the ~~most dumbest~~ ***dumbest*** dog on the block. I guess I was ~~angrier~~ ***more angry*** about a bad grade that I received, so I decided to pick on poor little Merlin. Even though Max insulted Jacko too, I felt I had been more mean. The next day I apologized to Max and brought Merlin some of Jacko's treats. When Merlin placed his paw on my knee and licked my hand, I was the ~~most sorry~~ ***sorriest*** person on the block.

3.
   1. bad
   2. good
   3. well
   4. bad
   5. badly
   6. good
   7. well
   8. good
   9. bad
   10. badly

4.
   1. better
   2. best
   3. worst
   4. worst
   5. worse
   6. better
   7. worst
   8. worse
   9. better
   10. best

11.7 - MISPLACED AND DANGLING MODIFIERS

Learning Objectives

- Identify modifiers.
- Learn how to correct misplaced and dangling modifiers.

A modifier is a word, phrase, or clause that clarifies or describes another word, phrase, or clause. Sometimes writers use modifiers incorrectly, leading to strange and unintentionally humorous sentences. The two common types of modifier errors are called misplaced modifiers and dangling modifiers. If either of these errors occurs, readers can no longer read smoothly. Instead, they become stumped trying to figure out *what* the writer meant to say. A writer's goal must always be to communicate clearly and to avoid distracting the reader with strange sentences or awkward sentence constructions. The good news is that these errors can be easily overcome.

Misplaced Modifiers

A misplaced modifier is a modifier that is placed too far from the word or words it modifies. Misplaced modifiers make the sentence awkward and sometimes unintentionally humorous.

Incorrect: She wore a bicycle helmet on her head *that was too large*.

Correct: She wore a bicycle helmet *that was too large* on her head.

- Notice in the incorrect sentence it sounds as if her head was too large! Of course, the writer is referring to the helmet, not to the person's head. The corrected version of the sentence clarifies the writer's meaning.

Look at the following two examples:

Incorrect: They bought a kitten for my brother *they call Shadow*.

Correct: They bought a kitten *they call Shadow* for my brother.

- In the incorrect sentence, it seems that the brother's name is *Shadow*. That's because the modifier is too far from the word it modifies, which is *kitten*.

Incorrect: The patient was referred to the physician *with stomach pains*.

Correct: The patient *with stomach pains* was referred to the physician.

- The incorrect sentence reads as if it is the physician who has stomach pains! What the writer means is that the patient has stomach pains.

Tip

Simple modifiers like only, almost, just, nearly, and barely often get used incorrectly because writers often stick them in the wrong place.

Confusing: Tyler almost found fifty cents under the sofa cushions.

Repaired: Tyler found almost fifty cents under the sofa cushions.

- How do you almost find something? Either you find it or you do not. The repaired sentence is much clearer.

Exercise 1

Exercise 1 (Text Version)

On a separate sheet of paper, rewrite the following sentences to correct the misplaced modifiers.

1. The young lady was walking the dog on the telephone.
2. I heard that there was a robbery on the evening news.
3. Uncle Louie bought a running stroller for the baby that he called "Speed Racer."
4. Rolling down the mountain, the explorer stopped the boulder with his powerful foot.
5. We are looking for a babysitter for our precious six-year-old who doesn't drink or smoke and owns a car.
6. The teacher served cookies to the children wrapped in aluminum foil.
7. The mysterious woman walked toward the car holding an umbrella.
8. We returned the wine to the waiter that was sour.
9. Charlie spotted a stray puppy driving home from work.
10. I ate nothing but a cold bowl of noodles for dinner.

Check Your Answers: [1]

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Dangling Modifiers

A dangling modifier is a word, phrase, or clause that describes something that has been left out of the sentence. When there is nothing that the word, phrase, or clause can modify, the modifier is said to dangle.

Incorrect:*Riding in the sports car*, the world whizzed by rapidly.

Correct: As Jane was *riding in the sports car*, the world whizzed by rapidly.

- In the incorrect sentence, *riding in the sports car* is dangling. The reader is left wondering who is riding in the sports car. The writer must tell the reader!

Incorrect: *Walking home at night*, the trees looked like spooky aliens.

Correct: As Jonas was *walking home at night*, the trees looked like spooky aliens.

Correct: The trees looked like spooky aliens as Jonas was *walking home at night*.

- In the incorrect sentence *walking home at night* is dangling. Who is walking home at night? Jonas. Note that there are two different ways the dangling modifier can be corrected.

Incorrect: To win the spelling bee, Gita and Gerard should join our team.

Correct: If we want to win the spelling bee this year, Gita and Gerard should join our team.

- In the incorrect sentence, *to win the spelling bee* is dangling. Who wants to win the spelling bee? We do!

Tip

The following three steps will help you quickly spot a dangling modifier:

1. Look for an -ing modifier at the beginning of your sentence or another modifying phrase:

   Painting for three hours at night, the kitchen was finally finished by Maggie. (Painting is the -ing modifier.)
2. Underline the first noun that follows it:

   Painting for three hours at night, the kitchen was finally finished by Maggie.
3. Make sure the modifier and noun go together logically. If they do not, it is very likely you have a dangling modifier.

   After identifying the dangling modifier, rewrite the sentence.

   Painting for three hours at night, Maggie finally finished the kitchen.

Exercise 2

Exercise 2 (Text Version)

Rewrite the following the sentences onto your own sheet of paper to correct the dangling modifiers.

1. Mike bent over backward, the posture was very challenging.
2. Making discoveries about new creatures, this is an interesting time to be a biologist.
3. Walking in the dark, the picture fell off the wall.
4. Playing a guitar in the bedroom, the cat was seen under the bed.
5. Packing for a trip, a cockroach scurried down the hallway.
6. While looking in the mirror, the towel swayed in the breeze.
7. While driving to the veterinarian's office, the dog nervously whined.
8. The priceless painting drew large crowds when walking into the museum.
9. Piled up next to the bookshelf, I chose a romance novel.
10. Chewing furiously, the gum fell out of my mouth.

Check Your Answers: [2]

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Exercise 3

Rewrite the following paragraph correcting all the misplaced and dangling modifiers.

> I bought a fresh loaf of bread for my sandwich shopping in the grocery store. Wanting to make a delicious sandwich, the mayonnaise was thickly spread. Placing the cold cuts on the bread, the lettuce was placed on top. I cut the sandwich in half with a knife turning on the radio. Biting into the sandwich, my favorite song blared loudly in my ears. Humming and

chewing, my sandwich went down smoothly. Smiling, my sandwich will be made again, but next time I will add cheese.

Key Takeaways

- Misplaced and dangling modifiers make sentences difficult to understand.
- Misplaced and dangling modifiers distract the reader.
- There are several effective ways to identify and correct misplaced and dangling modifiers.

Writing Application

See how creative and humorous you can get by writing ten sentences with misplaced and dangling modifiers. This is a deceptively simple task, but rise to the challenge. Your writing will be stronger for it.

Attribution & References

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Notes

1.
    1. The young lady on the telephone was walking the dog.
    2. I heard on the evening news that there was a robbery.
    3. Uncle Louie bought a running stroller that he called “Speed Racer” for the baby.
    4. The explorer stopped the boulder rolling down the mountain with his powerful foot.
    5. We are looking for a babysitter who doesn’t drink or smoke and owns a car for our precious six-year-old.
    6. The teacher served cookies wrapped in aluminum foil to the children.
    7. The mysterious woman holding an umbrella walked toward the car.
    8. We returned the wine that was sour to the waiter.
    9. Driving home from work Charlie spotted a stray puppy.
    10. I ate nothing but a cold bowl of noodles for dinner.
2.
    1. Bent over backward, the posture was very challenging for Mike.
    2. This is an interesting time to be a biologist, when you are making discoveries about new creatures.
    3. As I was walking in the dark, the picture fell off the wall.
    4. When he was playing guitar in the bedroom, he could see the cat under the bed.
    5. As I was packing for a trip, a cockroach scurried down the hallway.
    6. While she was looking in the mirror, she saw the towel sway in the breeze. / While he was looking in the mirror, she saw the towel sway in the breeze.
    7. While I was driving to the veterinarian’s office, the dog nervously whined. / While he was driving to the veterinarian’s office, the dog nervously whined./ While she was driving to the veterinarian’s office, the dog nervously whined. /While they were driving to the veterinarian’s office, the dog nervously whined.
    8. When walking into the museum, the priceless painting drew large crowds.
    9. I chose a romance novel piled up next to the bookshelf.
    10. The gum fell out of my mouth while I chewed furiously. / While chewing furiously the gum fell out of my mouth.

11.8 - WRITING BASICS: EXERCISES

Learning Objectives

- Use the skills you have learned in the chapter.
- Work collaboratively with other students.

Exercise 1

Exercise 1 (Text Version)
On your own sheet of paper, identify each sentence as a fragment, a run-on, or correct (no error).

1. My favorite book is Brave New World by Aldous Huxley, he was born in 1894 and died in 1963 _____.
2. Written in 1931 _____.
3. A futuristic society where humans are born out of test tubes and kept in rigid social classes _ _____.
4. This may not seem like a humorous premise for a novel, but Huxley uses satire, which is a type of humor that is used to make a serious point _____.
5. The humans in Brave New World learn through sleep teaching, Huxley calls this "hypnopedia" _____.
6. Everyone is kept "happy" in the brave new world by taking a pill called soma, there is one character named John the Savage who does not take soma _____.
7. because he comes from a different part of the world where there is no technology, and he

believes in natural ways of living _____.

8. It turns out that John has a big problem with the brave new world and how people live there _____.
9. Will he be able to survive living there, well you will have to read the novel to find out _____.
10. Brave New World is considered a classic in English literature, it is one of the best novels I have ever read _____.

Check Your Answers: [1]

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Exercise 2

Exercise 2 (Text Version)

Each sentence contains an error in subject-verb agreement, irregular verb form, or consistent verb tense. Identify the type of error.

1. Maria and Ty meets me at the community center for cooking classes on Tuesdays.
2. John's ability to laugh at almost anything amaze me.
3. Samantha and I were walking near the lake when the large, colorful bird appears.
4. I builded my own telescope using materials I bought at the hardware store.
5. My mother freezed the remaining tomatoes from her garden so that she could use them during the winter.
6. Bernard asked the stranger sitting next to him for the time, and she says it was past midnight.
7. My mother and brother wears glasses, but my father and sister do not.
8. We held our noses as the skunk runs away.
9. Neither Soren nor Andrew are excited about the early morning swim meet.
10. My hands hurted at the thought of transcribing all those notes.
11. The police questioned the suspect for hours but she gives them no useful information.

12. Terry takes short weekend trips because her job as a therapist was very emotionally draining.
13. She criticize delicately, making sure not to hurt anyone's feelings.
14. Davis winded the old clock and set it atop his nightstand.
15. Cherie losed four poker hands in a row before realizing that she was playing against professionals.
16. Janis and Joan describes their trip to the Amazon in vivid detail.
17. You should decides for yourself whether or not to reduce the amount of processed foods in your diet.
18. The oil rig exploded and spills millions of gallons of oil into the ocean.
19. The handsome vampire appeared out of nowhere and smiles at the smitten woman.
20. The batter swinged at the ball several times but never hit it.

Check Your Answers: [2]

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Exercise 3

Correct the capitalization errors in the following fictional story. Copy the corrected paragraph onto your own sheet of paper.

lance worthington signed a Recording Contract with Capitol records on june 15, 2007. Despite selling two million copies of his Debut Album, nothing to lose, lance lost quite a bit as his tax returns from the irs revealed. lance did not think it was fair that the Record Company kept so much of his earnings, so he decided to hire robert bergman, a prominent music Attorney with a Shark-like reputation. bergman represented lance all the way to the supreme court, where lance won the case against capitol records. Lance worthington was instrumental in changing intellectual property rights and long standing Record Company practices. All artists and musicians can thank him for his brave stance against record companies. Lance subsequently formed his own independent record

label called worthy records. worthy is now a successful Label based out of chicago, illinois, and its Artists have appeared on well known shows such as The tonight show and Saturday night live. Lance worthington is a model for success in the do-it-yourself World that has become the Music Industry.

Exercise 4

Exercise 4 (Text Version)

Complete the following sentences by selecting the correct comparative or superlative adjective or adverb.

1. Denise has a (cheerful) _____ outlook on life than her husband.
2. I don't mean to brag, but I think I am the (good) _____ cook in my family.
3. Lydia is the (thoughtful) _____ person I know.
4. Italy experienced the (bad) _____ heat wave in its history last year.
5. My teacher, Ms. Beckett, is the (strange) _____ person I know, and I like that.
6. Dorian's drawing skills are (good) _____ this semester than last.
7. My handwriting is the (sloppy) _____ of all my classmates.
8. Melvin's soccer team played (badly) _____ than it did last season.
9. Josie's pen writes (smooth) _____ than mine.
10. I felt (lucky) _____ than my sister because I got in to the college of my choice.

Check Your Answers: [3]

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Notes

1.

2.
   1. Subject-verb agreement error
   2. Subject-verb agreement error
   3. Consistent verb tense error
   4. Irregular verb form error
   5. Irregular verb form error
   6. Consistent verb tense error
   7. Subject-verb agreement error
   8. Consistent verb tense error
   9. Irregular verb form error
   10. Irregular verb form error
   11. Consistent verb tense error
   12. Consistent verb tense error
   13. Subject-verb agreement error
   14. Irregular verb form error
   15. Irregular verb form error
   16. Subject-verb agreement error
   17. Subject-verb agreement error
   18. Consistent verb tense error
   19. Consistent verb tense error
   20. Irregular verb form error

3.
   1. more cheerful/less cheerful
   2. best
   3. most thoughtful/least thoughtful
   4. worst
   5. strangest
   6. better
   7. sloppiest
   8. worse
   9. smoother
   10. luckier

CHAPTER 12: PUNCTUATION

Communication Essentials for College by Jen Booth, Emily Cramer & Amanda Quibell

- 12.1 – Commas
- 12.2 – Semicolons
- 12.3 – Quotes
- 12.4 – Apostrophes
- 12.5 – Punctuation: Exercises

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Please visit the web version of *Communication Essentials for College* to access the complete book, interactive activities and ancillary resources.

12.1 - COMMAS

Learning Objectives

- Identify the uses of commas.
- Correctly use commas in sentences.

One of the punctuation clues to reading you may encounter is the comma . The comma is a punctuation mark that indicates a pause in a sentence or a separation of things in a list. Commas can be used in a variety of ways. Look at some of the following sentences to see how you might use a comma when writing a sentence.

- **Introductory word:** Personally, I think the practice is helpful.
- **Lists:** The barn, the tool shed, and the back porch were destroyed by the wind.
- **Coordinating adjectives:** He was tired, hungry, and late.
- **Conjunctions in compound sentences:** The bedroom door was closed, so the children knew their mother was asleep.
- **Interrupting words:** I knew where it was hidden, of course, but I wanted them to find it themselves.
- **Dates, addresses, greetings, and letters:** The letter was postmarked December 8, 1945.

Commas after an Introductory Word or Phrase

You may notice a comma that appears near the beginning of the sentence, usually after a word or phrase. This comma lets the reader know where the introductory word or phrase ends and the main sentence begins.

Without spoiling the surprise**,** we need to tell her to save the date.

In this sentence, *without spoiling the surprise* is an introductory phrase, while *we need to tell her to save the date* is the main sentence. Notice how they are separated by a comma. When only an introductory word appears in the sentence, a comma also follows the introductory word.

Ironically**,** she already had plans for that day.

Exercise 1

Look for the introductory word or phrase. On your own sheet of paper, copy the sentence and add a comma to correct the sentence.

1. Suddenly the dog ran into the house.
2. In the blink of an eye the kids were ready to go to the movies.
3. Confused he tried opening the box from the other end.
4. Every year we go camping in the woods.
5. Without a doubt green is my favorite color.
6. Hesitating she looked back at the directions before proceeding.
7. Fortunately the sleeping baby did not stir when the doorbell rang.
8. Believe it or not the criminal was able to rob the same bank three times.

Commas in a List of Items

When you want to list several nouns in a sentence, you separate each word with a comma. This allows the reader to pause after each item and identify which words are included in the grouping. When you list items in a sentence, put a comma after each

noun, then add the word *and* before the last item. However, you do not need to include a comma after the last item.

We'll need to get flour**,** tomatoes**,** and cheese at the store.

The pizza will be topped with olives**,** peppers**,** and pineapple chunks.

Commas and Coordinating Adjectives

You can use commas to list both adjectives and nouns. A string of adjectives that describe a noun are called coordinating adjectives . These adjectives come before the noun they modify and are separated by commas. One important thing to note, however, is that unlike listing nouns, the word *and* does not always need to be before the last adjective.

It was a bright**,** windy**,** clear day.

Our kite glowed red**,** yellow**,** and blue in the morning sunlight.

Exercise 2

Exercise 2 (Text Version)

Identify whether the given statement has correct comma placement or not

1. Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday are all booked with meetings.
2. It was a quiet, uneventful, unproductive, day.
3. We'll need to prepare statements for the Franks, Todds and Smiths before their portfolio reviews, next week.
4. Michael, Nita and Desmond finished their report last Tuesday.
5. With cold, wet, aching fingers he was able to secure the sails before the storm.

6. He wrote his name, on the board, in clear, precise, delicate letters.

Check Your Answers: [1]

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Commas before Conjunctions in Compound Sentences

Commas are sometimes used to separate two independent clauses. The comma comes after the first independent clause and is followed by a conjunction, such as *for*, *and*, or *but*. For a full list of conjunctions, see Chapter 11 "Writing Basics: What Makes a Good Sentence?".

He missed class today**,** and he thinks he will be out tomorrow, too.

He says his fever is gone**,** but he is still very tired.

Exercise 3

Exercise 3 (Text Version)

On your own sheet of paper, create a compound sentence by combining the two independent clauses with a comma and a coordinating conjunction.

1. The presentation was scheduled for Monday. The weather delayed the presentation for four days.
2. He wanted a snack before bedtime. He ate some fruit.
3. The patient is in the next room. I can hardly hear anything.
4. We could go camping for vacation. We could go to the beach for vacation.
5. I want to get a better job. I am taking courses at night.

6. I cannot move forward on this project. I cannot afford to stop on this project.
7. Patrice wants to stop for lunch. We will take the next exit to look for a restaurant.
8. I've got to get this paper done. I have class in ten minutes.
9. The weather was clear yesterday. We decided to go on a picnic.
10. I have never dealt with this client before. I know Leonardo has worked with them. Let's ask Leonardo for his help.

Check Your Answers: [2]

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Commas before and after Interrupting Words

In conversations, you might interrupt your train of thought by giving more details about what you are talking about. In a sentence, you might interrupt your train of thought with a word or phrase called interrupting words . Interrupting words can come at the beginning or middle of a sentence. When the interrupting words appear at the beginning of the sentence, a comma appears after the word or phrase.

If you can believe it**,** people once thought the sun and planets orbited around Earth.

Luckily**,** some people questioned that theory.

When interrupting words come in the middle of a sentence, they are separated from the rest of the sentence by commas. You can determine where the commas should go by looking for the part of the sentence that is not essential for the sentence to make sense.

An Italian astronomer**,** Galileo**,** proved that Earth orbited the sun.

We have known**,** for hundreds of years now**,** that the Earth and other planets exist in a solar system.

Exercise 4

Exercise 4 (Text Version)

On your own sheet of paper, copy the sentence and insert commas to separate the interrupting words from the rest of the sentence.

1. I asked my neighbors the retired couple from Florida to bring in my mail.
2. Without a doubt his work has improved over the last few weeks.
3. Our professor Mr. Alamut drilled the lessons into our heads.
4. The meeting is at noon unfortunately which means I will be late for lunch.
5. We came in time for the last part of dinner but most importantly we came in time for dessert.
6. All of a sudden our network crashed and we lost our files.
7. Alex hand the wrench to me before the pipe comes loose again.

Check Your Answers: [3]

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Commas in Dates, Addresses, and the Greetings and Closings of Letters

You also use commas when you write the date, such as in cover letters and e-mails. Commas are used when you write the date, when you include an address, and when you greet someone.

If you are writing out the full date, add a comma after the day and before the year. You do not need to add a comma when you write the month and day or when you write the month and the year. If you need to continue the sentence after you add a date that includes the day and year, add a comma after the end of the date.

The letter is postmarked May 4**,** 2001.

Her birthday is May 5.

He visited the country in July 2009.

I registered for the conference on March 7**,** 2010**,** so we should get our tickets soon.

You also use commas when you include addresses and locations. When you include an address in a sentence, be sure to place a comma after the street and after the city. Do not place a comma between the province and the postal code. Like a date, if you need to continue the sentence after adding the address, simply add a comma after the address.

We moved to 4542 Boxcutter Lane**,** Hamilton**,** Ontario L0P 1B0.

After moving to Victoria**,** British Columbia**,** Eric used public transportation to get to work.

Greetings are also separated by commas. When you write an e-mail or a letter, you add a comma after the greeting word or the person's name. You also need to include a comma after the closing, which is the word or phrase you put before your signature.

Hello,
I would like more information about your job posting.
Thank you,
Anita Al-Sayf

> Dear Mrs. Al-Sayf,
> Thank you for your letter. Please read the attached document for details.
> Sincerely,
> Jack Fromont

Exercise 5

On your own sheet of paper, use what you have learned about using commas to edit the following letter.

March 27 2010
Alexa Marché
14 Taylor Drive Apt. 6
Beauceville Quebec G0M 1K0
Dear Mr. Timmons
Thank you for agreeing to meet with me. I am available on Monday the fifth. I can stop by your office at any time. Is your address still 7309 Marcourt Circle #501? Please get back to me at your earliest convenience.
Thank you
Alexa

Exercise 6

On your own sheet of paper, use what you have learned about comma usage to edit the following paragraphs.

1. My brother Nathaniel is a collector of many rare unusual things. He has collected lunch boxes limited edition books and hatpins at various points of his life. His current collection of unusual bottles has over fifty pieces. Usually he sells one collection before starting another.
2. Our meeting is scheduled for Thursday March 20. In that time we need to gather all our documents together. Alice is in charge of the timetables and schedules. Tom is in charge of updating the guidelines. I am in charge of the presentation. To prepare for this meeting please print out any e-mails faxes or documents you have referred to when writing your sample.

3. It was a cool crisp autumn day when the group set out. They needed to cover several miles before they made camp so they walked at a brisk pace. The leader of the group Garth kept checking his watch and their GPS location. Isabelle Wei and Maggie took turns carrying the equipment while Mohammed took notes about the wildlife they saw. As a result no one noticed the darkening sky until the first drops of rain splattered on their faces.
4. Please have your report complete and filed by April 15 2010. In your submission letter please include your contact information the position you are applying for and two people we can contact as references. We will not be available for consultation after April 10 but you may contact the office if you have any questions. Thank you HR Department.

Collaboration

Please share with a classmate and compare your answers.

Key Takeaways

- Punctuation marks provide visual cues to readers to tell them how to read a sentence. Punctuation marks convey meaning.
- Commas indicate a pause or a list in a sentence.
- A comma should be used after an introductory word to separate this word from the main sentence.
- A comma comes after each noun in a list. The word and is added before the last noun, which is not followed by a comma.
- A comma comes after every coordinating adjective except for the last adjective.
- Commas can be used to separate the two independent clauses in compound sentences as long as a conjunction follows the comma.
- Commas are used to separate interrupting words from the rest of the sentence.
- When you write the date, you add a comma between the day and the year. You also add a comma after the year if the sentence continues after the date.
- When they are used in a sentence, addresses have commas after the street address, and the

city. If a sentence continues after the address, a comma comes after the postal code.
- When you write a letter, you use commas in your greeting at the beginning and in your closing at the end of your letter.

Attribution & References

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Notes

1.
   1. Correct
   2. Incorrect
   3. Incorrect
   4. Correct
   5. Correct
   6. Incorrect

2.
   1. The presentation was scheduled for Monday, but the weather delayed the presentation for four days.
   2. He wanted a snack before bedtime, so he ate some fruit.
   3. The patient is in the next room, so I can hardly hear anything./ The patient is in the next room, but I can hardly hear anything.The patient is in the next room, so I can hardly hear anything./ The patient is in the next room, but I can hardly hear anything
   4. We could go camping for vacation, or we could go to the beach for vacation.
   5. I want to get a better job, so I am taking courses at night.
   6. I cannot move forward on this project, but I cannot afford to stop on this project.
   7. Patrice wants to stop for lunch, so we will take the next exit to look for a restaurant.
   8. I've got to get this paper done, but I have class in ten minutes.
   9. The weather was clear yesterday, so we decided to go on a picnic.
   10. I have never dealt with this client before, but I know Leonardo has worked with them, so let's ask Leonardo for his help.

3.
   1. I asked my neighbors, the retired couple from Florida, to bring in my mail.
   2. Without a doubt his work has improved, over the last few weeks.
   3. Our professor, Mr. Alamut, drilled the lessons into our heads.
   4. The meeting is at noon unfortunately, which means I will be late for lunch.
   5. We came in time for the last part of dinner, but most importantly we came in time for dessert.
   6. All of a sudden, our network crashed and we lost our files.
   7. Alex, hand the wrench to me before the pipe comes loose again.

12.2 - SEMICOLONS

Learning Objectives

- Identify the uses of semicolons.
- Properly use semicolons in sentences.

Another punctuation mark that you will encounter is the semicolon (;) . Like most punctuation marks, the semicolon can be used in a variety of ways. The semicolon indicates a break in the flow of a sentence, but functions differently than a period or a comma. When you encounter a semicolon while reading aloud, this represents a good place to pause and take a breath.

Semicolons to Join Two Independent Clauses

Use a semicolon to combine two closely related independent clauses. Relying on a period to separate the related clauses into two shorter sentences could lead to choppy writing. Using a comma would create an awkward run-on sentence.

Correct: Be sure to wear clean, well-pressed clothes to the interview**;** appearances are important.

Choppy: Be sure to wear clean, well-pressed clothes to the interview**.** Appearances are important.

Incorrect: Be sure to wear clean, well-pressed clothes to the interview**,** appearances are important.

In this case, writing the independent clauses as two sentences separated by a period is correct. However, using a semicolon to combine the clauses can make your writing

more interesting by creating a variety of sentence lengths and structures while preserving the flow of ideas.

Semicolons to Join Items in a List

You can also use a semicolon to join items in a list when the items in the list already require commas. Semicolons help the reader distinguish between items in the list.

Correct: The color combinations we can choose from are black, white, and grey**;** green, brown, and black**;** or red, green, and brown.

Incorrect: The color combinations we can choose from are black, white, and grey, green, brown, and black, or red, green, and brown.

By using semicolons in this sentence, the reader can easily distinguish between the three sets of colors.

Tip

Use semicolons to join two main clauses. Do not use semicolons with coordinating conjunctions such as and, or, and but.

Exercise 1

Exercise 1 (Text Version)
Identify whether the given statement has correct semicolon placement or not

1. I did not notice that you were in the office; I was behind the front desk all day.
2. Do you want turkey, spinach; and cheese roast beef, lettuce, and cheese; or ham, tomato, and cheese?

3. Please close the blinds; there is a glare on the screen.
4. Unbelievably, no one was hurt in the accident.
5. I cannot decide; if I want my room to be green, brown, and purple green, black, and brown or green, brown, and dark red.
6. Let's go for a walk the air is so refreshing.

Check Your Answers: [1]

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Key Takeaways

- Use a semicolon to join two independent clauses.
- Use a semicolon to separate items in a list when those items already require a comma.

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Notes

1. 1. True
   2. False
   3. True
   4. True
   5. False
   6. False

12.3 - QUOTES

Learning Objectives

- Identify the uses of quotes.
- Correctly use quotes in sentences.

Quotation marks (“ ”) set off a group of words from the rest of the text. Use quotation marks to indicate direct quotations of another person’s words or to indicate a title. Quotation marks always appear in pairs.

Direct Quotations

A direct quotation is an exact account of what someone said or wrote. To include a direct quotation in your writing, enclose the words in quotation marks. An indirect quotation is a restatement of what someone said or wrote. An indirect quotation does not use the person’s exact words. You do not need to use quotation marks for indirect quotations.

Direct quotation: Carly said, **“**I’m not ever going back there again.**”**

Indirect quotation: Carly said that she would never go back there.

Writing at Work

Most word processing software is designed to catch errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation. While this can be a useful tool, it is better to be well acquainted with the rules of punctuation than to leave the thinking to the computer. Properly punctuated writing will convey your meaning clearly. Consider the subtle shifts in meaning in the following sentences:

- The client said he thought our manuscript was garbage.
- The client said, "He thought our manuscript was garbage."

The first sentence reads as an indirect quote in which the client does not like the manuscript. But did he actually use the word "garbage"? (This would be alarming!) Or has the speaker paraphrased (and exaggerated) the client's words?

The second sentence reads as a direct quote from the client. But who is "he" in this sentence? Is it a third party?

Word processing software would not catch this because the sentences are not grammatically incorrect. However, the meanings of the sentences are not the same. Understanding punctuation will help you write what you mean, and in this case, could save a lot of confusion around the office!

Punctuating Direct Quotations

Quotation marks show readers another person's exact words. Often, you will want to identify who is speaking. You can do this at the beginning, middle, or end of the quote. Notice the use of commas and capitalized words.

Beginning: Madison said**, "L**et's stop at the farmers market to buy some fresh vegetables for dinner.**"**

Middle: "Let's stop at the farmers market**,"** Madison said**, "**to buy some fresh vegetables for dinner.**"**

End: "Let's stop at the farmers market to buy some fresh vegetables for dinner**,"** Madison said.

Speaker not identified: "Let's stop at the farmers market to buy some fresh vegetables for dinner.**"**

Always capitalize the first letter of a quote even if it is not the beginning of the sentence. When using identifying words in the middle of the quote, the beginning of the second part of the quote does not need to be capitalized.

Use commas between identifying words and quotes. Quotation marks must be placed *after* commas and periods. Place quotation marks after question marks and exclamation points only if the question or exclamation is part of the quoted text.

Question is part of quoted text: The new employee asked**, "**When is lunch**?"**

Question is not part of quoted text: Did you hear her say you were **"**the next Picasso**"?**

Exclamation is part of quoted text: My supervisor beamed**, "**Thanks for all of your hard work**!"**

Exclamation is not part of quoted text: He said I **"**single-handedly saved the company thousands of dollars**"!**

Quotations within Quotations

Use single quotation marks (' ') to show a quotation within in a quotation.

Theresa said, **"**I wanted to take my dog to the festival, but the man at the gate said, **'**No dogs allowed.**'"**

"When you say, **'**I can't help it,**'** what exactly does that mean?**"**

"The instructions say, **'**Tighten the screws one at a time.**'"**

Titles

Use quotation marks around titles of short works of writing, such as essays, songs, poems, short stories, and chapters in books. Usually, titles of longer works, such as books, magazines, albums, newspapers, and journals, are italicized.

"Annabelle Lee**"** is one of my favorite romantic poems.

The *Halifax Gazette* has been in publication since 1752.

Writing at Work

In many businesses, the difference between exact wording and a paraphrase is extremely important. For legal purposes, or for the purposes of doing a job correctly, it can be important to know exactly what the client, customer, or supervisor said. Sometimes, important details can be lost when instructions are paraphrased. Use quotes to indicate exact words where needed, and let your coworkers know the source of the quotation (client, customer, peer, etc.).

Exercise 1

Exercise 1 (Text Version)

Identify whether the given statement has correct quotation marks placement

1. Yasmin said, "I don't feel like cooking. Let's go out to eat."
2. "Where should we go"? said Russell.
3. Yasmin said "it didn't matter to her."
4. "I know," said Russell, "let's go to the Two Roads Juice Bar."
5. "Did you know that the name of the Juice Bar is a reference to a poem?" asked Russell.
6. "I didn't!" exclaimed Yasmin. Which poem?
7. The Road Not Taken, by Robert Frost Russell explained.
8. Oh! said Yasmin, Is that the one that starts with the line, Two roads diverged in a yellow wood?
9. That's the one said Russell.

Check Your Answers: [1]

Activity Source: Exercise 1 is adapted from "3.4 Quotes" In *Writing for Success* by University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing, licensed under CC BY-NC- 4.0.

Key Takeaways

- Use quotation marks to enclose direct quotes and titles of short works.
- Use single quotation marks to enclose a quote within a quote.
- Do not use any quotation marks for indirect quotations.

Attribution & References

Except where otherwise noted, this chapter is adapted from "3.4 Quotes" In *Writing for Success* by University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing, licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0.

Notes

1.
    1. True
    2. False
    3. True
    4. True
    5. False
    6. False
    7. False
    8. False
    9. False

12.4 - APOSTROPHES

Learning Objectives

- Identify the uses of apostrophes.
- Correctly use apostrophes in sentences.

An apostrophe (') is a punctuation mark that is used with a noun to show possession or to indicate where a letter has been left out to form a contraction.

Possession

An apostrophe and the letter *s* indicate who or what owns something. To show possession with a singular noun, add *'s*.

Jen**'s** dance routine mesmerized everyone in the room.

The dog**'s** leash is hanging on the hook beside the door.

Jess**'s** sister is also coming to the party.

Notice that singular nouns that end in *s* still take the apostrophe *s* (*'s*) ending to show possession.

To show possession with a plural noun that ends in *s*, just add an apostrophe ('). If the plural noun does not end in *s*, add an apostrophe and an *s* (*'s*).

Plural noun that ends in *s*: The drummers**'** sticks all moved in the same rhythm, like a machine.

Plural noun that does not end in *s*: The people**'s** votes clearly showed that no one supported the management decision.

Contractions

A contraction is a word that is formed by combining two words. In a contraction, an apostrophe shows where one or more letters have been left out. Contractions are commonly used in informal writing but not in formal writing.

I do not like ice cream.

I **don't** like ice cream.

Notice how the words *do* and *not* have been combined to form the contraction *don't*. The apostrophe shows where the *o* in *not* has been left out.

We will see you later.

We'll see you later.

Look at the chart for some examples of commonly used contractions.

This chart outlines common contractions and the words they combine

contraction	words combined
aren't	are not
can't	cannot
doesn't	does not
don't	do not
isn't	is not
he'll	he will
I'll	I will
she'll	she will
they'll	they will
you'll	you will
it's	it is, it has
let's	let us
she's	she is, she has
there's	there is, there has
who's	who is, who has

Tip

Be careful not to confuse it's with its. It's is a contraction of the words it and is. Its is a possessive pronoun.

It's cold and rainy outside. (It is cold and rainy outside.)

The cat was chasing its tail. (Shows that the tail belongs to the cat.)

When in doubt, substitute the words it is in a sentence. If sentence still makes sense, use the contraction it's.

Exercise 1

On your own sheet of paper, correct the following sentences by adding apostrophes. If the sentence is correct as it is, write *OK*.

1. "What a beautiful child! She has her mothers eyes."
2. My brothers wife is one of my best friends.
3. I couldnt believe it when I found out that I got the job!
4. My supervisors informed me that I wouldnt be able to take the days off.
5. Each of the students responses were unique.
6. Wont you please join me for dinner tonight?

Key Takeaways

- Use apostrophes to show possession. Add 's to singular nouns and plural nouns that do not end in s. Add ' to plural nouns that end in s.
- Use apostrophes in contractions to show where a letter or letters have been left out.

Attribution & References

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12.5 - PUNCTUATION: EXERCISES

Learning Objectives

- Use the skills you have learned in this chapter.
- Work collaboratively with other students.

Exercises

Each sentence contains a punctuation error. On your own sheet of paper, correct each sentence by adding the correct punctuation. The headings will let you know which type of punctuation mistakes to look for. If the sentence does not need corrections, write *OK*.

Commas

a. The wedding will be July 13 2012.
b. The date by the way is the anniversary of the day that they met.
c. The groom the bride and their parents are all planning the event.
d. Actually all of their friends and relatives are involved in the planning.
e. The bride is a baker so she will be making the wedding cake herself.
f. The photography the catering and the music will all be friends.

Semicolons

a. Some people spend a lot of money hiring people for wedding services they are lucky to have such talented friends.
b. The flowers will be either roses, daisies, and snapdragons orchids, tulips, and irises or peonies and lilies.

Colons

a. There will be three colors for the wedding: white, black, and gold.
b. They've finally narrowed down the dinner choices salmon, steak, and a vegan stew.
c. Their wedding invitations contained the following quote from the Roman poet Ovid If you want to be loved, be lovable.

Quotes

a. The invitations said that the wedding would be "outdoor casual."
b. "What exactly does 'outdoor casual' mean?" I asked the bride.
c. She told me to dress comfortably and wear shoes that do not sink into the ground.

Apostrophes

a. On the day of the wedding, were going to rent a limo.
b. My brothers wife will make the arrangements.
c. Shes a great party organizer.

Each sentence contains a punctuation error. On your own sheet of paper, correct each sentence by adding commas, semicolons, colons, and apostrophes as needed.

1. My mothers garden is full of beautiful flowers.
2. She has carefully planted several species of roses peonies and irises.
3. She is especially proud of her thirty year old Japanese maple tree.
4. I am especially proud of the sunflowers I planted them!
5. You should see the birds that are attracted to the garden hummingbirds, finches, robins, and sparrows.
6. I like to watch the hummingbirds they are my favorite.
7. We spend a lot of time in the garden planting weeding and just enjoying the view.
8. Each flower has its own personality some seem shy and others seem bold.
9. Arent gardens wonderful?
10. You should come visit sometime Do you like to garden?

The following paragraph contains errors in punctuation. On your own sheet of paper, correct the

paragraph by adding commas, semicolons, colons, and apostrophes as needed. There may be more than one way to correct the paragraph.

May 18 2011

Dear Hiring Manager

Allow me to introduce myself in my previous position I was known as the King of Sales. I hope to earn the same title within your company. My name is Frances Fortune. I have thirteen years experience in corporate sales and account management. I have been the top rated seller for two years in a row in my previous position. Clients recognize me as dependable honest and resourceful. I have a strong work ethic and great interpersonal skills. I excel at goal setting and time management. However you don't have to take my word for it I will be happy to provide personal and professional references upon request. Youre welcome to contact my previous employer to inquire about my work performance. I look forward to speaking with you in person in the near future.

Sincerely

Frances Fortune

Read the following paragraph. Edit by adding apostrophes and semi-colons where needed. There may be more than one correct way to edit some sentences. Consider how the punctuation you choose affects the meaning of the sentence.

I was a little nervous about the interview it was my first in years. I had to borrow my roommates suit, but it fit me well. A few days ago, I started to research the companys history and mission. I felt like I was well qualified for the job. When I arrived, I shook hands with the interviewer she had a strong grip! It nearly caught me off guard, but I did my best to smile and relax. I was a little distracted by all the books in the womans office she must have had a hundred books in that tiny room. However, I think my responses to her questions were good. Ill send her an e-mail to thank her for her time. Hopefully shell call me soon about the position.

Writing Application

Review some of the recent or current assignments you have completed for school or work. Look through recent business and personal e-mails. Does your work contain any errors in punctuation? Correct the errors and compile a list of the types of errors you are correcting (commas, semicolons, colons, apostrophes, etc.). Use this list as a reference for the types of punctuation marks that you should review and practice.

If you do not find many errors—great! You can still look for ways to add interest to your writing by using semicolons and colons to create a variety of sentence lengths and structures.

Attribution & References

Except where otherwise noted, this chapter is adapted from "3.9 Punctuation: End-of-Chapter Exercises" In *Writing for Success* by University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing, licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0.

CHAPTER 13: WORKING WITH WORDS: WHICH WORD IS RIGHT?

Communication Essentials for College by Jen Booth, Emily Cramer & Amanda Quibell

- 13.1 – Commonly Confused Words
- 13.2 – Spelling
- 13.3 – Word Choice
- 13.4 – Using Context Clues
- 13.5 – Plain language
- 13.6 – Working with Words: End-of-Chapter Exercises

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Please visit the web version of *Communication Essentials for College* to access the complete book, interactive activities and ancillary resources.

13.1 - COMMONLY CONFUSED WORDS

Learning Objectives

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

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 everyday as part of your writing and speaking vocabulary . You probably also know that certain words fit better in certain situations. Letters, e-mails, 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 flavor 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 these words 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 *new* sweater.

I *knew* 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 Chapter 11 "Writing Basics: What Makes a Good Sentence?".

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.

Commonly Confused Words

A, An, And

- *A* (article). Used before a word that begins with a consonant.
  a key, **a** mouse, **a** screen

- *An* (article). Used before a word that begins with a vowel.
  an airplane, **an** ocean, **an** igloo
- *And* (conjunction). Connects two or more words together.
  peanut butter **and** jelly, pen **and** pencil, jump **and** shout

Accept, Except

- *Accept* (verb). Means to take or agree to something offered.
  They **accepted** our proposal for the conference.
- *Except* (conjunction). Means only or but.
  We could fly there **except** the tickets cost too much.

Affect, Effect

- *Affect* (verb). Means to create a change.
  Hurricane winds **affect** the amount of rainfall.
- *Effect* (noun). Means an outcome or result.
  The heavy rains will have an **effect** on the crop growth.

Are, Our

- *Are* (verb). A conjugated form of the verb *to be*.
  My cousins **are** all tall and blonde.
- *Our* (pronoun). Indicates possession, usually follows the pronoun *we*.
  We will bring **our** cameras to take pictures.

By, Buy

- *By* (preposition). Means next to.
  My glasses are **by** the bed.
- *Buy* (verb). Means to purchase.
  I will **buy** new glasses after the doctor's appointment.

Its, It's

- *Its* (pronoun). A form of *it* that shows possession.
  The butterfly flapped **its** wings.
- *It's* (contraction). Joins the words *it* and *is*.
  It's the most beautiful butterfly I have ever seen.

Know, No

- *Know* (verb). Means to understand or possess knowledge.
  I **know** the male peacock sports the brilliant feathers.
- *No*. Used to make a negative.
  I have **no** time to visit the zoo this weekend.

Loose, Lose

- *Loose* (adjective). Describes something that is not tight or is detached.
  Without a belt, her pants are **loose** on her waist.
- *Lose* (verb). Means to forget, to give up, or to fail to earn something.
  She will **lose** even more weight after finishing the marathon training.

Of, Have

- *Of* (preposition). Means *from* or *about*.
  I studied maps **of** the city to know where to rent a new apartment.
- *Have* (verb). Means to possess something.
  I **have** many friends to help me move.
- *Have* (linking verb). Used to connect verbs.
  I should **have** helped her with that heavy box.

Quite, Quiet, Quit

- *Quite* (adverb). Means *really* or *truly*.
  My work will require **quite** a lot of concentration.
- *Quiet* (adjective). Means not loud.
  I need a **quiet** room to complete the assignments.
- *Quit* (verb). Means to stop or to end.
  I will **quit** when I am hungry for dinner.

Right, Write

- *Right* (adjective). Means proper or correct.
  When bowling, she practices the **right** form.
- *Right* (adjective). Also means the opposite of left.
  The ball curved to the **right** and hit the last pin.
- *Write* (verb). Means to communicate on paper.

After the team members bowl, I will **write** down their scores.

Set, Sit

- *Set* (verb). Means to put an item down.She **set** the mug on the saucer.
- *Set* (noun). Means a group of similar objects.
  All the mugs and saucers belonged in a **set**.
- *Sit* (verb). Means to lower oneself down on a chair or another place
  I'll **sit** on the sofa while she brews the tea.

Suppose, Supposed

- *Suppose* (verb). Means to think or to consider
  I **suppose** I will bake the bread, because no one else has the recipe.
- *Suppose* (verb). Means to suggest.
  Suppose we all split the cost of the dinner.
- *Supposed* (verb). The past tense form of the verb suppose, meaning required or allowed.
  She was **supposed** to create the menu.

Than, Then

- *Than* (conjunction). Used to connect two or more items when comparing
  Registered nurses require less schooling **than** doctors.
- *Then* (adverb). Means next or at a specific time.
  Doctors first complete medical school and **then** obtain a residency.

Their, They're, There

- *Their* (pronoun). A form of *they* that shows possession.
  The dog walker feeds **their** dogs everyday at two o'clock.
- *They're* (contraction). Joins the words *they* and *are*.
  They're the sweetest dogs in the neighborhood.
- *There* (adverb). Indicates a particular place.
  The dogs' bowls are over **there**, next to the pantry.
- *There* (pronoun). Indicates the presence of something
  There are more treats if the dogs behave.

To, Two, Too

- *To* (preposition). Indicates movement.
  Let's go **to** the circus.
- *To*. A word that completes an infinitive verb.
  to play, **to** ride, **to** watch.
- *Two*. The number after one. It describes how many.
  Two clowns squirted the elephants with water.
- *Too* (adverb). Means *also* or *very*.
  The tents were **too** loud, and we left.

Use, Used

- *Use* (verb). Means to apply for some purpose.
  We **use** a weed whacker to trim the hedges.
- *Used*. The past tense form of the verb *to use*
  He **used** the lawnmower last night before it rained.
- *Used to*. Indicates something done in the past but not in the present
  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*.
  Who's the new student? **Who's** met him?
- *Whose* (pronoun). A form of *who* that shows possession.
  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.
  Your book bag is unzipped.
- *You're* (contraction). Joins the words *you* and *are*.
  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!

Exercise 1

Exercise 1 (Text Version)

Complete the following sentences by selecting the correct word.

1. My little cousin turns (to, too, two) years old tomorrow.
2. The next-door neighbor'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
9. (affect, effect) my understanding of the rules.
10. Tonight she will (set, sit) down and (right, write) a cover letter to accompany her résumé and job application.
11. It must be fall, because the leaves (are, our) changing, and (it's, its) getting darker earlier.

Check Your Answers: [1]

Activity Source: Exercise 1 is adapted from "4.1 Commonly Confused Words" In *Writing for Success* by University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing, licensed under CC BY-NC- 4.0.

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.

1. **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.
2. **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.
3. **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

Figure 1 – Commonly Misused Word on a Public Sign



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 e-mail 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.

Exercise 2

The following paragraph contains eleven errors. Find each misused word and correct it by adding the proper word.

> 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.

Collaboration

Please share with a classmate and compare your answers.

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 book.
- 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.

Attribution & References

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Notes

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

13.2 - SPELLING

Learning Objectives

- 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, 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 "neighbour" 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

Exercise 1

Exercise 1 (Text Version)

Identify the nine misspelled words in the following paragraph.

Sherman J. Alexie Jr. was born in October 1966. He is a Spokane/Coeur d'Alene Indian and an 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 and possibly mental retardation. 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's The 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 pow wows 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.

Check Your Answers: [1]

Activity Source: Exercise 1 is adapted from "4.2 Spelling" In *Writing for Success* by University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing, licensed under CC BY-NC- 4.0.

Tip

Eight Tips to Improve 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 practice writing each word four to five times each. 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 flashcards. 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. To read more about the writing process and editing and revising, see Chapter 3 "The Writing Process: How Do I Begin?".

Homonyms

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

Commonly Misused Homonyms

Principle, Principal

- **Principle (noun).** A fundamental concept that is accepted as true.
  The **principle** of human equality is an important foundation for all nations.
- **Principal (noun).** The original amount of debt on which interest is calculated.
  The payment plan allows me to pay back only the **principal** amount, not any compounded interest.
- **Principal (noun).** A person who is the main authority of a school.
  The **principal** held a conference for both parents and teachers.

Where, Wear, Ware

- **Where (adverb).** The place in which something happens.
  Where is the restaurant?

- **Wear (verb).** To carry or have on the body.
  I will **wear** my hiking shoes when go on a climb tomorrow morning.
- **Ware (noun).** Articles of merchandise or manufacture (usually, *wares*).
  When I return from shopping, I will show you my **wares**.

Lead, Led

- **Lead (noun).** A type of metal used in pipes and batteries.
  The **lead** pipes in my homes are old and need to be replaced.
- **Led (verb).** The past tense of the verb *lead*.
  After the garden, she **led** the patrons through the museum.

Which, Witch

- **Which (pronoun).** Replaces one out of a group.
  Which apartment is yours?
- **Witch (noun).** A person who practices sorcery or who has supernatural powers.
  She thinks she is a **witch**, but she does not seem to have any powers.

Peace, Piece

- **Peace (noun).** A state of tranquility or quiet.
  For once, there was **peace** between the argumentative brothers.
- **Piece (noun).** A part of a whole.
  I would like a large **piece** of cake, thank you.

Passed, Past

- **Passed (verb).** To go away or move.
  He **passed** the slower cars on the road using the left lane.
- **Past (noun).** Having existed or taken place in a period before the present.
  The argument happened in the **past**, so there is no use in dwelling on it.

Lessen, Lesson

- **Lessen (verb).** To reduce in number, size, or degree.
  My dentist gave me medicine to **lessen** the pain of my aching tooth.
- **Lesson (noun).** A reading or exercise to be studied by a student.
  Today's **lesson** was about mortgage interest rates.

Patience, Patients

- **Patience (noun).** The capacity of being patient (waiting for a period of time or enduring pains and trials calmly).
  The novice teacher's **patience** with the unruly class was astounding.
- **Patients (plural noun).** Individuals under medical care.
  The **patients** were tired of eating the hospital food, and they could not wait for a home-cooked meal.

Sees, Seas, Seize

- **Sees (verb).** To perceive with the eye.
  He **sees** a whale through his binoculars.
- **Seas (plural noun).** The plural of sea, a great body of salt water.
  The tidal fluctuation of the oceans and **seas** are influenced by the moon.
- **Seize (verb).** To possess or take by force.
  The king plans to **seize** all the peasants' land.

Threw, Through

- **Threw (verb).** The past tense of *throw*.
  She **threw** the football with perfect form.
- **Through (preposition).** A word that indicates movement.
  She walked **through** the door and out of his life.

Exercise 2

Exercise 2 (Text Version)

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. I like to _____ (where, wear, ware) unique clothing from thrift stores that do not have company logos on them.
3. Marjorie felt like she was being _____ (led, lead) on a wild goose chase, and she did not like it one bit.
4. Serina described _____ (witch, which) house was hers, but now that I am here, they all look the same.
5. Seeing his friend without a lunch, Miguel gave her a _____ (peace, piece) of his apple.
6. Do you think that it is healthy for mother to talk about the _____ (passed, past) all the time?
7. Eating healthier foods will _____ (lessen, lesson) the risk of heart disease.
8. I know it sounds cliché, but my father had the _____ (patients, patience) of a saint.
9. Daniela _____ (sees, seas, seize) possibilities in the bleakest situations, and that it is why she is successful.
10. Everyone goes _____ (through, threw) hardships in life regardless of who they are.

Check Your Answers: [2]

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Commonly Misspelled Words

Below is a list of commonly misspelled words. You probably use these words every day in either speaking or writing. Each word has a segment in bold type, which indicates the problem area of the word that is often spelled incorrectly. If you can, use this list as a guide before, during, and after you write.

Tip

Use the following two tricks to help you master these troublesome words:

1. Copy each word a few times and underline the problem area.
2. Copy the words onto flash cards and have a friend test you.

Table 1 – Commonly Misspelled Words

- a**c**ross
- dis**app**oint
- in**teg**ration
- partic**u**lar
- sep**ara**te
- a**ddr**ess
- disa**pp**rove
- in**tell**igent
- **per**form
- sim**ilar**
- ans**w**er
- do**es**n't
- int**ere**st
- **per**haps
- **sin**ce
- arg**u**ment
- eig**hth**
- int**er**fere
- perso**nn**el
- sp**ee**ch
- a**thl**ete
- emba**rr**ass
- jew**el**ry
- po**sse**ss
- stren**gth**
- begi**nn**ing
- envir**on**ment
- jud**gm**ent
- po**ss**ible
- su**cc**ess
- beha**vi**or
- exa**gg**erate
- knowle**d**ge
- **pre**fer
- **sur**prise
- cal**e**nd**a**r
- fam**ili**ar
- maint**ain**
- pre**jud**ice
- **tau**ght
- ca**r**ee**r**
- fina**lly**
- math**e**matics
- privil**ege**
- temper**a**ture
- cons**cie**nce
- gover**rn**ment
- me**a**nt
- pro**bab**ly
- th**orou**gh
- crow**ded**
- gramm**a**r
- ne**ce**ssary
- **psy**cholo**gy**
- though**t**
- def**ini**te
- hei**gh**t
- nerv**ous**
- p**ur**sue
- tire**d**
- d**es**cribe
- **ill**egal
- o**cc**asion
- ref**er**ence
- unt**il**
- desp**er**ate
- immed**iate**ly
- opin**ion**
- **rhy**th**m**
- weig**ht**
- d**iffe**rent
- import**ant**
- opt**i**mist
- ridic**ul**ous
- wri**tt**en

Exercise 3

Exercise 3 (Text Version)

Find the ten commonly misspelled words in the following paragraph.

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 sixteenth 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 nineteenth 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 independent city.

Check Your Answers: [3]

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Writing at Work

In today's job market, writing e-mails has become a means by which many people find employment. E-mails to prospective employers require thoughtful word choice, accurate spelling, and perfect punctuation. Employers' inboxes are inundated with countless e-mails daily. If even the

subject line of an e-mail contains a spelling error, it will likely be overlooked and someone else's e-mail will take priority.

The best thing to do after you proofread an e-mail 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 e-mail and give you suggestions for improvement. Most colleges and universities have writing centers, 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 is it based on his or her 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.

Attribution & References

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Notes

1. Sherman J. Alexie Jr. was born in October 1966. He is a Spokane/Coeur d'Alene Indian and an 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 and possibly mental retardation. 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's The 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 pow wows 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.
2.
   1. principle
   2. wear
   3. led
   4. which
   5. piece
   6. past
   7. lessen
   8. patience
   9. seizes
   10. through
3. 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 sixteenth 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 nineteenth 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 independent city.

13.3 - WORD CHOICE

Learning Objectives

- 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 choices with words. 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 practice 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 preceeding 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 very 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.

> **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.

Scrawny

- **Denotation:** Exceptionally thin and slight or meager in body or size.
- **Word used in a sentence:** Although he was a premature baby and a **scrawny** child, Martin has developed into a strong man.
- **Connotation:** (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

- **Denotation:** Lacking sufficient flesh, very thin.
- **Word used in a sentence: Skinny** jeans have become very fashionable in the past couple of years.
- **Connotation:** (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

- **Denotation:** Lacking or deficient in flesh; containing little or no fat.
- **Word used in a sentence:** My brother has a **lean** figure, whereas I have a more muscular build.
- **Connotation:** (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.

Exercise 1

Exercise 1 (Text Version)

In each of the following items, you will find words with similar denotations. Identify the words'

connotations as positive, negative, or neutral by writing the word in the appropriate box. Copy the chart onto your own piece of paper.

1. curious, nosy, interested
2. lazy, relaxed, slow
3. courageous, foolhardy, assured
4. new, newfangled, modern
5. mansion, shack, residence
6. spinster, unmarried woman, career woman
7. giggle, laugh, cackle
8. boring, routine, prosaic
9. noted, notorious, famous
10. assertive, confident, pushy

Check Your Answers: [1]

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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 correspondences, such as e-mails, text messages, and instant messages. Slang is appropriate between friends in an informal context but should be avoided in formal academic writing.

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 e-mails or during meetings may convey the wrong message

or even mistakenly offend someone.

Exercise 2

Edit the following paragraph by replacing the slang words and phrases with more formal language. Rewrite the paragraph on your own sheet of paper.

> 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 practicing this speech 24/7, and I still bombed. It was ten 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 his or her 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.
>
> Collaboration
>
> Please share with a classmate and compare your answers.

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?

Exercise 3

On your own sheet of paper, revise the following sentences by replacing the clichés with fresh, original descriptions.

1. She is writing a memoir in which she will air her family's dirty laundry.
2. Fran had an ax to grind with Benny, and she planned to confront him that night at the party.
3. Mr. Muller was at his wit's end with the rowdy class of seventh graders.
4. The bottom line is that Greg was fired because he missed too many days of work.
5. Sometimes it is hard to make ends meet with just one paycheck.
6. My brain is fried from pulling an all-nighter.
7. Maria left the dishes in the sink all week to give Jeff a taste of his own medicine.
8. While they were at the carnival Janice exclaimed, "Time sure does fly when you are having fun!"
9. Jeremy became tongue-tied after the interviewer asked him where he saw himself in five years.
10. Jordan was dressed to the nines that night.

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 color, texture, sound, and even smell to your writing.

- **General:** My new puppy is cute.
- **Specific:** My new puppy is a ball of white fuzz with the biggest black eyes I have ever seen.

- **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.

Exercise 4

Revise the following sentences by replacing the overly general words with more precise and attractive language. Write the new sentences on your own sheet of paper.

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.

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.

Attribution & References

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Notes

1. 1. Positive: interested Negative: nosy Neutral: curious
   2. Positive: relaxed Negative: lazy Neutral: slow
   3. Positive: courageous Negative: foolhardy Neutral: assured
   4. Positive: modern Negative: newfangled Neutral: new
   5. Positive: mansion Negative: shack Neutral: residence
   6. Positive: career woman Negative: spinster Neutral: unmarried woman
   7. Positive: giggle Negative: cackle Neutral: laugh
   8. Positive: routine Negative: prosaic Neutral: boring

9. Positive: famous Negative: notorious Neutral: noted
10. Positive: confident Negative: pushy Neutral: assertive

13.4 - USING CONTEXT CLUES

Learning Objectives

- Identify the different types of context clues.
- Practice using context clues while reading.

Context clues are bits of information within a text that will assist you in deciphering the meaning of unknown words. Since most of your knowledge of vocabulary comes from reading, it is important that you recognize context clues. By becoming more aware of particular words and phrases surrounding a difficult word, you can make logical guesses about its meaning. The following are the different types of context clues:

- Brief definition or restatement
- Synonyms and antonyms
- Examples

Brief Definition or Restatement

Sometimes a text directly states the definition or a restatement of the unknown word. The brief definition or restatement is signaled by a word or a punctuation mark. Consider the following example:

If you visit Baffin Island, you will likely see many glaciers, or slow moving masses of ice.

In this sentence, the word *glaciers* is defined by the phrase that follows the signal word *or*, which is *slow moving masses of ice*.

In other instances, the text may restate the meaning of the word in a different way, by using punctuation as a signal. Look at the following example:

> Marina was indignant—fuming mad—when she discovered her brother had left for the party without her.

Although *fuming mad* is not a formal definition of the word *indignant*, it does serve to define it. These two examples use signals—the word *or* and the punctuation dashes—to indicate the meaning of the unfamiliar word. Other signals to look for are the words *is*, *as*, *means*, *known as*, and *refers to*.

Synonyms and Antonyms

Sometimes a text gives a synonym of the unknown word to signal the meaning of the unfamiliar word:

> When you interpret an image, you actively question and examine what the image connotes and suggests.

In this sentence the word *suggests* is a synonym of the word *connotes*. The word *and* sometimes signals synonyms.

Likewise, the word *but* may signal a contrast, which can help you define a word by its antonym.

> I abhor clothes shopping, but I adore grocery shopping.

The word *abhor* is contrasted with its opposite: *adore*. From this context, the reader can guess that *abhor* means to dislike greatly.

Examples

Sometimes a text will give you an example of the word that sheds light on its meaning:

> I knew Mark's ailurophobia was in full force because he began trembling and stuttering when he saw my cat, Ludwig, slink out from under the bed.

Although *ailurophobia* is an unknown word, the sentence gives an example of its effects. Based on this example, a reader could confidently surmise that the word means a fear of cats.

Tip

Look for signal words like such as, for instance, and for example. These words signal that a word's meaning may be revealed through an example.

Exercise 1

Identify the context clue that helps define the underlined words in each of the following sentences. Write the context clue on your own sheet of paper.

1. Lucinda is very adroit on the balance beam, but Constance is rather clumsy.
2. I saw the entomologist, a scientist who studies insects, cradle the giant dung beetle in her palm.
3. Lance's comments about politics were irrelevant and meaningless to the botanist's lecture on plant reproduction.
4. Before I left for my trip to the Czech Republic, I listened to my mother's sage advice and made a copy of my passport.
5. His rancor, or hatred, for socializing resulted in a life of loneliness and boredom.

6. Martin was mortified, way beyond embarrassment, when his friends teamed up to shove him into the pool.
7. The petulant four-year-old had a baby sister who was, on the contrary, not grouchy at all.
8. The philosophy teacher presented the students with several conundrums, or riddles, to solve.
9. Most Canadians are omnivores, people that eat both plants and animals.
10. Elena is effervescent, as excited as a cheerleader, for example, when she meets someone for the first time.

Exercise 2

On your own sheet of paper, write the name of the context clue that helps to define the following words:

- precocious
- flabbergasted
- dexterity
- gloanted
- agape

Imani was a precocious child to say the least. She produced brilliant watercolor paintings by the age of three. At first, her parents were flabbergasted—utterly blown away—by their daughter's ability, but soon they got used to their little painter. Her preschool teacher said that Imani's dexterity, or ease with which she used her hands, was something she had never before seen in such a young child. Little Imani never gloated or took pride in her paintings; she just smiled contentedly when she finished one and requested her parents give it to someone as a gift. Whenever people met Imani for the first time they often watched her paint with their mouths agape, but her parents always kept their mouths closed and simply smiled over their "little Monet."

Collaboration

Please share with a classmate and compare your answers.

Tip

In addition to context clues to help you figure out the meaning of a word, examine the following word parts: prefixes, roots, and suffixes.

Writing at Work

Jargon is a type of shorthand communication often used in the workplace. It is the technical language of a special field. Imagine it is your first time working as a server in a restaurant and your manager tells you he is going to "eighty-six" the roasted chicken. If you do not realize that "eighty-six" means to remove an item from the menu, you could be confused.

When you first start a job, no matter where it may be, you will encounter jargon that will likely be foreign to you. Perhaps after working the job for a short time, you too will feel comfortable enough to use it. When you are first hired, however, jargon can be baffling and make you feel like an outsider. If you cannot decipher the jargon based on the context, it is always a good policy to ask.

Key Takeaways

- Context clues are words or phrases within a text that help clarify vocabulary that is unknown to you.
- There are several types of context clues including brief definition and restatement, synonyms and antonyms, and example.

Writing Application

Write a paragraph describing your first job. In the paragraph, use five words previously unknown to you. These words could be jargon words or you may consult a dictionary or thesaurus to find a new word. Make sure to provide a specific context clue for understanding each word. Exchange papers with a classmate and try to decipher the meaning of the words in each other's paragraphs based on the context clues.

Attribution & References

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13.5 - PLAIN LANGUAGE

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, you will be able to

- identify active and passive voice, jargon, positive and negative tone, and unnecessary words in written and oral communications;
- rewrite a given message while following five principles of plain language: active voice, common words, positive tone, reader focus, and short (concise) words and sentences;
- proofread another student's work, or your own, with a focus on the five principles of plain language: active voice, common words, positive tone, reader focus, and short (concise) words and sentences.

Crafting Your Message with Plain Language

No matter who you are communicating with, they will appreciate your ability to write using plain language. This is a key skill in any professional setting. Plain language writing—and speaking—will help you to get your message across clearly and concisely. This chapter will introduce you to the principles of plain language and allow you to practise them.

Principle 1: Use Active Voice

Knowing when and how to use either active or passive voice will help you to create clear messages. Most contexts prefer the active voice, which is more direct than passive voice, which can be awkward, vague and wordy. Passive voice can be the best choice, in some situations; knowing the difference is important!

Recognizing Active and Passive Voice

To use active voice, make the *noun that performs the action* the subject of the sentence and pair it directly with an action verb.

Read these two sentences:

Matt Damon left Harvard in the late 1980s to start his acting career.

Matt Damon's acting career was started in the late 1980s when he left Harvard.

In the first sentence, **left** is an action verb that is paired with the subject, Matt Damon. If you ask, "Who or what left?" the answer is Matt Damon. Neither of the other two nouns in the sentence—Harvard and career—"left" anything.

Now look at the second sentence. The action verb is **started.** If you ask, "Who or what started something?" the answer, again, is Matt Damon. But in this sentence, the writer placed **career**—not **Matt Damon**—in the subject position. When the doer of the action is not the subject, the sentence is in passive voice. In passive voice constructions, the doer of the action usually follows the word by as the indirect object of a prepositional phrase, and the action verb is typically partnered with a version of the verb to be.

The following sentences are in passive voice. For each sentence, identify

- the noun in the subject position,
- the form of the verb to be,
- the action verb, and
- the doer of the action.

Example 1: The original screenplay for *Good Will Hunting* was written by Matt Damon for an English class when he was student at Harvard University.

Quick Check 1

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/gccomm/?p=5249#h5p-290

Quick Check 1 (Text version)

Match the following words or phrases (a. Matt Damon, b. written, c. was, d. Good Will Hunting), to the following parts:

1. The noun in the subject position
2. The form of the verb 'to be'
3. The action verb
4. The doer of the action

Check your Answer: [1]

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Example 2: As an actor, Matt Damon is loved by millions of fans worldwide.

Quick Check 2

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/gccomm/?p=5249#h5p-291

Quick Check 2 (Text version)

Match the following words or phrases (a. loved, b. Matt Damon, c. is, d. fans), to the following parts:

1. The noun in the subject position
2. The form of the verb 'to be'
3. The action verb
4. The doer of the action

Check your Answer: [2]

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Check Your Understanding: Active or Passive

Decide whether each of the following sentences is active or passive.

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Check Your Understanding: Active or Passive (Text version)

1. An Oscar was given to Matt Damon and Ben Affleck for the *Good Will Hunting* script.
2. Matt Damon and Ben Affleck grew up together and are still colleagues and friends today.
3. Jason Bourne, a character from the novels of Robert Ludlum, was played several times by Matt Damon.
4. Besides acting in the Bourne movies, Matt Damon also played the title character in *Good Will Hunting*, *Saving Private Ryan*, and *The Talented Mr. Ripley.*

Check your Answer: [3]

Activity source: "Check Your Understanding: Active or Passive" is adapted from *Professional Communications: Canadian Edition*, CC BY 4.0.

Using Action Verbs to Make Sentences More Interesting

Two sentences can say the same thing but leave a different impression based on the choice of verb. Which of the following sentences gives you the most vivid mental picture?

1. A bald eagle was overhead and now is low in the sky near me.

2. A bald eagle soared overhead and then dove low, seemingly coming right at me.

Most of us would agree that sentence B paints a better picture.

Try to express yourself with action verbs instead of forms of the verb *to be*. Sometimes it is fine to use forms of the verb *to be*, such as is or are, but it is easy to overuse them (as in this sentence—twice). Overuse of these verbs will make your writing dull.

Revising sentences to make them more interesting

Read each of the following sentences and note the use of the verb *to be*. Think of a way to reword the sentence to make it more interesting by using an action verb before checking the suggested revision.



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/gccomm/?p=5249#h5p-293

Revising sentences to make them more interesting (Text version)

A photo was snapped, the tiger was upset, and Elizabeth was on the ground. Check revision[4]

A giraffe's neck is long and thin, but it is as much as 500 pounds in weight. Check revision[5]

An elephant is able to drink 80 gallons of water and is likely to eat 1,000 pounds of vegetation in a day. Check revision[6]

Activity source: "Revising sentences to make them more interesting" is adapted from *Professional Communications: Canadian Edition*, CC BY 4.0.

Note

A point of confusion that sometimes comes up when people discuss the passive voice is the use of expletive pronouns. A sentence with expletive pronouns often starts with "There is ..." or "There are

…." Many people mistakenly think that expletive pronoun sentences are a form of passive voice, but they are not.

To understand the difference, please read the "Avoid Expletive Pronouns" section under Principle 5.

Using Action Verbs Alone to Avoid Passive Voice

Even though the passive voice might include an action verb, the action verb is not as strong as it could be, because of the sentence structure. The passive voice also causes unnecessary wordiness.

Rewording sentences in active voice

Read the following sentences and think of a way to reword each using an action verb in active voice. Then look at the suggested revision for each case.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/gccomm/?p=5249#h5p-294

Rewording sentences in active voice (Text version)

Original: The zebras were fed by the zoo workers. (eight words) Check revision[7]

Original: Water was spewed in the air by the elephant. (nine words) Check revision[8]

Original: The home of the hippopotamus was cleaned up and made tidy by Hank the Hippo Man. (16 words) Check revision [9]

Activity source: "Rewording sentences in active voice" is adapted from *Professional Communications: Canadian Edition*, CC BY 4.0.

Writing in the Active Voice

Writing in active voice is easy once you understand the difference between active and passive voice. Make sure you always define who or what did what. If you use forms of the verb to be with your action verb, consider the reason for your choice. If you are writing in progressive tense ("Carrie is walking to my house") or perfect progressive tense ("Melissa will have been married for four years by then"), you will need to use helping verbs, even in active voice.

Using Passive Voice

Sometimes passive voice is the best option. Consider the following acceptable uses of passive voice.

When you do not know who or what is responsible for the action:

Example: Our front-door lock was picked.

Rationale: If you do not know who picked the lock on your front door, you cannot say who did it. You could say a thief broke in, but that would be an assumption; you could, theoretically, find out that the lock was picked by a family member who had forgotten to take a key.

When you want to hide the person or thing responsible for the action, such as in a story:

Example: The basement was filled with a mysterious scraping sound.

Rationale: If you are writing a dramatic story, you might introduce a phenomenon without revealing the person or thing that caused it.

When the person or thing that performed the action is not important:

Example: The park was flooded all week.

Rationale: Although you would obviously know that the rainwater flooded the park, saying so would not be important.

When you do not want to place credit, responsibility, or blame:

Example: A mistake was made in the investigation that resulted in the wrong person being on trial.

Rationale: Even if you think you know who is responsible for a problem, you might not want to expose the person.

When you want to maintain the impression of objectivity:

Example: It was noted that only first-graders chose to eat the fruit.

Rationale: Research reports in certain academic disciplines attempt to remove the

researcher from the results, to avoid saying, for example, “I noted that only first graders….”

When you want to avoid using a gendered construction, and pluralizing is not an option:

Example: If the password is forgotten by the user, a security question will be asked.

Rationale: This construction avoids the need for the cumbersome “his or her” (as in “the user forgets his or her password”).

Principle 2: Use Common Words Instead of Complex Words

Inappropriate word choices will get in the way of your message. For this reason, use language that is accurate and appropriate for the writing situation. Omit jargon (technical words and phrases common to a specific profession or discipline) and slang (invented words and phrases specific to a certain group of people), unless your audience and purpose call for such language. Avoid outdated words and phrases, such as “Dial the number.” Be straightforward in your writing rather than using euphemism (a gentler, but sometimes inaccurate, way of saying something). Be clear about the level of formality each piece of writing needs, and adhere to that level.

Writing without Jargon or Slang

Jargon and slang both have their places. Using jargon is fine as long as you can safely assume your readers also know the jargon. For example, if you are a lawyer writing to others in the legal profession, using legal jargon is perfectly fine. On the other hand, if you are writing for people outside the legal profession, using legal jargon would most likely be confusing, and you should avoid it. Of course, lawyers must use legal jargon in papers they prepare for customers. However, those papers are designed to navigate within the legal system and may not be clear to readers outside of this demographic.

Examples:

Jargon: I need to hammer out this report by tomorrow.

Alternative: I need to type up this report by tomorrow.

Euphemism: My uncle is vertically challenged.

Alternative: My uncle is only five feet tall.

Principle 3: Use a Positive Tone When Possible

Unless there is a specific reason not to, use positive language wherever you can. Positive language benefits your writing in two ways. First, it creates a positive tone, and your writing is more likely to be well-received. Second, it clarifies your meaning, as positive statements are more concise. Take a look at the following negatively worded sentences and then their positive counterparts, below.

Examples:

Negative: Your car will not be ready for collection until Friday.
Positive: Your car will be ready for collection on Friday.

Negative: You did not complete the exam.
Positive: You will need to complete the exam.

Negative: Your holiday time is not approved until your manager clears it.
Positive: Your holiday time will be approved when your manager clears it.

Avoid using multiple negatives in one sentence, as this will make your sentence difficult to understand. When readers encounter more than one negative construct in a sentence, their brains have to do more cognitive work to decipher the meaning; multiple negatives can create convoluted sentences that bog the reader down.

Examples:

Negative: A decision will not be made unless all board members agree.
Positive: A decision will be made when all board members agree.

Negative: The event cannot be scheduled without a venue.
Positive: The event can be scheduled when a venue has been booked.

Principle 4: Write for Your Reader

When you write for your readers and speak to an audience, you have to consider who they are and what they need to know. When readers know that you are concerned with their needs, they are more likely to be open to your message, and will be more likely to:

- take the action you are asking them to and
- focus on important details.

Your message will mean more to your reader if they get the impression that it was written directly to them. When you sit down to write, either for a paper or a presentation, consider the audience analysis tool presented earlier in this module.

Then try to answer these questions in your writing with user-friendly language.

Speaking directly to the audience using you-oriented language helps to personalize the message and make it easier to understand. Using the second-person pronoun you tells your reader that the message is intended for them. You might be inclined to use he, she, or they instead, but those terms are not as direct or personal. Using the pronoun you makes the message feel relevant.

Consider the following sentences:

1. Employees arriving at the Sands Hotel for the team's day out should assemble in the lobby.
2. When you arrive at the Sands Hotel for the team's day out, please join us in the lobby.

Which one is more inviting? Most people will find the second sentence more friendly and inviting because it addresses the reader directly.

Organize Your Document to Meet Your Readers' Needs

When you write, ask yourself, "Why would someone read this message?" Often, it is because the reader needs a question answered. What do they need to know to prepare for the upcoming meeting, for example, or what new company policies do they need to abide by? Think about the questions your readers will ask and then organize your document to answer them.

Principle 5: Keep Words and Sentence Short (Conciseness)

It is easy to let your sentences become cluttered with words that do not add value to your message. Improve cluttered sentences by eliminating repetitive ideas, removing repeated words, and editing to eliminate unnecessary words.

Eliminating Repetitive Ideas

Unless you are providing definitions on purpose, stating one idea twice in a single sentence is redundant. Read each example below and think about how you could revise the sentence to remove repetitive phrasing. Then look at the suggested revision.

Examples:

Original: Use a very heavy skillet made of cast iron to bake an extra-juicy meatloaf.
Revision: Use a cast-iron skillet to bake a juicy meatloaf.

Original: Joe thought to himself, I think I'll make caramelized grilled salmon tonight.
Revision: Joe thought, I think I'll make caramelized grilled salmon tonight.

Removing Repeated Words

As a general rule, you should try not to repeat a word within a sentence. Sometimes you simply need to choose a different word. But often you can actually remove repeated words. Read this example and think about how you could revise the sentence to remove a repeated word that adds wordiness. Then check out the revision below the sentence.

Example:

Original: The student who won the cooking contest is a very talented and ambitious student.
Revision: The student who won the cooking contest is very talented and ambitious.

Rewording to Eliminate Unnecessary Words

If a sentence has words that are not necessary to carry the meaning, those words are unneeded and can be removed. Read each example and think about how you could revise the sentence; then check out the suggested revisions.

Examples:

Original: Andy has the ability to make the most fabulous twice-baked potatoes.
Revision: Andy makes the most fabulous twice-baked potatoes.

Original: For his part in the cooking class group project, Malik was responsible for making the mustard reduction sauce.
Revision: Malik made the mustard reduction sauce for his cooking class group project.

Avoid Expletive Pronouns (Most of the Time)

Many people create needlessly wordy sentences using expletive pronouns, which often take the form of "There is ..." or "There are ...."

Now, if you remember, pronouns (e.g., I, you, he, she, they, this, that, who, etc.) are words that we use to replace nouns (i.e., people, places, things), and there are many types of pronouns (e.g., personal, relative, demonstrative, etc.). However, expletive pronouns are different from other pronouns because unlike most pronouns, they do not stand for a person, thing, or place; they are called expletives because they have no

"value." Sometimes you will see expletive pronouns at the beginning of a sentence, sometimes at the end. Look at the following expletive constructs:

Examples:

1. There are a lot of reading assignments in this class.
2. I can't believe how many reading assignments there are!
   Note: These two examples are not necessarily bad examples of using expletive pronouns. We included them to help you first understand what expletive pronouns are so you can recognize them.

The main reason we should generally avoid writing with expletive pronouns is that they often cause us to use more words in the rest of the sentence than we have to. Also, the empty words at the beginning tend to shift the more important subject matter toward the end of the sentence. The above sentences are not that bad, but at least they are simple enough to help you understand what expletive pronouns are. Here are some more examples of expletive pronouns, along with better alternatives.

Examples:

Original: There are some people who love to cause trouble.
Revision: Some people love to cause trouble.

Original: There are some things that are just not worth waiting for.
Revision: Some things are just not worth waiting for.

Original: There is a person I know who can help you fix your computer.
Revision: I know a person who can help you fix your computer

While not all instances of expletive pronouns are bad, writing sentences with expletives seems to be habit forming. It can lead to trouble when you are explaining more complex ideas, because you end up having to use additional strings of phrases to explain what you want your reader to understand. Wordy sentences, such as those with expletive pronouns, can tax the reader's mind.

Example:

Original: There is a button you need to press that is red and says STOP.
Revision: You need to press the red STOP button. Or: Press the red STOP button.

Of course, most rules and guideline have exceptions, and expletive pronouns are no different. In many cases common expressions, particularly if they are short, are not worth revising—especially in live communications such as presentations, lectures, and speeches.

Examples:

There is no place I'd rather be.
There are good days, and there are bad days.
There is no way around this.
How many ways are there to solve this puzzle?

The above sentences use expletive pronouns but are fine because they are short and easy on the reader's mind. In fact, revising them would make for longer, more convoluted sentences!

So when you find yourself using expletives, always ask yourself if omitting and rewriting would give your reader a clearer, more direct, less wordy sentence. Can I communicate the same message using fewer words without taking away from the meaning I want to convey or the tone I want to create? Practise evaluating your own writing and playing with alternative ways to say the same thing.

Note

Do not confuse expletive pronouns with passive voice (as also noted briefly in Principle 1: Use the Active Voice). Both expletive sentences and passive voice use forms of the verb to be, often result in wordiness, and sometimes obscure important information, but they are not the same thing grammatically. The following example should help to clear up any mix-up between the two.

Example:

The following sentence uses passive voice:

- A few people can be called upon to help you.

It is passive because the subject of the sentence (people) are not the doers of the verb called. The active agent who will be "calling" is missing. Are you to call upon these people, or will someone else call upon them?

But the following example uses an expletive pronoun and is not in passive voice, because it has an active agent (you) doing the "calling":

- There are a few people you can call upon to help you.

But even though passive voice and expletive constructs are not the same, it is possible—but rarely advisable—to write a sentence that uses both!

- There are a few people who can be called upon to help you.

The active agent doing the "calling" is, once again, missing; and the sentence starts with the expletive "There are." What a convoluted sentence!

A better sentence that uses neither passive voice nor expletive pronouns would be:

- You can call upon a few people to help you.

Ah! Much better!

Conclusion

In this chapter, you have recognized plain language as a way to get your message across clearly and concisely when writing and speaking. You have identified five principles of plain-language writing: use active voice, use common words instead of complex words, use a positive tone when possible, write for your reader, and keep words and sentences short. You should now be ready to get more practice using the questions in this chapter, or move on to the next topic.

Further Readings

- *Five-step checklist to write better*. Center for Plain Language.

Key Takeaways and Check In

Key Takeaways

- Write using the active voice to make sentences more interesting.
- Limit the use of jargon to situations where your audience recognizes it. Remove slang and euphemisms from professional writing.
- Use positive instead of negative tone.
- Examine the subject matter, audience, and purpose to determine the level of formality for your writing or presentation.
- State ideas only once within a single sentence.

Final Check In Questions

Aim to achieve 100% on these final, check in questions. Good luck!



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Final Check In Questions (Text version)

1. "Best practices," "centres of excellence," "core competencies," "mission critical," "roll out," and "performance management" are all examples of:

    a. Jargon
    b. Cliches
    c. Sexism
    d. Slang

2. The following statement lacks which principle of plain language?"Despite the fact that Mrs. Armadio will not be present at the commencement of her kitchen renovation project, as her legal representative, I am authorized to coordinate with the foreman of the construction crew about how the project will proceed."

    a. Organization
    b. Common words
    c. Active Voice
    d. Positive tone
    e. Conciseness

3. Which of the following is FALSE?

    a. Jargon should be avoided at all times, because it is too occupation specific.
    b. Clichés are communication obstacles because they are overused.
    c. You can use slang to target specific audiences.
    d. Doublespeak is not ethical.

4. Read the following statement: "It was determined by the committee that the report was

inconclusive." Identify which of the five plain-language principles the writer has NOT followed.

a. Common Words
b. Reader Focus
c. Active voice
d. Conciseness
e. Positive Tone

5. One of the pages on the University of Midland's Human Resources website starts with the following paragraph: "The Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) replaced the Tuition Remission and Reimbursement Program (TRR) effective November 1, 2004. This program was implemented with the Spring Semester 2005. TAP is an employee supplemental educational assistance program." Is this an effective message? Why, or why not?

   a. Yes, it is effective, because it starts by making sure readers are not confused by the changes in the program.
   b. No, it is not effective, because it contains information that is now irrelevant and defines the most important term last instead of first.
   c. Yes, it is effective, because it contains precise information and identifies abbreviations (TAP, TRR) before using them.
   d. No, it is not effective, because when the new program was implemented is irrelevant and the name of the old program communicated the benefit more accurately than the new name.

6. Each of the options above contains flawed details, and so none are 100 percent correct.

   a. Which of the following is NOT a good way to ensure that your document's tone matches its intent?
   b. Read it out loud, so you can hear how the words you have chosen reflect the tone of your messages.
   c. Get several people to read your work and give you feedback on its tone.
   d. Listen to or watch presentations that are known for having used tone effectively.
   e. Publish or send the document and wait for feedback from your readers.*

Check your Answers: [10]

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Notes

1. 1. d, 2. c, 3. b, 4. a
2. 1. b, 2. c, 3. a, 4. d
3. 1. Passive, 2. Active, 3. Passive, 4. Active.
4. Elizabeth innocently snapped the photo, and the lion let out a roar that sent Elizabeth scrambling backward until she tumbled down the hill.
5. A giraffe's neck towers far above its body and often weighs as much as 500 pounds.
6. In one day, an elephant slurps down 80 gallons of water and munches away on 1,000 pounds of vegetation.
7. The zoo workers fed the zebras. (six words)

8. The elephant spewed water in the air. (seven words)
9. Hank the Hippo Man cleaned up and tidied the hippopotamus's home. (11 words)
10. 1. a, 2. e, 3. a, 4. c, 5. d, 6. e

13.6 - WORKING WITH WORDS: END-OF-CHAPTER EXERCISES

Learning Objectives

- Use the skills you have learned in the chapter.
- Work collaboratively with other students.

Exercise 1

Proofread the paragraph and correct any commonly confused words and misspelled words.

Grunge, or the Seattle sound, is a type of rock music that became quiet popular in the late 1980s and early 1990s. It began in Seattle, Washington. Grunge musicians rejected the dramatic an expensive stage productions that were trendy at the time. There music was striped down with an emphasis on distorted electric guitars. Grunge musicians did not ware makeup or sport extravagent hairstyles like many of the day's rock musicians and bands. Many grunge musicians would by they're clothes from secondhand stores. The lyrics too grunge songs were also quit different compared two what was populer at the time. Grunge lyrics are charecterized by dark or socially conscience themes. Grunge music is still admired today buy music lovers of all ages.

Exercise 2

Exercise 2 (Text Version)

Complete the following sentences by filling in the blank line with the correct homonym or frequently misspelled word.

1. Kevin asked me a serious question and _____(then, than) interrupted me when I attempted to answer.
2. A hot compress will _____(lessen, lesson) the pain of muscle cramps.
3. Jason was not a graceful _____(looser, loser) because he knocked his chair over and stormed off the basketball court.
4. Please consider the _____(effects, affects) of not getting enough green vegetables in your diet.
5. _____(Except, Accept) for Ajay, we all had our tickets to the play.
6. I am _____(threw, through) with this magazine, so you can read it if you like.
7. I don't care _____(whose, who's) coming to the party and _____(whose, who's) not.
8. Crystal could _____(sea, see) the soaring hawk through her binoculars.
9. The _____(principal, principle) gave the students a very long lecture about peer pressure.
10. Dr. Frankl nearly lost his _____(patience, patients) with one of his _____(patience, patients).

Check Your Answers: [1]

Activity Source: Exercise 2 is adapted from "13.5 – Working With Words: End-Of-Chapter Exercises" In *Writing for Success* by University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing, licensed under CC BY-NC- 4.0.

Exercise 3

Rewrite the following personal essay by replacing the slang, clichés, and overly general language with stronger, more precise language.

> My biggest regret happened in high school. I had always felt like a fish out of water, so when I started grade 9 I was determined to fit in with the cool people. Man, was that an uphill battle. I don't even know why I tried, but hindsight is 20/20 I guess. The first thing I did was change the way I dressed. I went from wearing clothes I was comfortable in to wearing stuff that was so not me. Then I started wearing a ton of makeup, and my brother was all like, "What happened to your face?" Not only did my looks change, my personality changed a lot too. I started to act all stuck up and bossy with my friends, and they didn't know how to respond to this person that used to be me. Luckily, this phase didn't last more than a couple of months. I decided it was more fun to be me than to try to be someone else. I guess you can't fit a square peg in a round hole after all.

Exercise 4

Exercise 4 (Text Version)

Write the correct synonym for each word.

1. lenient _____(relaxed, callous)
2. abandon _____(vacate, deceive)
3. berate _____(criticize, encourage)
4. experienced _____(callow, matured)
5. spiteful _____(malevolent, mellow)
6. tame _____(subdued, wild)
7. tasty _____(savory, bland)
8. banal _____(common, interesting)

9. contradict _____(deny, revolt)
10. vain _____(boastful, simple)

Check Your Answers: [2]

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Notes

1.
   1. then
   2. lessen
   3. looser
   4. effects
   5. Except
   6. through
   7. who's
   8. see
   9. principal
   10. patience

2.
   1. lenient - relaxed
   2. abandon - vacate
   3. berate - criticize
   4. experienced - matured
   5. spiteful - malevolent
   6. tame - subdued
   7. tasty - savory
   8. banal - common
   9. contradict - revolt
   10. vain - boastful

CHAPTER 14: REFINING YOUR WRITING: HOW DO I IMPROVE MY WRITING TECHNIQUE?

Communication Essentials for College by Jen Booth, Emily Cramer & Amanda Quibell

- 14.1 – Sentence Variety
- 14.2 – Coordination and Subordination
- 14.3 – Parallelism
- 14.4 – Refining Your Writing: End-of-Chapter Exercises

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Please visit the web version of *Communication Essentials for College* to access the complete book, interactive activities and ancillary resources.

14.1 - SENTENCE VARIETY

Learning Objectives

- Identify ways to vary sentence structure.
- Write and revise sentence structure at the beginning of sentences.
- Write and revise sentence structure by connecting ideas.

Have you ever ordered a dish in a restaurant and been not happy with its taste, even though it contained most of your favorite ingredients? Just as a meal might lack the finishing touches needed to spice it up, so too might a paragraph contain all the basic components but still lack the stylistic finesse required to engage a reader. Sometimes writers have a tendency to reuse the same sentence pattern throughout their writing. Like any repetitive task, reading text that contains too many sentences with the same length and structure can become monotonous and boring. Experienced writers mix it up by using an assortment of sentence patterns, rhythms, and lengths.

In this chapter, you will follow a student named Naomi who has written a draft of an essay but needs to refine her writing. This section discusses how to introduce sentence variety into writing, how to open sentences using a variety of techniques, and how to use different types of sentence structure when connecting ideas. You can use these techniques when revising a paper to bring life and rhythm to your work. They will also make reading your work more enjoyable.

Incorporating Sentence Variety

Experienced writers incorporate sentence variety into their writing by varying sentence style and structure. Using a mixture of different sentence structures reduces repetition and adds emphasis to important points in the text. Read the following example:

Read a sample passage

During my time in office I have achieved several goals. I have helped increase funding for local schools. I have reduced crime rates in the neighbourhood. I have encouraged young people to get involved in their community. My competitor argues that she is the better choice in the upcoming election. I argue that it is ridiculous to fix something that isn't broken. If you reelect me this year, I promise to continue to serve this community.

In this extract from an election campaign, the writer uses short, simple sentences of a similar length and style. Writers often mistakenly believe that this technique makes the text more clear for the reader, but the result is a choppy, unsophisticated paragraph that does not grab the audience's attention.

Now read the revised paragraph with sentence variety

During my time in office, I have helped increase funding for local schools, reduced crime rates in the neighbourhood, and encouraged young people to get involved in their community. Why fix what isn't broken? If you reelect me this year, I will continue to achieve great things for this community. Don't take a chance on an unknown contender; vote for the proven success.

Notice how introducing a short rhetorical question among the longer sentences in the paragraph is an effective means of keeping the reader's attention. In the revised version, the writer combines the choppy sentences at the beginning into one longer sentence, which adds rhythm and interest to the paragraph.

Tip

Effective writers often implement the "rule of three," which is basically the thought that things that contain three elements are more memorable and more satisfying to readers than any other number. Try to use a series of three when providing examples, grouping adjectives, or generating a list.

Exercise 1

Exercise 1 (Text Version)
Rewrite the following sentences by moving the adverbs to the beginning.

1. The red truck sped furiously past the camper van, blaring its horn.
2. Jeff snatched at the bread hungrily, polishing off three slices in under a minute.
3. Underage drinking typically results from peer pressure and lack of parental attention.
4. The firefighters bravely tackled the blaze, but they were beaten back by flames.
5. Mayor Johnson privately acknowledged that the budget was excessive and that further discussion was needed.

Check Your Answers: [1]

Activity Source: Exercise 1 is adapted from "14.1 – Sentence Variety" In *Writing for Success* by University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing, licensed under CC BY-NC- 4.0.

Using Sentence Variety at the Beginning of Sentences

Read the following sentences and consider what they all have in common:

John and Amanda will be analyzing this week's financial report.

The car screeched to a halt just a few inches away from the young boy.

Students rarely come to the exam adequately prepared.

If you are having trouble figuring out why these sentences are similar, try underlining the subject in each. You will notice that the subject is positioned at the beginning of each sentence—*John and Amanda*, *the car*, *students*. Since the subject-verb-object pattern is the simplest sentence structure, many writers tend to overuse this technique, which can result in repetitive paragraphs with little sentence variety.

Naomi wrote an essay about the 2008 government bailout.

Read this excerpt from Naomi's essay:

> The subprime mortgage crisis left many financial institutions in jeopardy. Some economists argued that the banks were too big to fail. Other economists argued that an infusion of credit and debt would exacerbate the problem. The government finally opted to bail out the banks. It acquired $700 billion worth of mortgage-backed securities in 2008. The government optimistically expects these assets will rise in value. This will profit both the banks and the government itself.

This section examines several ways to introduce sentence variety at the beginning of sentences, using Naomi's essay as an example.

Starting a Sentence with an Adverb

One technique you can use so as to avoid beginning a sentence with the subject is to use an adverb. An adverb is a word that describes a verb, adjective, or other adverb and often ends in *–ly*. Examples of adverbs include *quickly*, *softly*, *quietly*, *angrily*, and *timidly*. Read the following sentences:

She slowly turned the corner and peered into the murky basement.

Slowly, she turned the corner and peered into the murky basement.

In the second sentence, the adverb *slowly* is placed at the beginning of the sentence. If

you read the two sentences aloud, you will notice that moving the adverb changes the rhythm of the sentence and slightly alters its meaning. The second sentence emphasizes how the subject moves—slowly—creating a buildup of tension. This technique is effective in fictional writing.

Note that an adverb used at the beginning of a sentence is usually followed by a comma. A comma indicates that the reader should pause briefly, which creates a useful rhetorical device. Read the following sentences aloud and consider the effect of pausing after the adverb:

Cautiously, he unlocked the kennel and waited for the dog's reaction.

Solemnly, the policeman approached the mayor and placed him under arrest.

Suddenly, he slammed the door shut and sprinted across the street.

In an academic essay, moving an adverb to the beginning of a sentence serves to vary the rhythm of a paragraph and increase sentence variety.

An excerpt from Naomi's essay

The subprime mortgage crisis left many financial institutions in jeopardy. Some economists argued that the banks were too big to fail. Other economists argued that an infusion of credit and debt would exacerbate the problem. The government finally opted to bail out the banks. It acquired $700 billion worth of mortgage-backed securities in 2008. The government optimistically expects these assets will rise in value. This will profit both the banks and the government itself.

Naomi has used two adverbs in her essay that could be moved to the beginning of their respective sentences. Notice how the following revised version creates a more varied paragraph:

The revised excerpt from Naomi's essay

The subprime mortgage crisis left many financial institutions in jeopardy. Some economists argued that the banks were too big to fail. Other economists argued that an infusion of credit and debt would exacerbate the problem. Finally, the government opted to bail out the banks. It acquired $700 billion worth of mortgage-backed securities in 2008. Optimistically, the government expects these assets will rise in value. This will profit both the banks and the government itself.

Tip

Adverbs of time—adverbs that indicate when an action takes place—do not always require a comma when used at the beginning of a sentence. Adverbs of time include words such as yesterday, today, later, sometimes, often, and now.

Exercise 2

On your own sheet of paper, rewrite the following sentences by moving the adverbs to the beginning.

1. The red truck sped furiously past the camper van, blaring its horn.
2. Jeff snatched at the bread hungrily, polishing off three slices in under a minute.
3. Underage drinking typically results from peer pressure and lack of parental attention.

4. The firefighters bravely tackled the blaze, but they were beaten back by flames.
5. Mayor Johnson privately acknowledged that the budget was excessive and that further discussion was needed.

Collaboration

Please share with a classmate and compare your answers.

Starting a Sentence with a Prepositional Phrase

A prepositional phrase is a group of words that behaves as an adjective or an adverb, modifying a noun or a verb. Prepositional phrases contain a preposition (a word that specifies place, direction, or time) and an object of the preposition (a noun phrase or pronoun that follows the preposition).

Common Prepositions

- above
- beneath
- into
- till
- across
- beside
- like
- toward
- against
- between
- near
- under
- after
- beyond
- off
- underneath
- among
- by
- on
- until
- around
- despite
- over
- up
- at
- except
- past
- with
- before
- for
- since
- without
- behind
- from
- through
- below
- inside
- throughout

Read the following sentence:

The terrified child hid **underneath the table**.

In this sentence, the prepositional phrase is *underneath the table.* The preposition *underneath* relates to the object that follows the preposition—*the table*. Adjectives may be placed between the preposition and the object in a prepositional phrase.

The terrified child hid **underneath the heavy wooden table**.

Some prepositional phrases can be moved to the beginning of a sentence in order to create variety in a piece of writing. Look at the following revised sentence:

Underneath the heavy wooden table, the terrified child hid.

Notice that when the prepositional phrase is moved to the beginning of the sentence, the emphasis shifts from the subject—the terrified child—to the location in which the child is hiding. Words that are placed at the beginning or end of a sentence generally receive the greatest emphasis. Take a look at the following examples. The prepositional phrase is underlined in each:

The bandaged man waited **in the doctor's office**.

In the doctor's office, the bandaged man waited.

My train leaves the station **at 6:45 a.m**.

At 6:45 a.m., my train leaves the station.

Teenagers exchange drugs and money **under the railway bridge**.

Under the railway bridge, teenagers exchange drugs and money.

Prepositional phrases are useful in any type of writing. Take another look at Naomi's essay on the government bailout.

An excerpt from Naomi's essay about the 2008 government bailout

The subprime mortgage crisis left many financial institutions in jeopardy. Some economists argued that the banks were too big to fail. Other economists argued that an infusion of credit and debt would exacerbate the problem. The government finally opted to bail out the banks. It acquired $700 billion worth of mortgage-backed securities in 2008. The government optimistically expects these assets will rise in value. This will profit both the banks and the government itself.

Now read the revised version.

Revised version

Throughout 2007 and 2008, the subprime mortgage crisis worsened, leaving many financial institutions in jeopardy. According to some economists, the banks were too big to fail. Other economists argued that an infusion o credit and debt would exacerbate the problem. Despite public objections, the government finally opted to bail out the banks. Since the 2008 bill passed, it has acquired $700 billion worth of mortgage-backed securities. The government optimistically expects these assets will rise in value. This will profit both the banks and the government itself.

A revised version of Naomi's essay with 4 prepositional phrases underlined: 1- "Throughout 2007 and 2008", 2 – "According to some economists", 3 – "Despite public objections" and "Since the 2008 bill passed" .

The underlined words are all prepositional phrases. Notice how they add additional information to the text and provide a sense of flow to the essay, making it less choppy and more pleasurable to read.

Unmovable Prepositional Phrases

Not all prepositional phrases can be placed at the beginning of a sentence. Read the following sentence:

> I would like a chocolate sundae **without whipped cream**.

In this sentence, *without whipped cream* is the prepositional phrase. Because it describes the chocolate sundae, it cannot be moved to the beginning of the sentence. "Without whipped cream I would like a chocolate sundae" does not make as much (if any) sense. To determine whether a prepositional phrase can be moved, we must determine the meaning of the sentence.

Overuse of Prepositional Phrases

Experienced writers often include more than one prepositional phrase in a sentence; however, it is important not to overload your writing. Using too many modifiers in a paragraph may create an unintentionally comical effect as the following example shows:

> The treasure lay buried under the old oak tree, behind the crumbling fifteenth-century wall, near the schoolyard, where children played merrily during their lunch hour, unaware of the riches that remained hidden beneath their feet.

A sentence is not necessarily effective just because it is long and complex. If your sentence appears cluttered with prepositional phrases, divide it into two shorter sentences. The previous sentence is far more effective when written as two simpler sentences:

> The treasure lay buried under the old oak tree, behind the crumbling fifteenth-century wall. In the nearby schoolyard, children played merrily during their lunch hour, unaware of the riches that remained hidden beneath their feet.

Writing at Work

The overuse of prepositional phrases often occurs when our thoughts are jumbled and we are unsure how concepts or ideas relate to one another. If you are preparing a report or a proposal, take the time to organize your thoughts in an outline before writing a rough draft. Read the draft aloud, either to yourself or to a colleague, and identify areas that are rambling or unclear. If you notice that a particular part of your report contains several sentences over twenty words, you should double check that particular section to make certain that it is coherent and does not contain unnecessary prepositional phrases. Reading aloud sometimes helps detect unclear and wordy sentences. You can also ask a colleague to paraphrase your main points to ensure that the meaning is clear.

Starting a Sentence by Inverting Subject and Verb

As we noted earlier, most writers follow the subject-verb-object sentence structure. In an inverted sentence , the order is reversed so that the subject follows the verb. Read the following sentence pairs:

1. A truck was parked in the driveway.
2. Parked in the driveway was a truck.

1. A copy of the file is attached.
2. Attached is a copy of the file.

Notice how the second sentence in each pair places more emphasis on the subject—*a truck* in the first example and *the file* in the second. This technique is useful for drawing the reader's attention to your primary area of focus. We can apply this method to an academic essay. Take another look at Naomi's paragraph.

Naomi's original paragraph

The subprime mortgage crisis left many financial institutions in jeopardy. Some economics argued that the banks were too big to fail. Other economists argued that an infusion of credit and debt would exacerbate the problem. The government finally opted to bail out the banks. It acquired $700 billion worth of mortgage-backed securities in 2008. The government optimistically expects these assets will rise in value. This will profit both the banks and the government itself.

To emphasize the subject in certain sentences, Naomi can invert the traditional sentence structure. Read her revised paragraph:

Naomi's revised paragraph

The subprime mortgage crisis left many financial institutions in jeopardy. The banks were too big to fail, argued some economists. Other economists argued that an infusion of credit and debt would exacerbate the problem. The government finally opted to bail out the banks. It acquired $700 billion worth of mortgage-backed securities in 2008. These assets will rise in value, expects the government optimistically. This will profit both the banks and the government itself.

Naomi's revised paragraph with 2 inverted sentences underlined: 1 – The banks were too big to fail, argued some economists and 2- These assets will rise in value, expects the government optimistically.

Notice that in the first underlined sentence, the subject (*some economists*) is placed after the verb (*argued*). In the second underlined sentence, the subject (*the government*) is placed after the verb (*expects*).

Exercise 3

On your own sheet of paper, rewrite the following sentences as inverted sentences.

1. Teresa will never attempt to run another marathon.
2. A detailed job description is enclosed with this letter.
3. Bathroom facilities are across the hall to the left of the water cooler.
4. The well-dressed stranger stumbled through the doorway.
5. My colleagues remain unconvinced about the proposed merger.

Collaboration

Please share with a classmate and compare your answers.

Connecting Ideas to Increase Sentence Variety

Reviewing and rewriting the beginning of sentences is a good way of introducing sentence variety into your writing. Another useful technique is to connect two sentences using a modifier, a relative clause, or an appositive. This section examines how to connect ideas across several sentences in order to increase sentence variety and improve writing.

Joining Ideas Using an *–ing* Modifier

Sometimes it is possible to combine two sentences by converting one of them into a modifier using the *–ing* verb form—*singing*, *dancing*, *swimming*. A modifier is a word or phrase that qualifies the meaning of another element in the sentence. Read the following example:

Original sentences: Steve checked the computer system. He discovered a virus.

Revised sentence: Checking the computer system, Steve discovered a virus.

To connect two sentences using an *–ing* modifier, add *–ing* to one of the verbs in the sentences (*checking*) and delete the subject (*Steve*). Use a comma to separate the modifier from the subject of the sentence. It is important to make sure that the main idea in your revised sentence is contained in the main clause, not in the modifier. In this example, the main idea is that Steve discovered a virus, not that he checked the computer system.

In the following example, an *–ing* modifier indicates that two actions are occurring at the same time:

1. Noticing the police car, she shifted gears and slowed down.

   This means that she slowed down at the same time she noticed the police car.
2. Barking loudly, the dog ran across the driveway.

   This means that the dog barked as it ran across the driveway.

You can add an *–ing* modifier to the beginning or the end of a sentence, depending on which fits best.

Beginning: Conducting a survey among her friends, Amanda found that few were happy in their jobs.

End: Maria filed the final report, **meeting her deadline**.

Dangling Modifiers

A common mistake when combining sentences using the *–ing* verb form is to misplace the modifier so that it is not logically connected to the rest of the sentence. This creates a dangling modifier . Look at the following example:

> Jogging across the parking lot, my breath grew ragged and shallow.

In this sentence, *jogging across the parking lot* seems to modify *my breath*. Since breath cannot jog, the sentence should be rewritten so that the subject is placed immediately after the modifier or added to the dangling phrase.

> Jogging across the parking lot, I felt my breath grow ragged and shallow.

For more information on dangling modifiers, see Chapter 11 "Writing Basics: What Makes a Good Sentence?".

Joining Ideas Using an *–ed* Modifier

Some sentences can be combined using an *–ed* verb form—*stopped*, *finished*, *played*. To use this method, one of the sentences must contain a form of *be* as a helping verb in addition to the *–ed* verb form. Take a look at the following example:

> **Original sentences:** The Jones family was delayed by a traffic jam. They arrived several hours after the party started.
>
> **Revised sentence:** Delayed by a traffic jam, the Jones family arrived several hours after the party started.

In the original version, *was* acts as a helping verb —it has no meaning by itself, but it serves a grammatical function by placing the main verb (*delayed*) in the perfect tense.

To connect two sentences using an *–ed* modifier, drop the helping verb (*was*) and the subject (*the Jones family*) from the sentence with an *–ed* verb form. This forms a modifying phrase (*delayed by a traffic jam*) that can be added to the beginning or end of the other sentence according to which fits best. As with the *–ing* modifier, be careful to place the word that the phrase modifies immediately after the phrase in order to avoid a dangling modifier.

Using *–ing* or *–ed* modifiers can help streamline your writing by drawing obvious

connections between two sentences. Take a look at how Naomi might use modifiers in her paragraph.

Naomi's paragraph with modifiers

The subprime mortgage crisis left many financial institutions in jeopardy. Some economists argued that the banks were too big to fail. Other economists argued that an infusion of credit and debt would exacerbate the problem. Opting to bail out the banks, the government acquired $700 billion worth of mortgage-backed securities in 2008. It optimistically expects these assets will rise in value. This will profit both the banks and the government itself.

Naomi's original paragraph with a modifier on the sentence "Opting to bail out the banks, the government acquired $700 billion worth of mortgage-backed securities in 2008.

The revised version of the essay uses the *–ing* modifier *opting* to draw a connection between the government's decision to bail out the banks and the result of that decision—the acquisition of the mortgage-backed securities.

Joining Ideas Using a Relative Clause

Another technique that writers use to combine sentences is to join them using a relative clause. A relative clause is a group of words that contains a subject and a verb and describes a noun. Relative clauses function as adjectives by answering questions such as *which one?* or *what kind?* Relative clauses begin with a relative pronoun, such as *who*, *which*, *where*, *why*, or *when*. Read the following examples:

Original sentences: The managing director is visiting the company next week. He lives in Calgary.

Revised sentence: The managing director, who lives in Calgary, is visiting the company next week.

To connect two sentences using a relative clause, substitute the subject of one of the

sentences (*he*) for a relative pronoun (*who*). This gives you a relative clause (*who lives in Calgary*) that can be placed next to the noun it describes (*the managing director*). Make sure to keep the sentence you want to emphasize as the main clause. For example, reversing the main clause and subordinate clause in the preceding sentence emphasizes where the managing director lives, not the fact that he is visiting the company.

Revised sentence: The managing director, who is visiting the company next week, lives in Calgary.

Relative clauses are a useful way of providing additional, nonessential information in a sentence. Take a look at how Naomi might incorporate relative clauses into her essay.

Naomi's paragraph with relative clauses

The subprime mortgage crisis, which had been steadily building throughout 2007 and 2008, left many financial institutions in jeopardy. Some economists, who favoured the bailout, argued that the banks were too big to fail. Other economists, who opposed the bailout, argued that an infusion of credit and debt would exacerbate the problem. The government finally opted to bail out the banks. It acquired $700 billion worth of mortgage-backed securities in 2008 The government optimistically expects these assets will rise in value. This will profit both the banks and the government itself.

Naomi's paragraph with 3 relative clauses incorporated: 1- "which had been steadily building throughout 2007 and 2008", 2- "who favored the bailout" and 3- "who opposed the bailout".

Notice how the underlined relative clauses can be removed from Naomi's essay without changing the meaning of the sentence.

Tip

To check the punctuation of relative clauses, assess whether or not the clause can be taken out of the

sentence without changing its meaning. If the relative clause is not essential to the meaning of the sentence, it should be placed in commas. If the relative clause is essential to the meaning of the sentence, it does not require commas around it.

Joining Ideas Using an Appositive

An appositive is a word or group of words that describes or renames a noun or pronoun. Incorporating appositives into your writing is a useful way of combining sentences that are too short and choppy. Take a look at the following example:

Original sentences: Harland Sanders began serving food for hungry travelers in 1930. He is Colonel Sanders or "the Colonel."

Revised sentence: Harland Sanders, "the Colonel," began serving food for hungry travelers in 1930.

In the revised sentence, *"the Colonel"* is an appositive because it renames Harland Sanders. To combine two sentences using an appositive, drop the subject and verb from the sentence that renames the noun and turn it into a phrase. Note that in the previous example, the appositive is positioned immediately after the noun it describes. An appositive may be placed anywhere in a sentence, but it must come directly before or after the noun to which it refers:

Appositive after noun: Scott, a poorly trained athlete, was not expected to win the race.

Appositive before noun: A poorly trained athlete, Scott was not expected to win the race.

Unlike relative clauses, appositives are always punctuated by a comma or a set commas. Take a look at the way Naomi uses appositives to include additional facts in her essay.

Naomi's paragraph with appositives

The subprime mortgage crisis, the biggest financial disaster since the 1929 Wall Street crash, left many financial institutions in jeopardy. Some economists argued that the banks were too big to fail. Other economists argued that an infusion of credit and debt would exacerbate the problem. The government, the institution that would decide the fate of the banks, finally opted to bail them out. It acquired $700 billion worth of mortgage-backed securities in 2008. The government optimistically expects these assets will rise in value. This will profit both the banks and the government itself.

Naomi's paragraph with 2 appositives underlined: 1- "the biggest financial disaster since the 1929 Wall street crash" and 2- "the institution that would decide the fate of the banks".

Exercise 4

On your own sheet of paper, rewrite the following sentence pairs as one sentence using the techniques you have learned in this section.

1. Baby sharks are called pups. Pups can be born in one of three ways.
2. The Pacific Ocean is the world's largest ocean. It extends from the Arctic in the north to the Southern Ocean in the south.
3. Ashley introduced her colleague Dan to her husband, Jim. She speculated that the two of them would have a lot in common.
4. Cacao is harvested by hand. It is then sold to chocolate-processing companies at the Coffee, Sugar, and Cocoa Exchange.

Collaboration

Please share with a classmate and compare your answers.

Writing at Work

In addition to varying sentence structure, consider varying the types of sentences you are using in a report or other workplace document. Most sentences are declarative, but a carefully placed question, exclamation, or command can pique colleagues' interest, even if the subject material is fairly dry. Imagine that you are writing a budget analysis. Beginning your report with a rhetorical question, such as "Where is our money going?" or "How can we increase sales?" encourages people to continue reading to find out the answers. Although they should be used sparingly in academic and professional writing, questions or commands are effective rhetorical devices.

Key Takeaways

- Sentence variety reduces repetition in a piece of writing and adds emphasis to important points in the text.
- Sentence variety can be introduced to the beginning of sentences by starting a sentence with an adverb, starting a sentence with a prepositional phrase, or by inverting the subject and verb.
- Combine ideas, using modifiers, relative clauses, or appositives, to achieve sentence variety.

Attribution & References

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Notes

1.
    1. Furiously, the red truck sped past the camper van, blaring its horn.
    2. Hungrily, Jeff snatched at the bread, polishing off three slices in under a minute.
    3. Typically, underage drinking results from peer pressure and lack of parental attention.
    4. Bravely, the firefighters tackled the blaze, but they were beaten back by flames.
    5. Privately, Mayor Johnson acknowledged that the budget was excessive and that further discussion was needed.

14.2 - COORDINATION AND SUBORDINATION

Learning Objectives

- Identify coordination and subordination in writing.
- Combine sentences and ideas using coordination.
- Combine sentences and ideas using subordination.

In the previous section, we learned how to use different patterns to create sentence variety and to add emphasis to important points in our writing. Next, we will examine two ways in which we can join sentences with related ideas:

- Coordination . Joining two related ideas of equal importance.
- Subordination . Joining two related ideas of unequal importance.

Connecting sentences with coordinate or subordinate clauses creates more coherent paragraphs, and in turn, produces more effective writing. In this section, you will read excerpts from Joshua, who drafted an essay about wine production.

Read this excerpt from Joshua's essay

When the red grapes arrive at the winery, they are destemmed and crushed. The liquid that is left is made up of skins, seeds, and juice. The stems are removed. They contain harsh-tasting tannins. Once the grapes are destemmed and crushed, the liquid is pumped into a fermentation container. Here, sulfur dioxide is added. It prevents the liquid from becoming oxidized. It also destroys bacteria. Some winemakers carry out the fermenting process by using yeast that is naturally present on the grapes. Many add a yeast that is cultivated in a laboratory.

This section examines several ways to combine sentences with coordination and subordination, using Joshua's essay as an example.

Coordination

Coordination joins two independent clauses that contain related ideas of equal importance.

Original sentences: I spent my entire paycheck last week. I am staying home this weekend.

In their current form, these sentences contain two separate ideas that may or may not be related. Am I staying home this week *because* I spent my paycheck, or is there another reason for my lack of enthusiasm to leave the house? To indicate a relationship between the two ideas, we can use the coordinating conjunction *so*:

Revised sentence: I spent my entire paycheck last week, **so** I am staying home this weekend.

The revised sentence illustrates that the two ideas are connected. Notice that the

sentence retains two independent clauses (*I spent my entire paycheck*; *I am staying home this weekend*) because each can stand alone as a complete idea.

Coordinating Conjunctions

A coordinating conjunction is a word that joins two independent clauses. The most common coordinating conjunctions are *for*, *and*, *nor*, *but*, *or*, *yet*, and *so*. Note that a comma precedes the coordinating conjunction when joining two clauses.

Table 1 – Coordinating Conjunction Examples

Independent Clause	Coordinating Conjunction	Independent Clause	Revised Sentence
I will not be attending the dance.	for (indicates a reason or cause)	I have no one to go with.	I will not be attending the dance, for I have no one to go with.
I plan to stay home.	and (joins two ideas)	I will complete an essay for class.	I plan to stay home, and I will complete an essay for class.
Jessie isn't going to be at the dance.	nor (indicates a negative)	Tom won't be there either.	Jessie isn't going to be at the dance, nor will Tom be there.
The fundraisers are hoping for a record-breaking attendance.	but (indicates a contrast)	I don't think many people are going.	The fundraisers are hoping for a record-breaking attendance, but I don't think many people are going.
I might go to the next fundraising event.	or (offers an alternative)	I might donate some money to the cause.	I might go to the next fundraising event, or I might donate some money to the cause.
My parents are worried that I am antisocial.	yet (indicates a reason)	I have many friends at school.	My parents are worried that I am antisocial, yet I have many friends at school.
Buying a new dress is expensive.	so (indicates a result)	By staying home I will save money.	Buying a new dress is expensive, so by staying home I will save money.

Tip

To help you remember the seven coordinating conjunctions, think of the acronym FANBOYS: for, and,

nor, but, or, yet, so. Remember that when you use a coordinating conjunction in a sentence, a comma should precede it.

Conjunctive Adverbs

Another method of joining two independent clauses with related and equal ideas is to use a conjunctive adverb and a semicolon (see Chapter 12 "Writing Basics: What Makes a Good Sentence?" for information on semicolon usage). A conjunctive adverb is a linking word that demonstrates a relationship between two clauses. Read the following sentences:

Original sentences: Bridget wants to take part in the next Olympics. She trains every day.

Since these sentences contain two equal and related ideas, they may be joined using a conjunctive adverb. Now, read the revised sentence:

Revised sentence: Bridget wants to take part in the next Olympics; therefore, she trains every day.

The revised sentence explains the relationship between Bridget's desire to take part in the next Olympics and her daily training. Notice that the conjunctive adverb comes after a semicolon that separates the two clauses and is followed by a comma.

Review the following table of some common conjunctive adverbs with examples of how they are used:

Table 2 – Common Conjunctive Adverb Examples

Function	Conjunctive Adverb	Example
Addition	also, furthermore, moreover, besides	Alicia was late for class and stuck in traffic; furthermore, her shoe heel had broken and she had forgotten her lunch.
Comparison	similarly, likewise	Recycling aluminum cans is beneficial to the environment; similarly, reusing plastic bags and switching off lights reduces waste.
Contrast	instead, however, conversely	Most people do not walk to work; instead, they drive or take the train.
Emphasis	namely, certainly, indeed	The Siberian tiger is a rare creature; indeed, there are fewer than five hundred left in the wild.
Cause and Effect	accordingly, consequently, hence, thus	I missed my train this morning; consequently, I was late for my meeting.
Time	finally, next, subsequently, then	Tim crossed the barrier, jumped over the wall, and pushed through the hole in the fence; finally, he made it to the station.

Take a look at Joshua's essay on wine production and identify some areas in which he might use coordination.

Joshua's essay on wine production

When the red grapes arrive at the winery, they are destemmed and crushed. The liquid that is left is made up of skins, seeds, and juice. The stems are removed. They contain harsh-tasting tannins. Once the grapes are destemmed and crushed, the liquid is pumped into a fermentation container. Here, sulfur dioxide is added. It prevents the liquid from becoming oxidized. It also destroys bacteria. Some winemakers carry out the fermenting process by using yeast that is naturally present on the grapes. Many add a yeast that is cultivated in a laboratory.

Now look at Joshua's revised essay. Did you coordinate the same sentences? You may

find that your answers are different because there are usually several ways to join two independent clauses.

Joshua's revised essay with coordinated sentences

When the red grapes arrive at the winery, they are destemmed and crushed. The liquid that is left is made up of skins, seeds, and juice. The stems are removed, for they contain harsh-tasting tannins. Once the grapes are destemmed and crushed, the liquid is pumped into a fermentation container. Here, sulfur dioxide is added. It prevents the liquid from becoming oxidized and also destroys bacteria. Some winemakers carry out the fermenting process by using yeast that is naturally present on the grapes; however, many add a yeast that is cultivated in a laboratory.

Joshua's revised essay, showing 3 sentences that were coordinated: 1 – "The stems are removed, for they contain harsh-tasting tannins.", 2 – "It prevents the liquid from becoming oxidized and also destroys bacteria." and 3- "Some winemakers carry out the fermenting process by using yeast that is naturally present on the grapes; however, many add a yeast that is cultivated in a laboratory."

Exercise 1

Exercise 1 (Text Version)

Combine each sentence pair into a single sentence using either a coordinating conjunction or a conjunctive adverb. Then copy the combined sentence onto your own sheet of paper.

1. Pets are not allowed in Mr. Taylor's building. He owns several cats and a parrot.
2. New legislation prevents drivers from sending or reading text messages while driving. Many people continue to use their phones illegally.
3. The coroner concluded that the young man had taken a lethal concoction of drugs. By the time his relatives found him, nothing could be done.

4. Amphibians are vertebrates that live on land and in the water. Flatworms are invertebrates that live only in water.
5. Ashley carefully fed and watered her tomato plants all summer. The tomatoes grew juicy and ripe.
6. When he lost his car key, Simon attempted to open the door with a wire hanger, a credit card, and a paper clip. He called the manufacturer for advice.

Check Your Answers: [1]

Activity Source: Exercise 1 is adapted from "14.2 – Coordination And Subordination" In *Writing for Success* by University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing, licensed under CC BY-NC- 4.0.

Writing at Work

When writing an essay or a report, it is important that you do not use excessive coordination. Workplace documents should be clear and concise, so only join two clauses that are logically connected and can work together to make one main point. If you repeat the same coordinating conjunction several times in a sentence, you are probably including more than one idea. This may make it difficult for readers to pick out the most important information in each sentence.

Subordination

Subordination joins two sentences with related ideas by merging them into a main clause (a complete sentence) and a dependent clause (a construction that relies on the main clause to complete its meaning). Coordination allows a writer to give equal weight to the two ideas that are being combined, and subordination enables a writer to emphasize one idea over the other. Take a look at the following sentences:

Original sentences: Tracy stopped to help the injured man. She would be late for work.

To illustrate that these two ideas are related, we can rewrite them as a single sentence using the subordinating conjunction *even though*.

Revised sentence: Even though Tracy would be late for work, she stopped to help the injured man.

In the revised version, we now have an independent clause (*she stopped to help the injured man*) that stands as a complete sentence and a dependent clause (*even though Tracy would be late for work*) that is subordinate to the main clause. Notice that the revised sentence emphasizes the fact that Tracy stopped to help the injured man, rather than the fact she would be late for work. We could also write the sentence this way:

Revised sentence: Tracy stopped to help the injured man even though she would be late for work.

The meaning remains the same in both sentences, with the subordinating conjunction *even though* introducing the dependent clause.

Tip

To punctuate sentences correctly, look at the position of the main clause and the subordinate clause. If a subordinate clause precedes the main clause, use a comma. If the subordinate clause follows the main cause, no punctuation is required.

Subordinating Conjunctions

A subordinating conjunction is a word that joins a subordinate (dependent) clause to a main (independent) clause. Review the following table of some common subordinating conjunctions and examples of how they are used:

Table 3 – Common Subordinating Conjunction Examples

Function	Subordinating Conjunction	Example
Concession	although, while, though, whereas, even though	Sarah completed her report even though she had to stay late to get it done.
Condition	if, unless, until	Until we know what is causing the problem, we will not be able to fix it.
Manner	as if, as, though	Everyone in the conference room stopped talking at once, as though they had been stunned into silence.
Place	where, wherever	Rita is in San Jose where she has several important client meetings.
Reason	because, since, so that, in order that	Because the air conditioning was turned up so high, everyone in the office wore sweaters.
Time	after, before, while, once, when	After the meeting had finished, we all went to lunch.

Take a look at the excerpt from Joshua's essay and identify some areas in which he might use subordination.

Excerpt from Joshua's essay

When the red grapes arrive at the winery, they are destemmed and crushed. The liquid that is left is made up of skins, seeds, and juice. The stems are removed. They contain harsh-tasting tannins. Once the grapes are destemmed and crushed, the liquid is pumped into a fermentation container. Here, sulfur dioxide is added. It prevents the liquid from becoming oxidized. It also destroys bacteria. Some winemakers carry out the fermenting process by using yeast that is naturally present on the grapes. Many add a yeast that is cultivated in a laboratory.

Now look at Joshua's revised essay and compare your answers. You will probably notice that there are many different ways to subordinate sentences.

Joshua's revised essay

When the red grapes arrive at the winery, they are destemmed and crushed. The liquid that is left is made up of skins, seeds, and juice. Because the stems contain harsh-tasting tannins, they are removed. Once the grapes are destemmed and crushed, the liquid is pumped into a fermentation container. Here, sulfur dioxide is added in order to prevent the liquid from becoming oxidized. Sulfur dioxide also destroys bacteria. Although some winemakers carry out the fermenting process by using yeast that is naturally present on the grapes. Many add a yeast that is cultivated in a laboratory.

Joshua's revised essay has 3 different ways to subordinate sentences underlined: 1 – "Because the stems contain harsh-tasting tannins, they are removed.", 2- "Here, sulfur dioxide is added in order to prevent the liquid from becoming oxidized." and 3 – "Although some winemakers carry out the fermenting process by using yeast that is naturally present on the grapes, many add a yeast that is cultivated in a laboratory."

Exercise 2

Exercise 2 (Text Version)

Combine each sentence pair into a single sentence using a subordinating conjunction and then copy the combined sentence onto your own sheet of paper.

1. Jake is going to Mexico. There are beautiful beaches in Mexico.
2. A snowstorm disrupted traffic all over the east coast. There will be long delivery delays this week.
3. My neighbor had his television volume turned up too high. I banged on his door and asked him to keep the noise down.
4. Jessica prepared the potato salad and the sautéed vegetables. Ashley marinated the chicken.
5. Romeo poisons himself. Juliet awakes to find Romeo dead and stabs herself with a dagger.

Check Your Answers: [2]

Activity Source: Exercise 2 is adapted from "14.2 – Coordination And Subordination" In *Writing for Success* by University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing, licensed under CC BY-NC- 4.0.

Exercise 3

Copy the following paragraph from Joshua's essay onto your own sheet of paper. Then edit using the techniques you have learned in this section. Join the underlined sentences (Sentence #1, #3, #8 & #9) using coordination or subordination. Check your revised sentences for punctuation.

The yeast is added to the must. Alcoholic fermentation then begins. Here, the red wine production process differs from the method used in white wine production. Red wine is fermented for a shorter time. It is fermented at a higher temperature. Whereas white wines may ferment for over a month, red wines typically ferment for less than two weeks. During fermentation, contact between the skins and the juice release tannins and flavor compounds into the must. This process is known as maceration. Maceration may occur before, during, or after fermentation. The fermentation process is completed. The next stage is pressing. Many methods are used for pressing, the most common of which is basket pressing.

Key Takeaways

- Coordination and subordination join two sentences with related ideas.
- Coordination joins sentences with related and equal ideas, whereas subordination joins sentences with related but unequal ideas.

- Sentences can be coordinated using either a coordinating conjunction and a comma or a conjunctive adverb and a semicolon.
- Subordinate sentences are characterized by the use of a subordinate conjunction.
- In a subordinate sentence, a comma is used to separate the main clause from the dependent clause if the dependent clause is placed at the beginning of the sentence.

Attribution & References

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Notes

1.
    1. Pets are not allowed in Mr. Taylor's building yet he owns several cats and a parrot.
    2. New legislation prevents drivers from sending or reading text messages while driving for many people continue to use their phones illegally.
    3. The coroner concluded that the young man had taken a lethal concoction of drugs and by the time his relatives found him, nothing could be done.
    4. Amphibians are vertebrates that live on land and in the water however, flatworms are invertebrates that live only in water.
    5. Ashley carefully fed and watered her tomato plants all summer hence, the tomatoes grew juicy and ripe.
    6. When he lost his car key, Simon attempted to open the door with a wire hanger, a credit card, and a paper clip and he called the manufacturer for advice.
2.
    1. Jake is going to Mexico because there are beautiful beaches in Mexico.
    2. A snowstorm disrupted traffic all over the east coast now there will be long delivery delays this week.
    3. My neighbor had his television volume turned up too high until I banged on his door and asked him to keep the noise down.
    4. Jessica prepared the potato salad and the sautéed vegetables whereas Ashley marinated the chicken.
    5. Romeo poisons himself. Juliet awakes to find Romeo dead and stabs herself with a dagger.

14.3 - PARALLELISM

Learning Objectives

- Identify sentences that are parallel and not parallel.
- Identify ways to create parallelism in writing.
- Write and revise sentences using parallelism.

Earlier in this chapter, we learned that increasing sentence variety adds interest to a piece of writing and makes the reading process more enjoyable for others. Using a mixture of sentence lengths and patterns throughout an essay is an important writing technique. However, it is equally important to avoid introducing variation within individual sentences. A strong sentence is composed of balanced parts that all have the same structure. In this section, we will examine how to create a balanced sentence structure by using parallelism .

Using Parallelism

Parallelism is the use of similar structure in related words, clauses, or phrases. It creates a sense of rhythm and balance within a sentence. As readers, we often correct faulty parallelism —a lack of parallel structure—intuitively because an unbalanced sentence sounds awkward and poorly constructed. Read the following sentences aloud:

Faulty parallelism: Kelly had to iron, do the washing, and shopping before her parents arrived.

Faulty parallelism: Driving a car requires coordination, patience, and to have good eyesight.

Faulty parallelism: Ali prefers jeans to wearing a suit.

All of these sentences contain faulty parallelism. Although they are factually correct, the construction is clunky and confusing. In the first example, three different verb forms are used. In the second and third examples, the writer begins each sentence by using a noun (*coordination*, *jeans*), but ends with a phrase (*to have good eyesight*, *wearing a suit*). Now read the same three sentences that have correct parallelism.

Correct parallelism: Kelly had to do the ironing, washing, and shopping before her parents arrived.

Correct parallelism: Driving a car requires coordination, patience, and good eyesight.

Correct parallelism: Ali prefers wearing jeans to wearing a suit.

When these sentences are written using a parallel structure, they sound more aesthetically pleasing because they are balanced. Repetition of grammatical construction also minimizes the amount of work the reader has to do to decode the sentence. This enables the reader to focus on the main idea in the sentence and not on how the sentence is put together.

Tip

A simple way to check for parallelism in your writing is to make sure you have paired nouns with nouns, verbs with verbs, prepositional phrases with prepositional phrases, and so on. Underline each element in a sentence and check that the corresponding element uses the same grammatical form.

Creating Parallelism Using Coordinating Conjunctions

When you connect two clauses using a coordinating conjunction (*for*, *and*, *nor*, *but*, *or*, *yet*, *so*), make sure that the same grammatical structure is used on each side of the conjunction. Take a look at the following example:

Faulty parallelism: When I walk the dog, I like **to listen to music** and **talking to friends** on the phone.

Correct parallelism: When I walk the dog, I like **listening to music** and **talking to friends** on the phone.

The first sentence uses two different verb forms (*to listen*, *talking*). In the second sentence, the grammatical construction on each side of the coordinating conjunction (*and*) is the same, creating a parallel sentence.

The same technique should be used for joining items or lists in a series:

Faulty parallelism: This committee needs to decide whether the company should **reduce its workforce, cut its benefits,** or **lowering workers' wages**.

Correct parallelism: This committee needs to decide whether the company should **reduce its workforce, cut its benefits,** or **lower workers' wages**.

The first sentence contains two items that use the same verb construction (*reduce*, *cut*) and a third item that uses a different verb form (*lowering*). The second sentence uses the same verb construction in all three items, creating a parallel structure.

Exercise 1

Exercise 1 (Text Version)

On your own sheet of paper, revise each of the following sentences to create parallel structure using coordinating conjunctions.

1. Mr. Holloway enjoys reading and to play his guitar at weekends.
2. The doctor told Mrs. Franklin that she should either eat less or should exercise more.
3. Breaking out of the prison compound, the escapees moved carefully, quietly, and were quick on their feet.

4. I have read the book, but I have not watched the movie version.
5. Deal with a full inbox first thing in the morning, or by setting aside short periods of time in which to answer e-mail queries.

Check Your Answers: [1]

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Creating Parallelism Using *Than* or *As*

When you are making a comparison, the two items being compared should have a parallel structure. Comparing two items without using parallel structure can lead to confusion about what is being compared. Comparisons frequently use the words *than* or *as*, and the items on each side of these comparison words should be parallel. Take a look at the following example:

Faulty parallelism: Swimming in the ocean is much tougher than **a pool**.

Correct parallelism: Swimming in the ocean is much tougher than **swimming in a pool**.

In the first sentence, the elements before the comparison word (*than*) are not equal to the elements after the comparison word. It appears that the writer is comparing an action (*swimming*) with a noun (*a pool*). In the second sentence, the writer uses the same grammatical construction to create a parallel structure. This clarifies that an action is being compared with another action.

To correct some instances of faulty parallelism, it may be necessary to add or delete words in a sentence.

Faulty parallelism: A brisk walk is as beneficial to your health as **going for a run**.

Correct parallelism: Going for a brisk walk is as beneficial to your health as **going for a run**.

In this example, it is necessary to add the verb phrase *going for* to the sentence in order to clarify that the act of walking is being compared to the act of running.

Exercise 2

On your own sheet of paper, revise each of the following sentences to create parallel structure using *than* or *as*.

1. I would rather work at a second job to pay for a new car than a loan.
2. How you look in the workplace is just as important as your behavior.
3. The firefighter spoke more of his childhood than he talked about his job.
4. Indian cuisine is far tastier than the food of Great Britain.
5. Jim's opponent was as tall as Jim and he carried far more weight.

Creating Parallelism Using Correlative Conjunctions

A correlative conjunction is a paired conjunction that connects two equal parts of a sentence and shows the relationship between them. Common correlative conjunctions include the following:

- either…or
- not only…but also
- neither…nor
- whether…or
- rather…than
- both…and

Correlative conjunctions should follow the same grammatical structure to create a parallel sentence. Take a look at the following example:

Faulty parallelism: We can neither **wait** for something to happen nor **can we take** evasive action.

Correct parallelism: We can neither **wait** for something to happen nor **take** evasive action.

When using a correlative conjunction, the words, phrases, or clauses following each part should be parallel. In the first sentence, the construction of the second part of the sentence does not match the construction of the first part. In the second sentence, omitting needless words and matching verb constructions create a parallel structure. Sometimes, rearranging a sentence corrects faulty parallelism.

Faulty parallelism: It was both a long movie and poorly written.

Correct parallelism: The movie was both long and poorly written.

Tip

To see examples of parallelism in use, read some of the great historical speeches by rhetoricians such as Abraham Lincoln and Martin Luther King Jr. Notice how they use parallel structures to emphasize important points and to create a smooth, easily understandable oration.

Here is a link to text, audio, video, and the music of Martin Luther King's speech "I Have a Dream" [New tab] .

Writing at Work

Speechwriters use parallelism not only within sentences but also throughout paragraphs and beyond. Repeating particular key phrases throughout a speech is an effective way of tying a

paragraph together as a cohesive whole and creating a sense of importance. This technique can be adapted to any piece of writing, but it may be especially useful for creating a proposal or other type of persuasive workplace document.

Note that the spelling and grammar checker on most word processors will not draw attention to faulty parallelism. When proofreading a document, read it aloud and listen for sentences that sound awkward or poorly phrased.

Exercise 3

On your own sheet of paper, revise each of the following sentences to create parallel structure using correlative conjunctions.

1. The cyclist owns both a mountain bike and has a racing bike.
2. The movie not only contained lots of action, but also it offered an important lesson.
3. My current job is neither exciting nor is it meaningful.
4. Jason would rather listen to his father than be taking advice from me.
5. We are neither interested in buying a vacuum cleaner nor do we want to utilize your carpet cleaning service.

Exercise 4

Read through the following excerpt from Alex's essay and revise any instances of faulty parallelism. Rewrite the sentences to create a parallel structure.

Owning a pet has proven to be extremely beneficial to people's health. Pets help lower blood pressure, boost immunity, and are lessening anxiety. Studies indicate that children who grow up in a household with cats or dogs are at a lower risk of developing allergies or suffer from asthma. Owning a dog offers an additional bonus; it makes people more sociable. Dogs are natural conversation starters and this not only helps to draw people out of social isolation but also they are more likely to find a romantic partner.

Benefits of pet ownership for elderly people include less anxiety, lower insurance costs, and they also gain peace of mind. A study of Alzheimer's patients showed that patients have fewer anxious outbursts if there is an animal in the home. Some doctors even keep dogs in the office to act as on-site therapists. In short, owning a pet keeps you healthy, happy, and is a great way to help you relax.

Key Takeaways

- Parallelism creates a sense of rhythm and balance in writing by using the same grammatical structure to express equal ideas.
- Faulty parallelism occurs when elements of a sentence are not balanced, causing the sentence to sound clunky and awkward.
- Parallelism may be created by connecting two clauses or making a list using coordinating conjunctions; by comparing two items using than or as; or by connecting two parts of a sentence using correlative conjunctions.

Attribution & References

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Notes

1. 1. Mr. Holloway enjoys reading and playing his guitar at weekends.
   2. The doctor told Mrs. Franklin that she should either eat less or should exercise more.
   3. Breaking out of the prison compound, the escapees moved carefully, quietly, and were quick on their feet
   4. I have read the book, but I have not watched the movie version.
   5. Deal with a full inbox first thing in the morning, or by setting aside short periods of time in which to answer e-mail queries.

14.4 - REFINING YOUR WRITING: 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.

Exercises

1. Children's stories are deliberately written in short, simple sentences to avoid confusion. Most sentences are constructed using the standard subject-verb-object format. Choose a children's story that is suitable for eight- to ten-year-olds. Rewrite a chapter of the story so that it appeals to a slightly older age group, by editing for sentence variety. Experiment with the techniques you learned in Section 15.1 "Sentence Variety", including the three different ways to vary sentence structure at the beginning of a sentence and the three different ways to connect ideas between sentences. Compare the revised chapter with the original version and consider how sentence variety can be used to target a particular audience.
   Collaboration: Please share with a classmate and compare your answers.
2. Compile a selection of real-life writing samples from the workplace or around the home. You might like to choose one of the following: e-mail, junk mail, personal letter, company report,

social networking page, local newspaper, bulletin-board posting, or public notice. Choose two samples that lack sentence variety. Highlight areas of each writing sample that you would edit for sentence variety and explain why. Replace any recognizable name with a pseudonym, or a fictitious name.
Collaboration: Please share with a classmate and compare your answers.

3. **Group activity.** Choose a well-known speech, such as Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech, Winston Churchill's "Blood, Toil, Tears, and Sweat" speech, or Barack Obama's inaugural address. Make a copy of the speech and, as a group, underline examples of parallelism. Discuss the effects of using parallelism and consider whether it is always used to achieve the same result or whether the writer manipulates parallelism to create a variety of responses among his or her audience.
4. **Group activity.** Working in a small group, select a workplace document or academic essay. Examine each paragraph and identify examples of sentence variety, coordination and subordination, and parallelism. Then, choose one particular paragraph and discuss the following questions:

    - Does the writer use sentence variety effectively?
    - Does the writer connect his or her ideas effectively?
    - Does the writer use subordination and coordination correctly?
    - Does the writer use parallelism to emphasize his or her points?

    As a group, identify the weaker areas of the paragraph and rewrite them. Focus on sentence structure and sentence variation. Use coordinating conjunctions and subordinating conjunctions to join sentences.

5. Choose a college essay or a recent piece of writing from your work or everyday life. Use the techniques you have learned throughout this chapter to edit your writing for sentence variety, appropriate coordination and subordination, and parallelism. When you have finished, compare the two versions and write a brief analysis of how sentence variety, coordination and subordination, and parallelism help refine a piece of writing.

Attribution & References

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CHAPTER 15: HELP FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Communication Essentials for College by Jen Booth, Emily Cramer & Amanda Quibell

- 15.1 – Word Order
- 15.2 – Negative Statements
- 15.3 – Count and Noncount Nouns and Articles
- 15.4 – Verb Tenses
- 15.5 – Modal Auxiliaries
- 15.6 – Prepositions
- 15.7 – Slang and Idioms
- 15.8 – Help for English Language Learners: End-of-Chapter Exercises

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Please visit the web version of *Communication Essentials for College* to access the complete book, interactive activities and ancillary resources.

15.1 - WORD ORDER

Learning Objectives

- Identify the basic structures of sentences.
- Determine ways to turn sentences into questions.
- Define adjectives and how they are used.

If your first language is not English, you will most likely need some extra help when writing in Standard, or formal, English. New students of Standard English often make similar kinds of errors. Even if you have been speaking English for a long time, you may not feel as confident in your written English skills. This chapter covers the most common errors made by English language learners and helps you avoid similar mistakes in your writing.

Basic Sentence Structures

The most basic sentence structure in English is a subject plus a verb . A subject performs the action in the sentence, and the verb identifies the action. Keep in mind that in some languages, such as Spanish and Italian, an obvious subject does not always perform the action in a sentence; the subject is often implied by the verb. However, every sentence in English must have a subject and a verb to express a complete thought.

subject + verb
Samantha sleeps.

Not all sentences are as simple as a subject plus a verb. To form more complex

sentences, writers build upon this basic structure. Adding a prepositional phrase to the basic sentence creates a more complex sentence. A preposition is a part of speech that relates a noun or a pronoun to another word in a sentence. It also introduces a prepositional phrase . If you can identify a preposition, you will be able to identify a prepositional phrase.

subject + verb + prepositional phrase
Samantha sleeps on the couch.

On is the preposition. *On the couch* is the prepositional phrase.

Common Prepositions

- about
- above
- across
- after
- against
- along
- among
- around
- at
- before
- behind
- beside
- between
- by
- during
- except
- for
- from
- in
- into
- like
- of
- off
- on
- over
- through
- to
- toward
- under
- until
- up
- with
- without

Exercise 1

Exercise 1 (Text Version)
Underline the prepositional phrases.

1. Linda and Javier danced under the stars.
2. Each person has an opinion about the topic.
3. The fans walked through the gates.

4. Jamyra ran around the track.
5. Maria celebrated her birthday in January.

Check Your Answers: [1]

Activity Source: Exercise 1 is adapted from "15.1 – Word Order" In *Writing for Success* by University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing, licensed under CC BY-NC- 4.0.

Another sentence structure that is important to understand is subject + verb + object. There are two types of objects: direct objects and indirect objects .

A direct object receives the action of the verb.

subject + verb + direct object
Janice writes a letter.

The letter directly receives the action of the verb *writes*.

Tip

A quick way to find the direct object is to ask *what?* or *who?*

Sentence: Maurice kicked the ball.
What did Maurice kick? The direct object, *ball*.

Sentence: Maurice kicked Tom by accident.
Who did Maurice kick? The direct object, *Tom*.

An indirect object does not receive the action of the verb.

subject + verb + indirect object
Janice writes me a letter

The action (*writes)* is performed for or to the indirect object (*me)*.

Tip

Even though the indirect object is not found after a preposition in English, it can be discovered by asking to whom? or for whom? after the verb.

Sentence: Dad baked the children some cookies.

For whom did Dad bake the cookies? The indirect object, children.

Exercise 2

On a separate sheet of paper, identify the subject, verb, direct object, and indirect object in the following sentences.

1. Captain Kirk told the crew a story.
2. Jermaine gave his girlfriend a dozen yellow tulips.
3. That hospital offers nurses better pay.
4. Dad served Grandma a delicious dinner.
5. Mom bought herself a new car.

Exercise 3

On a separate sheet of paper, rewrite the sentences in the correct order. If the sentence is correct as it is, write *OK*.

1. The pizza Jeannine burnt.

2. To the Mexican restaurant we had to go for dinner.
3. Jeannine loved the food.
4. So full were we during the walk home.
5. I will make the pizza next time.

Questions

English speakers rely on the following two common ways to turn sentences into questions:

1. Move the helping verb and add a question mark.
2. Add the verb *do*, *does*, or *did* and add a question mark.

Move the helping verb and add a question mark.

Sentence: Sierra can pack these boxes.
Question: Can Sierra pack these boxes**?**

Add the verb *do*, *does*, or *did*, and add a question mark:

Sentence: Jolene skated across the pond.
Question: Did Jolene skate across the pond**?**

Exercise 4

On a separate sheet of paper, create questions from the following sentences.

1. *Slumdog Millionaire* is a film directed by Danny Boyle.
2. The story centers on a character named Jamal Malik.

3. He and his older brother find different ways to escape the slums.
4. His brother, Salim, pursues a life of crime.
5. Jamal ends up on the game show *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?*

Adjectives

An adjective is a kind of descriptive word that describes a noun or a pronoun. It tells *which one*, *what kind*, and *how many*. Adjectives make your writing more lively and interesting. Keep in mind, a common error that English language learners make is misplacing the adjectives in a sentence. It is important to know where to place the adjective in a sentence so that readers are not confused.

If you are using more than one adjective to describe a noun, place the adjectives in the following order before the noun:

1. **Opinion:** an interesting book, a boring movie, a fun ride
2. **Size:** a large box, a tiny turtle, a tall woman
3. **Shape:** a round ball, a long hose, a square field
4. **Age:** a new day, an old horse, a modern building
5. **Color:** an orange sunset, a green jacket, a red bug
6. **Ethnicity:** Italian cheese, French wine, Chinese tea
7. **Material:** silk shirt, wool socks, a cotton dress

Tip

Adjectives can also be placed at the end of a sentence if they describe the subject of a sentence and appear after the verb.

Sentence: My English teacher is excellent.

Exercise 5

On a separate sheet of paper, place the following sets of adjectives in the correct order before the noun. The first one has been done for you.

1. book: old, small, Spanish

   a small old Spanish book (age, size, ethnicity)
2. photograph: new, strange
3. suit: wool, green, funny
4. opinion: refreshing, new
5. dress: fashionable, purple

Key Takeaways

- The most basic sentence structure is a subject plus a verb that expresses a complete thought.
- Adding a prepositional phrase or a direct or indirect object to a sentence makes it more complex.
- English speakers change a sentence into a question in one of the following two ways: moving the helping verb and adding a question mark or adding the verb do, does, or did and adding a question mark.
- Adjectives follow a particular order before the noun they describe. The order is opinion, size, shape, age, color, ethnicity, and material.

Writing Application

Write a paragraph about a memorable family trip. Use at least two adjectives to describe each noun in your paragraph. Proofread your paragraph, and then exchange papers with a classmate. Check your classmate's use of adjectives to make sure they are correct.

Attribution & References

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Notes

1. 1. under
   2. about
   3. through
   4. around
   5. in

15.2 - NEGATIVE STATEMENTS

Learning Objectives

- Identify a negative statement.
- Write negative statements.

Negative statements are the opposite of positive statements and are necessary to express an opposing idea. The following charts list negative words and helping verbs that can be combined to form a negative statement.

Negative Words

- never
- nobody
- no one
- nowhere
- no
- none
- not
- hardly
- scarcely
- barely
- rarely

Common Helping Verbs

- am
- was
- being
- has
- does
- could
- must
- would
- is
- were
- been
- had
- did
- may
- will
- ought to
- are
- be
- have
- do
- can

- might
- should
- used to

The following examples show several ways to make a sentence negative in the present tense.

Negative sentences – present tense

1. A helping verb used with the negative word *not*.
   Sentence: My guests are arriving now.
   Negative: My guests **are not** arriving now.
2. The negative word *no.*
   Sentence: Jennie has money.
   Negative: Jennie **has no** money.
3. The contraction *n't.*
   Sentence: Janetta does miss her mom.
   Negative: Janetta **doesn't** miss her mom.
4. The negative adverb *rarely.*
   Sentence: I always go to the gym after work.
   Negative: I **rarely** go to the gym after work.
5. The negative subject *nobody.*
   Sentence: Everybody gets the day off.
   Negative: Nobody gets the day off.

Exercise 1

On a separate sheet of paper, rewrite the positive sentences as negative sentences. Be sure to keep the sentences in the present tense.

1. Everybody is happy about the mandatory lunch.
2. Deborah likes to visit online dating sites.
3. Jordan donates blood every six months.
4. Our writing instructor is very effective.
5. That beautiful papaya is cheap.

The following sentences show you the ways to make a sentence negative in the past tense.

Negative sentences – past tense

Sentence: Paul called me yesterday.
Negative: Paul **did not** call me yesterday.

Sentence: Jamilee went to the grocery store.
Negative: Jamilee **never went** to the grocery store.

Sentence: Gina laughed when she saw the huge pile of laundry.
Negative: Gina **did not laugh** when she saw the huge pile of laundry.

Notice that when forming a negative in the past tense, the helping verb *did* is what signals the past tense, and the main verb *laugh* does not have an *-ed* ending.

Exercise 2

Rewrite the following paragraph by correcting the errors in the past-tense negative sentences.

Celeste no did call me when she reached Manitoba. I was worried because she not drove alone before. She was going to meet her friend, Terry, who lived in a town called Steinbach, Manitoba. I did never want to worry, but she said she was going to call when she reached there. Finally, four hours later, she called and said, "Mom, I'm sorry I did not call. I lost track of time because I was so happy to see Terry!" I was relieved.

Collaboration

Once you have found all the errors you can, please share with a classmate and compare your answers. Did your partner find an error you missed? Did you find an error your partner missed? Compare with your instructor's answers.

Double negatives are two negatives used in the same phrase or sentence. They are considered incorrect in Standard English. You should avoid using double negatives in all formal writing. If you want to say something negative, use only one negative word in the sentence. Return to the beginning of this section for a list of negative words, and then study the following examples.

Double negative (incorrect)	Single negative (correct)
neg. + neg. I couldn't find no paper	neg. I couldn't find any paper.
neg. + neg. I don't want nothing.	neg. I don't want anything.

Tip

Ain't is considered a contraction of am not. Although some may use it in everyday speech, it is considered incorrect in Standard English. Avoid using it when speaking and writing in formal contexts.

Exercise 3

On your own sheet of paper, correct the double negatives and rewrite the following sentences.

1. Jose didn't like none of the choices on the menu.
2. Brittany can't make no friends with nobody.
3. The prairies hardly had no rain last summer.
4. My kids never get into no trouble.
5. I could not do nothing about the past.

Key Takeaways

- Negatives are usually formed using a negative word plus a helping verb.
- Double negatives are considered incorrect in Standard English.
- Only one negative word is used to express a negative statement.

Writing Application

Write a paragraph describing your favorite meal. Use rich, colorful language to describe the meal. Exchange papers with a classmate and read his or her paragraph. Then rewrite each sentence of your classmate's paragraph using negatives. Be sure to avoid double negatives. Share your negative

paragraphs with each other.

Attribution & References

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15.3 - COUNT AND NONCOUNT NOUNS AND ARTICLES

Learning Objectives

- Define and use count and noncount nouns.
- Recognize and use definite and indefinite articles.

Nouns are words that name things, places, people, and ideas. Right now, you may be surrounded by desks, computers, and notebooks. These are called count nouns because you can count the exact number of desks, computers, and notebooks—three desks, one computer, and six notebooks, for example.

On the other hand, you may be carrying a small amount of money in your wallet and sitting on a piece of furniture. These are called noncount nouns . Although you can count the pieces of furniture or the amount of money, you cannot add a number in front of *money* or *furniture* and simply add *–s* to the end of the noun. Instead, you must use other words and phrases to indicate the quantity of money and furniture.

Incorrect: five moneys, two furnitures

Correct: some money, two pieces of furniture

By the end of this section, you will grasp the difference between the two types of nouns and be able to use them confidently in speaking and writing.

Count and Noncount Nouns

A count noun refers to people, places, and things that are separate units. You make count nouns plural by adding *–s*.

Table 1 – Count Nouns

Count Noun	Sentence
Quarter	It takes six quarters to do my laundry.
Chair	Make sure to push in your chairs before leaving class.
Candidate	The two candidates debated the issue.
Adult	The three adults in the room acted like children.
Comedian	The two comedians made the audience laugh.

A noncount noun identifies a whole object that cannot separate and count individually. Noncount nouns may refer to concrete objects or abstract objects. A concrete noun identifies an object you can see, taste, touch, or count. An abstract noun identifies an object that you cannot see, touch, or count. There are some exceptions, but most abstract nouns cannot be made plural, so they are noncount nouns. Examples of abstract nouns include anger, education, melancholy, softness, violence, and conduct.

Table 2 – Types of Noncount Nouns

Type of Noncount Noun	Examples	Sentence
Food	sugar, salt, pepper, lettuce, rice	Add more sugar to my coffee, please.
Solids	concrete, chocolate, silver, soap	The ice cream was covered in creamy chocolate.
Abstract Nouns	peace, warmth, hospitality, information	I need more information about the insurance policy.

Exercise 1

Exercise 1 (Text Version)
Label each of the following nouns as count or noncount.

1. Electricity _____
2. Water _____
3. Book _____
4. Sculpture _____
5. Advice _____

Check Your Answers: [1]

Activity Source: Exercise 1 is adapted from "15.3 – Count And Noncount Nouns And Articles" In *Writing for Success* by University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing, licensed under CC BY-NC- 4.0.

Exercise 2

Exercise 2 (Text Version)
identify whether the italicized noun in the sentence is a count or noncount noun by writing C or NC above the noun.

1. The amount of ***traffic*** on the way home was terrible.
2. ***Forgiveness*** is an important part of growing up.
3. I made caramel sauce for the organic ***apples*** I bought.
4. I prefer film ***cameras*** instead of digital ones.
5. My favorite subject is ***history***.

Check Your Answers: [2]

Activity Source: Exercise 2 is adapted from "15.3 – Count And Noncount Nouns And Articles" In *Writing for Success* by University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing, licensed under CC BY-NC- 4.0.

Definite and Indefinite Articles

The word *the* is a definite article . It refers to one or more specific things. For example, *the woman* refers to not any woman but a particular woman. The definite article *the* is used before singular and plural count nouns.

The words *a* and *an* are indefinite articles . They refer to one nonspecific thing. For example, *a woman* refers to any woman, not a specific, particular woman. The indefinite article *a* or *an* is used before a singular count noun.

Definite Articles (*The*) and Indefinite Articles (*A/An*) with Count Nouns

I saw **the** concert. (singular, refers to a specific concert)

I saw **the** concerts. (plural, refers to more than one specific concert)

I saw **the** U2 concert last night. (singular, refers to a specific concert)

I saw **a** concert. (singular, refers to any nonspecific concert)

Exercise 3

Exercise 3 (Text Version)

Write the correct article in the blank for each of the following sentences. Write OK if the sentence is correct.

1. (A/An/The) camel can live for days without water. _____
2. I enjoyed (a/an/the) pastries at the Bar Mitzvah. _____
3. (A/An/The) politician spoke of many important issues. _____

4. I really enjoyed (a/an/the) actor's performance in the play. _____
5. (A/An/The) goal I have is to run a marathon this year. _____

Check Your Answers: [3]

Activity Source: Exercise 3 is adapted from "15.3 – Count And Noncount Nouns And Articles" In *Writing for Success* by University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing, licensed under CC BY-NC- 4.0.

Exercise 4

Correct the misused or missing articles and rewrite the paragraph.

Stars are large balls of spinning hot gas like our sun. The stars look tiny because they are far away. Many of them are much larger than sun. Did you know that a Milky Way galaxy has between two hundred billion and four hundred billion stars in it? Scientists estimate that there may be as many as five hundred billion galaxies in an entire universe! Just like a human being, the star has a life cycle from birth to death, but its lifespan is billions of years long. The star is born in a cloud of cosmic gas and dust called a nebula. Our sun was born in the nebula nearly five billion years ago. Photographs of the star-forming nebulas are astonishing.

Collaboration

Once you have found all the errors you can, share with a classmate and compare your answers. Did your partner find an error you missed? Did you find an error your partner missed? Compare with your instructor's answers.

Key Takeaways

- You can make count nouns plural by adding -s.
- Count nouns are individual people, places, or things that can be counted, such as politicians, deserts, or candles.
- Noncount nouns refer to whole things that cannot be made plural, such as salt, peace, or happiness.
- The is a definite article and is used to refer to a specific person, place, or thing, such as the Queen of England.
- A and an are indefinite articles, and they refer to nonspecific people, places, or things, such as an apple or a bicycle.

Writing Application

Write five sentences using the definite article *the*. Write five sentences using the indefinite article *a* or *an*. Exchange papers with a classmate and check each other's work.

Attribution & References

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Notes

1.
   1. Electricity noncount noun
   2. Water noncount
   3. Book count noun
   4. Sculpture count noun
   5. Advice noncount noun

2.
   1. Count Noun
   2. Noncount Noun
   3. Count Noun
   4. Noncount Noun
   5. Noncount Noun

3.
   1. A
   2. ok
   3. The
   4. The
   5. A

15.4 - VERB TENSES

Learning Objectives

- Identify simple verb tenses.
- Recognize to be, to have, and to do verbs.
- Use perfect verb tenses.
- Apply progressive verb tenses.
- Define gerunds and infinitives.

You must always use a verb in every sentence you write. Verbs are parts of speech that indicate actions or states of being. The most basic sentence structure is a subject followed by a verb.

Simple Verb Tenses

Verb tenses tell the reader when the action takes place. The action could be in the past, present, or future.

Past	← Present →	Future
Yesterday I **jumped**.	Today I **jump**.	Tomorrow I **will jump**.

Simple present verbs are used in the following situations:

1. When the action takes place now

   I **drink** the water greedily.
2. When the action is something that happens regularly

I **always cross** my fingers for good luck.

3. When describing things that are generally true

   College tuition **is** very costly.

Table 1 – Regular Simple Present Tense Verbs

Verb	I	He/She/It	You	We	They
ask	ask	asks	ask	ask	ask
bake	bake	bakes	bake	bake	bake
cook	cook	cooks	cook	cook	cook
cough	cough	coughs	cough	cough	cough
clap	clap	claps	clap	clap	clap
dance	dance	dances	dance	dance	dance
erase	erase	erases	erase	erase	erase
kiss	kiss	kisses	kiss	kiss	kiss
push	push	pushes	push	push	push
wash	wash	washes	wash	wash	wash

When it is *he*, *she*, or *it* doing the present tense action, remember to add *–s*, or *–es* to the end of the verb or to change the *y* to *–ies*.

Simple past verbs are used when the action has already taken place and is now finished:

- I **washed** my uniform last night.
- I **asked** for more pie.
- I **coughed** loudly last night.

Table 2 – Regular Simple Past Tense Verbs

Verb	I	He/She/It	You	We	They
ask	asked	asked	asked	asked	asked
bake	baked	baked	baked	baked	baked
cook	cooked	cooked	cooked	cooked	cooked
cough	coughed	coughed	coughed	coughed	coughed
clap	clapped	clapped	clapped	clapped	clapped
dance	danced	danced	danced	danced	danced
erase	erased	erased	erased	erased	erased
kiss	kissed	kissed	kissed	kissed	kissed
push	pushed	pushed	pushed	pushed	pushed
wash	washed	washed	washed	washed	washed

When *he*, *she*, or *it* is doing the action in the past tense, remember to add *–d* or *–ed* to the end of regular verbs.

Simple future verbs are used when the action has not yet taken place:

- I **will work** late tomorrow.
- I **will kiss** my boyfriend when I see him.
- I **will erase** the board after class.

Table 3 – Regular Simple Future Tense Verbs

Verb	I	He/She/It	You	We	They
ask	will ask	will ask	will ask	will ask	will ask
bake	will bake	will bake	will bake	will bake	will bake
cook	will cook	will cook	will cook	will cook	will cook
cough	will cough	will cough	will cough	will cough	will cough
clap	will clap	will clap	will clap	will clap	will clap
dance	will dance	will dance	will dance	will dance	will dance
erase	will erase	will erase	will erase	will erase	will erase
kiss	will kiss	will kiss	will kiss	will kiss	will kiss
push	will push	will push	will push	will push	will push
wash	will wash	will wash	will wash	will wash	will wash

Going to can also be added to the main verb to make it future tense:

- I am **going to** go to work tomorrow.

Exercise 1

On a separate sheet of paper, complete the following sentences by adding the verb in the correct simple tense.

1. Please do not (erase, erased, will erase) what I have written on the board.
2. They (dance, danced, will dance) for hours after the party was over.
3. Harrison (wash, washed, will wash) his laundry after several weeks had passed.
4. Yesterday Mom (ask, asked, will ask) me about my plans for college.
5. I (bake, baked, will bake) several dozen cookies for tomorrow's bake sale.

Exercise 2

Correct the verb tense mistakes in the following paragraph.

> Last summer, I walk around Walden Pond. Walden Pond is in Concord, Massachusetts. It is where the philosopher Henry David Thoreau will live during the mid-nineteenth century. During his time there, he wrote a book called *Walden*. *Walden* is a book of Thoreau's reflections on the natural environment. It will be consider a classic in American literature. I did not know that Walden Pond is consider the birthplace of the environmental movement. It was very relaxing there. I will listen to birds, frogs, and crickets, not to mention the peaceful sound of the pond itself.
>
> **Collaboration**
>
> Once you have found all the errors you can, please share with a classmate and compare

your answers. Did your partner find an error you missed? Did you find an error your partner missed? Compare with your instructor's answers.

To Be, *To Do*, and *To Have*

There are some irregular verbs in English that are formed in special ways. The most common of these are the verbs *to be*, *to have*, and *to do*.

Table 4 – Verb Forms of To Be, To Do, and To Have

Base Form	Present Tense Form	Past Tense Form	Future Tense Form
be	am/is/are	was/were	will be
do	do/does	did	will do
have	have/has	had	will have

Tip

Memorize the present tense forms of *to be*, *to do*, and *to have*. A song or rhythmic pattern will make them easier to memorize.

Review these examples of *to be*, *to do*, *and to have* used in sentences.

Verb	Past	← Present →	Future
To Be	Yesterday I **was** angry.	Today I **am** not angry.	Tomorrow I **will be** angry.
To Do	I **did** my best yesterday.	I **do** my best every day.	Tomorrow I **will do** my best.
To Have	Yesterday I **had** ten dollars.	Today I **have** ten dollars.	Tomorrow I **will have** ten dollars.

Remember the following uses of *to be*, *to have* and *to do*:

To Be

- I → am/was/will be
- you/we/they → are/were/will be
- he/she/it → is/was/will be

To Have

- I/you/we/they → have/had/will have
- he/she/it → has/had/will have

To Do

- I/you/we/they → do/did/will do
- he/she/it → does/did/will do

Tip

Remember, if you have a compound subject like *Marie and Jennifer*, think of the subject as *they* to determine the correct verb form.

- Marie and Jennifer (*they*) have a house on Bainbridge Island.

Similarly, single names can be thought of as *he*, *she*, or *it*.

- LeBron (*he*) has scored thirty points so far.

Exercise 3

On a separate sheet of paper, complete the following sentences by circling the correct form of the verbs *to be*, *to have*, and *to do* in the three simple tenses.

1. Stefan always (do, does, will do) his taxes the day before they are due.
2. We (are, is, was) planning a surprise birthday party for my mother.
3. Turtles (have, had, has) the most beautiful patterns on their shells.
4. I always (do, did, will do) my homework before dinner, so I can eat in peace.
5. You (is, are, was) so much smarter than you think!

Perfect Verb Tenses

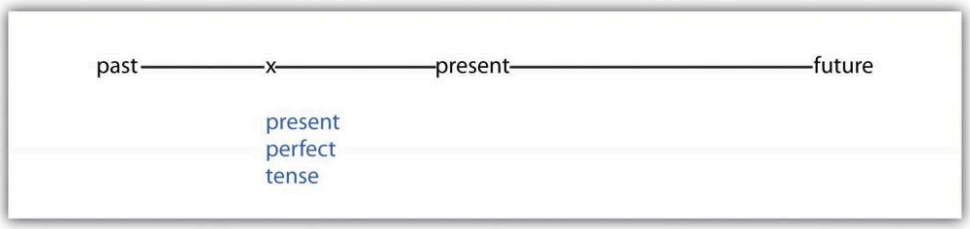
Up to this point, we have studied the three simple verb tenses—simple present, simple past, and simple future. Now we will add three more tenses, which are called perfect tenses. They are present perfect , past perfect , and future perfect . These are the three basic tenses of English. A past participle is often called the *–ed* form of a verb because it is formed by adding *–d* or *–ed* to the base form of regular verbs. Past participles can also end in *-t* or *-en*. Keep in mind, however, the past participle is also formed in various other ways for irregular verbs. The past participle can be used to form the present perfect tense.

Review the following basic formula for the present perfect tense:

Subject + has or have + past participle

I have helped.

The present perfect tense has a connection with the past and the present.



The present perfect tense sits between the past and present on a timeline from past -> present -> future

Use the present perfect tense to describe a continuing situation and to describe an action that has just happened.

- I **have worked** as a caretaker since June.

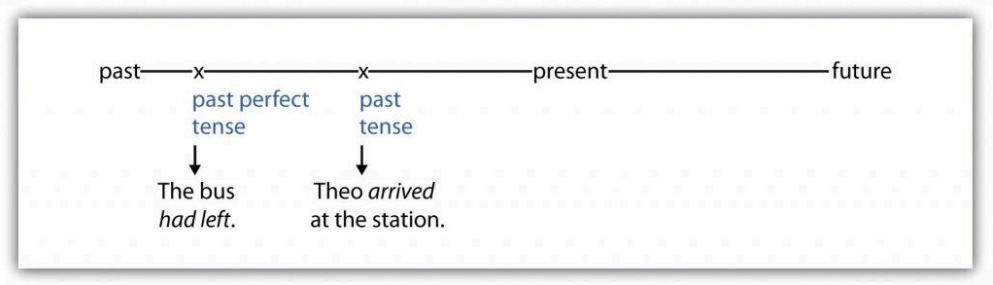
  This sentence tells us that the subject has worked as a caretaker in the past and is still working as a caretaker in the present.
- Dmitri **has** just **received** an award from the Dean of Students.

  This sentence tells us that Dmitri has very recently received the award. The word *just* emphasizes that the action happened very recently.

Study the following basic formula for the past perfect tense:

Subject + had or have + past participle

I had listened.



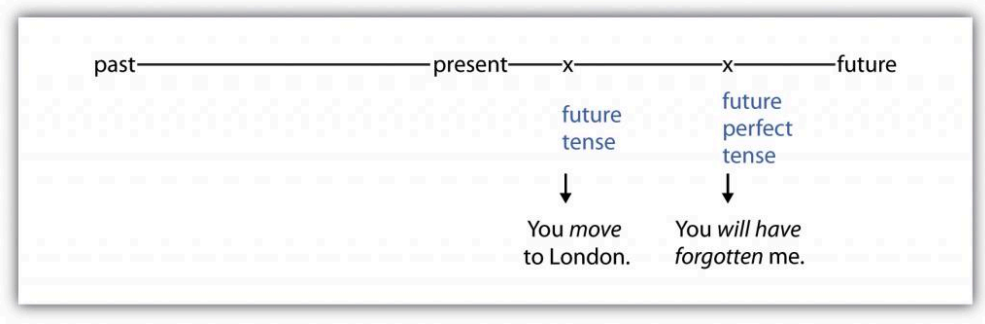
- The bus **had left** by the time Theo **arrived** at the station.

  Notice that both actions occurred entirely in the past, but one action occurred before the other. At some time in the past, Theo *arrived* (simple past tense) at the station, but at some time before that, the bus *had left* (past perfect).

Look at the following basic formula for the future perfect tense:

Subject + will have + past participle

I will have graduated.



The future perfect tense describes an action from the past in the future, as if the past event has already occurred. Use the future perfect tense when you anticipate completing an event in the future, but you have not completed it yet.

- You **will have forgotten** me after you **move** to London.

  Notice that both actions occur in the future, but one action will occur before the other. At some time in the future, the subject (*you*) *will move* (future tense) to London, and at some time after that, the subject *will have forgotten* (future perfect tense) the speaker, *me*.

Exercise 4

Exercise 4 (Text Version)

Complete the following sentences by using the correct perfect verb tense for the verb in parentheses.

1. I plan to start a compost bin because I _____ (to want) one for a long time now.
2. My brother told me he _____ (to argue) with his friend about politics.
3. By the time we reach the mountain top the sun _____ (to set).
4. Denise _____ (to walk) several miles in the past three hours.
5. His mother _____ (to offer) to pay him to work in her office.

Check Your Answers: [1]

Activity Source: Exercise 4 is adapted from "15.4 – Verb Tenses" In *Writing for Success* by University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing, licensed under CC BY-NC- 4.0.

Progressive Verb Tenses

Progressive verb tenses describe a continuing or unfinished action, such as *I am going, I was going*, or *I will be going*.

The present progressive tense describes an action or state of being that takes place in the present and that continues to take place.

To make verbs in the present progressive tense, combine these two parts:

Present tense form of *to be*	**+**	***-ing* (present participle)**
am/is/are	help	helping

You should use the present progressive tense to describe a planned activity, to describe an activity that is recurring right now, and to describe an activity that is in progress, although not actually occurring at the time of speaking:

- Preeti **is starting** school on Tuesday.

  This sentence describes a planned activity.
- Janetta **is getting** her teeth cleaned right now.

  This sentence describes an activity that is occurring right now.
- I **am studying** ballet at school.

  This sentence describes an activity that is in progress but not actually occurring at the time of speaking.

The past progressive tense describes an action or state of being that took place in the past and that continues to take place.

To make verbs in the past progressive tense, combine these two parts:

Past tense form of *to be* +	-ing (present participle)
was/were	helping

You should use the past progressive tense to describe a continuous action in the past, to describe a past activity in progress while another activity occurred, or to describe two past activities in progress at the same time:

- Ella and I **were planning** a vacation.

  This sentence describes a continuous action in the past.
- I **was helping** a customer when I smelled delicious fried chicken.

  This sentence describes a past activity in progress while another activity occurred.
- While I **was finishing** my homework, my wife **was talking** on the phone.

  This sentence describes two past activities in progress at the same time.

The future progressive tense describes an action or state of being that will take place in the future and that will continue to take place. The action will have started at that future moment, but it will not have finished at that moment.

To make verbs in the future progressive tense, combine these parts:

Future tense form of *to be* **+ -ing (present participle)**

will be helping

Use the future progressive tense to describe an activity that will be in progress in the future:

- Samantha and I **will be dancing** in the school play next week.
- Tomorrow Agnes **will be reading** two of her poems.

Exercise 5

Exercise 5 (Text Version)
Revise the following sentences, written in simple tenses, using the progressive tenses indicated in parentheses.

1. He prepared the food while I watched. (past progressive tense)
2. Jonathan will speak at the conference. (future progressive)
3. Josie traveled to Egypt last July. (past progressive tense)
4. My foot aches, so I know it will rain. (present progressive tense)
5. Micah will talk a lot when I see him. (future progressive)
6. I yawn a lot because I feel tired. (present progressive tense)

Check Your Answers: [2]

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Similar to the present perfect tense, the present perfect progressive tense is used to indicate an action that was begun in the past and continues into the present. However, the present perfect progressive is used when you want to stress that the action is ongoing.

To make verbs in the present perfect progressive tense, combine the following parts:

Present tense form of *to have* **+ Been + -ing (present participle)**

has or have been helping

- She **has been talking** for the last hour.

  This sentence indicates that *she* started talking in the past and is continuing to talk in the present.
- I **have been feeling** tired lately.

  This sentence indicates that *I* started feeling tired in the past, and *I* continue to feel

tired in the present. Instead of indicating time, as in the first sentence, the second sentence uses the adverb *lately*. You can also use the adverb *recently* when using the present perfect progressive tense.

Similar to the past perfect tense, the past perfect progressive tense is used to indicate an action that was begun in the past and continued until another time in the past. The past perfect progressive does not continue into the present but stops at a designated moment in the past.

To make verbs in the past perfect progressive tense, combine the following parts:

Past tense form of *to have* **+ been + -ing (present participle)**

had been helping

- The employees **had been talking** until their boss arrived.

  This sentence indicates that the employees were talking in the past and they stopped talking when their boss arrived, which also happened in the past.
- I **had been working** all day.

  This sentence implies that *I* was working in the past. The action does not continue into the future, and the sentence implies that the subject stopped working for unstated reasons.

The future perfect progressive tense is rarely used. It is used to indicate an action that will begin in the future and will continue until another time in the future.

To make verbs in the future perfect progressive tense, combine the following parts:

Future tense form of *to have* **+been + -ing (present participle)**

will have Been helping

- By the end of the meeting, I **will have been hearing** about mortgages and taxes for eight hours.

  This sentence indicates that in the future *I* will hear about mortgages and taxes for

eight hours, but it has not happened yet. It also indicates the action of *hearing* will continue until *the end of the meeting*, something that is also in the future.

Gerunds

A gerund is a form of a verb that is used as a noun. All gerunds end in *-ing*. Since gerunds function as nouns, they occupy places in a sentence that a noun would, such as the subject, direct object, and object of a preposition.

You can use a gerund in the following ways:

1. As a **subject**

   Traveling is Cynthia's favorite pastime.
2. As a **direct object**

   I enjoy **jogging**.
3. As an **object of a proposition**

   The librarian scolded me for **laughing**.

Often verbs are followed by gerunds. Study Table 5 – "Gerunds and Verbs" for examples.

Table 5 – Gerunds and Verbs

Gerund	Verb Followed by a Gerund
moving	Denise **considered moving** to Paris.
cleaning	I **hate cleaning** the bathroom.
winning	Nate **imagines winning** an Oscar one day.
worrying	Mom says she **has stopped worrying**.
taking	She **admitted taking** the pumpkin.

Infinitives

An infinitive is a form of a verb that comes after the word *to* and acts as a noun, adjective, or adverb.

to + verb = infinitive

Examples of infinitives include to move, to sleep, to look, to throw, to read, and to sneeze.

Often verbs are followed by infinitives. Study Table 6 – "Infinitives and Verbs" for examples.

Table 6 – Infinitives and Verbs

Infinitive	Verb Followed by Infinitive
to help	Jessica **offered to help** her move.
to arrive	Mick **expects to arrive** early.
to win	Sunita **wants to win** the writing contest.
to close	He **forgot to close** the curtains.
to eat	She **likes to eat** late.

You may wonder which verbs can be followed by gerunds and which verbs can be followed by infinitives. With the following verbs, you can use either a gerund or an infinitive.

Table 7 – Infinitives and Gerunds Verbs

Base Form of Verb	Sentences with Verbs Followed by Gerunds *and* Infinitives
begin	1. John **began crying**. 2. John **began to cry**.
hate	1. Marie **hated talking** on the phone. 2. Marie **hated to talk** on the phone.
forget	1. Wendell **forgot paying** the bills. 2. Wendell **forgot to pay** the bills.
like	1. I **liked leaving** messages. 2. I **liked to leave** messages.
continue	1. He **continued listening** to the news. 2. He **continued to listen** to the news.
start	1. I **will start recycling** immediately. 2. I **will start to recycle** immediately.
try	1. Mikhail **will try climbing** the tree. 2. Mikhail **will try to climb** the tree.
prefer	1. I **prefer baking**. 2. I **prefer to bake**.
love	1. Josh **loves diving**. 2. Josh **loves to dive**.

Exercise 6

Exercise 6 (Text Version)

Complete the following sentences by choosing the correct infinitive or gerund.

1. I meant _____ (to kiss, kissing) my kids before they left for school.
2. The children hoped (to go, going) to a restaurant for dinner.
3. Do you intend _____ (to eat, eating) the entire pie?

4. Crystal postponed _____ (to get dressed, getting dressed) for the party.
5. When we finish _____ (to play, playing) this game, we will go home.

Check Your Answers: [3]

Activity Source: Exercise 6 is adapted from "15.4 – Verb Tenses" In *Writing for Success* by University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing, licensed under CC BY-NC- 4.0.

Key Takeaways

- Verb tenses tell the reader when the action takes place.
- Actions could be in the past, present, or future.
- There are some irregular verbs in English that are formed in special ways. The most common of these irregular verbs are the verbs to be, to have, and to do.
- There are six main verb tenses in English: simple present, simple past, simple future, present perfect, past perfect, and future perfect.
- Verbs can be followed by either gerunds or infinitives.

Writing Application

Write about a lively event that is either remembered or imagined. Ask yourself the following three questions: What happened during the event? What happened after the event? Looking back, what do you think of the event now? Answer each question in a separate paragraph to keep the present, past, and future tense verbs separate.

Attribution & References

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Notes

1. 1. wanted
   2. had argued
   3. was setting
   4. had walked
   5. was offering
2. 1. He was preparing the food while I watched.
   2. Jonathan will be speaking at the conference.
   3. Josie was travelling to Egypt last July.
   4. My foot aches, so I know it is going to rain.
   5. Micah was talking a lot when I saw him.
   6. I am yawning a lot because I feel tired.
3. 1. to kiss
   2. to go
   3. to eat
   4. getting dressed
   5. playing

15.5 - MODAL AUXILIARIES

Learning Objectives

- Define and identify modal auxiliaries.
- Learn how and when to use modal auxiliaries.

We all need to express our moods and emotions, both in writing and in our everyday life. We do this by using modal auxiliaries .

Modal Auxiliaries

Modal auxiliaries are a type of helping verb that are used only with a main verb to help express its mood.

The following is the basic formula for using a modal auxiliary:

Subject +	modal auxiliary +	main verb
James	may	call

There are ten main modal auxiliaries in English.

Table 1 – Modal Auxiliaries

Modal Auxiliary	Use	Modal Auxiliary + Main Verb
can	Expresses an ability or possibility	I **can lift** this forty-pound box. (ability)
		We **can embrace** green sources of energy. (possibility)
could	Expresses an ability in the past; a present possibility; a past or future permission	I **could beat** you at chess when we were kids. (past ability)
		We **could bake** a pie! (present possibility)
		Could we **pick** some flowers from the garden? (future permission)
may	Expresses uncertain future action; permission; ask a yes-no question	I **may attend** the concert. (uncertain future action)
		You **may begin** the exam. (permission)
		May I **attend** the concert? (yes-no questions)
might	Expresses uncertain future action	I **might attend** the concert (uncertain future action—same as *may*)
shall	Expresses intended future action	I **shall** go to the opera. (intended future action)
should	Expresses obligation; ask if an obligation exists	I **should mail** my RSVP. (obligation, same as *ought to*)
		Should I **call** my mother? (asking if an obligation exists)
will	Expresses intended future action; ask a favor; ask for information	I **will get** an A in this class. (intended future action)
		Will you **buy** me some chocolate? (favor)
		Will you **be finished** soon? (information)
would	States a preference; request a choice politely; explain an action; introduce habitual past actions	I **would like** the steak, please. (preference)
		Would you **like** to have breakfast in bed? (request a choice politely)
		I **would go** with you if I didn't have to babysit tonight. (explain an action)

Modal Auxiliary	Use	Modal Auxiliary + Main Verb
		He **would write** to me every week when we were dating. (habitual past action)
must	Expresses obligation	We **must be** on time for class.
ought to	Expresses obligation	I **ought to mail** my RSVP. (obligation, same as may)

Tip

Use the following format to form a yes-no question with a modal auxiliary:

Modal auxiliary +	subject +	main verb
Should	I	drive?

Be aware of these four common errors when using modal auxiliaries:

1. Using an infinitive instead of a base verb after a modal

   Incorrect: I can to move this heavy table.
   Correct: I **can move** this heavy table.
2. Using a gerund instead of an infinitive or a base verb after a modal

   Incorrect: I could moving to Sweden.
   Correct: I **could move** to Sweden.
3. Using two modals in a row

   Incorrect: I should must *renew* my passport.
   Correct: I **must renew** my passport.
   Correct: I **should renew** my passport.
4. Leaving out a modal

   Incorrect: I renew my passport.
   Correct: I **must renew** my passport.

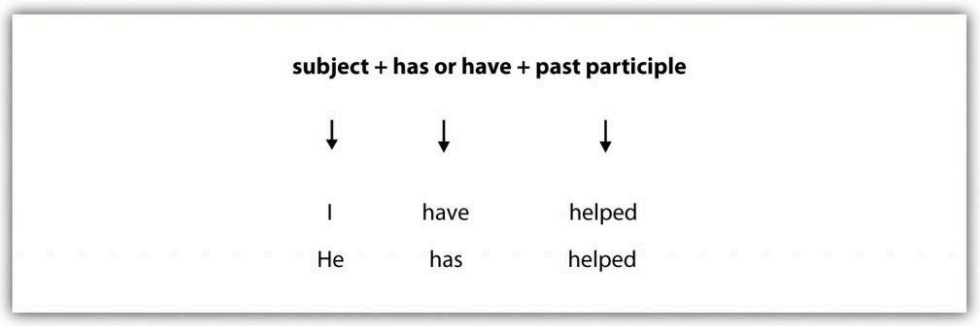
Exercise 1

Edit the following paragraph by correcting the common modal auxiliary errors.

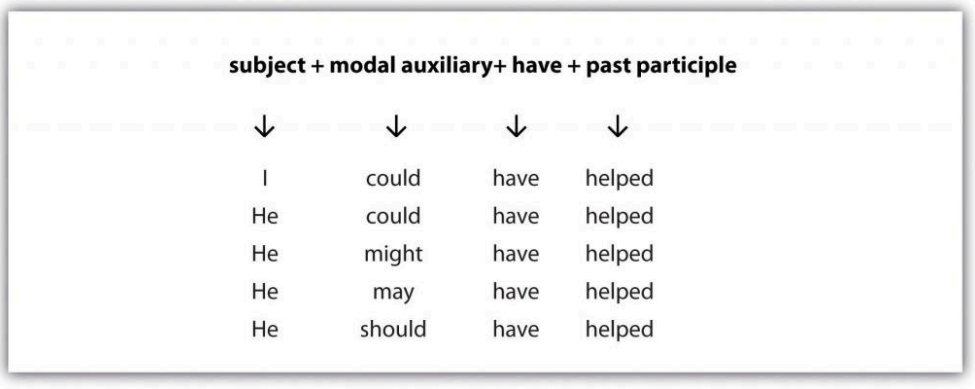
> I may to go to France on vacation next summer. I shall might visit the Palace of Versailles. I would to drive around the countryside. I could imagining myself living there; however, I will not move to France because my family should miss me very much.

Modals and Present Perfect Verbs

In the previous section, we defined present perfect verb tense as describing a continuing situation or something that has just happened.



Remember, when a sentence contains a modal auxiliary before the verb, the helping verb is always *have*.



Be aware of the following common errors when using modal auxiliaries in the present perfect tense:

1. Using *had* instead of *have*

   Incorrect: Jamie would had attended the party, but he was sick.
   Correct: Jamie **would have attended** the party, but he was sick.
2. Leaving out *have*

   Incorrect: Jamie would attended the party, but he was sick.
   Correct: Jamie **would have attended** the party, but he was sick.

Exercise 2

Exercise 2 (Text Version)
Complete the following sentences by changing the given verb form to a modal auxiliary in present perfect tense.

1. The man _____ (laugh).
2. The frogs _____ (croak).
3. My writing teacher _____ (smile).
4. The audience _____ (cheer) all night.
5. My best friend _____ (giggled).

Check Your Answers: [1]

Activity Source: Exercise 2 is adapted from "15.5 – Modal Auxiliaries" In *Writing for Success* by University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing, licensed under CC BY-NC- 4.0.

Key Takeaways

- The basic formula for using a modal auxiliary is
  subject + modal auxiliary + main verb
- There are ten main modal auxiliaries in English: *can*, *could*, *may*, *might*, *shall*, *should*, *will*, *would*, *must*, and *ought to*.
- The four common types of errors when using modals include the following: using an infinitive instead of a base verb after a modal, using a gerund instead of an infinitive or a base verb after a modal, using two modals in a row, and leaving out a modal.
- In the present perfect tense, when a sentence has a modal auxiliary before the verb, the helping verb is always *have*.
- The two common errors when using modals in the present perfect tense include using *had* instead of *have* and leaving out *have*.

Writing Application

On a separate sheet of paper, write ten original sentences using modal auxiliaries.

Attribution & References

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Notes

1. 1. has laughed
   2. have croaked
   3. have smiled
   4. have cheered
   5. has giggled

15.6 - PREPOSITIONS

Learning Objectives

- Identify prepositions.
- Learn how and when to use prepositions.

A preposition is a word that connects a noun or a pronoun to another word in a sentence. Most prepositions such as *above*, *below*, and *behind* usually indicate a location in the physical world, but some prepositions such as *during*, *after*, and *until* show location in time.

In, *At*, and *On*

The prepositions *in*, *at*, and *on* are used to indicate both location and time, but they are used in specific ways. Study the following tables to learn when to use each one.

Table 1 – *In*

Preposition	Time	Example	Place	Example
in	year	in 1942	country	in Zimbabwe
	month	in August	state	in California
	season	in the summer	city	in Chicago
	time of day (not with *night*)	in the afternoon		

Table 2 – *On*

Preposition	Time	Example	Place	Example
on	day	on Monday	surfaces	on the table
	date	on May 23	streets	on 124th Street
	specific days/dates	on Monday	modes of transportation	on the bus

Table 3 – *At*

Preposition	Time	Example	Place	Example
at	time	at five o'clock	addresses	at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
	with *night*	at night	location	at Rooney's Grill

Exercise 1

Edit the following letter from a resident to her landlord by correcting errors with *in*, *at*, and *on*.

Dear Mrs. Salazar,
I am writing this letter to inform you that I will be vacating apartment 2A in 356 Maple Street at Wednesday, June 30, 2010. I will be cleaning the apartment at the Monday before I leave. I will return the keys to you on 5 p.m., sharp, at June 30. If you have any questions or specific instructions for me, please contact me in my office. I have enjoyed living at Toronto, Ontario, but I want to explore other parts of the country now.
Sincerely,
Milani Davis

Prepositions after Verbs

Prepositions often follow verbs to create expressions with distinct meanings. These expressions are sometimes called prepositional verbs. It is important to remember that these expressions cannot be separated.

Table 4 – Verbs + Prepositions

Verb + Preposition	Meaning	Example
agree with	to agree with something or someone	My husband always **agrees with** me.
apologize for	to express regret for something, to say sorry about something	I **apologize for** being late.
apply for	to ask for something formally	I will **apply for** that job.
believe in	to have a firm conviction in something; to believe in the existence of something	I **believe in** educating the world's women.
care about	to think that someone or something is important	I **care about** the health of our oceans.
hear about	to be told about something or someone	I **heard about** the teachers' strike.
look after	to watch or to protect someone or something	Will you **look after** my dog while I am on vacation?
talk about	to discuss something	We will **talk about** the importance of recycling.
speak to, with	to talk to/with someone	I will **speak to** his teacher tomorrow.
wait for	to await the arrival of someone or something	I will **wait for** my package to arrive.

Tip

It is a good idea to memorize these combinations of verbs plus prepositions. Write them down in a notebook along with the definition and practice using them when you speak.

Exercise 2

Exercise 2 (Text Version)

Complete the following sentences by writing the correct preposition after the verb.

1. Charlotte does not _____ (apologize for, believe in) aliens or ghosts.
2. It is impolite to _____ (hear about, talk about) people when they are not here.
3. Herman said he was going to _____ (believe in, apply for) the internship.
4. Jonas would not _____ (talk about, apologize for) eating the last piece of cake.
5. I _____ (care about, agree with) the environment very much.

Check Your Answers: [1]

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Prepositions after Adjectives

Similar to prepositions after verbs, prepositions after adjectives create expressions with distinct meanings unique to English. Remember, like prepositional verbs, these expressions also cannot be separated.

Table 5 – Adjectives + Prepositions

Adjective + Preposition	Meaning	Example
angry at, about	to feel or show anger toward (or about) someone or something	I am **angry about** the oil spill in the ocean.
confused about	to be unable to think with clarity about someone or something.	Shawn was **confused about** the concepts presented at the meeting.
disappointed in, with	to feel dissatisfaction with someone or something	I was **disappointed in** my husband because he voted for that candidate.
dressed in	to clothe the body	He was **dressed in** a pin-striped suit.
happy for	to show happiness for someone or something	I was **happy for** my sister who graduated from college.
interested in	giving attention to something, expressing interest	I am **interested in** musical theater.
jealous of	to feel resentful or bitter toward someone or something (because of their status, possessions, or ability)	I was **jealous of** her because she always went on vacation.
thankful for	to express thanks for something	I am **thankful for** my wonderful friends.
tired of	to be disgusted with, have a distaste for	I was **tired of** driving for hours without end.
worried about	to express anxiety or worry about something	I am **worried about** my father's health.

Exercise 3

Exercise 3 (Text Version)

Complete the following sentences by writing the correct preposition after the verb.

1. Meera was deeply _____ (interested in, thankful for) marine biology.
2. I was _____ (jealous of, disappointed in) the season finale of my favorite show.
3. Jordan won the race, and I am _____ (happy for, interested in) him.

4. The lawyer was _____ (thankful for, confused about) the details of the case.
5. Chloe was _____ (dressed in, tired of) a comfortable blue tunic.

Check Your Answers: [2]

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Tip

The following adjectives are always followed by the preposition *at*:

- Good

  She is really **good at** chess.
- Excellent

  Henry is **excellent at** drawing.
- Brilliant

  Mary Anne is **brilliant at** playing the violin.

Key Takeaways

- The prepositions *in*, *at*, and *on* are used to indicate both location and time, but they are used in specific ways.
- The preposition *in* is used when expressing the following: year, month, season, time of day (not with *night*), country, state, and city.
- The preposition *on* is used to express day, date, and specific days or dates and surfaces, streets, and transportation modes.

- The preposition *at* is used for expressions of time, with *night*, and with addresses and locations.
- Prepositions often follow verbs to create expressions with distinct meanings that are unique to English.
- Prepositions also follow adjectives to create expressions with distinct meanings that are unique to English.

Writing Application

Write about a happy childhood memory using as many prepositions followed by verbs and adjectives as you can. Use at least ten. When you are finished, exchange papers with a classmate and correct any preposition errors you find.

Attribution & References

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Notes

1. 1. believe in
   2. talk about
   3. apply for
   4. apologize for
   5. care about
2. 1. interested in
   2. disappointed in
   3. happy for
   4. confused about
   5. dressed in

15.7 - SLANG AND IDIOMS

Learning Objectives

- Recognize slang and idioms.
- Learn to avoid using slang and idioms in formal writing.

Words are the basis of how a reader or listener judges you, the writer and speaker. When you write an academic paper or speak in a business interview, you want to be sure to choose your words carefully. In our casual, everyday talk, we often use a lot of "ums," "likes," "yeahs," and so on. This everyday language is not appropriate for formal contexts, such as academic papers and business interviews. You should switch between different ways of speaking and writing depending on whether the context is formal or informal.

Slang

Hey guys, let's learn about slang and other cool stuff like that! It will be awesome, trust me. This section is off the hook!

What do you notice about the previous paragraph? You might notice that the language sounds informal, or casual, like someone might talk with a friend or family member. The paragraph also uses a lot of slang . Slang is a type of language that is informal and playful. It often changes over time. The slang of the past is different than the slang of today, but some slang has carried over into the present. Slang also varies by region and culture. The important thing to understand is that slang is casual talk, and you should avoid using it in formal contexts. There are literally thousands of slang words and expressions. Table 1 "Slang Expressions" explains just a few of the more common terms.

Table 1 – Slang Expressions

Slang Word or Phrase	Meaning
check it out, check this out	v. look at, watch, examine
chocoholic, workaholic, shopaholic	n. a person who loves, is addicted to chocolate/work/shopping
stuff	n. things (used as a singular, noncount noun)
taking care of business	doing things that need to be done
pro	n. a person who is a professional
crack up	v. to laugh uncontrollably
veg (sounds like the *veg* in *vegetable*)	v. relax and do nothing
dude, man	n. person, man
all-nighter	n. studying all night
cool	adj. good, fashionable
gross, nasty	adj. disgusting
pig out	v. eat a lot, overeat
screw up	v. make a mistake
awesome	adj. great

Exercise 1

Edit the business e-mail by replacing any slang words and phrases with more formal language.

Dear Ms. O'Connor:
I am writing to follow up on my interview from last week. First of all, it was awesome to meet you. You are a really cool lady. I believe I would be a pro at all the stuff you mentioned that would be required of me in this job. I am not a workaholic, but I do work hard and "take care of business." Haha. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns.
Sincerely,
M. Ernest Anderson

Idioms

Idioms are expressions that have a meaning different from the dictionary definitions of the individual words in the expression. Because English contains many idioms, nonnative English speakers have difficulties making logical sense of idioms and idiomatic expressions. The more you are exposed to English, however, the more idioms you will come to understand. Until then, memorizing the more common idioms may be of some help.

Table 2 – Idioms

Idiom	Definition
a blessing in disguise	a good thing you do not recognize at first
a piece of cake	easy to do
better late than never	it is better to do something late than not at all
get over it	recover from something (like a perceived insult)
I have no idea	I don't know
not a chance	it will definitely not happen
on pins and needles	very nervous about something that is happening
on top of the world	feeling great
pulling your leg	making a joke by tricking another person
the sky is the limit	the possibilities are endless

What if you come across an idiom that you do not understand? There are clues that can help you. They are called context clues . Context clues are words or phrases around the unknown word or phrase that may help you decipher its meaning.

1. **Definition or explanation clue.** An idiom may be explained immediately after its use.

   Sentence: I felt like I was sitting *on pins and needles* **I was so nervous**.
2. **Restatement or synonym clues.** An idiom may be simplified or restated.

   Sentence: The young girl felt as though she had been *sent to the dog house* when her mother **punished her** for fighting in school.
3. **Contrast or Antonym clues.** An idiom may be clarified by a contrasting phrase or antonym that is near it.

Sentence: Chynna thought the 5k marathon would be *a piece of cake*, *but* **it turned out to be very difficult.**

Pay attention to the signal word *but*, which tells the reader that an opposite thought or concept is occurring.

Key Takeaways

- Informal language is not appropriate in formal writing or speaking contexts.
- Slang and idioms might not make logical sense to nonnative speakers of English.
- It is good to be aware of slang and idioms so they do not appear in your formal writing.

Writing Application

Write a short paragraph about yourself to a friend. Write another paragraph about yourself to an employer. Examine and discuss the differences in language between the two paragraphs.

Attribution & References

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15.8 - HELP FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS: END-OF-CHAPTER EXERCISES

Learning Objectives

- Use the skills you have learned in the chapter.
- Work collaboratively with other students.

Exercises

1. On a separate sheet of paper, create questions from the following sentences.
    a. My daughter will have to think about her college options.
    b. Otto is waiting in the car for his girlfriend.
    c. The article talks about conserving energy.
    d. We need to reduce our needs.
    e. Rusha is always complaining about her work.
2. Underline the prepositional phrase in each of the following sentences.
    a. Monica told us about her trip.
    b. I hope we have sunshine throughout the summer.
    c. The panther climbed up the tree.

d. The little boy was standing behind his mother's legs.
e. We stayed awake until dawn.

3. Place the following sets of adjectives in the correct order before the noun.

   a. eyes: black, mesmerizing
   b. jacket: vintage, orange, suede
   c. pineapple: ripe, yellow, sweet
   d. vacation: fun, skiing
   e. movie: hilarious, independent

4. On a separate sheet of paper, rewrite the positive sentences as negative sentences. Be sure to keep the sentences in the present tense.

   a. Sometimes I work on Saturdays.
   b. The garden attracts butterflies and bees.
   c. He breathes loudly at night.
   d. I chew on blades of grass in the summer time.
   e. I communicate well with my husband.

5. On a separate sheet of paper, rewrite the following paragraph by correcting the double negatives.

   That morning it was so hot Forrest felt like he couldn't hardly breathe. Ain't nothing would get him out the door into that scorching heat. Then he remembered his dog, Zeus, who started whining right then. Zeus was whining and barking so much that Forrest didn't have no choice but to get off the couch and face the day. That dog didn't do nothing but sniff around the bushes and try to stay in the shade while Forrest was sweating in the sun holding the leash. He couldn't not wait for winter to come.

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UPDATE & CHANGE LOG

Updates

August 16, 2024

- Updates to section 1.4 – Academic Integrity to reflect updated Georgian College policy
- Updates to front matter – Tutoring information
- Updated PowerPoint files – design to match textbook cover
- Updated PDF files for download on Accessing this OER page

December, 2023

- Addition of section 13.5 – Plain Language
- COMM1016 Tutoring information updated
- Minor updates throughout the semester to correct specific errors in sections 3.3, 9.4, 11.7
- Updates to heading structure to properly nest end of page Attribution & References on most pages

September 1, 2023

View this version of the text (archived from September, 2023) in PDF for Print or Digital PDF format

- Third author added, cover image updated to Georgian template
- COMM1016 Tutoring information added to front matter of book – Fall 2023 pilot
- Section 1.1, exercise 2 updated – the link to file on Conference Board of Canada now requires a login, so the relevant information has been cited & referenced instead of forcing students to login – activity is the same
- Small updates to formatting of YouTube links (improves Print PDF)
- PDF files have been exported, streamlined, and added as links to the Accessing this textbook page, as well as the main page – default Pressbooks exports have been

removed due to large file size) and replaced with compressed PDFs.

April 24, 2023

View this version of the text (archived from April, 2023) in PDF for Print or Digital PDF format

- Accessing & Using this textbook page enhanced and streamlined to include more resources/links for students
- Note to educators added to For Educators (PDF) and Ancillary Resources for Educators (web book) pages
- Chapter 1 – section 1.4: Academic Integrity added
- Chapter 3 – minor updates throughout to indicate the need for/use of research in essay planning, outlining etc. Added links to later chapters for continuity.
  - Updates to writing samples: updated topics, in-text citation & references
- Chapter 4 – minor updates throughout to indicate where research would be included for academic writing. Added links to later chapters for continuity.
  - Updates to writing samples: updated topics, in-text citation & references
- Chapter 5 – Sample research essays in sections 5.1, 5.2, 5.3
  - Create/update PDF version of paper to demonstrate proper APA document format
  - Replaced existing samples with research paper examples in 5.1 and 5.2 (includes references/citations & APA document formatting)
  - Added formatting note to text-version of paper re: APA document format (enhances PDF version)
  - Section 5.1, 5.2, & 5.3 – Online essay links removed/updated (invalid links)
- Chapter 7 – Sample research essays in Sections 7.3, 7.5, 7.6, 7.7
  - Create/update PDF version of paper to demonstrate proper APA document format
  - Added indicators of where research supports the writing in sentence outline for section 7.5
  - Added formatting note to text-version of paper re: APA document format
  - Added Longer research essay sample (student work, used with permission)
  - Added sample Annotated Bibliography
- Section 8.3, 8.5, 8.6 – updated the sample resources to use openly licensed publications. Updates to PDF version to improve user experience.
- Section 8.16 – updates to the section that demonstrates APA heading levels for

student comprehension
- Section 11.5 – updates to streamline the section
- Sections 12.2 & 12.3 – corrections to issues in quotes and semi-colon exercises
- Glossary of terms – Added to webbook
- Summary PPTs updated to reflect above changes
- PDF by chapter files updated

December 15, 2022

View this version of the text (archived from Jan 2023) in PDF for Print or Digital PDF format

- Accessing and Using this text landing page created
- Replaced compare/contrast essay outline diagrams in section 5.1
- Changed/added existing content to Georgian Writing Centre videos in sections 8.1, 8.9, 8.12, 8.16
- Embedded PDF version of essay example in 7.2, text version added for PDF export
- Small updates for screenreader experience with text versions of H5P/writing activities throughout the text (identifying fill in the blank spaces, ordered lists)
- H5P activities added to Chapters 11-15
- Updated some headings for consistency/user experience
- Summary PowerPoint files added to "Ancillary Resources for Educators" in back matter
- Updated PDF files generated & posted.
- PDF format changes to improve readability/user experience:
    - Title pages amended for each chapter, to allow for the creation of individual PDFs by chapter
    - Answers to exercises changed to endnotes at end of each section/chapter, labelled Notes
    - Body text/font changed to a sans serif font
    - Underlined links removed
    - Headings made bold
    - Added glossary page to back matter of book (embedded in some chapters in web book)

August 30, 2022

- Added custom book cover & relevant attribution
- Added section 8.16 – APA Document formatting
- Ancillary resources (Summary slides & quiz bank) created
- Interactive H5P activities added to several sections
- Text versions of H5P added to improve accessibility & offline/PDF user experience
- Work to streamline/improve PDF exports for Print & electronic access
- Accessibility and user experience updates throughout book

February 25, 2022

- Original publication

GLOSSARY

cheating

Georgian College's Academic Integrity regulations (2024-2025) state:

"Cheating is the use of inappropriate, prohibited, or unacknowledged materials, information aids, or misrepresentation in any academic work. The unauthorized use of books, notes, online resources, electronic technology (including, but not limited to calculators, cell phones, tablets, voice and video recorders, and generative artificial intelligence (AI) (e.g., Chat GPT, Quilbot, list not inclusive) as well as conversation with others is restricted or forbidden in many instances of academic work and their use constitutes cheating. You may not request others (including commercial or free term-paper organizations) or any other form of unauthorized assistance to conduct research or prepare any work for you. In addition, you may not distribute or receive an examination, test or other course material that are not obtained with the permission of the professor."

(Georgian College, 2024, 8.2.1).

credential

What makes you an authority on the subject – usually education or experience.

deck

Slide Deck: a group of slides. Also called a powerpoint, a presentation, or presentation slides

fabrication

Georgian College's Academic Integrity regulations (2024-2025) state:

"Fabrication is the falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic work or program and employment documentation.

You must never falsify a record of any kind, nor permit another person to do so. Fabricating academic work, program and employment records includes, but is not limited to clinical permits, criminal reference checks, co-op jobs, placements, employer or placement supervisor evaluation, signatures, misrepresentation of

academic credentials from other institutions, or submitting false information for the purpose of gaining admission or credits. An example of fabrication is making up data results for a lab or providing references which are not real."

(Georgian College, 2024, 8.2.2).

feedback

A dreadful echoing screech loop created by your mic picking up sound from your speakers

fight or flight

An automatic physical response to fear or stress

headshot

Small, well-lit photo of your head and shoulders, looking at the camera

plagiarism

Georgian College's Academic Integrity regulations (2024-2025) state:

"Plagiarism is the representation of another's words, computer code, design solution or ideas as your own regardless of how they are generated in any academic work. Whenever you use words, code, design, or ideas that are not your own when submitting scholarly work, you must cite your sources with an in-text citation, use quotation marks where appropriate, and include a list of references for the sources cited. Failure to do this constitutes plagiarism.

You must not allow anyone access to the work you have prepared for evaluation, whether in a test, examination, or assignment, etc. You are the only one who should receive credit for what you know, unless prior agreement has been reached with the faculty that group work (and group credit) is allowed. Therefore, publishing work on a public repository (ex. Course Hero) is prohibited.

Plagiarism of any part of a work is a breach of academic integrity; there is no partial responsibility. To avoid plagiarism, every source of information must be identified and properly documented according to an established writing convention determined by your faculty, for example, Georgian College Library Citation Guidelines, American Psychological Association (APA) style. Faculty have the right to request that you submit your work for electronic text matching and may ask you to submit proof of paper development, including your notes and drafts.

Self-plagiarism is the resubmission of previous work or portions of work from

another course or from the same course if you are repeating a course, without the permission of the current faculty. Self-plagiarism of any part of your work is a breach of academic integrity; there is no partial responsibility."

(Georgian College, 2024, 8.2.3).

RSVP

Let someone know if you'll attend an event or not

storyboard

A visual outline of your presentation

team home

A place where all documents, files and decisions reside.

Thinking on your feet

The ability to respond quickly and effectively to unexpected situations or questions.

unauthorized use of AI tools

Unless your assignment, course syllabus or professor specifically states that you may use artificial intelligence tools to complete your work, you are not permitted to use them. Georgian's Academic Integrity regulations mention the unauthorized use of AI tools (among others) in Section 8.2.1 - Cheating.

Artificial Intelligence tools include (but aren't limited to) ChatGPT, other chatbots, paraphrasing or summarizing tools, word switchers or other technological tools that generate, translate, or rewrite text or ideas for you. If you're not sure, please ask your professor.