EmpoWORD: A Student-Centered Anthology and Handbook for College Writers

EmpoWORD: A Student-Centered Anthology and Handbook for College Writers

SHANE ABRAMS

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Contents

Acknowledgements

This project would not have been possible without the kind and generous support of my communities.

I am very grateful to Alex Dannemiller for his contributions to the content of this book, as well as his support as a peer reviewer. This book also integrates meaningful contributions from Jarrod Dunham, Karolinn Fiscalleti, Paul Lask, and Brian Gazaille. Further thanks to Jessica Lee and Brian Gazaille for serving as peer reviewers, and to Bridget Carrick for copy editing.

I would also like to thank the former students whose work has inspired and will sustain this book. While some have chosen to remain anonymous, the others are cited in the table of contents and the endnotes of sections in which their work appears. These students have not only shaped my pedagogy and worldview, but have (and continue to) inspire the many students who have followed in their paths and continue on to forge their own.

For their mentorship and inspiration, and especially those concepts that have become so integral to my teaching that they are here in this book, I thank Daniel Hershel, Michael Stuart, Susan Kirtley, Leni Zumas, Rachel Brett, Lily Harris, Leah Arvanitis, Mark Davies, Jeffrey Pegram, and Christine Potter.

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And, lastly, I would be remiss to forget Linnea Wilhjelm, who has not simply tolerated my stress and whining throughout the duration

of composing this text, but instead met it with patience, love, and encouragement.

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How to Use This Book – Instructors

First, I'd like to thank you for adopting this book (or at least considering it) for your class. I know the nightmare that textbook adoption can be, and I hope this serves your students' needs as a primary textbook or a supplementary material.

This text was inspired by my first year as a Graduate Teaching Assistant at Portland State University. I walked into a classroom of first-year students, transfer students, international students, and returning students, all of whom had shelled out $70 for textbooks required by the department. As I planned each lesson, I had this figure in my mind: sure, it wasn't the most expensive part of college, but my students would feel ripped off if I didn't use the anthology and instructional handbook that they had been required to purchase.

Both of those books fell quite short. As with any anthology, the selected texts were great, but the scope left a lot to be desired. As with any textbook, the instruction was solid but had different priorities than I had. Nevertheless, I still felt obliged to teach them.

In contrast, this text is free. On the student side, this is great news, but it's also great for us as teachers. You can use this book in its entirety, or use none of it. You can pick and choose model texts, or you can teach exclusively from one section. Because there is no cost associated with this book, you should feel no obligation to use it in a way that students "get their money's worth."

In addition to this advantage, this text afforded me a handful of other opportunities. First, as a digital product, it increases accessibility for students with disabilities. Additionally, because you can use it anywhere with an Internet connection, it is more readily available to non-traditional or distance learning students. Next,

because it is zero-cost, it reduces the barrier to access for students entering college, especially from low-income backgrounds.

These characteristics are representative of broader trends in Open Educational Resources (OER), but I'd like to think that other things set this textbook apart: predominantly, I envision this book as a space to advocate for a student-centered writing pedagogy that at once embraces expressivist and social constructivist paradigms of rhetoric. This isn't the first time a book has pursued this goal, but I consider my approach a valuable contribution to buoying the perception of value in student writing.

Student-Centered Writing and Learning Communities

Before going any further, I want to acknowledge one major goal of this text: to advocate for student-centered pedagogy that fosters learning communities. Most of the texts that make this a *reader*-rhetoric are actual student work that I've encountered over my career as a teacher. This is a deliberate choice which responds to a problem that I have observed: the texts in anthologies are almost always and almost exclusively by professional writers. While this sets, perhaps, a higher standard, it also trains students to think that polished, publishable, and impactful writing is not accessible to them—that it is a different echelon of creativity and mastery. It teaches them that they should imitate the people who write well with the understanding that their writing will never be quite as good.

Teacher Takeaways

Reactions from actual college professors are included in boxes like these.

By the same logic that representations of people of color, different genders, different ability statuses, and so on are important to those who experience oppression, representing student writing in this book allows students to envision themselves in the role of author. This text showcases outstanding student work as evidence that students are very capable of producing beautiful, moving, thorough, thoughtful, and well-informed rhetoric.

To this end, I have edited student work as minimally as possible, foregoing stylistic and some mechanical issues. The use of student writing, in addition to its primary objective of representation, also relates to this book's focus on writing as *process*, not *product*. We'll discuss this further in the General Introduction, but I want to give you fair warning that the student essays included here would not meet some readers' standards of "perfect." They exemplify some strategies very well, but may fall short in other domains. Therefore, it's important to regularly remind students that no text is perfect; no text is free of bias or ideology. The texts might spark discussions; they might serve as exemplars for assignments; they could even serve as focus texts for analysis. Regardless, though, I encourage you to read critically with your students, unpacking not only the content but also the construction of the rhetoric itself.

Professional authors and teachers know that a piece of writing is never actually finished—that there are always ways to challenge, reimagine, or polish a text. I encourage you to teach both professional and student model texts with this in mind: ask your students, *What does this author do well, and what could they do better? In what ways are they fulfilling the imperatives of the rhetorical situation, and what advice would you give them to improve?* To support this critical perspective, each text included in the main sections of the book is followed by a "Teacher Takeaway": ideas from college professors reacting to the work at hand. While these takeaways are not comprehensive, they offer a starting point for you and your students to interpret the strengths of a model text.

I see student-centered curriculum as necessarily invested in what I call learning community. No matter how much support I provide

for my students, their opportunities for growth multiply exponentially with the support of their classmates and college resources (like a Writing Center or research librarian).

I build a good deal of time into my classes for community-building for a handful of reasons:

- **Writing doesn't exist in a vacuum**. Almost all writing involves an exchange between a writer and their audience. Even on the professional level, the best writing is produced collaboratively, using feedback from a cohort of trusted peers. However, many of our students have been trained to believe that their schoolwork is their business and no one else's—or, at best, that their sole audience is the red-pen-toting teacher. Instead, this text emphasizes collaboration to model real-world writing situations.
- **Writing is hard**. Writing is hard because learning is hard: growth only occurs under challenging circumstances. Additionally, whether our students are writing a personal narrative or a research essay, they are putting themselves in a position of vulnerability. While the concept of an entirely "safe space" is largely a myth, it is important that they feel supported by their classmates and their instructor to ensure that this vulnerability is productive.
- **Communities are, to some extent, horizontal**. The vertical power dynamic that plagues many college classrooms, where the all-knowing teacher deposits knowledge into their ignorant students, must be dismantled for true learning to take place. Students need to be able to claim the knowledge and skills they build in the classroom, and they can only do so if they feel they have a stake in the mission and operation of the class.[1]
- **Communities have shared goals and values, but also diversity within them**. Each member might have a different path to those goals, might have different needs along the way, might have additional individual goals—but there's value in

acknowledging the destinations we pursue together.

- **Learning communities are not just communities of learners, but also communities *that* learn**. I've taught awesome classes, and I've taught classes that I dreaded attending. But all of those classes have had one thing in common: they were never exactly what I expected. It is crucial to acknowledge that no matter how much planning we do, our communities will have unanticipated strengths, needs, successes, and failures. Communities that learn *adapt* to their internal idiosyncrasies in order to make shared goals more accessible to everyone. Furthermore, the skills and concepts for building community that your students learn with carry them forth to shape their future communities.

I will take a moment to clarify: the concept of the learning community is not simply a classroom management technique or a pedagogical suggestion. Rather, I find the learning experience inherent in building and sustaining a community to be inextricable from learning about composition. Developing writers have more to offer one another than any textbook could. Although this book seeks to provide pragmatic and meaty instruction on writing skills, it is from this core assumption that I operate:

Writers write best among other writers. Learners learn best among other learners.

Rhetorical Situations

In this book, I also encourage a deep consideration of writing as a dynamic response to a *rhetorical situation*. I think we can all acknowledge that different circumstances, different audiences, different subjects require different kinds of writing. This variability demands that we think more expansively and critically about *genre*, language, style, and medium. It also requires us to acknowledge that there is no monolithic, static, singular model of "good" writing,

contrary to what some traditionalists believe—and what many of our students have been trained to believe.

The realization that "good" writing cannot be essentialized is not groundbreaking in the field of rhetoric: indeed, we have known for thousands of years that audience and purpose should influence message and delivery. However, it often *is* groundbreaking for students today who have learned from both hidden and explicit curricula that certain dialects, styles, or perspectives are valued in academia.

Shifting the paradigm—from "How do I write right?" to "How do I respond to the nuanced constraints of my rhetorical situation?"—requires a lot of unlearning. As your students try to unpack more and more complex rhetorical situations, support them by deliberately talking through the constituent elements of the rhetorical situation and the preferred modes and languages utilized therein. The question I use to turn my students focus to the rhetorical situation is, *How will the subject, occasion, audience, and purpose of this situation influence the way we write?*

Why this focus? My emphasis on rhetorical situations is twofold:

- **To sharpen and complicate students' thinking**. On a more abstract level, I advocate for critical consumption and production of rhetoric as a fundamental goal of composition instruction. If we, as educators, want to empower our students as thinkers and agents within the world, we must equip them with the habits to challenge the texts and ideas that surround them.
- **To prepare students for future writing situations**. On a more pragmatic level, I don't think it's possible to teach students all of the ways they will need to know how to write in their lives—especially not in a single college term. Instead of teaching rules for writing (rules which will invariably change), I argue for teaching questions about writing situations. Students will be better prepared for future writing situations if they can analyze a rhetorical situation, determine how that situation's

constraints will influence their writing, and produce a text that is tailored to that situation.

Keep in mind that many of your students don't think about (or have been taught to actively *not-think* about) language as dynamic and adaptable, so you will need to provide scaffolding that gradually initiates them into the interrogation of rhetorical situation. Reflect on your own experiences writing: how did you learn to carefully choose a vocabulary and perspective that engages your audience? When did you realize that your purpose would determine your style, length, or content?

I also encourage you to gesture to the many forms that rhetoric takes. Although you are likely using this book for a class with "Writing" in the title, another primary goal of this book is to advocate for critical consumption and production of rhetoric in all its forms. *EmpoWord* is centered on the nonfiction essay form (in order to satisfy the typical academic requirements of foundational college courses), but very little of the writing, reading, speaking, and listening our students do is in traditional essay form. You can contribute to their critical encounters with all kinds of media and rhetoric that permeate their lives.

Assignments and Activities

Depending on your course schedule and your pedagogical priorities, the content of this book may be too much to teach in one term. I imagined this book as my ideal curriculum: if I could move at a breakneck pace, teach everything I wanted perfectly and efficiently, and expect quick and painless work from all of my students, my course would probably follow this text directly.

However, this has never been and will likely never be the case. Teaching is a game of adaptation: we must be flexible, responding to our constraints and our students' particular needs. To that end,

I encourage you to pick and choose the units, assignments, and activities that you find most valuable. I also encourage you to tailor those units, assignments, and activities to your particular class by adding parameters, providing supplementary materials, opening up discussions, and locating assignments in the sociogeographical place in which you find your class.[2] You can also zoom in on certain chapters and create your own corresponding assignments, curriculum, or activities: for instance, if you wanted students to write a purely descriptive essay, rather than a descriptive personal narrative that includes reflection, you could teach from the chapter on description, expand it using your own materials and related resources, and modify the culminating assignment appropriately.

All that said, another major goal of this text is to provide support to developing instructors. Especially if this is your first experience teaching, you are more than welcome to use this text to structure and develop your syllabus, conduct activities, and prepare assignments. Rely on this text as much as you find it useful.

One major insight I have gained from teaching this book in its pilot version is that students learn more when I block out time to discuss the activities after they have been completed. Each activity in this text is designed to help practice a discrete skill, but developing writers don't always make that connection right away: be sure to allow for time to debrief to explore what the students can take away from each assignment. Doing so will allow the students to translate skills more easily. Furthermore, they will also reveal learning that you may not have anticipated, providing for rich in-class discussion.

Navigation

This textbook is organized according to the following general formula:

Section Topic
Section Introduction

Chapter on a Rhetorical Mode or Skill
    Instruction
    Activities
    Model Student Work
Chapter on a Rhetorical Mode or Skill
    Instruction
    Activities
    Model Student Work
Chapter on a Rhetorical Mode or Skill
    Instruction
    Activities
    Model Student Work
Culminating Assignment
    Rubric
    Guidelines for Peer Workshop
    Model Student Work

Under "Additional Readings," you will find more sample work by both student and professional authors. "Additional Recommend Resources" includes direction to some of my favorite supplementary materials.

You can take a more specific look at either Table of Contents. (The second provides detail on the readings included.)

Chapter Vocabulary

term	definition
term	definition

Key words and concepts are formatted like this the first time they appear, and they are defined briefly in the Glossary. Near the beginning of each chapter, you will find a table of vocabulary, like the one to the left, for terms used in that chapter.

You should feel free to bounce around between Chapters and Sections as you feel it is appropriate to your course.

Feedback

As with any piece of writing, I acknowledge that this textbook will never really be "finished": it could always be better. I wholeheartedly welcome your feedback—on content, format, style, accessibility, or otherwise—as I continue ongoing revisions to this text. Please do not hesitate to contact me with your criticism, positive or negative, at shaneabrams.professional@gmail.com.

Chapter Vocabulary

Vocabulary	**Definition**
learning community	a network of learners and teachers, each equipped and empowered to provide support through horizontal power relations. Values diversity insofar as it encourages growth and perspective, but also inclusivity. Also, a community that learns by adapting to its unique needs and advantages.
genre	a specific category, subcategory, style, form, or medium (or combination of the above) of rhetoric. A genre may have a "generic imperative," which is an expectation or set of expectations an audience holds for a particular genre of rhetoric; the foundational assumptions that particular genres carry.
rhetorical situation	the circumstances in which rhetoric is produced, understood using the constituent elements of subject, occasion, audience, and purpose. Each element of the rhetorical situation carries assumptions and imperatives about the kind of rhetoric that will be well received. Rhetorical situation will also influence mode and medium.

Endnotes

1 This is, of course, a call out to Paulo Freire and the school of popular/critical pedagogy and social justice education. While it's beyond the scope of the book to consider the intersection of critical pedagogy and writing pedagogy, the two are inseparable for me.

2 Place-based education is the pedagogical manifestation of the mantra, "Think Globally; Act Locally." It informs what I consider to be the most relevant pedagogy and curriculum. It also draws from the important movements of decolonizing and Indigenous pedagogies. As your students work through this text, try to find ways to make it relevant to the local community: students can complete a micro-ethnography in a place unique to your location; students could choose research topics that are relevant to the local scene; students could analyze op-eds from the local newspaper. To learn more, I encourage you to seek out texts by David Sobel, Vine Deloria, Daniel Wildcat, Matthew Wildcat, and Steven Semken, among others.

How to Use This Book – Students

Welcome, students! Whether this textbook has been assigned for your class or you've discovered this book on your own and are teaching yourself, I hope it is an accessible and enjoyable resource to support your learning about writing, rhetoric, and the world.

Although your instructor may provide more specific information on how they want you to use this text, I will provide a bit of guidance to help you acclimate to it.

Student-Centered Writing and Learning Communities

First and foremost, I want to acknowledge one major goal of this text: to center the student learning experience among a community of learners. Most of the exemplar texts included here are actual student work that I've encountered over my career as a teacher. Almost always, the texts in anthologies are exclusively by professional writers. While this sets a high standard, many of my students tend to think that polished, publishable, and impactful writing is not theirs to create. Instead, this text showcases outstanding student work as evidence that you, and other student authors like you, are very capable of producing beautiful, moving, thorough, thoughtful, and well-informed rhetoric.

Furthermore, the use of student writing relates to this book's focus on writing as *process*, not *product*. We'll discuss this further in the General Introduction, but I want to give you fair warning that the student essays included here would not meet some readers' standards of "perfect." They exemplify some techniques very well, but may fall short in other domains. These student authors, just like professional authors, realize that a piece of writing is never actually

finished; there are always ways to challenge, reimagine, or polish a text. As you read model texts, whether they are written by students or professional authors, you should ask yourself, *What does this author do well, and what could they do better? In what ways are they fulfilling the imperatives of the rhetorical situation, and what advice would I give them to improve?* To support this critical perspective, each text included in the main sections of the book is followed by a "Teacher Takeaway": ideas from college professors reacting to the work at hand. While these takeaways are not comprehensive, they offer a starting point for you to interpret the strengths of a model text.

Teacher Takeaways

Reactions from actual college professors are included in boxes like these.

As I see it, the best educational experiences happen in what I call *learning community*. No matter how much support one teacher can provide for their students, your opportunities for growth multiply exponentially with the support of your classmates and college resources (like a Writing Center or research librarian).

It's important to consider your writing class as one very particular learning community. Doing so acknowledges that:

- **Writing doesn't exist in a vacuum**. Almost all writing involves an exchange between a writer and a reader. Even on the professional level, the best writing is produced collaboratively, using feedback from a cohort of trusted peers. You may have been trained to believe that your schoolwork is your business and no one else's. This text emphasizes collaboration instead: we can be more successful, confident writers with the support

of the readers around us.

- **Writing is hard**. Learning, and especially learning to write, demands a certain amount of vulnerability. By working from a place of shared vulnerability, you will discover ways to ensure that vulnerability is productive and maintain a certain degree of safety and support through a challenging process. My students are often pleasantly surprised by how much more meaningful their learning experience is when approached with an investment in shared vulnerability.
- **Communities are, to some extent, horizontal**. The vertical power dynamic that plagues many classrooms, where the all-knowing teacher deposits knowledge into their ignorant students, must be dismantled for true learning to take place. You need to be able to claim the knowledge and skills you build in the classroom, and you can only do so if you feel you have a stake in the mission of the class.
- **Communities have shared goals and values, but also diversity within them**. Each member might have a different path to that goal, might have different needs along the way, might have additional individual goals—but there's value in acknowledging the destinations we pursue together.
- **Learning communities are not just communities of learners, but also communities *that* learn**. No matter your expectations for your writing course, our communities will have unanticipated strengths, needs, successes, and failures. Communities that learn adapt to their unique makeup in order to make shared goals more accessible to everyone.

Why does this matter to you? Because building and sustaining a learning community is a valuable experience which will serve you as a writer, a student, and a citizen. Furthermore, living writers have more to offer one another than any textbook could. Writers write best among other writers. Learners learn best among other learners.

Although you will learn writing skills from this book, engaging in a learning community will allow you test and sharpen those skills.

At the same time, your future writing situations, whatever they may be, will be among complex discourse ecologies–specific groups of readers and writers with specific tastes, interests, and expectations. In this way, working within a learning community teach you to more actively evaluate your rhetorical situation.

Rhetorical Situations

In this book, you'll notice a focus on *rhetorical situations*, which are explained more thoroughly in the General Introduction. Put simply, the act of writing is a response to a rhetorical situation, and no two situations are the same. Think about the differences and similarities between the following kinds of writing:

- A letter to your grandmother about your first semester in college
- An editorial advocating for immigration reform
- An e-mail to a craigslist user about the futon you want to buy
- A flyer for a Super Smash Bros. tournament in the Student Union

Different circumstances, different audiences, and different subjects require different kinds of writing. These differences ask writers to think critically about *genre*, language, style, and medium. More importantly, it means that there is no one method for creating "good" writing, no one-size-fits-all, step-by-step guide to success, despite what some of your previous teachers may have claimed.

Because you and each member of your learning community has a vastly different future ahead of you, it would be impossible to teach you all the ways you will need to write throughout your lives–especially not in a single college term. Instead of learning rules for writing (rules which will invariably change), it is more

valuable to learn the questions you should ask of your future writing situations and produce texts that are tailored to those situations.

In this book, you will explore and work within three rhetorical situations. (The beauty of the rhetorical situation, of course, is that no two writers using this book will have the exact same constraints; nevertheless, you will share similar experiences.) Because many college composition programs value the nonfiction essay form, this textbook focuses on three different kinds of essays: a personal narrative, a textual analysis, and a persuasive research essay. The goal of writing these essays, though, is not to become a master of any of them. Instead, the goal is to practice interrogating the rhetorical situations and tailoring your work to be more effective within them.

As you learn more about rhetorical situations, think about the many forms that rhetoric takes. Although you are likely using this book for a class with "Writing" in the title, another primary goal of this book is to encourage the critical consumption and production of rhetoric in all its forms. Very little of the writing, reading, speaking, and listening you do is in traditional essay form, so the learning experiences included in this book and your class should be applied to the other sorts of reading, writing, speaking, and listening you do throughout your life: how can you bring the same thoughtfulness to a Facebook status, an online news article, a class syllabus, a conversation in the dining hall, or a Socratic discussion in class?

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rhetorical situation	the circumstances in which rhetoric is produced, understood using the c well received. Rhetorical situation will also influence mode and medium.

General Introduction

In a 2012 article published by *The Washington Post*'s "Answer Sheet" section, curated by Valerie Strauss, John G. Maguire decries the failure of college writing students and their instructors. The article, "Why So Many College Students Are Lousy at Writing–And How Mr. Miyagi Can Help," explains that many students "enter college as lousy writers–and … graduate without seeming to make much, if any, improvement."[1] The problem? College writing classes don't teach good writing. The article scorns those writing courses which cover "rhetorical strategies, research, awareness of audience, youth civic activism–everything except the production of clear sentences."[2]

Maguire's article advocates for a return to old-school instructional methods–specifically, teaching style and mechanics so that college grads can produce clear, readable sentences. Maguire concludes with a reference to a 1984 film, *The Karate Kid*. (If you haven't seen it, the film is an underdog story about an outcast teenager learning martial arts from a caring but mysterious karate master, Mr. Miyagi.) Maguire asserts, "I'm a teacher, and I know what Mr. Miyagi did – he tricked the kid into learning. He got him to do important behaviors first, and didn't reveal where they fit into the overall skill until later." He continues,

> [Colleges] should offer new writing courses that assume *students know nothing* about sentences and train new sentence behaviors from the ground up. Be repetitive and tricky–*fool the kids* into doing the right thing. Create muscle memory. Think "wax on, wax off." The kid's goal was to win the karate contest. The student writer's goal should be *mastery of the readable style*.[3]

So, according to Maguire, more teachers should "trick" students

into learning grammar and style, only to reveal to the students at some faraway time that they knew how to write all along.

In case you can't already tell, I am very resistant to this article. I introduce it not because I have an axe to grind, but rather because I find it demonstrates essential misconceptions about writing that many people share. I have taken to teaching this text on the first day of class to show my students what they're up against: teachers, readers, parents, *The Washington Post* reporters, and many, many others who assume that (a) there is one "correct" kind of writing, and (b) today's students have no idea how to execute it.

I refer to the perspective in the Strauss and Maguire text as *the complaint tradition*,[4] and it's probably something you've encountered plenty of times. With every generation, some older folks can't wrap their minds around how terrible the following generation is. *Those kids can't write, they spend too much time on their phones, back in my day we used to play outside and movies only cost a nickel.* It's easy to write Maguire off right away here, but let's unpack a couple of key quotes to better understand what we're working against.

"[Colleges] should offer new writing courses that assume *students know nothing* about sentences and train new sentence behaviors from the ground up. Be repetitive and tricky—*fool the kids* into doing the right thing."[5]

Beyond the fact that such an assumption is simply rude, it also overlooks the fact that students actually already know a lot about using rhetoric—they do so on a daily basis, just not necessarily in the same register, style, or medium that Maguire wants. Designing a course and basing a teaching style on the assumption that "students know nothing" would be a toxic and oppressive practice. As a student, you have dedicated yourself to learning, meaning you acknowledge that you don't know everything. But this is a far cry from "knowing nothing," and what you do know is not inherently less valuable than what Maguire knows.

Furthermore, I do not believe in "repetitive and tricky" teaching that pretends to know what's best for students. Don't get me wrong,

I love *The Karate Kid*, but teaching grounded in deceit reinforces the toxic power dynamic mentioned above. It assumes that teachers know best, and that their students deserve no power in their learning environment. Teachers are not "better than" or "above" students: we have had certain experiences that position us to offer help, but that doesn't give us license to lie to you.

Most importantly, though, I believe that pedagogy should aim to be transparent. In order for you to claim the knowledge and skills you gain in a *learning community*, you need to see how you're building it, be invested in why you're doing certain work, and respond to feedback on your thinking and writing processes.

So Maguire and I have our differences on teaching philosophy; we disagree on the nature of the teacher-student relationship. If it ended there, we might 'agree to disagree.' But Maguire also drastically misunderstands the characteristics of *good writing*.

"The student writer's goal should be mastery of the readable style."[6]

Not unrelated to his beliefs on teaching and learning, Maguire's belief in a monolithic goal of "readable style" is loaded with problematic assumptions about

what the student writer's goals are, academically, personally, and professionally,

whether "mastery" is a reasonable goal for a foundational college course, and

what "readable" style is.

> Your learning community—you and the people around you—have drastically different futures ahead of you, both in school and beyond. To assume that you all want the same thing out of your writing class is myopic.
>
> You will learn plenty about writing in this book or in your class. But let's be realistic: even professional writers rarely consider themselves masters. Writing, like any art or skill, requires ongoing, lifelong practice and refinement. You will not be a master after 10, 14, or even 28 weeks—but you can always grow and improve.

Every text reflects the characteristics and values of its rhetorical situation.

What counts as "clarity" or "quality writing" is *never* static: it is always shifting as you enter new *rhetorical situations*. In short, "good writing" depends on who's reading, who's writing, why they're writing, when and where they're writing, and what they're writing about. "Good writing" *means* differently to different people in different places and different times.7

Rhetorical Situations

Throughout this text, you will be challenged to respond to different rhetorical situations through the act of writing. In other words, you will try to learn more about what "good writing" says and does in different contexts: What makes for a good story? An insightful analysis? A convincing argument? Why does it matter that we write where and when we do? What do different readers want out of a piece of writing?

By exploring and writing within different situations, you will learn skills for specific rhetorical modes, sharpen your critical literacy, and—most importantly—learn to adapt to a variety of writing circumstances that you will encounter both in and out of school. In other words, practice in different rhetorical situations will make you a more critical consumer and producer of rhetoric.

But let's back up a second. What's rhetoric?

You may have heard of a rhetorical question before—a question that someone asks you without expecting an answer. What's the point of asking a question with no answer? To somehow impact the person who hears it, maybe by making them think about an issue in a different way.

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, rhetoric is "The art of using language effectively so as to persuade or influence others, esp. the exploitation of figures of speech and other compositional techniques to this end."[8]

Very generally speaking, *rhetoric* refers to a set of strategies that authors use to connect to their readers. More often in this book, though, I use "rhetoric" to refer to any text that tries to do something to a reader, viewer, or listener. Vague, I know, but let's consider some examples that require such a vague definition:

> What other purposes do you think each of these texts might try to achieve?

An essay on capital punishment	tries	**to convince** a reader to form a particular opinion on the issue.
A T-shirt with a Boston Red Sox logo		**to rally** team spirit.
A Levi's advertisement in a magazine		**to sell** you Levi's and **to build** a brand image.
A website for Portland Community College		**to provide** resources for students, faculty, and staff.

An episode of *The Simpsons*	tries	**to entertain**, **to tell** a story, or **to make** social commentary.
The aforementioned rhetorical question		**to stimulate** reflection.
A speech to the U.N. on the Syrian Civil War		**to garner** support and humanitarian aid.

Each of these texts is rhetorical. Texts can be written or spoken; they can be images; they can be video; they can be digital or printed; they can exist for only a moment or for eons. What they try to accomplish can vary widely, from killing time to killing people.

A pattern might be emerging to you: you are perpetually surrounded by rhetoric, but you are not always aware of how it's acting on you—no one can be. But by developing your rhetorical awareness, you can perceive and interpret texts more diligently, in turn developing skills to think more independently. For that reason, this book encourages you to be both a critical consumer and also a critical producer of rhetoric, specifically in the written form.

> The goal of writing the essays in this text is to practice interrogating the rhetorical situations and tailoring your work to be more effective within them.

In this book, you will explore and work within three rhetorical situations. (The beauty of the rhetorical situation, of course, is that no two writers using this book will have the exact same constraints; nevertheless, you will share similar experiences.) Because many college composition programs value the nonfiction essay form, this textbook focuses on three different kinds of essays: a personal narrative, a textual analysis, and a persuasive research essay. The goal of writing these essays, though, is not to become a master of any of them. Instead, the goal is to practice interrogating the rhetorical situations and tailoring your work to be more effective within them.

Because the writing you will do throughout your life will take drastically different forms, you should learn to ask the right questions about the writing you need to do. Instead of learning rules for writing (rules which will invariably change), it is more valuable to learn the questions you should ask of your future writing situations and produce texts that are tailored to those situations. Whenever

you create a new piece of writing, you should ask, *What will make my writing most effective based on my rhetorical situation?*

Every text comes into being within a specific rhetorical situation and reflects the characteristics and values of that situation. Although there are many ways to break down a rhetorical situation, I use the acronym SOAP for *subject*, *occasion*, *audience*, and *purpose*.[9] These are distinct elements, but they often overlap and inform one another. Let's take a closer look:

Subject: The subject, put simply, is what you are writing about. It's the topic, the argument, the main concern of the rhetoric you are producing or consuming. Every text has at least one subject; sometimes, a text will have both an implicit and explicit subject.	**O**ccasion: Every piece of rhetoric The term *occasion* refers to the so prompt the production of a piece makes you write? How does your and history influence your writing Every text has an occasion; son stated, and other tim
Audience: The target audience for a piece of rhetoric is the person or group of people for whom you're writing. Although many people will encounter certain texts, every piece of rhetoric is designed with a certain audience in mind. Every text has at least one audience; sometimes that audience is directly addressed, and other times we have to infer.	**P**urpose: As I mentioned above, ev accomplish something. We can sta infinitive verb phrase, like "to ente explain." Every text has at least one purp obvious, and someti

Identifying these elements is only step one. What matters more are the implications that each of these elements carries. For each text you create, you should ask *What is my subject*? *What is my occasion*? *Who is my audience*? *What is my purpose*? But you should also ask *How do each of those answers influence the way I will write*?

For instance, the subject of the story of your weekend might change when you're telling your grandma instead of your friends. Your language will change as your audience changes: if you're writing a story about giraffes for a classroom of third graders, you'd better use different word choice than if you're writing a meta-analysis of giraffe population metrics for the Executive Board of the Oregon Zoo.[10] Similarly, you can imagine that writing a blog about standardized testing would be different in 2003 from the same writing in 2017.

Throughout this book, I encourage you to think critically about these rhetorical situations because there is no one version of "good writing." There is only rhetoric that is effective in its situation. Any such rhetoric is crafted through process.

Writing as Process

> "It is good to have an end to journey toward; but it is the journey that matters, in the end." – Ursula K. Le Guin

Good writing is a lot of different things, and those things are largely dependent on rhetorical situation. But how exactly do we produce effective, situationally appropriate writing with an always-moving target?

The answer lies in the difference between writing as *product* and writing as *process*. The word "writing" itself can be both a noun and a verb: a **piece** of writing, or the **act** of write-ing. Although your process will eventually lead to a product, I emphasize awareness of process to more deliberately think through the techniques and ideas that you encounter leading up to that final product in that specific situation.

Take a few minutes to think about your own writing process. From

the moment a writing project is assigned to the moment you turn the paper in and wash your hands of it completely, what happens? What are the ingredients you've found necessary to a successful recipe, so to speak?

Your answer might include the things you see on posters in high school English classrooms—pre-write, research, draft, revise, etc. —but it also likely includes some other factors—procrastination, dance breaks, coffee, existential dread, snacks, etc. You should especially account for the things that make *your* process unique. One great example is your environment: some writers prefer silence in the library; others listen to music at their desk; still others like working in a coffee shop with conversational hum in the background.

As you challenge yourself with new writing experiences, experiment with your process. By this point in your academic career, you've probably already found something that works pretty well for you, and you should give yourself credit for that. But it doesn't mean you can't enhance your process. If you're someone who usually outlines before a draft, try a free-write or a mind-map—or just jumping right into the draft. If you usually listen to music, try a different genre. If you usually fall prey to procrastination, try to bust out an early draft, give yourself a day or two off, and then come back to it.

For all the differences in individual processes, *every* effective writing process is *iterative*: unlike the neat diagrams on posters in high school English classrooms, writing requires you to circle back, repeat steps, bounce around in sequence. It demands that you write, rewrite, rerewrite. It asks you to make revisions on every scale of your drafts. Like building muscle, improving your writing (as product) and your writing (as process) require repetition, dedication, and labor over time.

In summary, remember these three key ideas:

SOAP and the rhetorical situation.

Writing is never "good," "bad," "right," or "wrong" in and of

itself: it can only be these things relative to the constraints of the rhetorical situation.

Process.

Writing is more than just putting words on the page. It begins with a careful consideration of the rhetorical situation and proceeds through recursive idea generation, drafting, and revision. Writing is never truly finished.

What to expect from the book.

EmpoWord will provide you the opportunity to experiment within different rhetorical situations to help you practice for future rhetorical situations. Alongside the work you do in class, the book will encourage you to work through complex writing and thinking processes to create rhetorically effective essays. These essays anticipate the kind of writing you will do both in school and beyond because they will give you the chance to practice asking the right questions of your rhetorical situation.

With these ideas in mind, I wish you Happy Writing!

Chapter Vocabulary

Vocabulary	**Definition**
audience	the intended consumers for a piece of rhetoric. *Every* text has at least one audience; sometimes, that audience is directly addressed, and other times we have to infer.
complaint tradition	the recurring social phenomenon in which a generation complains about the way things have changed since their earlier years. Coined by Leonard Greenbaum.
iterative	literally, a repetition within a process. The writing process is iterative because it is non-linear and because an author often has to repeat, revisit, or reapproach different steps along the way.
learning community	a network of learners and teachers, each equipped and empowered to provide support through horizontal power relations. Values diversity insofar as it encourages growth and perspective, but also inclusivity. Also, a community that learns by adapting to its unique needs and advantages.
medium	the channel, technology, or form through which rhetoric is constructed and communicated. Different rhetorical situations value different media, and different media value different kinds of rhetoric.
mode	the style and techniques employed by of a piece of rhetoric to achieve its purpose. Different rhetorical situations value different modes, and different modes value different kinds of rhetoric. Compare to genre.
occasion	the sociohistorical circumstances that prompt the production of a piece of rhetoric, determined by personal experiences, current events, language, and culture. Every text has an occasion.
process	a complex and multifaceted sequence that results in a product. As applied in "writing process," non-linear and iterative. Contrast with product.

product	the end result of a creative process. Often shows little evidence of the process that created it.
purpose	the intended result of a piece of rhetoric. Can be stated using an infinitive verb phrase ("to entertain," "to persuade," "to explain"). Every text has at least one purpose, sometimes declared explicitly, and other times implied or hidden.
rhetoric	a combination of textual strategies designed to do something to someone. In other words, 'rhetoric' refers to language, video, images, or other symbols (or some combination of these) that informs, entertains, persuades, compels, or otherwise impacts an audience.
rhetorical situation	the circumstances in which rhetoric is produced, understood using the constituent elements of subject, occasion, audience, and purpose. Each element of the rhetorical situation carries assumptions and imperatives about the kind of rhetoric that will be well received. Rhetorical situation will also influence mode and medium.
subject	the topic, focus, argument, or idea explored in a text
text	any artifact through which a message is communicated. Can be written or spoken; digital, printed, or undocumented; video, image, or language. Every text is rhetorical in nature. See rhetoric.

Endnotes

1General Introduction Endnotes Strauss.Maguire, John G., with an introduction by Valerie Strauss. "Why So Many College Students Are Lousy at Writing—and How Mr. Miyagi Can Help." The Washington Post, 27 April 2012, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2017/04/27/why-so-many-college-students-are-lousy-at-writing-and-how-mr-miyagi-can-help/.

2 Maguire.
3 Ibid., emphasis added.
4 Greenbaum, Leonard. "The Tradition of Complaint." College English, vol. 31, no. 2, 1969, pp. 174–187. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/374119.
5 Strauss and Maguire.
6 Ibid.
7 It's worth noting that most singular definitions of "good writing" are deeply entrenched in racist, sexist, and jingoist prejudice. This is not news to the National Council of Teachers of English, who originally published "Students' Right to Their Own Language" in 1974, nor to Asao B. Inoue who recently published an outstanding textbook on the matter. Maguire missed that memo, I suppose.
8 "Rhetoric." Oxford English Dictionary, 2018, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/165178?rskey=CYNdOm&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid.
9 Also worth consideration are mode and medium, which are often closely related to SOAP, but not explored in-depth in this book. This acronym comes to me courtesy of Daniel Hershel.
10 Granted, these examples are also in different rhetorical modes, but you get the point.Ursula K. Le Guin quote on p. xlviii is from The Left Hand of Darkness, Ace, 1987. Le Guin, 220.

PART 1: DESCRIPTION, NARRATION, AND REFLECTION

Section Introduction

Chapter Vocabulary

Vocabulary	Definition
description	a rhetorical mode that emphasizes eye-catching, specific Often integrates imagery and thick description to this en
narration	a rhetorical mode involving the construction and relation description as a technique.
reflection	a rhetorical gesture by which an author looks back, throu knowledge or understanding gained from the subject on include consideration of the impact of that past subject o back in order to look forward."
rhetorical situation	the circumstances in which rhetoric is produced, unders of subject, occasion, audience, and purpose. Each elemen assumptions and imperatives about the kind of rhetoric t situation will also influence mode and medium.

Storytelling is one of few rituals that permeates all cultures. Indeed, there's nothing quite as satisfying as a well-told story. But what exactly makes for a well-told story?

Of course, the answer to that question depends on your *rhetorical situation*: your audience, your sociohistorical position, and your purpose will determine *how* you tell your story. Perhaps your story is best told in traditional writing; maybe it is a story best told orally, among friends or family; it could even be a story that uses images or technology.

"Stories" by Rebecca O'Connor is licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0

By creating your own story in this unit, you will be negotiating a distinct rhetorical situation. As you learn techniques and concepts for effective storytelling, so too will you practice asking the critical questions of any rhetorical situation.

The following section explores three useful rhetorical tools–*description*, *narration*, and *reflection*–that often contribute to effective storytelling. Each chapter will provide techniques and activities to help you decide which stories you can tell and the ways in which you can tell them. The assignment at the end of this section, a descriptive personal narrative essay, encourages you to synthesize all three rhetorical tools to share one of your stories in writing.

Chapter One: Describing a Scene or Experience

This morning, as I was brewing my coffee before rushing to work, I found myself hurrying up the stairs back to the bedroom, a sense of urgency in my step. I opened the door and froze—what was I doing? Did I need something from up here? I stood in confusion, trying to retrace the mental processes that had led me here, but it was all muddy.

It's quite likely that you've experienced a similarly befuddling situation. This phenomenon can loosely be referred to as automatization: because we are so constantly surrounded by stimuli, our brains often go on autopilot. (We often miss even the most explicit stimuli if we are distracted, as demonstrated by the Invisible Gorilla study.)

Automatization is an incredibly useful skill—we don't have the time or capacity to take in everything at once, let alone think our own thoughts simultaneously—but it's also troublesome. In the same way that we might run through a morning ritual absent-mindedly, like I did above, we have also been programmed to overlook tiny but striking details: the slight gradation in color of cement on the bus stop curb; the hum of the air conditioner or fluorescent lights; the weight and texture of a pen in the crook of the hand. These details, though, make experiences, people, and places unique. By focusing on the particular, we can interrupt automatization.[1] We can become radical noticers by practicing good description.

In a great variety of rhetorical situations, *description* is an essential rhetorical mode. Our minds latch onto detail and specificity, so effective description can help us experience a story, understand an analysis, and nuance a critical argument. Each of these situations requires a different kind of description; this chapter

focuses on the vivid, image-driven descriptive language that you would use for storytelling.

Chapter Vocabulary

Vocabulary	Definition
constraint-based writing	a writing technique by which an author tries to follow a rule or set of rules in order to create more experimental or surprising content, popularized by the Oulipo school of writers.
description	a rhetorical mode that emphasizes eye-catching, specific, and vivid portrayal of a subject. Often integrates imagery and thick description to this end.
defamiliarization	a method of reading, writing, and thinking that emphasizes the interruption of automatization. Established as "остранение" ("estrangement") by Viktor Shklovsky, defamiliarization attempts to turn the everyday into the strange, eye-catching, or dramatic.
ethnography	a study of a particular culture, subculture, or group of people. Uses thick description to explore a place and its associated culture.
figurative language	language which implies a meaning that is not to be taken literally. Common examples include metaphor, simile, personification, onomatopoeia, and hyperbole.
imagery	sensory language; literal or figurative language that appeals to an audience's imagined sense of sight, sound, smell, touch, or taste.
thick description	economical and deliberate language which attempts to capture complex subjects (like cultures, people, or environments) in written or spoken language. Coined by anthropologists Clifford Geertz and Gilbert Ryle.

Techniques

Imagery and Experiential Language

Strong description helps a reader experience what you've experienced, whether it was an event, an interaction, or simply a place. Even though you could never capture it perfectly, you should try to approximate sensations, feelings, and details as closely as you can. Your most vivid description will be that which gives your reader a way to imagine being themselves as of your story.

Imagery is a device that you have likely encountered in your studies before: it refers to language used to 'paint a scene' for the reader, directing their attention to striking details. Here are a few examples:

"Busy Market" by Henry Sudarman is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

- Bamboo walls, dwarf banana trees, silk lanterns, and a hand-size jade Buddha on a wooden table decorate the restaurant. For a moment, I imagined I was on vacation. The bright orange lantern over my table was the blazing hot sun and the cool air currents coming from the ceiling fan caused the leaves of the banana trees to brush against one another in soothing crackling sounds.[2]
- The sunny midday sky calls to us all like a guilty pleasure while the warning winds of winter tug our scarves warmer around our necks; the City of Roses is painted the color of red dusk, and the setting sun casts her longing rays over the Eastern shoulders of Mt. Hood, drawing the curtains on another crimson-grey day.[3]
- Flipping the switch, the lights flicker—not menacingly, but

> rather in a homey, imperfect manner. Hundreds of seats are sprawled out in front of a black, worn down stage. Each seat has its own unique creak, creating a symphony of groans whenever an audience takes their seats. The walls are adorned with a brown mustard yellow, and the black paint on the stage is fading and chipped.[4]

You might notice, too, that the above examples appeal to many different senses. Beyond just *visual* detail, good imagery can be considered sensory language: words that help me see, but also words that help me taste, touch, smell, and hear the story. Go back and identify a word, phrase, or sentence that suggests one of these non-visual sensations; what about this line is so striking?

Imagery might also apply *figurative language* to describe more creatively. Devices like metaphor, simile, and personification, or hyperbole can enhance description by pushing beyond literal meanings.

Using imagery, you can better communicate specific sensations to put the reader in your shoes. To the best of your ability, avoid clichés (stock phrases that are easy to ignore) and focus on the particular (what makes a place, person, event, or object unique). To practice creating imagery, try the Imagery Inventory exercise and the Image Builder graphic organizer in the Activities section of this chapter.

Thick Description

If you're focusing on specific, detailed imagery and experiential language, you might begin to feel wordy: simply piling up descriptive phrases and sentences isn't always the best option. Instead, your goal as a descriptive writer is to make the language work hard. *Thick description* refers to economy of language in vivid description. While good description has a variety of characteristics,

one of its defining features is that every word is *on purpose*, and this credo is exemplified by thick description.

Thick description as a concept finds its roots in anthropology, where ethnographers seek to portray deeper context of a studied culture than simply surface appearance.[5] In the world of writing, thick description means careful and detailed portrayal of context, emotions, and actions. It relies on specificity to engage the reader. Consider the difference between these two descriptions:

The market is busy. There is a lot of different produce. It is colorful.

vs.

Customers blur between stalls of bright green bok choy, gnarled carrots, and fiery Thai peppers. Stopping only to inspect the occasional citrus, everyone is busy, focused, industrious.

> Effective thick description is rarely written the first time around- it is re-written. As you revise, consider that every word should be on purpose.

Notice that, even though the second description is longer, its major difference is the specificity of its word choice. The author names particular produce, which brings to mind a sharper image of the selection, and uses specific adjectives. Further, though, the words themselves do heavy lifting–the nouns and verbs are descriptive

too! "Customers blur" both implies a market (where we would expect to find "customers") and also illustrates how busy the market is ("blur" implies speed), rather than just naming it as such.

Consider the following examples of thick description:

> I had some strength left to wrench my shoulders and neck upward but the rest of my body would not follow. My back was twisted like a contortionist's.[6]
>
> Shaking off the idiotic urge to knock, I turned the brass knob in my trembling hands and heaved open the thick

> door. The hallway was so dark that I had to squint while clumsily reaching out to feel my surroundings so I wouldn't crash into anything.[7]
>
> Snow-covered mountains, enormous glaciers, frozen caves and massive caps of ice clash with heat, smoke, lava and ash. Fields dense with lush greenery and vibrant purple lupine plants butt up against black, barren lands scorched by eruptions. The spectacular drama of cascading waterfalls, rolling hills, deep canyons and towering jagged peaks competes with open expanses of flat, desert-like terrain.[8]

Where do you see the student authors using deliberate, specific, and imagistic words and phrases? Where do you see the language working hard?

Unanticipated and Eye-catching Language

In addition to our language being deliberate, we should also strive for language that is unanticipated. You should control your language, but also allow for surprises–for you and your reader! Doing so will help you maintain attention and interest from your reader because your writing will be unique and eye-catching, but it also has benefits for you: it will also make your writing experience more enjoyable and educational.

How can you be surprised by your own writing, though? If you're the author, how could you not know what you're about to say? To that very valid question, I have two responses:

> **On a conceptual level:** Depending on your background, you may currently consider drafting to be thinking-*then*-writing. Instead, you should try thinking-*through*-writing: rather than two separate and sequential acts, embrace the possibility that the act of writing can be a new way to process through ideas. You must give yourself

license to write before an idea is fully formed—but remember, you will revise, so it's okay to not be perfect. (I highly recommend Anne Lamott's "Shitty First Drafts.")

On a technical level: Try out different activities—or even invent your own—that challenge your instincts. Rules and games can help you push beyond your auto-pilot descriptions to much more eye-catching language!

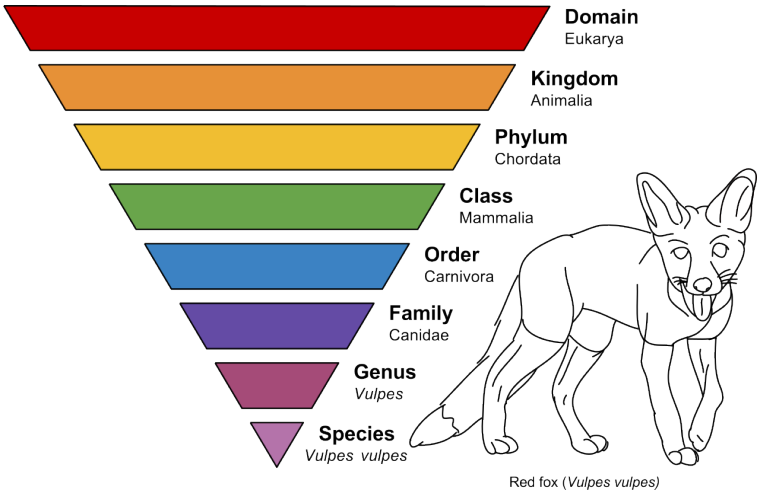
"Kansas Summer Wheat and Storm Panorama" by James Watkins is licensed under CC BY 2.0

Constraint-based writing is one technique like this. It refers to a process which requires you to deliberately work within a specific set of writing rules, and it can often spark unexpected combinations of words and ideas. The most valuable benefit to constraint-based writing, though, is that it gives you many options for your descriptions: because first idea ≠ best idea, constraint-based writing can help you push beyond instinctive descriptors.

When you spend more time thinking creatively, the ordinary can become extraordinary. The act of writing invites discovery! When you challenge yourself to see something in new ways, you actually see more of it. Try the Dwayne Johnson activity to think more about surprising language.Activities

Specificity Taxonomy

Good description lives and dies in particularities. It takes deliberate effort to refine our general ideas and memories into more focused, specific language that the reader can identify with.



A ***taxonomy*** is a system of classification that arranges a variety of items into an order that makes sense to someone. You might remember from your biology class the ranking taxonomy based on Carl Linnaeus' classifications, pictured here.

To practice shifting from general to specific, fill in the blanks in the taxonomy[9] below. After you have filled in the blanks, use the bottom three rows to make your own. As you work, notice how attention to detail, even on the scale of an individual word, builds a more tangible image.

	More General	General	Specific	
(example):	animal	mammal	dog	
1a	organism		conifer	
1b		airplane		
2a		novel		*Harr*
2b	clothing		blue jeans	
3a	medical condition		respiratory infection	
3b	school	college		
4a	artist		pop singer	
4b	structure	building		
5a		coffee	Starbucks coffee	
5b		scientist		
6a				
6b				
6c				

Compare your answers with a classmate. What similarities do you

share with other students? What differences? Why do you think this is the case? How can you apply this thinking to your own writing?

Micro-Ethnography

An *ethnography* is a form of writing that uses thick description to explore a place and its associated culture. By attempting this method on a small scale, you can practice specific, focused description.

Find a place in which you can observe the people and setting without actively involving yourself. (Interesting spaces and cultures students have used before include a poetry slam, a local bar, a dog park, and a nursing home.) You can choose a place you've been before or a place you've never been: the point here is to look at a space and a group of people more critically for the sake of detail, whether or not you already know that context.

As an ethnographer, your goal is to take in details without influencing those details. In order to stay focused, go to this place alone and refrain from using your phone or doing anything besides note-taking. Keep your attention on the people and the place.

Spend a few minutes taking notes on your general impressions of the place at this time.

Use imagery and thick description to describe the place itself. What sorts of interactions do you observe? What sort of tone, affect, and language is used? How would you describe the overall atmosphere?

Spend a few minutes "zooming in" to identify artifacts–specific physical objects being used by the people you see.

Use imagery and thick description to describe the specific artifacts.

How do these parts contribute to/differentiate from/relate to the whole of the scene?

After observing, write one to two paragraphs synthesizing your

observations to describe the space and culture. What do the details represent or reveal about the place and people?

Imagery Inventory

Visit a location you visit often—your classroom, your favorite café, the commuter train, etc. Isolate each of your senses and describe the sensations as thoroughly as possible. Take detailed notes in the organizer below, or use a voice-recording app on your phone to talk through each of your sensations.

Sense	
Sight	
Sound	
Smell	
Touch	
Taste	

Now, write a paragraph that synthesizes three or more of your sensory details. Which details were easiest to identify? Which make for the most striking descriptive language? Which will bring the most vivid sensations to your reader's mind?

The Dwayne Johnson Activity

"Stones" by Carol Von Canon is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

This exercise will encourage you to flex your creative descriptor muscles by generating unanticipated language.

Begin by finding a mundane object. (A plain, unspectacular rock is my go-to choice.) Divide a blank piece of paper into four quadrants. Set a timer for two minutes; in this time, write as many **describing words** as possible in the first quadrant. You may use a bulleted list. Full sentences are not required.

Now, cross out your first quadrant. In the second quadrant, take five minutes to write as many **new** describing words as possible without repeating anything from your first quadrant. If you're struggling, try to use imagery and/or figurative language.

For the third quadrant, set the timer for two minutes. Write as many **uses** as possible for your object.

Before starting the fourth quadrant, cross out the uses you came up with for the previous step. Over the next five minutes, come up with as many **new** uses as you can.

After this generative process, identify your three favorite items from the sections you didn't cross out. Spend ten minutes writing in any genre or form you like—a story, a poem, a song, a letter, anything—on any topic you like. Your writing doesn't have to be about the object you chose, but try to incorporate your chosen descriptors or uses in some way.

Share your writing with a friend or peer, and debrief about the

exercise. What surprises did this process yield? What does it teach us about innovative language use?[10]

1) Writing invites discovery: the more you look, the more you see.

2) Suspend judgment: first idea ≠ best idea.

3) Objects are not inherently boring: the ordinary can be dramatic if described creatively.

Surprising Yourself: Constraint-Based Scene Description

This exercise[11] asks you to write a scene, following specific instructions, about a place of your choice. There is no such thing as a step-by-step guide to descriptive writing; instead, the detailed instructions that follow are challenges that will force you to think differently while you're writing. The constraints of the directions may help you to discover new aspects of this topic since you are following the sentence-level prompts even as you develop your content.

1. Bring your place to mind. Focus on "seeing" or "feeling" your place.
2. For a title, choose an emotion or a color that represents this place to you.
3. For a first line starter, choose one of the following and complete the sentence:
    - You stand there…When I'm here, I know that…
    - Every time…I [see/smell/hear/feel/taste]…
    - We had been…I think sometimes…

4. After your first sentence, create your scene, writing the sentences according to the following directions:

    - Sentence 2: Write a sentence with a color in it.
    - Sentence 3: Write a sentence with a part of the body in it.
    - Sentence 4: Write a sentence with a simile (a comparison using like or as)
    - Sentence 5: Write a sentence of over twenty-five words.
    - Sentence 6: Write a sentence of under eight words.
    - Sentence 7: Write a sentence with a piece of clothing in it.
    - Sentence 8: Write a sentence with a wish in it.
    - Sentence 9: Write a sentence with an animal in it.
    - Sentence 10: Write a sentence in which three or more words alliterate; that is, they begin with the same initial consonant: "She has been left, lately, with less and less time to think…."
    - Sentence 11: Write a sentence with two commas.
    - Sentence 12: Write a sentence with a smell and a color in it.
    - Sentence 13: Write a sentence without using the letter "e."
    - Sentence 14: Write a sentence with a simile.
    - Sentence 15: Write a sentence that could carry an exclamation point (but don't use the exclamation point).
    - Sentence 16: Write a sentence to end this portrait that uses the word or words you chose for a title.

5. Read over your scene and mark words/phrases that surprised you, especially those rich with possibilities (themes, ironies, etc.) that you could develop.
6. On the right side of the page, for each word/passage you marked, interpret the symbols, name the themes that your description and detail suggest, note any significant meaning you see in your description.
7. On a separate sheet of paper, rewrite the scene you have created as a more thorough and cohesive piece in whatever

genre you desire. You may add sentences and transitional words/phrases to help the piece flow.

Image Builder

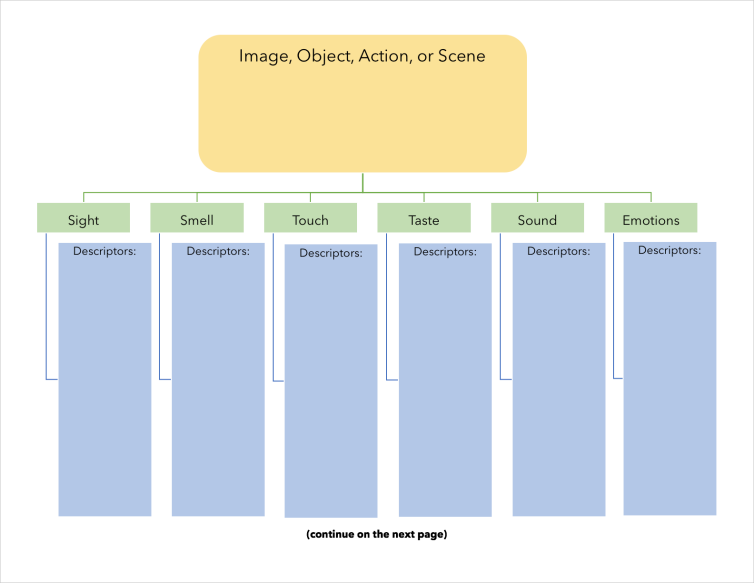
This exercise encourages you to experiment with thick description by focusing on one element of your writing in expansive detail. Read the directions below, then use the graphic organizer on the following two pages or write your responses as an outline on a separate piece of paper.

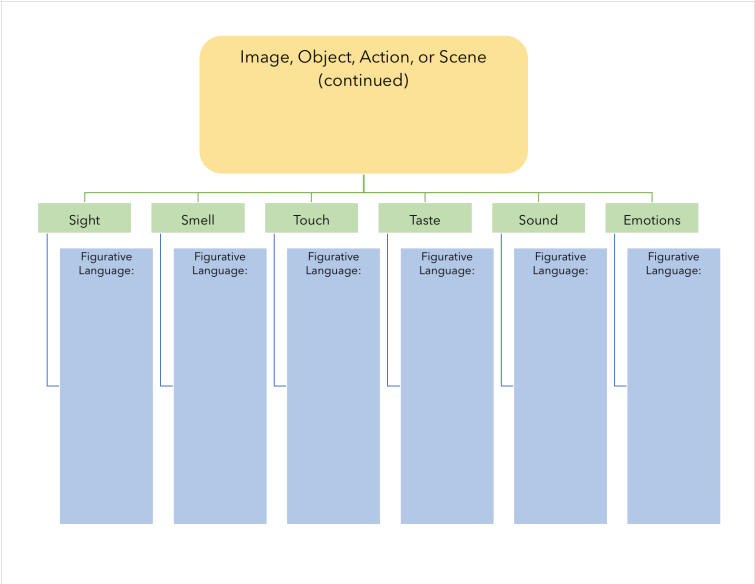
> Identify one image, object, action, or scene that you want to expand in your story. Name this element in the big, yellow bubble.
>
> Develop at least three describing words for your element, considering each sense independently, as well as emotional associations. Focus on particularities. (Adjectives will come most easily, but remember that you can use any part of speech.)
>
> Then, on the next page, create at least two descriptions using figurative language (metaphor, simile, personification, onomatopoeia, hyperbole, etc.) for your element, considering each sense independently, as well as emotional associations. Focus on particularities.
>
> Finally, reflect on the different ideas you came up with.
>
> Which descriptions surprised you? Which descriptions are accurate but unanticipated?
>
> Where might you weave these descriptions in to your current project?
>
> How will you balance description with other rhetorical modes, like narration, argumentation, or analysis?

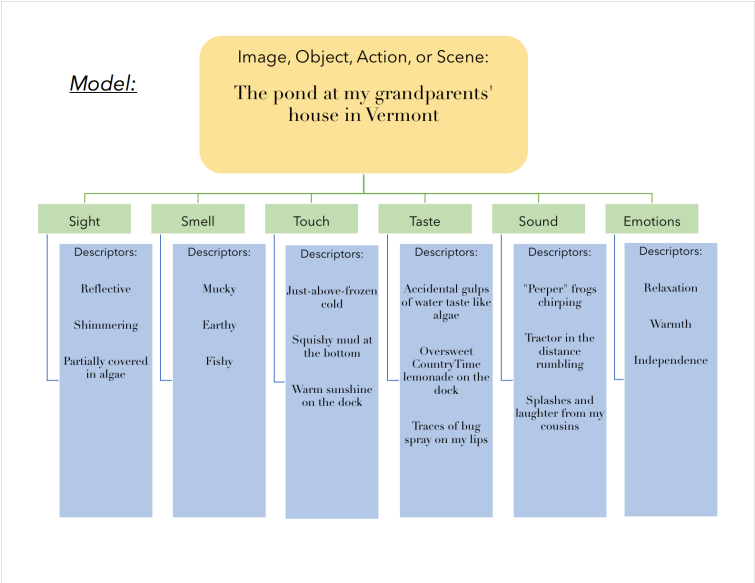
Repeat this exercise as desired or as instructed, choosing a different focus element to begin with.

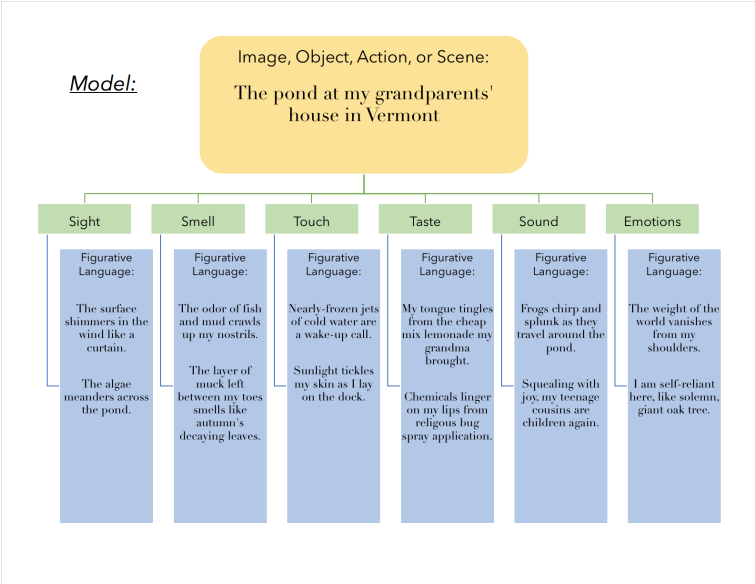
Choose your favorite descriptors and incorporate them into your writing.

If you're struggling to get started, check out the example on the pages following the blank organizer.




Image, Object, Action, or Scene (continued)
Sight
Smell
Touch
Taste
Sound
Emotions
Figurative Language:
Figurative Language:
Figurative Language:
Figurative Language:
Figurative Language:
Figurative Language:


Model:
Image, Object, Action, or Scene:
The pond at my grandparents' house in Vermont
Sight
Smell
Touch
Taste
Sound
Emotions
Descriptors:
Reflective
Shimmering
Partially covered in algae
Descriptors:
Mucky
Earthy
Fishy
Descriptors:
Just-above-frozen cold
Squishy mud at the bottom
Warm sunshine on the dock
Descriptors:
Accidental gulps of water taste like algae
Oversweet CountryTime lemonade on the dock
Traces of bug spray on my lips
Descriptors:
"Peeper" frogs chirping
Tractor in the distance rumbling
Splashes and laughter from my cousins
Descriptors:
Relaxation
Warmth
Independence



Model Texts by Student Authors

*Innocence Again*12

Imagine the sensation of the one split second that you are floating through the air as you were thrown up in the air as a child, that feeling of freedom and carefree spirit as happiness abounds. Looking at the world through innocent eyes, all thoughts and feelings of amazement. Being free, happy, innocent, amazed, wowed. Imagine the first time seeing the colors when your eyes and brain start to recognize them but never being able to name the shade or hue. Looking at the sky as it changes from the blackness with twinkling stars to the lightest shade of blue that is almost white, then the deep red of the sunset and bright orange of the sun. All shades of the spectrum of the rainbow, colors as beautiful as the mind can see or imagine.

I have always loved the sea since I was young; the smell of saltiness in the air invigorates me and reminds me of the times spent with my family enjoying Sundays at the beach. In Singapore, the sea was always murky and green but I continued to enjoy all activities in it. When I went to Malaysia to work, I discovered that the sea was clear and blue and without hesitation, I signed up for a basic diving course and I was hooked. In my first year of diving, I explored all the dive destinations along the east coast of Malaysia and also took an advanced diving course which allowed me to dive up to a depth of thirty meters. Traveling to a dive site took no more than four hours by car and weekends were spent just enjoying the sea again.

Gearing up is no fun. Depending on the temperature of the water, I might put on a shortie, wetsuit or drysuit. Then on come the booties, fins and mask which can be considered the easiest part unless the suit is tight–then it is a hop and pull struggle, which reminds me of how life can be at times. Carrying the steel tank, regulator, buoyancy control device (BCD) and weights is a torture. The heaviest weights that I ever had to use were 110 pounds, equivalent to my body weight; but as I jump in and start sinking into the sea, the contrast to weightlessness hits me. The moment that I start floating in the water, a sense of immense freedom and joy overtakes me.

Growing up, we have to learn the basics: time spent in classes to learn, constantly practicing to improve our skills while safety is ingrained by our parents. In dive classes, I was taught to never panic or do stupid stuff: the same with the lessons that I have learned in life. Panic and over-inflated egos can lead to death, and I have heard it happens all the time. I had the opportunity to go to Antarctica for a diving expedition, but what led to me getting that slot was the death of a very experienced diver who used a drysuit in a tropic climate against all advice. He just overheated and died. Lessons learned in the sea can be very profound, but they contrast the life I live: risk-taker versus risk-avoider. However, when I have perfected it and it is time to be unleashed, it is time to enjoy. I jump

in as I would jump into any opportunity, but this time it is into the deep blue sea of wonders.

A sea of wonders waits to be explored. Every journey is different: it can be fast or slow, like how life takes me. The sea decides how it wants to carry me; drifting fast with the currents so that at times, I hang on to the reef and corals like my life depends on it, even though I am taught never to touch anything underwater. The fear I feel when I am speeding along with the current is that I will be swept away into the big ocean, never to be found. Sometimes, I feel like I am not moving at all, kicking away madly until I hyperventilate because the sea is against me with its strong current holding me against my will.

The sea decides what it wants me to see: turtles popping out of the seabed, manta rays gracefully floating alongside, being in the middle of the eye of a barracuda hurricane, a coral shelf as big as a car, a desert of bleached corals, the emptiness of the seabed with not a fish in sight, the memorials of death caused by the December 26
tsunami—a barren sea floor with not a soul or life in sight.

The sea decides what treasures I can discover: a black-tipped shark sleeping in an underwater cavern, a pike hiding from predators in the reef, an octopus under a dead tree trunk that escapes into my buddy's BCD, colorful mandarin fish mating at sunset, a deadly box jellyfish held in my gloved hands, pygmy seahorses in a fern—so tiny that to discover them is a journey itself.

Looking back, diving has taught me more about life, the ups and downs, the good and bad, and to accept and deal with life's challenges. Everything I learn and discover

underwater applies to the many different aspects of my life. It has also taught me that life is very short: I have to live in the moment or I will miss the opportunities that come my way. I allow myself to forget all my sorrow, despair and disappointments when I dive into the deep blue sea and savor the feelings of peacefulness and calmness. There is nothing around me but fish and corals, big and small. Floating along in silence with only the sound of my

breath–*inhale and exhale*. An array of colors explodes in front of my eyes, colors that I never imagine I will discover again, an underwater rainbow as beautiful as the rainbow in the sky after a storm. As far as my eyes can see, I look into the depth of the ocean with nothing to anchor me. The deeper I get, the darker it turns. From the light blue sky to the deep navy blue, even blackness into the void. As the horizon darkens, the feeding frenzy of the underwater world starts and the watery landscape comes alive. Total darkness surrounds me but the sounds that I can hear are the little clicks in addition to my breathing. My senses overload as I cannot see what is around me, but the sea tells me it is alive and it anchors me to the depth of my soul.

As Ralph Waldo Emerson once said: "The lover of nature is he whose inward and outward senses are truly adjusted to each other; who has retained the spirit of
infancy even into the era of manhood… In the presence of nature, a wild delight runs through the man in spite of real sorrows…." The sea and diving have given me a new outlook on life, a different planet where I can float into and enjoy as an adult, a new, different perspective on how it is to be that child again. Time and time again as I enter into the sea, I feel innocent all over again.

Teacher Takeaways

"One of the more difficult aspects of writing a good descriptive essay is to use the description to move beyond itself – to 'think through writing.' This author does it well. Interspersed between the details of diving are deliberate metaphors and analogies that enable the reader to gain access and derive deeper meanings. While the essay could benefit from a more structured system of organization and clearer unifying points, and

while the language is at times a bit sentimental, this piece is also a treasure trove of sensory imagery (notably colors) and descriptive devices such as personification and recursion."– Professor Fiscaletti

Comatose Dreams[13]

Her vision was tunneled in on his face. His eyes were wet and his mouth was open as if he was trying to catch his breath. He leaned in closer and wrapped his arms around her face and spoke to her in reassuring whispers that reminded her of a time long ago when he taught her to pray. As her vision widened the confusion increased. She could not move. She opened her mouth to speak, but could not. She wanted to sit up, but was restrained to the bed. She did not have the energy to sob, but she could feel tears roll down her cheek and didn't try to wipe them away. The anxiety overtook her and she fell back into a deep sleep.

She opened her eyes and tried to find reality. She was being tortured. Her feet were the size of pumpkins and her stomach was gutted all the way up her abdomen, her insides exposed for all to see. She was on display like an animal at the zoo. Tubes were coming out of her in multiple directions and her throat felt as if it were coated in chalk. She was conscious, but still a prisoner. Then a nurse walked in, pulled on one of her tubes, and sent her back into the abyss.

Eventually someone heard her speak, and with that she learned that if she complained enough she would get an injection. It gave her a beautiful head rush that temporarily dulled the pain. She adored it. She was no longer restrained to the bed, but still

unable to move or eat. She was fed like baby. Each time she woke she was able to gather bits of information: she would not be going back to work, or school. couch was her safe haven. She came closer to dying during recovery than she had in the coma. The doctors made a mistake. She began to sweat profusely and shiver all at the same time. She vomited every twenty minutes like clockwork. It went on like that for days and she was ready to go. She wanted to slip back into her sleep. It was time to wake up from this nightmare. She pulled her hair and scratched her wrists trying to draw blood, anything to shake herself awake.

She began to heal. They removed a tube or two and she became more mobile. She was always tethered to a machine, like a dog on a leash. The pain from the surgeries still lingered and the giant opening in her stomach began to slowly close. The couch was her safe haven. She came closer to dying during recovery than she had in the coma. The doctors made a mistake. She began to sweat profusely and shiver all at the same time. She vomited every twenty minutes like clockwork. It went on like that for days and she was ready to go. She wanted to slip back into her sleep. It was time to wake up from this nightmare. She pulled her hair and scratched her wrists trying to draw blood, anything to shake herself awake.

She sat on a beach remembering that nightmare. The sun beat down recharging a battery within her that had been running on empty for far too long. The waves washed up the length of her body and she sank deeper into the warm sand. She lay on her back taking it all in. Then laid her hand on top of her stomach, unconsciously she ran her fingers along a deep scar.

Teacher Takeaways

"This imagery is body-centered and predominantly tactile – though strange sights and sounds are also

present. The narrow focus of the description symbolically mirrors the limitation of the comatose subject, which enhances the reader's experience. Simile abounds, and in its oddities (feet like pumpkins, something like chalk in the throat), adds to the eerie newness of each scene. While the paragraphs are a bit underdeveloped, and one or two clichés in need of removal, this little episode does an excellent job of conveying the visceral strangeness one might imagine to be associated with a comatose state. It's full of surprise."– Professor Fiscaletti

The Devil in Green Canyon14

The sky was painted blue, with soft wisps of white clouds that decorated the edges of the horizon like a wedding cake. To the West, a bright orb filled the world with warm golden light which gives life to the gnarled mountain landscape. The light casted contrasting shadows against the rolling foot hills of the Cascade Mountain Range. A lone hawk circled above the narrow white water river that lay beneath the steep mountain side. Through the hawk's eyes the mountains look like small green waves that flow down from a massive snow white point. Mt. Hood sits high above its surrounding foot hills, like that special jewel that sits on a pedestal, above all the others in a fancy jewelry store. The hawk soars into the Salmon River Valley, with hope of capturing a tasty meal, an area also known as the Green Canyon.

For hundreds of years, the Salmon River has carved its home into the bedrock. Filled from bank to bank with tumbled boulders, all strewn across the river bed, some as big as a car. Crystal clear water cascades over and around the rocky course

nature has made with its unique rapids and eddies for the native salmon and trout to navigate, flanked by thick old growth forest and the steep tree studded walls of the canyon. Along the river lies a narrow two-lane road, where people are able to access tall wonders of this wilderness. The road was paved for eight miles and the condition was rough, with large potholes and sunken grades.

In my beat up old Corolla, I drove down windy roads of the Salmon River. With the windows down and the stereo turned up, I watched trees that towered above me pass behind my view. A thin ribbon of blue sky peeked through the towering Douglas Fir and Sequoia trees. At a particular bend in the road, I drove past an opening in the trees. Here the river and the road came around a sharp turn in the canyon. A natural rock face, with a patch of gravel at its base, offered a place to park and enjoy the river. The water was calm and shallow, like a sheet of glass. I could see the rocky bottom all the way across the river, the rocks were round and smoothed by the continuous flow of water. It was peaceful as gentle flow of water created this tranquil symphony of rippling sounds.

As the road continued up the gentle slope guarded on the right by a thicket of bushes and tall colorful wild flowers giving red, purple, and white accents against lush green that dominated the landscape, followed by tall trees that quickly give way to a rocky precipice to the left. A yellow diamond shaped sign, complete with rusty edges and a few bullet holes indicated a one-lane bridge ahead. This was it! The beginning of the real journey. I parked my dusty Corolla as the gravel crunched under the balding tires, they skidded to a stop. As I turned the engine off, its irregular hum sputtered into silence. I could smell that hot oil that leaked from somewhere underneath the motor. I hopped out of the car and grabbed my large-framed backpack which was filled with enough food and gear for a few nights, I locked the car and took a short walk down the road. I arrived at the trail head, I was here to find peace, inspiration and discover a new place to feel freedom.

Devil's Peak. 16 miles. As the trail skirted its way along the cascading Salmon River. The well-traveled dirt path was packed

hard by constant foot traffic with roots from the massive old fir trees, rocks and mud that frequently created tripping hazards along the trail. Sword Fern, Salmon Berry and Oregon Grape are among the various small plant growth that lined the trail. Under the shade of the thick canopy, the large patches of shamrocks created an even covering over the rolling forest floor like the icing on a cake. The small shamrock forests are broken by mountainous nursery logs of old decaying trees. New life sprouts as these logs nature and host their kin. Varieties of maple fight for space among the ever-growing conifers that dominate the forest. Vine maple arches over the trail, bearded with hanging moss that forms natural pergolas.

It is easy to see why it is named Green Canyon, as the color touches everything. From the moss covering the floor, to the tops of the trees, many hues of green continue to paint the forest. These many greens are broken by the brown pillar like trunks of massive trees. Their rough bark provides a textural contrast to the soft leaves and pine needles. Wild flowers grow between the sun breaks in the trees and provide a rainbow of color. Near the few streams that form from artesian springs higher up, vicious patches of devil's glove, create a thorny wall that can tower above the trail. Their green stalk bristling with inch long barbs and the large leaves some over a foot long are covered with smaller needles.

I can hear the hum of bees in the distance collecting pollen from the assorted wild flowers. Their buzz mixes in with the occasional horse fly that lumbers past. For miles the trail, follows the river before it quickly ascends above the canyon. Winding steeply away from the river, the sound of rushing water began to fade, giving way to the serene and eerie quiet of the high mountains. Leaves and trees make a gentle sound as the wind brushes past them, but are overpowered by the sound of my dusty hiking boots slowly dragging me up this seemingly never-ending hill. I feel tired and sweat is beading up on my brow, exhausted as I am, I feel happy and relieved. Its moments like this that recharge the soul. I continue to climb, sweat and smile.

Undergrowth gives way to the harsh steep rock spires that

crown the mountain top like ancient vertebra. The forest opens up to a steep cliff with a clearing offering a grand view. The spine of the mountain is visible, it hovers at 5000 feet above sea level and climbs to a point close to 5200 feet. Trees fight for position on the steep hillside as they flow down to the edge of the Salmon River. This a popular turn around point for day hikes. Not for me; I am going for the top. The peak is my destination where I will call home tonight. Devil's Peak is a *destination*. Not just a great view point but it is also home to a historic fire watchtower. Here visitors can explore the tower and even stay the night.

From the gorge viewpoint the trail switchbacks up several miles through dense high-altitude forests. Passing rocky ramparts and a few sheer cliff faces the path ends at an old dirt road with mis from bygone trucks that leave faint traces of life. A hand carved wooden sign, nailed to a tree at the continuation of the trail indicates another 2.6 miles to Devil's Peak. The trail is narrow as it traces the spine of the mountain before steeply carving around the peak. There are instances where the mountain narrows to a few feet, with sheer drops on both sides, like traversing a catwalk. The trees at this altitude are stunted compared to the giants that live below. Most trees here are only a foot or two thick and a mere 50 feet in height. The thick under growth has dwindled to small rhododendron bushes and clumps of bear grass. The frequently gusting wind has caused the trunks of the trees to grow into twisted gnarled forms. It is almost like some demon walked through the trail distorting everything as it passed. Foxglove and other wild flowers find root holds in warm sunny spots along the trail. Breaks in the thick forest provide snapshots of distant mountains: Mt. Hood is among the snowcapped peaks that pepper the distant mountains.

With sweat on my brow, forming beads that drip down my face, I reached the top. The trail came to a fork where another small sign indicates to go left. After a few feet the forest shrinks away and opens to a rocky field with expansive views that stretched for miles. There, standing its eternal watch, is the Devil's Peak watch tower. Its sun-bleached planks are a white contrast to the evergreen wall

behind it. It was built by hand decades ago before portable power tools by hardened forest rangers. It has stood so long that the peak which once offered a 360-degree view now only has a few openings left between the mature trees that surround the grove in which the old devil stands, watching high above the green canyon. The lookout stands 30 feet in height. Its old weathered moss-covered wood shingled roof is topped with a weathered copper lightning rod. A staircase climbs steeply to the balcony that wraps around the tower. Only two feet wide, the deck still offers an amazing view where the forest allows. Mt. Hood stands proud to the North and the green mountains stretch South to the edge of the horizon.

The builders made window covers to protect the glass during storms. Once lined and supported with boards that have been notched to fit the railing, the tower is open filling the interior with daylight. In all the cabin is only twelve feet by twelve feet. The door has a tall window and three of the four walls have windows most of the way to the ceiling. The furnishing is modest, with a bed that has several pieces of foam and some sleeping bags to make mattress, it was complete with a pillow with no case. A table covered with carvings and some useful information and rules for the tower were taped to the surface. An old diary for the tower and a cup full of writing instruments next to it for visitors to share their experience lay closed in the middle of the table. In the South East corner, on a hearth made of old brick sat an old iron wood stove. The door had an image of a mountain and trees molded into it. The top was flat and had room to use for a cook top. Someone left a small pile of wood next the stove. The paint on the inside was weathered and stripping. The floor boards creaked with each step. Whenever the wind gusted the windows rattled. The air inside the cabin was musty and dry. It smelled old. But the windows all pivot and open to make the inside feel like its outside and as soon as the windows were opened the old smell is replaced with the scent of fresh pine.

Surrounded by small patches of wild flowers and rocks, all ringed by a maturing forest Devil's Peak watchtower sits high above the Green Canyon. On a high point near the tower where solid

rock pierces the ground there is a small round plaque cemented to the ancient basalt. It is a U.S. geological marker with the name of the peak and its elevation stamped into the metal. Standing on the marker I can see south through a large opening in the trees. Mountains like giant green walls fill the view. For miles, rock and earth rise up forming mountains, supporting the exquisite green forest.

The hawk circles, soaring high above the enchanting mountains. On a peak below, it sees prey skitter across a rock into a clump of juniper and swoops down for the hunt. There I stand on the tower's wooden balcony, watching the sunset. The blue horizon slowly turned pale before glowing orange. Mt. Hood reflected the changing colors, from orange to a light purple. Soon stars twinkled above and the mountain faded to dark. The day is done. Here in this moment, I am.

Teacher Takeaways

"This author's description is frequent and rich with detail; I especially like the thorough inventory of wildlife throughout the essay, although it does get a feel a bit burdensome at times. I can clearly envision the setting, at times even hearing the sounds and feeling the textures the author describes. Depending on their goals in revision, this author might make some global adjustments to pacing (so the reader can move through a bit more quickly and fluidly). At the very least, this student should spend some time polishing up mechanical errors. I noticed two recurring issues: (1) shifting verb tense [the author writes in both present and past tense, where it would be more appropriate to stick with one or the other]; and (2) sentence fragments,

run-ons, and comma splices [all errors that occur because a sentence combines clauses ungrammatically]."– Professor Wilhjelm

Endnotes

1 There is a school of writing based on this practice, termed остранение by Viktor Shklovsky, commonly translated into English as defamiliarization.Shklovsky, Viktor. "Art as Technique." 1925. Literary Theory: An Anthology, 2nd edition, edited by Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan, Blackwell, 2004, pp. 12-15.
2 Excerpt by an anonymous student author, 2017. Reproduced with permission from the student author.
3 Excerpt by an anonymous student author, 2017. Reproduced with permission from the student author.
4 Excerpt by Ross Reaume, Portland State University, 2014. Reproduced with permission from the student author.
5 The term "thick description" was coined by Gilbert Ryle and adopted into the field of anthropology by Clifford Geertz.Ryle, Gilbert. Collected Essays (1929-1968), vol. 2, Routledge, 2009, 479+.Geertz, Clifford. The Interpretation of Cultures, Basic Books, 1973.
6 Excerpt by an anonymous student author, 2017. Reproduced with permission from the student author.
7 Excerpt by Noel Taylor, Portland State University, 2014. Reproduced with permission from the student author.
8 Excerpt by Chris Gaylord, Portland State University, 2017. Reproduced with permission from the student author.
9 This activity is courtesy of Mackenzie Myers.

10 This activity was inspired by Susan Kirtley, William Thomas Van Camp, and Bruce Ballenger.
11 This activity is a modified version of one by Daniel Hershel.
12 Essay by Chris Chan, Portland State University, 2014. Reproduced with permission from the student author.
13 Essay by Kiley Yoakum, Portland Community College, 2016. Reproduced with permission from the student author.
14 Essay by Franklin, who has requested his last name not be included. Portland Community College, 2017. Reproduced with permission from the student author.

Chapter Two: Telling a Story

"We're all stories, in the end." – Steven Moffat, Doctor Who[1]

Whether or not you've seen a single episode of Doctor Who, you can appreciate this quote. I love it for its ambiguities.[2] As I can tell, we can interpret it in at least four ways:

All we are is stories, in the end. Our identities, our ambitions, our histories are all a composite of the many stories we tell about ourselves.

All of us are stories, in the end. Our stories are never just our own: you share common stories with your parents, your friends, your teachers and bosses, strangers on the street.

Each of us is a story, in the end. Your entire life, while composed of many interlocking stories, is one story among many.

We are stories (in all of the above ways), but only at the end. Our individual stories have no definite

conclusion until we can no longer tell them ourselves. What legacy will you leave? How can you tell a piece of your story while it's still up to you?

But perhaps that's enough abstraction: *narration* is a rhetorical mode that you likely engage on a daily basis, and one that has held significance in every culture in human history. Even when we're not deliberately telling stories, storytelling often underlies our writing and thinking:

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- Historians synthesize and interpret events of the past; a history book is one of many narratives of our cultures and civilizations.
- Chemists analyze observable data to determine cause-and-effect behaviors of natural and synthetic materials; a lab report is a sort of narrative about elements (characters) and reactions (plot).
- Musical composers evoke the emotional experience of story through instrumentation, motion, motifs, resolutions, and so on; a song is a narrative that may not even need words.

What makes for an interesting, well-told story *in writing*? In addition to description, your deliberate choices in narration can create impactful, beautiful, and entertaining stories.

Chapter Vocabulary

Vocabulary	Definition
characterization	the process by which an author builds characters; can be accomplished directly or indirectly.
dialogue	a communication between two or more people. Can include any mode of communication, including speech, texting, e-mail, Facebook post, body language, etc.
dynamic character	a character who noticeably changes within the scope of a narrative, typically as a result of the plot events and/or other characters. Contrast with static character.
epiphany	a character's sudden realization of a personal or universal truth. See dynamic character.
flat character	a character who is minimally detailed, only briefly sketched or named. Generally less central to the events and relationships portrayed in a narrative. Contrast with round character.
mood	the emotional dimension which a reader experiences while encountering a text. Compare with tone.
multimedia / multigenre	a term describing a text that combines more than one media and/or more than one genre (e.g., an essay with embedded images; a portfolio with essays, poetry, and comic strips; a mixtape with song reviews).
narration	a rhetorical mode involving the construction and relation of stories. Typically integrates description as a technique.
narrative pacing	the speed with which a story progresses through plot events. Can be influenced by reflective and descriptive writing.
narrative scope	the boundaries of a narrative in time, space, perspective, and focus.
narrative sequence	the order of events included in a narrative.
plot	the events included within the scope of a narrative.

point-of-view	the perspective from which a story is told, determining both grammar (pronouns) and perspective (speaker's awareness of events, thoughts, and circumstances).
round character	a character who is thoroughly characterized and dimensional, detailed with attentive description of their traits and behaviors. Contrast with flat character.
static character	a character who remains the same throughout the narrative. Contrast with dynamic character.
tone	the emotional register of the text. Compare with mood.

Techniques

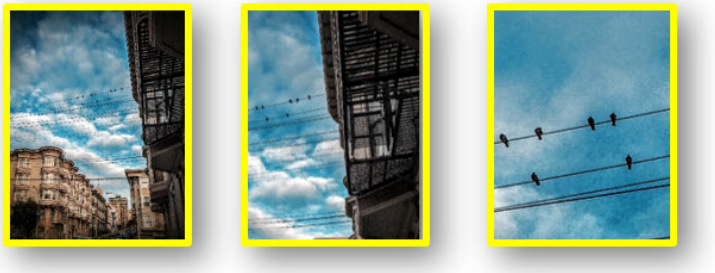
Plot Shapes and Form

Plot is one of the basic elements of every story: put simply, plot refers to the actual events that take place within the bounds of your narrative. Using our rhetorical situation vocabulary, we can identify "plot" as the primary *subject* of a descriptive personal narrative. Three related elements to consider are *scope*, *sequence*, and *pacing*.

Scope

The term *scope* refers to the boundaries of your plot. Where and when does it begin and end? What is its focus? What background information and details does your story require? I often think about narrative scope as the edges of a photograph: a photo, whether of a vast landscape or a microscopic organism, has boundaries. Those boundaries inform the viewer's perception. In this example, the

scope of the left photo allows for a story about a neighborhood in San Francisco. In the middle, it is a story about the fire escape, the clouds. On the right, the scope of the story directs our attention to the birds. In this way, narrative scope impacts the content you include **and** your reader's perception of that content in context.

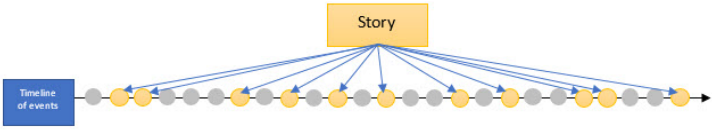


"SF Neighborhood" by SBT4NOW is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0

The way we determine scope varies based on rhetorical situation, but I can say generally that many developing writers struggle with a scope that is too broad: writers often find it challenging to zero in on the events that drive a story and prune out extraneous information.

Consider, as an example, how you might respond if your friend asked what you did last weekend. If you began with, "I woke up on Saturday morning, rolled over, checked my phone, fell back asleep, woke up, pulled my feet out from under the covers, put my feet on the floor, stood up, stretched..." then your friend might have stopped listening by the time you get to the really good stuff. Your scope is too broad, so you're including details that distract or bore your reader. Instead of listing every detail in order like this:

... you should consider narrowing your scope, focusing instead on the important, interesting, and unique plot points (events) like this:



You might think of this as the difference between a series of snapshots and a roll of film: instead of twenty-four frames per second video, your entire story might only be a few photographs aligned together.

> It may seem counterintuitive, but we can often say more by digging deep into a few ideas or events, instead of trying to relate every idea or event.

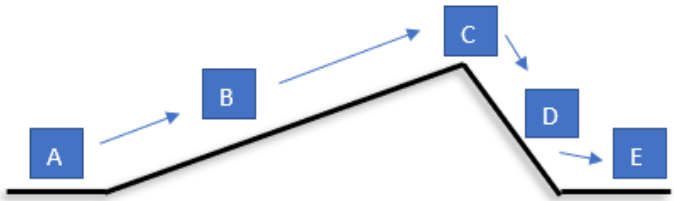
The most impactful stories are often those that represent something, so your scope should focus on the details that fit into the bigger picture. To return to the previous example, you could tell me more about your weekend by sharing a specific detail than every detail. "Brushing my teeth Saturday morning, I didn't realize that I would probably have a scar from wrestling that bear on Sunday" reveals more than "I woke up on Saturday morning, rolled over, checked my phone, fell back asleep, woke up, pulled my feet out from under the covers, put my feet on the floor, stood up, stretched…." Not only have you foregrounded the more interesting event, but you have also foreshadowed that you had a harrowing, adventurous, and unexpected weekend.

Sequence and Pacing

The *sequence* and *pacing* of your plot—the order of the events and the amount of time you give to each event, respectively—will determine your reader's experience. There are an infinite number of ways you might structure your story, and the shape of your

story is worth deep consideration. Although the traditional forms for narrative sequence are not your only options, let's take a look at a few tried-and-true shapes your plot might take.

You might recognize Freytag's Pyramid[3] from other classes you've taken:



Exposition: Here, you're setting the scene, introducing characters, and preparing the reader for the journey.

Rising action: In this part, things start to happen. You (or your characters) encounter conflict, set out on a journey, meet people, etc.

Climax: This is the peak of the action, the main showdown, the central event toward which your story has been building.

Falling action: Now things start to wind down. You (or your characters) come away from the climactic experience changed—at the very least, you are wiser for having had that experience.

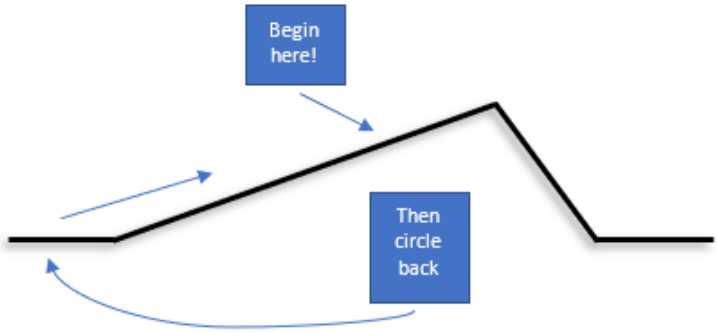
Resolution: Also known as dénouement, this is where all the loose ends get tied up. The central conflict has been resolved, and everything is back to normal, but perhaps a bit different.

This narrative shape is certainly a familiar one. Many films, TV shows, plays, novels, and short stories follow this track. But it's not without its flaws. You should discuss with your classmates and instructors what shortcomings you see in this classic plot shape. What assumptions does it rely on? How might it limit a storyteller? Sometimes, I tell my students to "Start the story where the story starts"—often, steps A and B in the diagram above just delay the most descriptive, active, or meaningful parts of the story. If nothing

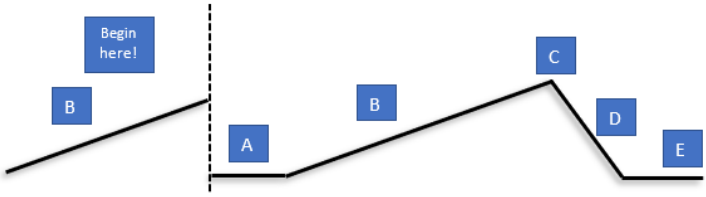
else, we should note that it is not necessarily the best way to tell your story, and definitely not the only way.

Another classic technique for narrative sequence is known as *in medias res*–literally, "in the middle of things." As you map out your plot in pre-writing or experiment with during the drafting and revision process, you might find this technique a more active and exciting way to begin a story.

In the earlier example, the plot is chronological, linear, and continuous: the story would move smoothly from beginning to end with no interruptions. *In medias res* instead suggests that you start your story with action rather than exposition, focusing on an exciting, imagistic, or important scene. Then, you can circle back to an earlier part of the story to fill in the blanks for your reader. Using the previously discussed plot shape, you might visualize it like this:



or...



How will your choices of narrative scope, sequence, and pacing impact your reader's experience?

You can experiment with your sequence in a variety of other ways, which might include also making changes to your scope: instead of a continuous story, you might have a series of fragments with specific scope (like photographs instead of video), as is exemplified by "The Pot Calling the Kettle Black…." Instead of chronological order, you might bounce around in time or space, like in "Parental Guidance," or in reverse, like "21." Some of my favorite narratives reject traditional narrative sequence.

I include *pacing* with *sequence* because a change to one often influences the other. Put simply, pacing refers to the speed and fluidity with which a reader moves through your story. You can play with pacing by moving more quickly through events, or even by experimenting with sentence and paragraph length. Consider how the "flow" of the following examples differs:

- The train screeched to a halt. A flock of pigeons took flight as the conductor announced, "We'll be stuck here for a few minutes."
- Lost in my thoughts, I shuddered as the train ground to a full stop in the middle of an intersection.I was surprised, jarred by the unannounced and abrupt jerking of the car. I sought clues for our stop outside the window. All I saw were pigeons as startled and clueless as I.

I recommend the student essay "Under the Knife," which does excellent work with pacing, in addition to making a strong creative choice with narrative scope.

Point-of-View

Different perspective" by Carlos ZGZ is in the Public Domain, CC0

The position from which your story is told will help shape your reader's experience, the language your narrator and characters use, and even the plot itself. You might recognize this from *Dear White People* Volume 1 or *Arrested Development* Season 4, both Netflix TV series. Typically, each episode in these seasons explores similar plot events, but from a different character's perspective. Because of their unique vantage points, characters can tell different stories about the same realities.

This is, of course, true for our lives more generally. In addition to our differences in knowledge and experiences, we also interpret and understand events differently. In our writing, narrative position is informed by point-of-view and the emotional valences I refer to here as tone and mood.

point-of-view (POV): the perspective from which a story is told.

This is a grammatical phenomenon—i.e., it decides pronoun use—but, more importantly, it impacts tone, mood, scope, voice, and plot.[4]

Although point-of-view will influence tone and mood, we can also consider what feelings we want to convey and inspire independently as part of our narrative position.

tone: the emotional register of the story's language.

What emotional state does the narrator of the story (not the author, but the speaker) seem to be in? What emotions are you trying to imbue in your writing?

mood: the emotional register a reader experiences.[5]

What emotions do you want your reader to experience? Are they the same feelings you experienced at the time?

A Non-Comprehensive Breakdown of POV

	Pronouns	Description
1st person	Narrator uses 1st person pronouns (I/me/mine or us/we/ours)	Can include internal monologue (thoughts, feelings) of the narrator certainty of motives, thoughts, or other characters.
2nd person	Narrator uses 2nd person pronouns (you/you/your)	Speaks *to* the reader, as if the rea protagonist OR uses apostrophe t absent or unidentified person
3rd person limited	Narrator uses 3rd person pronouns (he/him/his, she/her/hers, they/they/ theirs)	Sometimes called "close" third pe Observes and narrates but sticks two characters, in contrast with 3 omniscient.
3rd person omniscient	Narrator uses 3rd person pronouns (he/him/his, she/her/hers, they/they/ theirs)	Observes and narrates from an al perspective. Can include internal (motives, thoughts, feelings) of all
stream-of-consciousness	Narrator uses inconsistent pronouns, or no pronouns at all	Approximates the digressive, wan ungrammatical thought processes narrator.

Typically, you will tell your story from the first-person point-of-view, but personal narratives can also be told from a different perspective; I recommend "Comatose Dreams" to illustrate this at work. As you're developing and revising your writing, try to inhabit different authorial positions: What would change if you used the third person POV instead of first person? What different meanings would your reader find if you told this story with a different tone—bitter instead of nostalgic, proud rather than embarrassed, sarcastic rather than genuine?

Furthermore, there are many rhetorical situations that call for

different POVs. (For instance, you may have noticed that this book uses the second-person very frequently.) So, as you evaluate which POV will be most effective for your current rhetorical situation, bear in mind that the same choice might inform your future writing.

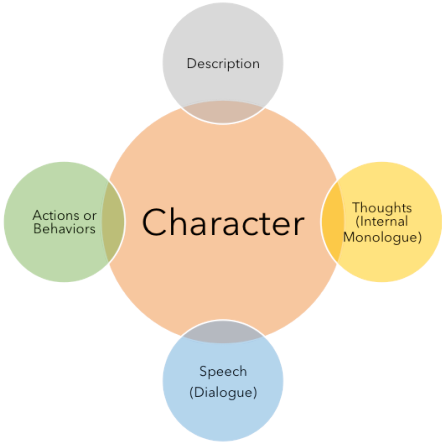
Building Characters

Whether your story is fiction or nonfiction, you should spend some time thinking about *characterization*: the development of characters through actions, descriptions, and dialogue. Your audience will be more engaged with and sympathetic toward your narrative if they can vividly imagine the characters as real people.

Like description, characterization relies on specificity. Consider the following contrast in character descriptions:

> My mom is great. She is an average-sized brunette with brown eyes. She is very loving and supportive, and I know I can rely on her. She taught me everything I know.
>
> In addition to some of my father's idiosyncrasies, however, he is also one of the most kind-hearted and loving people in my life. One of his signature actions is the 'cry-smile,' in which he simultaneously cries and smiles any time he experiences a strong positive emotion (which is almost daily).[6]

How does the "cry-smile" detail enhance the characterization of the speaker's parent?



To break it down to process, characterization can be accomplished in two ways:

> **Directly**, through specific description of the character—What kind of clothes do they wear? What do they look, smell, sound like?—or,
>
> **Indirectly**, through the behaviors, speech, and thoughts of the character—What kind of language, dialect, or register do they use? What is the tone, inflection, and timbre of their voice? How does their manner of speaking reflect their attitude toward the listener? How do their actions reflect their traits? What's on their mind that they won't share with the world?

Thinking through these questions will help you get a better understanding of each character (often including yourself!). You do not need to include all the details, but they should inform your description, dialogue, and narration.

Round characters…	are very detailed, requiring attentive description of their traits and behaviors.	Your most important characters should be round: the added detail will help your reader better visualize, understand, and care about them.
Flat characters…	are minimally detailed, only briefly sketched or named.	Less important characters should take up less space and will therefore have less detailed characterization.
Static characters…	remain the same throughout the narrative.	Even though all of us are always changing, some people will behave and appear the same throughout the course of your story. Static characters can serve as a reference point for dynamic characters to show the latter's growth.
Dynamic characters…	noticeably change within the narrative, typically as a result of the events.	Most likely, you will be a dynamic character in your personal narrative because such stories are centered around an impactful experience, relationship, or place. Dynamic characters learn and grow over time, either gradually or with an *epiphany*.

Dialogue7

dialogue: communication between two or more characters.

"Conversation" by Ray Wewerka is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

Think of the different conversations you've had today, with family, friends, or even classmates. Within each of those conversations, there were likely preestablished relationships that determined how you talked to each other: each is its own rhetorical situation. A dialogue with your friends, for example, may be far different from one with your family. These relationships can influence tone of voice, word choice (such as using slang, jargon, or lingo), what details we share, and even what language we speak.

As we've seen above, good dialogue often demonstrates the traits of a character or the relationship of characters. From reading or listening to how people talk to one another, we often infer the relationships they have. We can tell if they're having an argument or conflict, if one is experiencing some internal conflict or trauma, if they're friendly acquaintances or cold strangers, even how their emotional or professional attributes align or create opposition.

Often, dialogue does more than just one thing, which makes it a challenging tool to master. When dialogue isn't doing more than one thing, it can feel flat or expositional, like a bad movie or TV show where everyone is saying their feelings or explaining what just happened. For example, there is a difference between "No thanks, I'm not hungry" and "I've told you, I'm not hungry." The latter shows frustration, and hints at a previous conversation. Exposition can have a place in dialogue, but we should use it deliberately, with an awareness of how natural or unnatural it may sound. We should be aware how dialogue impacts the pacing of the narrative. Dialogue can be musical and create tempo, with either quick back and forth,

or long drawn out pauses between two characters. Rhythm of a dialogue can also tell us about the characters' relationship and emotions.

We can put some of these thoughts to the test using the exercises in the Activities section of this chapter to practice writing dialogue.

Choosing a Medium

Narration, as you already know, can occur in a variety of media: TV shows, music, drama, and even Snapchat Stories practice narration in different ways. Your instructor may ask you to write a traditional personal narrative (using only prose), but if you are given the opportunity, you might also consider what other media or genres might inform your narration. Some awesome narratives use a *multimedia* or *multigenre* approach, synthesizing multiple different forms, like audio and video, or nonfiction, poetry, and photography.

In addition to the limitations and opportunities presented by your rhetorical situation, choosing a medium also depends on the opportunities and limitations of different forms. To determine which tool or tools you want to use for your story, you should consider which medium (or combination of media) will help you best accomplish your purpose. Here's a non-comprehensive list of storytelling tools you might incorporate in place of or in addition to traditional prose:

- Images
- Poetry
- Video
- Audio recording
- "Found" texts (fragments of other authors' works reframed to tell a different story)
- Illustrations
- Comics, manga, or other graphic storytelling
- Journal entries or series of letters

- Plays, screenplays, or other works of drama
- Blogs and social media postings

Although each of these media is a vehicle for delivering information, it is important to acknowledge that each different medium will have a different impact on the audience; in other words, the medium can change the message itself.

There are a number of digital tools available that you might consider for your storytelling medium, as well.[8]

Video: Storytelling with Robyn Vazquez9

Video of Storytelling with Robyn Vazquez is available via PSU Media Space.

Activities

Idea Generation: What Stories Can I Tell?

You may already have an idea of an important experience in your

life about which you could tell a story. Although this might be a significant experience, it is most definitely not the only one worth telling. (Remember: first idea ≠ best idea.)

Just as with description, good narration isn't about shocking content but rather about effective and innovative writing. In order to broaden your options before you begin developing your story, complete the organizer on the following pages.

Then, choose three of the list items from this page that you think are especially unique or have had a serious impact on your life experience. On a separate sheet of paper, free-write about each of your three list items for no less than five minutes per item.

List five places that are significant to you (real, fictional, or imaginary)	List ten people who have influenced your life in some way (positive or negative, acquainted or not, real or fictional)

List ten ways that you identify yourself (roles, adjectives, or names)	List three obstacles you've overcome to be where you are today

List three difficult moments – tough decisions, traumatic or challenging experiences, or troubling circumstances

Idea Generation: Mapping an Autobiography

This exercise will help you develop a variety of options for your story, considered especially in the context of your entire life trajectory.

First, brainstorm at least ten moments or experiences that you consider influential–moments that in some way impacted your

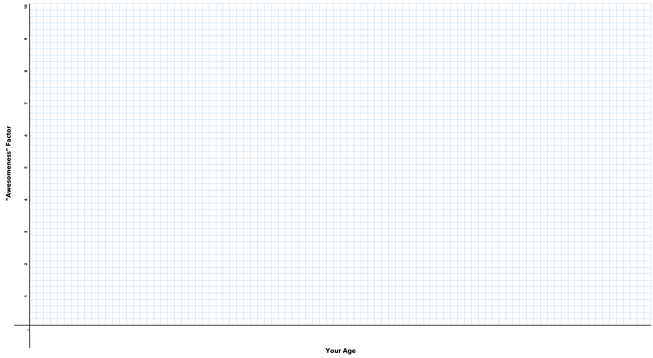
identity, your friendships, your worldview—for the better or for the worse. Record them in the table below.

Then, rate those experiences on a degree of "awesomeness," "pleasurability," or something else along those lines, on a scale of 0 – 10, with 10 being the hands down best moment of your life and 0 being the worst.

Next, plot those events on the graph paper on the back of this page. Each point is an event; the x-axis is your age, and the y-axis is the factor of positivity. Connect the points with a line.

Finally, circle three of the events/experiences on your graph. On a clean sheet of paper, free-write about each of those three for at least four minutes.[10]

Your age	Event, moment, or experience	Awesomeness Factor (0-10)



Experimenting with Voice and Dialogue11

Complete the following three exercises to think through the language your characters use and the relationships they demonstrate through dialogue. If you've started your assignment, you can use these exercises to generate content.

The Secret

1. Choose any two professions for two imaginary characters.
2. Give the two characters a secret that they share with one another. As you might imagine, neither of them would reveal that secret aloud, but they might discuss it. (To really challenge yourself, you might also come up with a reason that their secret must be a secret: Is it socially unacceptable to talk

about? Are they liable to get in trouble if people find out? Will they ruin a surprise?)

3. Write an exchange between those characters about the secret using only their words (i.e., no "he said" or "she said," but rather only the language they use). Allow the secret to be revealed to the reader in how the characters speak, what they say, and how they say it. Pay attention to the subtext of what's being said and how it's being said. How would these characters discuss their secret without revealing it to eavesdroppers? (Consider Ernest Hemingway's "Hills Like White Elephants" as a model.)
4. Draw a line beneath your dialogue. Now, imagine that only one of the characters has a secret. Write a new dialogue in which one character is trying to keep that secret from the other. Again, consider how the speakers are communicating: what language do they use? What sort of tone? What does that reveal about their relationship?

The Overheard

1. Go to a public space and eavesdrop on a conversation. (Try not to be too creepy—be considerate and respectful of the people.) You don't need to take avid notes, but observe natural inflections, pauses, and gestures. What do these characteristics imply about the relationship between the speakers?
2. Jot down a fragment of striking, interesting, or weird dialogue.
3. Now, use that fragment of dialogue to imagine a digital exchange: consider that fragment as a Facebook status, a text message, or a tweet. Then, write at least ten comments or replies to that fragment.
4. Reflect on the imaginary digital conversation you just created. What led you to make the choices you made? How does digital dialogue differ from real-life dialogue?

Beyond Words

As you may have noticed in the previous exercises, dialogue is about more than just what the words say: our verbal communication is supplemented by inflection, tone, body language, and pace, among other things. With a partner, exchange the following lines. Without changing the words, try to change the meaning using your tone, inflection, body language, etc.

a
"I don't want to talk about it."
"Can we talk about it?"
"I want it."
"Have you seen her today?"

B
"Leave me alone."
"What do you want from me?"
"You can't have it."
"Why?"

After each round, debrief with your partner; jot down a few notes together to describe how your variations changed the meaning of

each word. Then, consider how you might capture and relay these different deliveries using written language–what some writers call "dialogue tags." Dialogue tags try to reproduce the nuance of our spoken and unspoken languages (e.g., "he muttered," "she shouted in frustration," "they insinuated, crossing their arms").

"Body Language" by Paolo Fefe' is licensed under CC BY-ND 2.0

Using Images to Tell a Story

Even though this textbook focuses on writing as a means to tell stories, you can also construct thoughtful and unique narratives using solely images, or using images to supplement your writing. A single photograph can tell a story, but a series will create a more cohesive narrative. To experiment with this medium, try the following activity.

1. Using your cell phone or a digital camera, take at least one

photograph (of yourself, events, and/or your surroundings) each hour for one day.
2. Compile the photos and arrange them in chronological order. Choose any five photos that tell a story about part or all of your day.

    - How did you determine which photos to remove? What does this suggest about your narrative scope?
    - Where might you want to add photos or text? Why?

To consider models of this kind of narrative, check out Al Jazeera's "In Pictures" series. In 2014, a friend of mine recorded a one-second video every day for a year, creating a similar kind of narrative.

Model Texts by Student Authors

Under the Knife[12]

The white fluorescent lights mirrored off the waxed and buffed vinyl flooring. Doctors and nurses beelined through small congregations of others conversing. Clocks were posted at every corner of every wall and the sum of the quiet ticking grew to an audible drone. From the vinyl floors to the desks where decade old Dell computers sat, a sickly gray sucked all the life from the room. The only source of color was the rainbow circle crocheted blanket that came customary for minors about to undergo surgery. It was supposed to be a token of warmth and happiness, a blanket you could find life in; however, all I found in the blanket was an unwanted pity.

Three months ago doctors diagnosed me with severe scoliosis. They told me I would need to pursue orthopedic surgery to realign my spine. For years I endured through back pain and discomfort, never attributing it to the disease. In part, I felt as

if it was my fault, that me letting the symptoms go unattended for so long led it to become so extreme. Those months between the diagnosis and the surgery felt like mere seconds. Every day I would recite to myself that everything would be okay and that I had nothing to worry about. However, then minutes away from sedation, I felt like this bed I was in—only three feet off the ground—would put me six feet under.

The doctors informed me beforehand of the potential complications that could arise from surgery. Partial paralysis, infection, death, these words echoed throughout the chasms of my mind. Anxiety overwhelmed me; I was a dying animal surrounded by ravenous vultures, drool dripping awaiting their next meal. My palms were a disgusting swamp of sweat that gripped hard onto the white sheets that covered me. A feeling of numbness lurked into my extremities and slowly infected its way throughout my body.

The vinyl mattress cover I was on felt like a porcelain toilet seat during a cold winter morning. It did not help my discomfort that I had nothing on but a sea blue gown that covered only the front and ankle high socks that seemed like bathroom scrubbers. A heart rate monitor clamp was tightly affixed onto my index finger that had already lost circulation minutes ago. The monitor was the snitch giving away my growing anxiety; my heart rate began to increase as I awaited surgery. Attached to the bed frame was a remote that could adjust almost every aspect of the bed. I kept the bed at an almost right angle: I wanted to be aware of my surroundings.

My orthopediatrician and surgeon, Dr. Halsey, paced in from the hallway and gave away a forced smile to ease me into comfort. The doctor shot out his hand and I hesitantly stuck out mine for the handshake. I've always hated handshakes; my hands are incredibly sweaty and I did not want to disgust him with my soggy tofu hands. He asked me how my day was so far, and I responded with a concise "Alright." Truth was, my day so far was pretty lackluster and tiring. I had woken up before the birds had even begun to chirp, I ate nothing for breakfast, and I was terrified out of my mind. This Orthopedic Surgeon, this man, this human, was fully

in charge of the surgery. Dr. Halsey and other surgeons deal with one of the most delicate and fragile things in the world—people's lives. The amount of pressure and nerves he must face on an everyday basis is incredible. His calm and reserved nature made me believe that he was confident in himself, and that put me more at ease.

An overweight nurse wheeled in an IV with a bag of solution hooked to the side. "Which arm do you prefer for your IV?" she inquired.

Needles used to terrify me. They were tiny bullets that pierced through your skin like mosquitos looking for dinner, but by now I had grown accustomed to them. Like getting stung by a bee for the first time, my first time getting blood taken was a grueling adventure. "Left, I guess," I let out with a long anxiety-filled sigh.

The rubber band was thick and dark blue, the same color as the latex gloves she wore. I could feel my arm pulse in excitement as they tightly wrapped the rubber band right above my elbow.

"Oh, wow! Look at that vein pop right out!" The nurse exclaimed as she inspected the bulging vein.

I tried to distract myself from the nurse so I wouldn't hesitate as the IV was going in. I stared intently at the speckled ceiling tiles. They were the same ones used in schools. As my eyes began to relax, the dots on the ceiling started to transform into different shapes and animals. There was a squirrel, a seal, and a do—I felt pain shock through my body as the IV needle had infiltrated into my arm.

Dr. Halsey had one arm planted to the bottom end of the bed frame and the other holding the clipboard that was attached to the frame. "We're going to pump two solutions through you. The first will be the saline, and the second will be the sedation and anesthesia." The nurse leaned over and punched in buttons connected to the IV. After a loud beep, I felt a cooling sensation run down my arm. I felt like a criminal, prosecuted for murder, and now was one chemical away from finishing the cocktail execution. My

eyes darted across the room; I was searching for hope I could cling to.

My mother was sitting on a chair on the other side of the room, eyes slowly and silently sweating. She clutched my father's giant calloused hands as he browsed the internet on his phone. While I would say that I am more similar to my mother than my father, I think we both dealt with our anxiety in similar ways. Just like my father, I too needed a visual distraction to avoid my anxiety. "I love you," my mother called out.

All I did was a slight nod in affirmation. I was too fully engulfed by my own thoughts to even try and let out a single syllable. What is my purpose in life? Have I been successful in making others proud? Questions like these crept up in my mind like an unwanted visitor.

"Here comes the next solution," Dr. Halsey announced while pointing his pen at the IV bags. "10...," he began his countdown.

I needed answers to the questions that had invaded my mind. So far in life, I haven't done anything praiseworthy or even noteworthy. I am the bottom of the barrel, a dime a dozen, someone who will probably never influence the future to come. However, in those final seconds, I realized that I did not really care.

"7...," Dr. Halsey continued the countdown.

I've enjoyed my life. I've had my fun and shared many experiences with my closest friends. If I'm not remembered in a few years after I die, then so be it. I'm proud of my small accomplishments so far.

"4..."

Although I am not the most decorated of students, I can say that at least I tried my hardest. All that really mattered was that I was happy. I had hit tranquility; my mind had halted. I was out even before Dr. Halsey finished the countdown. I was at ease.

Teacher Takeaways

"I like how the scope of the narrative is specifically limited to the hours leading up to the surgery. That shifts the focus on the author's anticipation and anxiety, rather than the surgery itself. This essay also successfully employs slow, deliberate pacing in each section, reflecting that sense of anticipation and anxiety. However, at some points this slow pacing results in minute descriptions of details that don't clearly advance the narrative, making the essay feel bloated at times and diminishing the effectiveness of those sections where the pacing is more appropriate." – Professor Dunham

Breathing Easy[13]

Most people's midlife crises happen when they're well into adulthood; mine happened when I was twelve. For most of my childhood and into my early teen years, I was actively involved in community theater. In the fall of 2010, I was in the throes of puberty as well as in the middle of rehearsals for a production of *Pinocchio*, in which I played the glamorous and highly coveted role of an unnamed puppet. On this particular day, however, I was not onstage rehearsing with all the other unnamed puppets as I should've been; instead, I was locked backstage in a single-stall bathroom, dressed in my harlequin costume and crying my eyes out on the freezing tile floor, the gaudy red and black makeup dripping down my face until I looked like the villain from a low-budget horror movie.

The timing of this breakdown was not ideal. I don't

remember exactly what happened in the middle of rehearsal that triggered this moment of hysteria, but I know it had been building for a long time, and for whatever reason, that was the day the dam finally broke. At the time, I had pinpointed the start of my crisis to a moment several months earlier when I started questioning my sexuality. Looking back now, though, I can see that this aspect of my identity had been there since childhood, when as a seven-year-old I couldn't decide if I would rather marry Aladdin or Princess Jasmine.

Up until the age of 16, I lived in Amarillo, Texas, a flat, brown city in the middle of a huge red state. Even though my parents had never been blatantly homophobic in front of me, I grew up in a conservative religious community that was fiercely cisheteronormative. My eighth-grade health teacher kicked off our unit on sex education with a contemptuous, "We aren't going to bother learning about safe sex for homosexuals. We're only going to talk about normal relationships." Another time, when I told a friend about a secret I had (unrelated to my sexuality), she responded with, "That's not too bad. At least you're not gay," her lips curling in disdain as if simply saying the sinful word aloud left a bad taste in her mouth.

I laid in a crumpled mess on that bathroom floor, crying until my head throbbed and the linoleum beneath me became slick with tears and dollar-store face paint. By the time my crying slowed and I finally pulled myself up off the floor, my entire body felt weighed down by the secret I now knew I had to keep, and despite being a perfectionist at heart, I couldn't find it within myself to care that I'd missed almost all of rehearsal. I looked at my tear-streaked face in the mirror, makeup smeared all over my burning cheeks, and silently admitted to myself what I had subconsciously known for a long time: that I wasn't straight, even though I didn't know exactly what I was yet. At the time, even thinking the words "I might be gay" to myself felt like a death sentence. I promised myself then and there that I would never tell anyone; that seemed to be the only option.

For several years, I managed to keep my promise to myself.

Whereas before I had spent almost all of my free time with my friends, after my episode in the bathroom, I became isolated, making up excuses anytime a friend invited me out for fear of accidentally getting too comfortable and letting my secret slip. I spent most of middle school and the beginning of high school so far back in the closet I could barely breathe or see any light. I felt like the puppet I'd played in that production of *Pinocchio*—tied down by fear and shame, controlled by other people and their expectations of me rather than having the ability to be honest about who I was.

Just as I ended up breaking down in that theater bathroom stall when I was twelve, though, I eventually broke down again. My freshman year of high school was one of the worst years of my life. Struggling with mental illness and missing large portions of school as I went in and out of psychiatric hospitals was hard enough, but on top of all of that, I was also lying about a core part of my identity to everyone I knew. After a particularly rough night, I sat down and wrote a letter to my parents explaining that I was pansexual (or attracted to all genders and gender identities). "I've tried to stop being this way, but I can't," I wrote, my normally-neat handwriting reduced to a shaky chicken scratch as I struggled to control the trembling of my hands. "I hope you still love me." With my heart pounding violently in my chest, I signed the letter and left it in the kitchen for them to find before locking myself in my room and pretending to go to sleep so I wouldn't have to deal with their initial response.

By some amazing twist of fate, my parents did not have the horrible reaction I'd been dreading for the past two years. They knocked on my door a few minutes after I'd left the letter for them, and when I nervously let them in, they hugged me and told me that they loved me no matter what; my dad even said, "Kid, you couldn't have picked a better family to be gay in." For the first time in years, I felt like I could breathe again. My fear of rejection was still there—after all, I still had to come out to most of my friends and extended family—but it seemed so much more manageable knowing I had my parents on my side.

It took me several years to fully come out and get to a point where I felt comfortable in my own identity. A lot of people, even those who had known and loved me since I was a baby, told me that they couldn't be friends with me or my family anymore because of my "sinful lifestyle." As painful as it was each time I was shunned by someone I thought was my friend, I eventually gained enough confidence in myself and my identity to stop caring as much when people tried to tear me down for something I know is outside of my control. Now, as a fully out-of-the-closet queer person, I still face discrimination from certain people in my life and from society as a whole. However, I've learned that it's a lot easier to deal with judgement from external forces when you surround yourself with people who love and support you, and most importantly, when you have love for yourself, which I'm glad to say I now do. Even though it was terrifying at first, I'm glad I broke the promise I made to myself in that backstage bathroom, because no matter what struggles I might face, at least I know I'm able to be open about who I am.

Teacher Takeaways

"This essay begins in compelling fashion, in a dramatic, vividly descriptive scene that proves central to the narrative. The use of dialogue is also strong here, especially in the letter the narrator writes to their parents and the father's response to that letter. The author also experiments with narrative sequence. It's a good move, but it does introduce some chronological confusion, making it difficult to place events on a timeline in relation to one another. This is a challenge with non-traditional narrative sequencing, but it can be resolved with strategic editing."– Professor Dunham

Visions14

Before I got sober I never paid attention to my dreams. I don't even remember if I had dreams. In the end I was spiritually broken, hopeless, scared and desperate. My life was dedicated to blotting out my miserable existence using copious amounts of booze and drugs. The substances stopped working. Every night was intoxicated tear soaked erratic fits of despair until I passed out. Only to wake up the next morning and begin the vicious cycle all over. Bending and writhing my way out of a five year heroin and alcohol addiction was just as scary. I was in jail. I had no idea how to live. I had no purpose in life. Then the dreams came back. Some of them were terrifying. Some dreams had inspiration. There is one dream I will never forget.

I am standing in a room full of people. They are all sitting looking up at me. I am holding a hand drum. My hands are shaking and I am extremely nervous. An old woman enters the room and walks up to me. The old woman is about half my height. She is barefoot and wearing a long green wool dress. She is holding a walking stick and is draped in animal furs. She has long flowing hair that falls over the animal furs. The old woman looks at all the people in the room. Then she looks at me and says, "It's okay, they are waiting, sing." My heart is racing. I strike the hand drum with all my courage. I feel the heartbeat of the drum. It's my heartbeat. I begin to sing, honoring the four directions. After each verse I pause and the old woman pushes me forward "It's okay," she says, "Sing." I am singing louder now. The third verse is powerful. I am striking the drum with all my strength. Many people singing with me. My spirit is strong. During the fourth verse sparks are flying from the contact between the beater stick and my drum. I am striking the drum with all our strength. We are all singing together. The room is shaking with spirit. The old woman looks over at me and smiles.

I woke up. My heart was racing. I took a deep breath of recirculated air. I could taste the institution. I looked over and saw my cellmate sleeping. I remembered where I was. I knew what I had

to do. I had to get sober and stay sober. I had to find my spirit. I had to sing.

At six months of sobriety I was out in the real world. I was living on the Oregon Coast and I was attending local AA meetings. I was still lost but had the dream about singing with the drum in the back of my mind. One day an oldtimer walked into the meeting and sat down. He introduced himself, "My name is Gary, and I am an alcoholic from Colorado." We all respond, "Welcome Gary." Gary intrigued me. He was wearing old jeans, a sweatshirt and a faded old native pride hat with an eagle feather embroider on the front. Beneath the hat he wore round eyeglasses which sat on top of his large nose, below his nose was a bushy mustache. He resembled an Indian version of Groucho Marx. Something felt familiar about his spirit. After the meeting Gary walked up and introduced himself to me. I invited him to our native recovery circle we have on Wednesday nights.

Gary came to our circle that Wednesday. We made plans to hang out after the meeting. Gary is Oglala Lakota. He is a pipe carrier for the people. We decide to hold a pipe ceremony in order to establish connectedness and unite with one heart and mind. To pray and get to know each other. We went down to the beach and lit a fire. It was a clear, warm night. The stars were bright. The fire was crackling and the shadows of the flames were bouncing of the clear night sky. I took my shoes off and felt the cool soft sand beneath my feet and between my toes. The ocean was rumbling in the distance. Gary started digging around in his bag. The firelight bounced off his glasses giving a twinkle in his eye as he gave me a little smile. He pulled out a hand drum. My heart stopped. He began to sing a song. I knew that song. He was honoring the four directions. My eyes began to water and a wave of emotion flooded over me. I looked up to the stars with gratitude. I asked Gary if he would teach me and he shrugged.

I began to hang around Gary a lot. I would just listen. He let me practice with his drum. He would talk and I would listen. Sometimes he would sing and I would sing along. We continued to

go to our native recovery circle. It was growing in attendance. Gary would open the meeting by honoring the four directions with the song and we would smudge down. I would listen and sometimes sing along.

I had a year of sobriety when I got my first drum making supplies. I called Gary and he came over to help me make it. Gary showed me how to prep the hide. How to stretch the hide over the wooden hoop and how to lace it up in the back. I began to find purpose in the simple act of learning how to create stuff. I brought my drum to our native recovery circle. Around forty people attend our circle now. Many of them young and new still struggling with addiction. We lit the sage to open the meeting. The smoke began to rise into the sky. I inhaled the smoky scent deep and could feel the serenity and cleansing property of the sage medicine. I looked around at all the people. They were all looking at me and waiting. Then I looked at Gary. Gary smiled and said, "It's okay, they are all waiting, sing."

We now have another recovery circle here in Portland on Friday nights. Gary is gone. He had to move to Nashville, Tennessee. Many people come to our circle to find healing from drug and alcohol abuse. We light the sage and smudge down while I honor the four directions with the same song. I carry many of the traditional prayer songs today. Most of them given to me by Gary.

At one meeting a young man struggling with alcoholism approaches me and tells me he needs to sing and wants to learn the songs. The next week we open the meeting and light the sage. The young man is standing next to me holding his own drum. His own heartbeat. He looks at all the people. They are all looking at him. He looks at me. I smile and say, "It's okay, they are waiting, sing."

Teacher Takeaways

"I love this essay. It's clear that the student is personally invested in the subject matter—that they've chosen something that is important to their identity and worldview—and they use repetition to highlight the experience of learning and growing. If this author planned to revise further, I would encourage them to experiment with sentence structure: the author uses what we call 'simple sentences' predominantly, which leads to a rhythmic but sometimes monotonous cadence. For instance, instead of 'Gary is gone. He had to move to Nashville, Tennessee,' the student could try 'Because he had to move to Nashville, Tennessee, Gary is gone now.' (Neither sentence is inherently better, but variety in sentence structure keeps the reader more engaged.)"– Professor Dawson

Endnotes

1 "The Big Bang." Doctor Who, written by Steven Moffat, BBC, 2010.
2 Of interest on this topic is the word sonder, defined at The Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows:(n.) the realization that each random passerby is living a life as vivid and complex as your own—populated with their own ambitions, friends, routines, worries and inherited craziness—an epic story that continues invisibly around you like an anthill sprawling deep underground, with elaborate passageways to thousands of other lives that you'll never know existed, in which you might appear only once, as an extra sipping coffee in the background, as a blur of traffic passing on the highway, as a lighted window at dusk.Koening, John. "Sonder." The Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows, 22 July 2012, http://www.dictionaryofobscuresorrows.com/post/23536922667/

sonder.
3 Gustav Freytag is credited with this particular model, often referred to as "Freytag's pyramid." Freytag studied the works of Shakespeare and a collection of Greek tragic plays to develop this model in Die Technik des Dramas (1863).
4 For the sake of brevity, I have not included here a discussion of focalization, an important phenomenon to consider when studying point-of-view more in-depth.
5 Sometimes tone and mood align, and you might describe them using similar adjectives—a joyous tone might create joy for the reader. However, they sometimes don't align, depending largely on the rhetorical situation and the author's approach to that situation. For instance, a story's tone might be bitter, but the reader might find the narrator's bitterness funny, off-putting, or irritating. Often, tone and mood are in opposition to create irony: Jonathan Swift's matter-of-fact tone in "A Modest Proposal" is satirical, producing a range of emotions for the audience, from revulsion to hilarity.
6 Excerpt by an anonymous student author, 2016. Reproduced with permission from the student author.
7 Thanks to Alex Dannemiller for his contributions to this subsection.
8 Tips on podcasting and audio engineering [transom.org]Interactive web platform hosting [H5P.org] Audio editing and engineering: NCH WavePad Audio Editing SoftwareWhiteboard video creation (paid, free trial): Video scribeInfographic maker: PiktochartComic and graphic narrative software (free, paid upgrades): Pixton
9 Vazquez, Robyn. Interview with Shane Abrams. 2 July 2017, Deep End Theater, Portland, OR.
10 This activity is a modified version of one by Lily Harris.
11 Thanks to Alex Dannemiller for his contributions to this subsection.
12 Essay by Joey Butler, Portland Community College, 2016. Reproduced with permission from the student author.
13 Essay by an anonymous student author, 2016. Reproduced with

permission from the student author.
14 Essay by an anonymous student author, 2014. Reproduced with permission from the student author.

Chapter Three: Reflecting on an Experience

One of my greatest pleasures as a writing instructor is learning about my students' life journeys through their storytelling. Because it is impossible for us to truly know anything beyond our own lived experience,[1] sharing our stories is the most powerful form of teaching. It allows us a chance to learn about others' lives and worldviews.

Often, our rhetorical purpose in storytelling is to entertain. Storytelling is a way to pass time, to make connections, and to share experiences. Just as often, though, stories are didactic: one of the rhetorical purposes (either overtly or covertly) is to teach. Since human learning often relies on experience, and relating an experience constitutes storytelling, narrative can be an indirect teaching opportunity. Articulating lessons drawn from an experience, though, requires *reflection*.

Reflection is a way that writers
look back in order to
look forward.

Reflection is a rhetorical gesture that helps you and your audience construct meaning from the story you've told. It demonstrates why your story matters, to you and to the audience more generally: how did the experience change you? What did it teach you? What relevance does it hold for your audience? Writers often consider reflection as a means of "looking back in order to look forward." This

means that storytelling is not just a mode of preservation, nostalgia, or regret, but instead a mechanism for learning about ourselves and the world.

Chapter Vocabulary

Vocabulary	**Definition**
reflection	a rhetorical gesture by which an author looks back, through the diege reflecting. May also include consideration of the impact of that past s
diegetic gap	from "diegesis," the temporal distance between a first-person narrato author and author-as-character.

Techniques

> "Looking back in order to look forward,"2 or
> "I wish that I knew what I know now when I was younger"3

As you draft your narrative, keep in mind that your story or stories should allow you to draw some insight that has helped you or may help your reader in some way: reflection can help you relate a lesson, explore an important part of your identity, or process through a complicated set of memories. Your writing should equip both you and your audience with a perspective or knowledge that challenges, nuances, or shapes the way you and they interact with the world. This reflection need not be momentous or dramatic, but will deepen the impression of your narrative.

Reflection relies on what I call *the diegetic gap*. Diegesis is a term from the field of narratology referring to narration—the story as it is portrayed. In turn, this gap identifies that time has passed between

the plot events and your act of writing. Simply put, the diegetic gap is the distance between you-the-author and you-the-character:

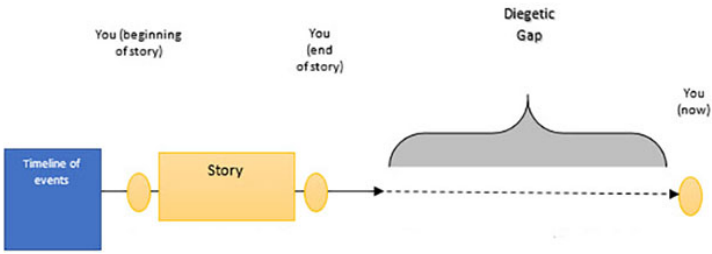


Diagram: Diagetic gap is between You (end of story) and You (now, writing the story)

Because we are constantly becoming ourselves, shaped by our relationships and experiences, "you" are a different person at all three points. By looking back at your story, you can cultivate meaning in ways you could not during the events or immediately following them. Distance from an event changes the way we see previous events: time to process, combined with new experiences and knowledge, encourages us to interpret the past differently.

As you'll see in the upcoming activities , looking back through this gap is a gesture akin to the phrase "When I look back now, I realize that…"[4]

Wrap-up vs. Weave

Students often have a hard time integrating reflective writing throughout their narratives. In some cases, it is effective to use reflection to "wrap up" the story; it might not make sense to talk about a lesson learned before the story has played out. However, you should try to avoid the "tacked on" paragraph at the end of your story: if your reflective writing takes over at the end of the story, it should still feel like a part of the narrative rather than

an afterthought. In other words, you should only reserve your reflective writing for the last paragraph or two if the story has naturally and fluidly brought us across the diegetic gap to present day.

> You may notice that your choices in narration, including point-of-view, tense, and scope, will influence the way you develop reflective writing.

Instead of a wrap-up, though, I often challenge my students to weave their reflection in with the story itself. You can see this at work in "Slowing Down" and "Parental Guidance" in some places. However, to see woven reflection applied even more deliberately, take a look at the model text "Blood & Chocolate Milk." This author explicitly weaves narration and reflection; while your weave doesn't need to be this obvious, consider how the author's choices in this essay enhance both the narrative and your understanding of their family dynamic.

Spelling it Out vs. Implying Meaning

Finally, you should be deliberate about how overt you should make your reflection. If you are trying to connect with your reader, sharing your story so they might

better know you, the world you live in, or even themselves, you need to walk the fine line between subtlety and over-explanation. You need to be clear enough that your reader can generalize and relate. Consider the essay "Comatose Dreams" in the previous section: it does exceptional work with implication, but some readers have trouble knowing what they should take away from the story to apply to their own lives.

It is also possible, though, to be too explicit. Take, for example,

Charles Perrault's 1697 publication of a classic folk story, "Little Red Riding Hood."[5] As with many fairy tales, this story is overtly didactic, stating the following moral after Little Red Riding Hood's demise:

> Moral: Children, especially attractive, well bred young ladies, should never talk to strangers, for if they should do so, they may well provide dinner for a wolf. I say "wolf," but there are various kinds of wolves. There are also those who are charming, quiet, polite, unassuming, complacent, and sweet, who pursue young women at home and in the streets. And unfortunately, it is these gentle wolves who are the most dangerous ones of all.[6]

I encourage you to discuss the misogynist leanings of this moral with your class. For our purposes here, though, let's consider what Perrault's "wrap-up" does, rhetorically. With a target audience of, presumably, children, Perrault assumes that the moral needs to be spelled out. This paragraph does the "heavy lifting" of interpreting the story as an allegory; it explains what the reader is supposed to take away from the fairy tale so they don't have to figure it out on their own. On the other side of that coin, though, it limits interpretive possibilities. Perrault makes the intent of the story unambiguous, making it less likely that readers can synthesize their own meaning.

Activities

What My Childhood Tastes Like7

To practice reflection, try this activity writing about something very important—food.

First, spend five minutes making a list of every food or drink you remember from childhood. Mine looks like this:

– Plain cheese quesadillas, made by my mom in the miniscule kitchenette of our one-bedroom apartment

– "Chicken"-flavored ramen noodles, at home alone after school

– Cayenne pepper cherry Jell-O at my grandparents' house

– Wheat toast slathered in peanut butter before school

– Lime and orange freezy-pops

– My stepdad's meatloaf–ironically, the only meatloaf I've ever liked

– Cookie Crisp cereal ("It's cookies–for breakfast!")

– Macintosh apples and creamy Skippy peanut butter

– Tostitos Hint of Lime chips and salsa

– Love Apple Stew that only my grandma can make right

– Caramel brownies, by my grandma who can't bake anymore

Then, identify one of those foods that holds a special place in your memory. Spend another five minutes free-writing about the memories you have surrounding that food. What makes it so special? What relationships are represented by that food? What life circumstances? What does it represent about *you*? Here's my model; I started out with my first list item, but then digressed–you too should feel free to let your reflective writing guide you.

> My mom became a gourmet with only the most basic ingredients. We lived bare bones in a one-bedroom apartment in the outskirts of Denver; for whatever selfless reason, she gave four-year-old the bedroom and she took a futon in the living room. She would cook for me after caring for other

mothers' four-year-olds all day long: usually plain cheese quesadillas (never any sort of add-ons, meats, or veggies—besides my abundant use of store-brand ketchup) or scrambled eggs (again, with puddles of ketchup).

When I was 6, my dad eventually used ketchup as a rationale for my second stepmom: "Shane, look! Judy likes ketchup on her eggs too!" But it was my mom I remembered cooking for me every night—not Judy, and certainly not my father.

"I don't like that anymore. I like barbecue sauce on my eggs."

Reflection as a Rhetorical Gesture

Although reflection isn't necessarily its own rhetorical mode, it certainly is a posture that you can apply to any mode of writing. I picture it as a pivot, perhaps off to the left somewhere, that opens up the diegetic gap and allows me to think through the impact of an experience. As mentioned earlier, this gesture can be represented by the phrase "When I look back now, I realize that…" To practice this pivot, try this exercise.

- Over five minutes, write a description of the person who taught you to tie your shoes, ride a bike, or some other life skill. You may tell the story of learning this skill if you want, but it is not necessary. (See characterization for more on describing people.)
- Write the phrase "When I look back now, I realize that."
- Complete the sentence and proceed with reflective writing for another five minutes. What does your reflection reveal about that person that the narrative doesn't showcase? Why? How might you integrate this "wrap-up" into a "weave"?

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End-of-Episode Voice-Overs: Reflection in Television Shows

In addition to written rhetoric, reflection is also a tool used to provide closure in many television shows: writers use voiceovers in these shows in an attempt to neatly tie up separate narrative threads for the audience, or to provide reflective insight on what the audience just watched for added gravity or relevance for their lives. Often a show will use a voiceover toward the end of the episode to provide (or try to provide) a satisfying dénouement.

To unpack this trope, watch an episode of one of the following TV shows (available on Netflix or Hulu at the time of this writing) and write a paragraph in response to the questions below:

- *Scrubs*[8]
- *Grey's Anatomy*
- *The Wonder Years*
- *How I Met Your Mother*

    - *Ally McBeal*
    - *Jane the Virgin*
    - *Sex and the City*
- What individual stories were told in the episode? How was each story related to the others?
- Is there a common lesson at all the characters learned?
- At what point(s) does the voiceover use the gesture of reflection? Does it seem genuine? Forced? Satisfying? Frustrating?

Dr. Cox: "Grey's Anatomy always wraps up every episode with some cheesy voice-over that ties together all of the storylines, which, incidentally, is my least favorite device on television."

Elliot: "I happen to like the voice-overs on Grey's Anatomy, except for when they're really vague and generic."

Voice-over (J.D.): And so, in the end, I knew what Elliot said about the way things were has forever changed the way we all thought about them. – Scrubs

Model Texts by Student Authors

Slowing Down9

I remember a time when I was still oblivious to it. My brother, sister, and I would pile out of the car and race through the parking lot to the store, or up the driveway to the house, never so

much as a glance backward. I'm not sure exactly when it happened, but at some point I started to take notice, fall back, slow my pace, wait for him.

My dad wasn't always that slow. He didn't always have to concentrate so hard to just put one foot in front of the other. Memory has a way of playing tricks on you, but I swear that I can remember him being tall, capable, and strong once. When I was real little he could put me on his shoulders and march me around: I have pictures to prove it. I also have fuzzy memories of family camping trips—him taking us to places like Yosemite, Death Valley, and the California coast. What I remember clearly, though, was him driving to and from work every day in that old flatbed truck with the arc welder strapped to the back, going to fix boilers, whatever those were.

My dad owned his own business; I was always proud of that. I'd tell my friends that he was the boss. Of course, he was the sole employee, aside from my mom who did the books. I didn't tell them that part. But he did eventually hire a guy named David. My mom said it was to "be his hands." At the time I wasn't sure what that meant but I knew that his hands certainly looked different than other people's, all knotty. And he'd started to use that foam thing that he'd slip over his fork or toothbrush so he could grip it better. I supposed that maybe a new set of hands wasn't a bad idea.

When I was about 8, he and my mom made a couple of trips to San Francisco to see a special doctor. They said that he'd need several surgeries before they were through, but that they'd start on his knees. I pictured my dad as a robot, all of his joints fused together with nuts and bolts. I wondered if I'd have to oil him, like the tin man. It made me laugh to think about it: bionic dad. That wouldn't be so bad; maybe I could take him to show and tell. To be honest, I was sometimes a little embarrassed by the way he looked when he came to pick me up at school or my friend's house. He wore braces in his boots to help him walk, he always moved so slow, and his hands had all those knots that made them curl up like old grapevines. And then there was that dirty old fanny pack he always

carried with him because he couldn't reach his wallet if it was in his pocket. Yeah, bionic dad would be an improvement.

It was around this time that my parents decided to give up the business. That was fine with me; it meant he'd be home all day. Also, his flatbed work truck quickly became our new jungle gym and the stage for many new imaginary games. Maybe it was him not being able to work anymore that finally made it click for me, but I think it was around this time that I started to slow down a bit, wait for him.

He could still drive—he just needed help starting the ignition. But now, once we'd get to where we were going, I'd try not to walk too fast. It had begun to occur to me that maybe walking ahead of him was kind of disrespectful or insensitive. In a way, I think that I just didn't want him to know that my legs worked better than his. So, I'd help him out of the car, offer to carry his fanny pack, and try to walk casually next to him, as if I'd always kept that pace.

I got pretty good at doing other stuff for him, too; we all did. He couldn't really reach above shoulder height anymore, so aside from just procuring cereal boxes from high shelves we'd take turns combing his hair, helping him shave, or changing his shirt. I never minded helping out. I had spent so many years being my dad's shadow and copying him in every aspect that I possibly could; helping him out like this just made me feel useful, like I was finally a worthy sidekick. I pictured Robin combing Batman's hair. That probably happened from time to time, right?

Once I got to high school, our relationship began to change a bit. I still helped him out, but we had started to grow apart. I now held my own opinions about things, and like most kids in the throes of rebellion, I felt the need to make this known at every chance I got. I rejected his music, politics, TV shows, sports, you name it. Instead of being his shadow we became more like reflections in a mirror; we looked the same, but everything was opposite, and I wasted no opportunity to demonstrate this.

We argued constantly. Once in particular, while fighting about something to do with me not respecting his authority, he

came at me with his arms crossed in front of him and shoved me. I was taller than him by this point, and his push felt akin to someone not paying attention and accidentally bumping into me while wandering the aisles at the supermarket. It was nothing. But it was also the first time he'd ever done anything like that, and I was incredulous—eager, even—at the invitation to assert myself physically. I shoved him back. He lost his footing and flailed backwards. If the refrigerator hadn't been there to catch him he would have fallen. I still remember the wild look in his eyes as he stared at me in disbelief. I felt ashamed of myself, truly ashamed, maybe for the first time ever. I offered no apology, though, just retreated to my room.

In those years, with all the arguing, I just thought of my dad as having an angry heart. It seemed that he wasn't just mad at me: he was mad at the world. But to his credit, as he continued to shrink, as his joints became more fused and his extremities more gnarled, he never complained, and never stopped trying to contribute. And no matter how much of an entitled teenaged brat I was, he never stopped being there when I needed him, so I tried my best to return the favor.

It wasn't until I moved out of my parents' house that I was able to really reflect on my dad's lot in life. His body had started to betray him in his mid-20s and continued to work against him for the rest of his life. He was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis, the worst case that his specialists had seen, and eventually had surgery on both knees, ankles, wrists, elbows, and shoulders. Not that they helped much. He had an Easter-sized basket full of pills he had to take every day. When I was younger I had naively thought that those pills were supposed to help him get better. But now that I was older I finally realized that their only purpose was to mitigate pain. I decided that if I were him, I'd be pretty pissed off too.

I was 24 and living in Portland the morning that I got the call. I was wrong about his heart being angry. Turned out it was just weak. With all of those pills he took, I should have known that it was only a matter of time before it would give out; I'm pretty sure he did.

When I think back on it, my dad had a lot of reasons to be angry. Aside from he himself being shortchanged, he had us to consider. I know it weighed on him that he couldn't do normal "dad" stuff with us. And then there was my mom. Their story had started out so wild and perfect, a couple of beautiful longhaired kids that met and fell in love while hitchhiking in Canada. She had moved across the country to marry him. The unfairness that life didn't go as they'd planned, that she'd be a young widow—these are things I know he thought about. But he never mentioned them. He never complained. He never talked about the pain he was in, even though I know now it was constant. I guess at some point he became like the fish that doesn't know it's in water. That, or he just made his peace with it somehow.

It took me a long time to find my own peace in his situation. Our situation. I was angry for myself and my family, but mostly I was angry for him. I was pissed that he had to spend the last twenty something years of his life in that prison he called a body. Eventually though, that anger gave way to other feelings. Gratitude, mostly. I don't think that my dad could have lived a hundred healthy years and taught me the same lessons that I learned from watching him suffer. He taught me about personal sacrifice, the brevity of life, how it can be both a blessing and a curse. All kids are egocentric (I know I definitely was), but he was the first one to make me think outside of myself, without having to ask me to do it. He taught me what compassion and patience looked like. He taught me to slow down.

Teacher Takeaways

"This essay is commendable for its deft narration – replete with a balanced use of specific descriptions and general exposition. However, the mixture of simple past tense with simple future tense (used here to indicate the

future in the past) situates both the reader and the narrator primarily in the past. This means that we really don't get to the simple present tense (i.e. across the diegetic gap) until the final two paragraphs of the essay. That said, the narrator's past reflections are integrated often throughout the essay, making it more an example of 'weaving' than of 'wrap-up.'"– Professor Fiscaletti

Untitled10

The sky was white, a blank canvas, when I became the middle school's biggest and most feared bully. The sky was white and my hands were stained red with blood—specifically a boy named Garrett's blood. I was 12 years old, smaller than average with clothes-hanger collar bones but on that day I was the heavyweight champion. It wasn't as if I'd just snapped out of the blue; it wasn't as if he were innocent. He had just been the only one within arms-length at the time when my heart beat so loudly in my ears, a rhythm I matched with my fists. I was dragged off of him minutes later by stunned teachers (who had never seen me out of line before) and escorted to the Principal's Office. They murmured over my head as if I couldn't hear them. "What do you think that was about?" "Who started it?" I was tightlipped and frightened, shaking and wringing my hands, rusting with someone else's blood on them. Who started it? That particular brawl could have arguably been started by me: I jumped at him, I threw the only punches. But words are what started the fight. Words were at the root of my anger.

I was the kid who was considered stupid: math, a foreign language my tongue refused to speak. I was pulled up to the front of the classroom by my teachers who thought struggling my way through word problems on the whiteboard would help me

grasp the concepts, but all I could ever do was stand there humiliated, red-faced with clenched fists until I was walked through the equation, step by step. I was the one who tripped over my words when I had to read aloud in English, the sentences rearranging themselves on the page until tears blurred my vision. I never spoke in class because I was nervous—"socially anxious" is what the doctors called it. Severe social anxiety with panic disorder. I sat in the back and read. I sat at lunch and read because books were easier to talk to than people my own age. Kids tease; it's a fact of life. But sometimes kids are downright cruel. They are relentless. When they find an insecurity, they will poke and prod it, an emotional bruise. A scar on my heart. Names like "idiot" and "loser" and "moron" are phrases chanted like a prayer at me in the halls, on the field, in the lunchroom. They are casual bombs tossed at me on the bus and they detonate around my feet, kicking up gravel and stinging my eyes. What is the saying? Sticks and stones will break my bones but words will never hurt me? Whoever came up with that has quite obviously never been a 12-year-old girl.

The principal stared at me as I walked in, his eyes as still as water. He told me my parents had to be called, I had to be suspended the rest of the week, this is a no-tolerance school. Many facts were rattled off. I began to do what I do best—tune him out—when he said something that glowed. It caught my attention, held my focus. "Would you like to tell me your side of the story?" I must have looked shocked because he half-smiled when he said, "I know there are always two sides. I know you wouldn't just start a fist fight out of nowhere. Did he do something to you?" An avalanche in my throat, the words came crashing out. I explained the bullying, how torturous it was for me to wake up every morning and know I would have to face the jeers and mean comments all day. I told him about how when I put on my uniform every morning, it felt like I was gearing up for a battle I didn't sign up for and knew I
wouldn't win. The shame and embarrassment I wore around me like a shawl slipped off. He listened thoughtfully, occasionally pressing his fingers together and bringing them to his pursed lips, his still

eyes beginning to ripple, a silent storm. When I was done he apologized. How strange and satisfying to be apologized to by a grown-up. I was validated with that simple "I'm sorry." I almost collapsed on the floor in gratitude. My parents entered the room, worry and anger etched on their faces, folded up in the wrinkles that were just then starting to line their skin. My parents listened as I retold my story, admitted what I had been bottling up for months. I was relieved, I felt the cliché weight lifted off of my too-narrow shoulders. My principal assured my parents that this was also a no-tolerance stance on bullying and he was gravely sorry the staff hadn't known about the abuse earlier. I was still suspended for three days, but he said to make sure I didn't miss Monday's assembly. He thought it would be important for me.

The Monday I returned, there was an assembly all day. I didn't know what it was for, but I knew everyone had to be there on time so I hurried to find a seat. People avoided eye-contact with me. As I pushed past them, I could feel the whispers like taps on my shoulder. I sat down and the assembly began. It was a teenage girl and she was talking about differences, about how bullying can affect people more than you could ever know. I was leaning forward in my seat trying to hang onto every word because she was describing how I had felt every day for months. She spoke about how her own anxiety and learning disability isolated her. She was made fun of and bullied and she became depressed. It was important to her for us to hear her story because she wanted people like her, like me, to know they weren't alone and that words can do the most damage of all. R.A.D. Respect all differences, a movement that was being implemented in the school to accept and celebrate everybody. At the end of her
speech, she asked everyone who had ever felt bullied or mistreated by their peers to stand up. Almost half of the school stood, and I felt like a part of my school for the first time. She then invited anyone who wanted to speak to come up and take the mic. To my surprise, there were multiple volunteers. A line formed and I found myself in it.

I heard kids I'd never talked to before speak about their ADHD, their dyslexia, how racist comments can hurt. I had no idea so many of my classmates had been verbal punching bags; I had felt utterly alone. When it was my turn I explained what it means to be socially anxious. How in classrooms and crowds in general I felt like I was being suffocated: it was hard to focus because I often forgot to breathe. How every sentence I ever spoke was rehearsed at least 15 times before I said it aloud: it was exhausting. I was physically and emotionally drained after interactions, like I had run a marathon. I didn't like people to stare at me because I assumed everyone disliked me, and the bullying just solidified that feeling of worthlessness. It was exhilarating and terrifying to have everyone's eyes on me, everyone listening to what it was like to be inside my head. I stepped back from the microphone and expected boos, or maybe silence. But instead everyone clapped, a couple teachers even stood up. I was shocked but elated. Finally I was able to express what I went through on a day-to-day basis.

The girl who spoke came up to me after and thanked me for being brave. I had never felt brave in my life until that moment. And yes, there was the honeymoon period. Everyone in the school was nice to each other for about two weeks before everything returned to normal. But for me it was a new normal: no one threw things at me in the halls, no one called me names, my teachers were respectful of my anxiety by not singling me out in class. School should be a sanctuary, a safe space where students feel free to be exactly who they are, free of ridicule or judgment. School had never been that for me, school had been a warzone littered with minefields. I dreaded facing my school days, but then I began to look forward to them. I didn't have to worry about being made fun of anymore. From that moment on, it was just school. Not a place to be feared, but a place to learn.

Teacher Takeaways

"This author obviously has a knack for descriptive metaphor and simile, and for the sonic drive of repetition, all of which contribute to the emotional appeal of the narrative. The more vivid the imagery, the more accessible the event. However, the detailed narrative is only briefly interrupted by the author's current ideas or interpretations; she might consider changing the structure of the essay from linear recollection to a mix of narrative and commentary from herself, in the present. Still, the essay does serve as an example of implicit reflection; the author doesn't do much of the 'heavy lifting' for us."– Professor Fiscaletti

Parental Guidance[11]

"Derek, it's Dad!" I already knew who it was because the call was made collect from the county jail. His voice sounded clean: he didn't sound like he was fucked up. I heard from his ex-girlfriend about a year earlier that he was going to jail for breaking into her apartment and hiding under her bed with a knife then popping out and threatening her life; probably other stuff too. I wasn't all that surprised to hear from him. I was expecting a call eventually. I was happy to hear from him. I missed him. He needed a place to stay for a couple weeks. I wanted to be a good son. I wanted him to be proud of me. My room-mates said it was alright. I gave him the address to our apartment and told him to come over. I was 19.

I am told when I was a toddler I wouldn't let my dad take the garbage outside without me hitching a ride on his boot. I would straddle his foot like a horse and hang onto his leg; even in the

pouring rain. He was strong, funny and a good surfer. One time at the skatepark when I was 6 or 7 he made these guys leave for smoking pot in front of me and my little sister. He told them to get that shit out of here and they listened. He was protecting us. I wanted to be just like him.

When my dad got to the apartment he was still wearing his yellow jail slippers. They were rubber with a single strap. No socks, a t-shirt and jeans was all he had on. It was January: cold and rainy. He was clean and sober from what I could tell by his voice and eyes. He was there. I hugged him. I was hopeful that maybe he was back for good. I found my dad a pair of warm socks and a hoodie. We were drinking beer and one of my friends offered him one. He must have wanted one but he knows where that leads and he said no thanks. We all got stoned instead.

One time when I was in 7th grade my dad was driving me and my siblings home from school. He saw someone walking down the street wearing a nice snowboarding jacket. It looked just like my dad's snowboarding jacket which he claimed was stolen from the van while he was at work. He pulled the van over next to this guy and got out. He began threatening him. He was cursing and yelling and throwing his hands up and around. I was scared.

He said he only needed a couple weeks to get back on his feet. I was happy to have him there. As long as he wasn't drinking or using drugs he had a chance. He said he was done with all that other shit. He just needs to smoke some pot to relax at night and he will be fine. Sounded reasonable to me. It had been about a year since I dropped out of high school and moved out of my mom's. I worked full time making pizza and smoked pot and drank beer with my friends and roommates. Occasionally there was some coke or ecstasy around but mostly just beer, pot and video games.

One day in 4th grade when we were living in Coos Bay the whole family went to the beach to surf and hang out. My mom and dad were together and it seemed like they loved each other. My littlest sister was a toddler and ran around on the beach in the sun with my mom and our Rottweiler Lani. My older brother and other

sister were in the ocean with me and my dad. We all took turns being pushed into waves on our surfboards by dad. We all caught waves and had a great day. My mom cheered us on from the shore. He was a good dad.

Two weeks passed quickly and my dad was still staying at our apartment. One day while I was at work my dad blew some coke with my roommate. I could tell something was off when I got home. I was worried. He said he was leaving for a couple days to go stay with his friend who is a pastor. He needed some spiritual guidance or something like that. He sounded fucked up.

Growing up we did a lot of board sports. My dad owned a surf shop in Lincoln City for a while and worked as a sales representative for various gear companies. We had surfboards, snowboards, windsurfers, sails, wakeboards, wetsuits: several thousand dollars' worth of gear. One day my dad told us someone broke into our garage and stole all the gear. The window in the garage was broken except it appeared to be broken from the inside. He didn't file a police report. My middle school surf club coach tried to get my surfboard from the pawnshop but it was too expensive and the pawn shop owner wouldn't give it back. I felt betrayed.

I came home from work and found my dad in my room passed out. I stumbled over an empty beer can on the way in and there were cheap whiskey bottles scattered about. It smelled horrible. He woke up and was ashamed. He looked up at me from my bed with a thousand pounds pulling down on his puffy eyelids and asked me for a cigarette. He was strung out. Half of our spoons went missing. It smelled like booze, heroin and filth. I was ashamed.

One day in 9th grade I came home from school to find my brother lifting blood stains out of the carpet with hydrogen peroxide. He said some guys came over and beat dad up. He owed them money or stole from them or something. I wanted to call my mom. I was scared.

I told my dad he had to leave. He pleaded to stay for another thirty minutes. I would be at work by then. While I was at work my friends escorted him out. He said he was going to his friend

the pastor's house. I didn't hear from him for a couple years after that.

We learn a lot from our parents. Sometimes the best lessons are those on what not to do.

My two-year-old daughter calls me Papa, Daddy, Dad or Derek. Whatever she calls me it has a positive meaning. When we are driving she says from her car-seat, "Daddy's hand", "I want daddy's hand please" and I reach back and put it on her lap.

One day my daughter woke me up and said, "Oh hi Daddy! I wanna go forest. I wanna go hike!" She was smiling. We practiced the alphabet before breakfast then went for a walk in the woods: mama, papa and baby. I'm a good dad.

Teacher Takeaways

"One of the most notable features of this essay is the timeline: by jumping back and forth in chronology between parallel but distinct experiences, the author opens up the diegetic gap and demonstrates a profound impact through simple narration. I also like this author's use of repetition and parallel structure. However, the author's description could take a cue from 'Comatose Dreams' to develop more complex, surprising descriptors. While the essay makes use of sensory language, I want more dramatic or unanticipated imagery."– Professor Dawson

Endnotes

1 To consider this phenomenon further, check out The Importance of Empathy (Youtube video)

2 This is a phrase I picked up from Kelly Gallagher.Gallagher, Kelly. Write Like This, Stenhouse, 2011.
3 Faces. "Ooh La La." Ooh La La, 1973.
4 This activity is a modified version of one by Susan Kirtley.
5 Admittedly, this story is a not the kind of narrative you will write if your teacher has assigned a descriptive personal narrative: it is fictional and in third person. For the purposes of studying reflection as a rhetorical gesture, though, "Little Red Riding Hood" does some of the same things that a personal narrative would: it uses a story to deliver a didactic message based on learning from experience.
6 Perrault, Charles. "Little Red Riding Hood." 1697. Making Literature Matter, 4th edition, edited by John Schlib and John Clifford, Bedford, 2009, pp. 1573-1576.
7 This exercise is loosely based on Gallagher, pp. 44-45.
8 The quote reproduced below is from "My Scrubs." Scrubs, NBC Universal, 2007.
9 Essay by Beth Harding, Portland State University, 2017. Reproduced with permission from the student author.
10 Essay by Katherine Morris, Portland State University, 2016. Reproduced with permission from the student author.
11 Essay by Derek Holt, Portland State University, 2017. Reproduced with permission from the student author.

Assignment: Descriptive Personal Narrative

To synthesize what you've learned about description, narration, and reflection, you will write a personal narrative. This is generally a nonfiction, prose essay (similar to a memoir), but your instructor might provide additional guidelines in regard to genre, media, approach, or assessment standards.

Assignment

Your task is to identify an influential place, event, or person from your life experience about which you can tell a story. Then, you will write a narrative essay that relates that story and considers the impact it had on you, your worldview, and/or your life path. Using model texts in this book as exemplars, you will tell a story (*narrate*) using vivid *description* and draw out meaning and insight using *reflection*.

As you'll evaluate below, descriptive personal narratives have a variety of purposes. One important one is to share a story that stands in for a bigger idea. Do not be worried if you don't know the "bigger idea" yet, but be advised that your final draft will narrate a focused, specific moment that represents something about who you are, how you got here, what you believe, or what you strive to be.

Be sure to apply the concepts you learn in class to your writing.

Before you begin, consider your rhetorical situation:

Subject:	Occasion:
How will this influence the way you write?	How will this influe
Audience:	Purpose:

How will this influence the way you write?	How will this influ

Assignment: Descriptive Personal Narrative

Each student will write an essay which **narrates** an event or series of events influential to their life path. The essay will incorporate ideas and techniques explored in Section 1, including the use of **description** and the rhetorical gesture of **reflection**. The essay will demonstrate thoughtful pre-writing, drafting, and revision based on feedback from the instructor, classmates, and/or the Writing Center.

Criteria	Instructor Comments	Score
Ideas, Focus, and Content *Is the author telling a story? Is the scope of that story effective? Does the author appeal to their rhetorical audience?*		/____
Structure *Has the author sequenced their story effectively? Does the organization enhance the writing? Does the piece 'flow?'*		/____
Style and Language *Is the author's voice authentic but rhetorically appropriate? Does the author use strong imagery and thick description?*		/____
Depth, Support, and Reflection *Does the author provide specific data? Does the author reflect on the significance of the experience? Is that reflection genuine and integrated?*		/____
Mechanics *Does the essay read smoothly with minimal spelling/grammar/mechanical issues? Does it use proper format?*		/____
		/____ pts. possible

Guidelines for Peer Workshop

Before beginning the Peer Workshop and revision process, I recommend consulting the

Revision Concepts and Strategies Appendix. In your Peer

Workshop group (or based on your teacher's directions), establish a process for workshopping that will work for you. You may find the flowchart titled "Establishing Your Peer Workshop" useful.

Establishing Your Peer Workshop

To set the tone and expectations for your unique workshop group, talk through the following prompts. Record your answers on the companion sheet. Part One asks you to establish a climate or culture for your group; Part Two will help you talk through logistics.

(1) Culture of your Workshop

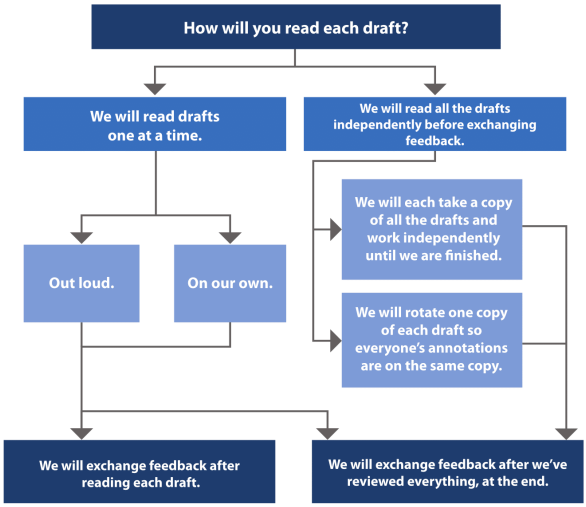
(a.) Choose the 3-5 descriptors of good feedback that are most important to the members of your group.

(b.) Discuss for 3-5 minutes: What do each of you need for this Peer Workshop to be effective?

FROM EACH OTHER? **FROM THE INSTRUCTOR?** **FROM YOURSELVES?** **FROM YOUR ENVIRONMENT?**

Record responses on a separate sheet of paper.

(2) Procedures for your Workshop



Establishing Peer Workshop Process:

Do you prefer written notes, or open discussion? Would you like to read all the drafts first, then discuss, or go one at a time? Should the author respond to feedback or just listen? What anxieties do you each have about sharing your writing? How will you provide feedback that is both critical and kind? How will you demonstrate respect for your peers?

One Example of a Peer Workshop Process

Before the workshop, each author should spend several minutes generating requests for support (#1 below). Identify specific elements you need help on. Here are a few examples:

I need suggestions for new imagery.
Do you think my reflective writing seems too "tacked on."
Do you have any ideas for a title?
I need help proofreading and polishing.

During the workshop, follow this sequence:

1. Student A introduces their draft, distributes copies, and makes requests for feedback.
   What do you want help with, specifically?
2. Student A reads their draft aloud while students B and C annotate/take notes. *What do you notice as the draft is read aloud?*
3. Whole group discusses the draft; student A takes notes. Use these prompts as a reference to generate and frame your feedback. Try to identify specific places in your classmates' essays where the writer is successful and where the writer

needs support. Consider constructive, specific, and actionable feedback.

What is the author doing well? What could they do better?

- What requests does the author have for support? What feedback do you have on this issue, specifically?
- Identify one "golden line" from the essay under consideration—a phrase, sentence, or paragraph that resonates with you. What about this line is so striking?
- Consult either the rubric included above or an alternate rubric, if your instructor has provided one. Is the author on track to meet the expectations of the assignment? What does the author do well in each of the categories? What could they do better?
  - Ideas, Content, and Focus
  - Structure
  - Style and Language
  - Depth, Support, and Reflection
  - Mechanics
- What resonances do you see between this draft and others from your group? Between this draft and the exemplars you've read?

4. Repeat with students B and C.

After the workshop, try implementing some of the feedback your group provided while they're still nearby! For example, if Student B said your introduction needed more imagery, draft some new language and see if Student B likes the direction you're moving in. As you are comfortable, exchange contact information with your group so you can to continue the discussion outside of class.

The Pot Calling the Kettle Black…1

"You aren't acting normal," my dad said with a dopy, concerned look on his face. He was a hard-working, soft and loving man. He was smaller than my mother, physically and figuratively. She sat beside him. She had a towering stature, with strong, swimmers' shoulders, but she was hunched often. She didn't really have eyebrows, but she didn't need them. She had no problem conveying emotion on her face, especially negative ones.

"What's wrong?" my mother asked. She took my hand frantically. Not the way one might take someone's hand to connect with or comfort them. She needed reassurance more than I did.

My parents were sitting across from me on cushioned, bland-colored chairs in my dad's office, while I sat on a rickety, torturous wooden chair. My dad's office generally utilized natural light due to the expansive glass windows that allowed the light to drown the room, enclosing us in the chamber. I felt like an inmate being prepped for lethal injection. The weather was particularly gray and dismal. Perhaps it was the ambiguous, gray, confusing feelings I was breathing through. My parents had somewhat regular "interventions" to address my somewhat regular (sometimes public) emotional breakdowns, my self-medicating habits, and my general shitty attitude.

This week in particular, I had purposely destroyed two of my mother's collectible horses. She had a maniacal obsession for them. She also maniacally collected sunflower artwork, which was the one obsession, of many, I found endearing. My old babysitter noted at one point there were 74 collectible horses in the house. After my outburst, there were 72.

I could see behind my parents, through the glass-paned door, my two younger sisters were secretly observing the altercation from the dining room, hiding under the table. They were

illuminated by the ominous weather, which was also watching in on the dismal conversation through the windows. I was envious, jealous even, of my spectating sisters. My sisters didn't have overflowing, excessive emotions. They didn't have emotions that were considered "excessive." I felt like an offender being put at the stocks: my parents were the executioners, and my sisters were the jesters.

"I'm angry."

"What about?" my dad asked, puzzled. "Did someone do something to you?"

"Honey, were you–" my mother looked to my dad, then concealed her mouth slightly with the other hand, "*raped*?"

I couldn't help but raise my voice. "No, Mom, I wasn't raped, Jesus." I took a moment to grind on my teeth and imagine the bit I was chomping at. Calm, careful, composed, I responded. "I'm just angry. I don't feel–"

"What don't you feel?" She practically jumped on me, while yanking my imprisoned hand toward her. She yanked at my reins.

"I don't feel understood!" My mind was bucking. I didn't know why I needed to react by raising my voice. It felt instinctive, defensive. Shouting forcefully, I jerked my hand away from her, but it remained in her clutches. I didn't feel satisfied saying it, though what I said was the truth.

"What are you talking about?" my dad asked mournfully. I knew he felt betrayed. But he didn't understand. He didn't know what it's like for things to be too much. Or to be too much. My dad looked at me longingly, hoping I would correct what I had said. He looked lost, incapable of understanding why I was doing what I was doing. My mother interjected, cutting off my dad's hypnotic, silent cry for connection.

"You're crazy!" she said, maintaining eye contact. My mother then let go of my hand, flipped it back to me. She reclined in her chair, retracting from me and the discussion entirely. She crossed her legs, then her arms. She turned her head away, toward the glass windows, and (mentally) left.

***

I was and am not "too much."

I was diagnosed with bipolar disorder at 18 years old.

***

I had just stepped off a squealing MAX line onto a broken sidewalk slab, gnarled from tree roots, when I felt my phone buzz rhythmically.

"I need you to come to the hospital. Mom had a little accident." My dad's voice was distant and cracking, like a wavering radio signal, calling for help.

"What's going on? Is she okay?" I asked while making my way to campus.

"Where are you?" He wasn't going to tell me anything over the phone. Adrenaline set in. I let him know I was downtown and headed to campus, but that I would catch a Lyft to wherever they were. "We're at Milwaukie Providence. How soon can you get here?

"I'll let you know soon." My assumption was that my parents had been in an argument, my mother left the house in a rage, and crashed her car. She'd been an erratic driver for as long as I could remember, and my parents had been arguing more than usual recently, as many new "empty-nesters" do. The lack of information provided by my dad, however, was unsettling. I don't really recall the ride to the hospital. I do remember looking over the river while riding from the west to east side of town. I remember the menacing, dark clouds rolling in faster than the driver could transport me. I remember it was quick, but it was too much time spent without answers.

When I arrived at Providence, I jumped out of the sedan and galloped into the lobby of the emergency room like a race horse on its final lap. My younger sister and Dad were seated on cushioned, bland-colored chairs in the waiting room. There were expansive glass windows that allowed the light to drown the room. The weather was particularly gray and dismal. Perhaps it was the ambiguous, gray, confusing feelings I was breathing through. I sat down beside my dad, in a firmer-than-anticipated waiting room chair beside him. He took my hand frantically. He took it in the way

one might take someone's hand to connect with or comfort them. He needed reassurance more than I did.

"Where did she get in the accident?" I asked.

My sister, sitting across from me with her head in her knees, looked up at me with aquamarine, tear-filled eyes. She was staring through me, an unclouded window. "Mom tried to kill herself."

"What?" My voice crescendoed from a normal volume to a shriek in the span of a single word. My mind felt like it was bucking. I grabbed at my hair, pulling it back tight with my spare hand. The tears and cries reared, no matter how hard I yanked my mane.

"We got in another argument this morning, and she sent me a message saying she didn't want to be in pain anymore. She told me to tell you girls she's sorry. I'm so sorry." I'd never seen my dad cry before; I didn't know he could. I didn't know his tears would stream like gushing water from a broken dam. He looked lost, incapable of understanding why she was doing what she was doing. I looked from my dad to my sister to my hands. One hand remained enveloped by my dad's gentle palm. At this point in life, I had not yet learned to be gentle with myself, or others. I cut off my dad's hypnotic, silent cry for connection.

"She's crazy!" I let go of my dad's hand, flipped it back to him. I reclined in the
chair, retracting from the situation entirely. I crossed my legs, then my arms. I turned my head away, toward the glass windows, and (mentally) left.

***

"Crazy" is a term devised to dismiss people.

My mother was diagnosed with bipolar disorder at 50 years old.

Teacher Takeaways

"This essay makes excellent use of repetition as a narrative strategy. Throughout the essay, terms and phrases are repeated, generally with slight alterations, drawing the reader's attention to the moment in question and recontextualizing the information being conveyed. This strategy is especially powerful when used to disclose the separate diagnoses of bipolar disorder, which is central to the narrative. I also appreciate the use of dialogue, though it mostly serves an expository function here. In itself that's effective, but this narrative would be strengthened if that dialogue could serve to make some of the characters, especially the mother, more rounded."– Professor Dunham

All Quiet2

"We can have you kicked out, you know." Miss Nick (as everyone addressed her) began digging her fists into her hips. She towered over me at six-foot-something, gravity pulling her wire-framed glasses to the end of her nose.

I recounted the empty threats my mom would make.

"*Ay nako nanlan! Putang ina!* I'll pull you out of that school! You want to go to Taft? Reseda?" Local public schools.

"Do it, you'll save a ton of money," I'd say.

"The only thing Catholic school is good for is producing my favorite unstable artists and writers," I'd joke with my friends. They had been in the Catholic school system far longer than I had—fourteen years. I was jaded, though it was only my fourth year.

All-girls' school was supposed to turn me around. But did my mother really expect the Northeastern elitism she hammered into me to fare well in Los Angeles? Especially surrounded by the

daughters of television, radio and film legacies who lived in their hilly pseudo-ranches populated with their troupes of horses dancing around in golden Agouran fields? *Homogenized whole milk.*

Lodged right against the Santa Monica mountains was Louisville High School. The school was founded by the French sisters of Saint Louis, a French order founded by Abbé Louis Eugene Marie Bautain—whoever the hell that was. At the top of the rolling hills that were about as blonde as those who lived in them, was a small room that erupted with incense and the chatter of young women. These quarters belonged to this supposed gentle giant who chanted Mary Oliver poems *ad nauseam*. By her side was a new hire: an aspiring Christian songstress, also the daughter of an actor who had been typecast as a hundred high school bullies in the eighties. They, collectively, made up the "campus ministry."

"Why didn't you come to us first?" Miss Nick continued. "Why did you have to go straight online?" She had me there. I suppose it just ate at me. Maybe some sense of urgency. Maybe I was just playing their own game.

"Are you gonna cry?" The songstress almost demanded it. Her piercing blue gaze could only be summed up with lunacy. This was the first time I'd actually had any conversation with the religion department outside of class.

"No."

The Archdiocese of Los Angeles demands Catholic schools regularly hold these retreats in some picturesque Californian mountain range or seaside. A select number of student lectors were elected to tell their stories drawn from their own struggles. It was supposed to be a time of reflection about your faith or something, but it never felt wholly about that. It was a period where you got to know your teachers and your peers, and empathize with each other. For a lot of the closeted non-religious and agnostics, this was the only time they could identify with their school and community.

Once, during lunch at a retreat, I hailed down one of the most respected instructors of our school. As a seven-foot bleeding

wood crucifix looked on, we sipped the punch prepared by the sisters.

"Hey Mr. Clark, what was the name of that cult leader in sixties?" I asked. Amber punched me. We all giggled.

"You mean Jonestown?" He paused. His voice grew stern. "Now ladies—behave."

Mr. Clark taught history and social sciences. He was the oldest member of the faculty and the most outspoken atheist of all. I'd spend hours in his room for detention, and we would have elusive conversations about Freud, Hunter S. Thompson, and his time in Boulder. The only way to enter campus ministry was through Mr. Clark's room.

A week prior Olivia had applied to be a student leader for a retreat. Olivia kept to herself for the most part, and though we differed a lot, I always found something to discuss with her. Her last name came right before mine, so we often worked together on a number of assignments and projects. Mostly, we'd just critique our religion classes which emphasized chastity and accused select girls of being hussies. Olivia was a model student with perfect attendance. She was an artist, a writer, and more importantly, my friend.

Olivia's application was readily denied in favor for the wealthy Catholic sweethearts and a select few who never disclosed certain information.

"I'd put on there that I was an atheist," she shrugged. I knew for a fact the retreat leadership was ridden with heathens. There, on the sunny knoll, I flipped through the handbook and showed her a clause that prohibited the act of denying anyone for their race, religion or creed. And I knew save for everything, Olivia was overwhelmingly more qualified than anyone to lead a retreat. She was articulate, an active contributor to all things art and writing, and had come from years of struggle. She'd been living with Type I Diabetes her entire life, and her parents had just divorced. Her brother frequently got in trouble with the law, and she had managed to maintain perfect grades and demeanor for the past

year. She actively contributed her art and writing in various forms, and was loved and championed by many teachers. *If there's anyone who deserves this position, it's her*, I thought.

I went home late after serving another detention. I opened my computer, lazed around, wondered for a moment. *It's our last year of high school. Fuck it.*

I typed in the search bar, "Petitions."

I spent a couple hours, which could have easily been spent completing all my assignments, formatting and outlining my 95 theses. I typed and typed with the fury and angst that coincided with the suffix of my age. I clicked submit and shared the URL for my peers to see—namely, my closest friend at the school, Amber, another artist who had recently painted a depiction of a dark-skinned Jesus. Amber naturally became fired up.

The next day, parades of teachers, parents, and students voiced their opinion to me.

"What you're doing is wonderful," uttered my art teacher. "I hope she gets the position." So far, the whole idea was met with so much positivity. Olivia would get her voice.

"Can I speak to you for a moment?" The math and earth science teacher stopped me in my tracks between classes. She, an advocate for the environment and reason, would surely shower the petition with nothing but affirmations.

"I'd put an end to this before it escalates. This is a Catholic school. This is a private school." I was blindsided. It was not until then I realized what I was doing could be considered wrong.

Endlessly, I cited the handbook. It was their constitution—their code of conduct. Often, I just nodded in confusion. I did not know what to reply. More and more teachers looked at me with disdain and discouraged me from continuing forth. No one would listen to the citation. Why couldn't anyone just admit that this clause was being broken? Opponents would only say that the campus ministry could conduct business as they wanted. It was their school.

Amber, vehement and by my side, became my

spokesperson. She was the recipient of the arts scholarship. That, coupled with the death of her father years ago, granted her the honor of being selected as a senior lector. Students could not apply for this position—rather, they had to be nominated by a member of faculty. The thing was, Amber was a fervent atheist—more so than Olivia.

"She's a cunt," Amber protested, "she's a fucking cunt." I envied her absoluteness. It came so naturally to her. But I couldn't say the same.

From across the knolly pasture I saw my religion teacher, someone I found solace in. He had gone through seminary. He lapsed, and married a former student of our school. He found himself in some sweat lodge deep in New Mexico, where his Catholic faith had been lingering all along. Here, an adult teacher, admitted his agnosticism and his doubt. I admired it so. He had a liberal nature similar to my own: he talked of rogue Catholic sisters who were pro-choice and advocated for birth control.

"I understand your intention," he told me, "but I don't think you're seeing it in the right light. It's a *perceived* injustice. I'm not sure it really is one." My heart dropped.

I finally piped up after an hour-and-a-half into the harangue.

"So, you would have let her speak if she lied about her beliefs? That's all she had to do?" I could feel my voice rupturing.

"Yes." Miss Nick replied. I silently stood up.

"Thank you." I left.

I took down the petition at the instruction of the principal.

"It was very brave what you did," she smirked, "but we can't have that on our record, you know how it is." She gave me a wink. I did not know what to make of that.

Amber was also subject to their lectures. She was told she had to forfeit her position as a student leader for being a "convicted atheist"—more specifically, that she had no business leading because of her system of beliefs. She argued that she was nominated by

faculty, and that Mr. Clark was also an atheist embraced by the staff. To no avail.

Olivia thanked me. She said it was the best thing anyone had ever done for her. As an act of compromise, the campus ministry let her say a prayer over the intercom system. People were moved. Silence reigned. Our art teacher, Mrs. Dupuy, cried.

In a city of millions and a country of hundreds of millions, one girl in a small Catholic high school was viewed as threatening to the point of disrupting the entire framework. How could something so miniscule pose such a threat to our adult overseers? I never attacked their religion, but they were so adamant in attacking anyone's lack thereof. They preach "universality," but where? They lost all credibility with me.

After that, I became passive, stopped participating, and kept to myself. I often found myself cheek first against my desk in religion classes while Miss Nick ignited a pro-life/pro-choice debate that swept across the room. The songstress rallied for nigh fundamentalist practices that I'd never seen within a Catholic church. In the yearbook's senior superlatives, there's a picture of me under "Class Rebel," but it didn't mean anything. An embarrassment. No one seemed sincere after that. Self-interest ruled everyone around me: the lenses I had on determined that everyone was doing and saying anything to further their personal convictions, regardless of how uninformed they were, or anyone who defied them.

Including myself. Especially myself.

So, I shut up. *Everyone is self-serving*, I'd remind myself. I became cynical of everyone's intentions. I longed for authentic empathy. No, *unachievable*. I muted myself behind layers upon layers of verbal irony. No one could attack me if I followed my lines with nervous laugh, and *I don't know! Just kidding!* I prescribed myself large doses of Charlie Kaufman films, acid, and absurdist texts. At least Beckett and Camus see the gray.

"Now ladies," Mr. Clark said. "I know you don't agree with

her, but she's had a rough life. Please try to understand where she came from."

I don't think anyone there would have done the same.

Teacher Takeaways

"This author's use of dialogue is especially striking to me. Because the individual characters (and the way they speak) are each so vivid, I am more invested in the way the narrative plays out. I also appreciate this author's reflection; it's a good reminder that reflective writing doesn't haven't to sound like a self-help book or motivational speaker. On a global level, I would love to see this author apply their skill with dialogue to tell this story from multiple perspectives. What if Olivia was a first-person narrator in one section? What if we saw Miss Nick in her office alone after the confrontation?"– Professor Dawson

Blood & Chocolate Milk3

The stick of gauze, the tinny primal taste of blood and the sweet creaminess of chocolate milk is what I remember. It was a spring day of my junior year in high school. It was the day I lost my wisdom teeth.

The night before my surgery Dad showed up and cooked us dinner. He made spaghetti, those meatballs he makes with the drop of plum sauce on the top, and a salad of spring greens topped with bright balsamic dressing and twirls of carrot. Then Mom, Dad and I watched a movie and Dad tucked me in for the first time in a long time. He slept on the couch.

***

It was strange that we were all together. My parents divorced before I could talk. I don't think about them as a pair. Other than birthdays and drop-offs they were never in the same place. They were always separate entities that I saw half a week at a time.

***

The next morning we woke bright and early. The dental assistant had told me to wear something comfortable but my cashmere cardigan and slippers did little to calm my nerves.

In the car on the way to the dental surgeon's office we made groggy early-morning small talk. Mom was at the helm of our beat-up, dark blue minivan, La Fiesta. Dad sat in the passenger seat and I was behind them on the first bench seat wringing my hands.

The waiting room was sterile and white, it smelled of disinfectant and mint. Copies of various parenting magazines, *Life* and *People* scattered the low generic coffee table. More catching up. We asked dad how things were going with his new girlfriend, he was happy and we were happy for him. I fidgeted in the uncomfortable pastel green chair.

In the surgical consult they had said that the roots of my wisdom teeth were too close to the nerves in my lower jaw, it was possible that I could lose feeling in my lower lip. I was terrified of that possibility. I watched the hands on the clock tick away. I wanted to get it over with already.

A serious woman in scrubs finally appeared to lead me to the surgical room. I hugged dad and he stayed behind in the waiting room, Mom came with me. There were machines beeping and blinking. I handed Mom my sweater and shoes and she gave me a tight squeeze.

***

Mom and I are a good team. It's always been us against the world. Dad has moved away twice but Mom has always been right here.

My parents were young hippies when I was born. They didn't have life figured out yet and their relationship disintegrated

but their love for me never faded. Mom always says "You were a surprise but never a mistake. If I could go back in time I wouldn't change a thing because I got you and you just kind of came along for the ride. Whatever I did, you did too."

***

As I laid down on the grey vinyl chair, the stale frigid air and my racing heart prompted tiny goose bumps to appear on my arms. Everything in that room was a dull pastel color or unnatural white. The pastels were unsettling – not the kind that reminded you of a sweet Easter morning but the kind that brought to mind dreary hospitals and desolate nursing homes. Mom held my hand, the tiny IV needle pricked into my vein and I was gone.

Hours later I was semiconscious with a mouth full of cotton and four less teeth. My parents got me to the car and dad sat in the back with me, letting my limp medicated body lean on his. Blood and drool seeped out of my numb lips and onto his ratty Patagonia jacket. He held me the whole way home.

***

Mom is my rock but I know she was glad to have a partner that day. She couldn't have carried me the way Dad did and she couldn't have seen me so broken without someone to assure her that I was going to be fine. Dad isn't always around but when he is, he gives all he can.

***

Mom and dad helped me wobble into bed and I floated away, my body heavy with anesthesia and Vicodin. I drifted in and out. The light came in my window, soft and pink like the creamy walls of my room.

My eyes opened slightly as I sensed movement in the room. "Hey Mai, how are you feeling?" Mom said, concern and sweetness heavy in her high voice. "It's time for some more medicine, does your mouth hurt?"

"A little bit," I said as best as I could with numb lips. The words came out muffled and strange. Gauze thick with blood and saliva was tucked over the wounds from the excavation. My mouth

had become a foreign landscape with mountains of gauze and slippery rivers of blood. My tongue tried to ignore the upset. The blood was unnerving.

Dad reached into my mouth to deftly extract the blood soaked wads of gauze. Mom handed me the pills and dad held the bottle of chocolate milk, letting me sip it bit by bit to get the pills down. The milk was cool. Thick. Chalky. Chocolaty. A lazy breeze drifted in and Dad tucked fresh gauze over the wounds at the back of my mouth. They let me succumb to sleep again.

Hours or minutes later, Dad came into my room holding the *Seattle Times*. "Hey Sweetie, how are you feeling? I have some good articles to read to you," Dad said softly. He was wearing his jeans that didn't fit quite right and a ratty flannel. He sat down on the edge of my full-sized cloud, his back against the window sill, his legs outstretched horizontally and crossed at the ankle. His tall lanky body looked so out of place in my room but I was grateful to have him there.

***

He didn't have to come. Maybe it was the medical nature of the event that made that more important in his mind than the school events or performances he'd missed. He could justify the trip and missing a night of work—to himself and his boss—because it was my body that needed hire, not my heart.

***

I sat up a little bit. I was still groggy but aware. He read me an article about an ignorant hick couple that had gotten lost in the woods but survived to hilariously tell their lucky story. His performance was complete with different voices for each person. The ridiculous accents made me laugh. He read me a few more articles. I savored his performance. He was going back to his city the next day and I was going to miss him.

Mom came in to check on me. She sat down next to dad on the edge of my bed. She touched my forehead, her hand was cool and steady. They looked at me with so much love, the pain was there but they lessened it. We were all under the same roof and on the

same page, they were a team taking care of me, Mom handled the important things and dad handled the laughs.

Our journey has been hard but I know that they were always doing their best. They are both here for me in their own way. I grinned as much as I could; my puffy cheeks aching and straining against the gauze. My mouth felt broken but I felt whole. All I need is them, soft light, a warm breeze and chocolate milk.

Teacher Takeaways

"This essay caught my attention for a number of reasons. Primarily, I appreciate the content–this essay is about wisdom tooth surgery, but not really. The surgery is a way for the author to explore their family dynamic. Next, the imagery in this essay is vivid and appeals to a variety of senses. Finally, I really enjoy the structural choice this author has made: in order to weave reflection in with narration, they alternate each mode, indicating the shift with asterisks (***). This choice, I feel, is very effective. However, it also runs the risk of choppiness, as the abrupt changes might interrupt the 'flow' for some readers."– Professor Dawson

Endnotes

1 Essay by an anonymous student author, 2017. Reproduced with permission from the student author.
2 Essay by Carlynn de Joya, Portland State University, 2017. Reproduced with permission from the student author.
3 Essay by Maia Wiseman, Portland State University, 2014.

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PART 2: TEXT WRESTLING

Section Introduction

Chapter Vocabulary

Vocabulary	Definition
critical/ active reading	also referred to in this text as "engaged reading," a set of strategies and concepts to interrupt projection and focus on a text. See Appendix B: Engaged Reading Strategies.
Interpretation	the process of consuming rhetoric to create meaning. "An interpretation" refers to a specific meaning we build as we encounter a text, focusing on certain ideas, language, or patterns.
Text	any artifact through which a message is communicated. Can be written or spoken; digital, printed, or undocumented; video, image, or language. Every text is rhetorical in nature. See rhetoric.
text wrestling	a rhetorical mode in which an author analyzes a text using close reading, then presents an interpretation supported by evidence from the text.

Along the way to this point of your educational career, you've probably encountered the term *critical reading* or *active reading* more than a few times. Teachers tell students of all ages that using active reading skills is important for reading comprehension, critical thinking, and even effective writing. But what exactly does it mean to read critically or actively?

Perhaps it would serve us to step back and first consider what is being read.

Most often, we think of a text as a written piece—an essay, a poem, a newspaper article, a novel. While this is often the case, a *text* can be anything: it is an articulation of rhetoric, bearing in mind that we are constantly surrounded by rhetoric. An advertisement is a text; a series of tweets is a text; a TV show is a text; an improvised dance number is a text.

"CSAF releases 2009 reading list" by Master Sgt. Steven Goetsch is in the Public Domain

Every text, in turn, is subject to *interpretation*. Interpretation refers to the process of consuming rhetoric to create meaning. A text by itself does not actually *mean* anything; rather, we *build* meaning as we engage with a text. This is an important distinction to make because

- As a reader, your interpretation is unique, informed by your lived experiences, your education, your mood(s), your purpose, and your posture. To an extent, no two readers will interpret a text exactly the same way.
- As an author, you must be cognizant that your writing only impacts your audience when they encounter it from their unique interpretive position. You may carefully construct a piece of writing to capture meaning, but that meaning only exists when a reader engages with what you've written.

Because texts can come in such diverse and complex forms, the strategies entailed in "critical" and "active reading" are only the first step: they are tools in our toolkits that lay the groundwork for interpretation. In other words, *engaged reading strategies* (like those in the so-titled Appendix A) prepare us for *text wrestling*.

Text wrestling refers to an analytical encounter with a text during which you, the reader, make observations and informed arguments

about the text as a method of creating meaning and cultivating unique insight. Most often, this encounter will eventually lead to an essay that shares your analysis with your classmates, your teacher, or a broader audience.

The following section explores the cognitive and rhetorical techniques that support text wrestling. While your teacher may ask you to focus on a particular medium or genre of text for a text wrestling essay, this section will explore analytical processes that can be applied to many different kinds of texts. First, in Chapter Four, we will review the ideas and skills for thinking analytically. After that, we will turn to ideas and skills for writing about that analytical thinking, including summary, note-taking, and synthesis.

Chapter Four: Interpretation, Analysis, and Close Reading

Interpretation

When *Mad Max: Fury Road* came out in 2015, it was lauded as a powerful feminist film. No longer was this franchise about men enacting post-apocalyptic violence; now, there was an important place in that universe for women. A similar phenomenon surrounded *Wonder Woman* in 2017: after dozens of male-fronted superhero movies, one would finally focus on a female hero exclusively.

Some people, though, were resistant to this reading of feminism in film. I found myself in regular debates after each of these releases about what it meant to promote gender equality in film: does substituting a violent woman for a violent man constitute feminism? Is the leading woman in a film a feminist just by virtue of being in a female-fronted film? Or do her political beliefs take priority?[1] Does the presence of women on the screen preclude the fact that those women are still highly sexualized?

These questions, debates, and discussions gesture toward the *interpretive process*. Indeed, most arguments (verbal or written) rely on the fact that we each process texts and information from different positions with different purposes, lenses, and preoccupations. Why is it that some people leave the theater after *Mad Max* or *Wonder Woman* feeling empowered, and others leave deeply troubled?

Interpretation is a complex process that is unique to every reader. It is a process of meaning-making that relies on your particular position as a reader. Your interpretive position is informed by several factors.

- Your **purpose** – In the same way you have a rhetorical purpose in writing, you often have a purpose in reading, either consciously or subconsciously. What are you trying to accomplish in this encounter with a text?
- Your **background** – Your lived experiences have trained you to perceive texts with certain assumptions. This background is a blend of cultural, educational, geographical, familial, ideological, and personal influences, among many others.
- Your **posture** – The stance you assume relative to a text will contribute to what meaning you make as you read, think about, and write about that text. This relative position might be emotional (what mood you're in while reading) or contextual (what situation you're reading in), and may also be impacted by your background and purpose.
- Your **lens** – Related to your purpose, lens refers to the way you focus your attention on particular ideas, images, and language to construct meaning. Toward what elements are you directing your attention

It would be simpler, perhaps, to acknowledge that we will never all agree on an interpretation of a text because of these differences. But the stakes are higher here than simply, "Is *Mad Max* feminist?" Interpretation gets down to the very way we encounter the world; it is about all our biases and flaws; it is about truth; it is about building new knowledges and dismantling institutional oppression. In other words, analytical interpretation is not so esoteric as slotting texts into labels like "feminist" or "not feminist." It is a practice of thinking critically, examining our sense of community and communication, and pursuing social justice.

Analysis

On a basic level, *analysis* refers to the conceptual strategy of "part-to-whole." Because I grew up playing with LEGOs® (or, more often,

the cheap knock-offs), I like to use this analogy: Imagine a castle built of 1000 LEGO bricks. I can look at the entire structure and say, "Oh, that's a castle"–this is a reasonable interpretation. But to understand how that castle has actually come together, I pull a few of the LEGO bricks from various parts of the structure. I look at those bricks individually, closely examining each side (even the sides that I couldn't see when they were part of the castle).

"lego pile" by justgrimes is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0

:jovian:" by bf8done is licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0

When I say, "This is a castle," I am not analyzing. But next, perhaps I ask myself, "What is each of these blocks **doing** to create what I can clearly interpret as a castle?" This is the process of analysis.

Which bricks to choose, though? As we discussed in Chapter One, attention is always selective: we automate most of our daily experience for the sake of efficiency and survival, so we often overlook the trees when we see the forest—or each LEGO brick when we see the castle.

Analysis, then, is a practice of radical noticing (like description): it invites you to attend to the details that add up to a complex reality. But analysis also involves conscientious focus of your attention, or a *lens*. Just like reading glasses can bring these words into focus, an analytical lens brings specific ideas, words, or patterns into sharper focus, making them easier to process and interpret.

Sometimes, especially in English classrooms, analysis of a text is referred to as *close reading*.[2] Importantly, close reading as a technique is not a magical key to meaning, not a super-secret decoder ring for a deeply encrypted code. Rather, it is a means to unpack a text and construct a unique, focused interpretation. Close reading is an *iterative* process: by repeatedly encountering, unpacking, and discussing a text, you can develop an analytical insight through guided and focused interpretation of its meaning.

In an analytical situation, your readerly purpose might determine your focus: for example, if you're trying to convince a friend that **Wonder Woman** is a feminist film, you would keep your eyes peeled for images, words, and other markers that align with such an interpretation, like situations featuring independent powerful women or an equitable ratio of dialogue spoken by female characters vs. male characters. It is important to note, though, that good analysis embraces curiosity and allows you to notice elements that might contradict, complicate, or nuance your original purpose: in addition to finding evidence in support of your interpretation, you should also be aware of characteristics that push back against your expectations.

Chapter Vocabulary

Vocabulary	Definition
authorial intent	the inferred or speculated intention
analysis	the cognitive process and/or rheto
connotation	the associated meanings of a word, phrase, or idea the shift based on in
close reading	a technique of reading that focuses that rely on research, historical con
denotation	the dictionary definition of a word, vary based on interpretive position.
interpretation	the process of consuming rhetoric t on certain ideas, language, or patter
interpretive position	the unique position from which eac same person at different times in th
iterative	literally, a repetition within a proces
lens	a metaphor for the conceptual fram attend to specific parts of a text to
motif	a recurring image or phrase that hel one than between motif and theme.
pattern	a notable sequence; structure or sha

reference	a connection a text makes to anothe adopts some characteristics of the r
symbol	an artifact (usually something concr

Techniques

Authorial Intent

In a groundbreaking 1967 essay, Roland Barthes declared that "the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author."[3] In the fifty years since its publication, "The Death of the Author" has greatly influenced the way students, teachers, and academics conduct analysis. Most critics have come to acknowledge that the personal and historical context of the author is not entirely irrelevant, as Barthes might seem to suggest; rather, most people value Barthes' notion that we must free ourselves from the trap of *authorial intent*. This is to say, what we have to work with is the text itself, so it doesn't matter what the author *wanted* to say, but instead what they *did* say. Therefore, we should work from the assumption that every choice the author made was *deliberate*.

> "Once the Author is gone, the claim to 'decipher' a text becomes quite useless." – Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author"

This choice to avoid speculation about the author's intent or personality is consistent with the theories of text wrestling analysis

explored in this chapter's introduction. Because meaning is always and only constructed through interpretation, we should let go of the idea that the author (or the "secret meanings" the author wrote into a text) is hidden somewhere beneath the surface. There is nothing "hidden" behind the text or in between the lines: there is only the text and those who interpret it.

This idea might seem to contradict one of the central frameworks of this textbook: that unpacking the rhetorical situation is crucial to critically consuming and producing rhetoric. Overlooking authorial intent does not mean that the author's rhetorical situation is no longer important. Instead, we should simply avoid unproductive speculation: we can consider the author's occasion, but we shouldn't try to guess about their motives. For instance, we can say that Malcolm X's writing was influenced by racial oppression in the 1950s and 1960s in the U.S., but not by his preference for peas over carrots. It's a fine line, but an important one.

Moreover, the choice to focus on what the author actually wrote, assuming that each word is on purpose, is *part* of the rhetorical situation of analysis. Your audience might also be curious about the author's intent, but your rhetorical purpose in this situation is to demonstrate an interpretation of the *text*—not the author.

Radical Noticing: Seeing What's On the Page

When we were early readers, we were trained to encounter texts in a specific way: find the main idea, focus on large-scale comprehension, and ignore errors, digressions, or irrelevant information. As Jane Gallop discusses in her essay, "The Ethics of Reading: Close Encounters," this is a useful skill but a problematic one. Because we engage a text from a specific interpretive position (and because we're not always aware of that position), we often project what we anticipate rather than actually reading. Instead of reading what *is* on the page, we read what we think *should be*.

Projection is efficient—one e-mail from Mom is probably like all

the others, and one episode of *The Simpsons* will probably follow the same trajectory as every episode from the last twenty-odd years. But projection is also problematic and inhibits analysis. As Gallop puts it,

> When the reader concentrates on the familiar, she is reassured that what she already knows is sufficient in relation to this new book. Focusing on the surprising, on the other hand, would mean giving up the comfort of the familiar, of the already known for the sake of learning, of encountering something new, something she didn't already know.
>
> In fact, this all has to do with learning. Learning is very difficult; it takes a lot of effort. It is of course much easier if once we learn something we can apply what we have learned again and again. It is much more difficult if every time we confront something new, we have to learn something new.
>
> Reading what one expects to find means finding what one already knows. Learning, on the other hand, means coming to know something one did not know before. Projecting is the opposite of learning. As long as we project onto a text, we cannot learn from it, we can only find what we already know. Close reading is thus a technique to make us learn, to make us see what we don't already know, rather than transforming the new into the old.[4]

Analysis as "learning," as Gallop explains, is a tool to help interrupt projection: by focusing on and trying to understand *parts*, we can redirect our attention to what the author ***is saying*** rather than what ***we think they should have said***. In turn, we can develop a more complex, ethical, and informed understanding of a ***whole***.

Perhaps the most important part of analysis is this attention to detail. If we assume that every word the author published is

intentional (in order to avoid speculation about authorial intent), then we can question the meaning and impact of each word, each combination of words, each formal feature of the text. In turn, you should pay special attention to words or forms that surprise you or confuse you: the eye-catching and the ambiguous.

Symbols, Patterns, and References5

There is no definitive "how-to" guide on text wrestling, but I often ask my students to direct their attention to three particular elements of a text during their interpretive processes. When you draw connections through the following categories, you are actively building meaning from the words on the page.

Symbol: A symbol, as you may already know, is an artifact (usually something concrete) that stands in for (represents) something else (often something abstract). Here are a few examples in different media:

- Barack Obama's 2008 campaign logo: the O, of course, stands in for the candidate's last name; the red lines seem to suggest a road (implying progress), or maybe waving American flag; the blue curve represents a clear, blue sky (implying safety or wellbeing); the colors themselves are perhaps symbolic of bipartisan cooperation, or at the very least, the American color palette of red, white, and blue.

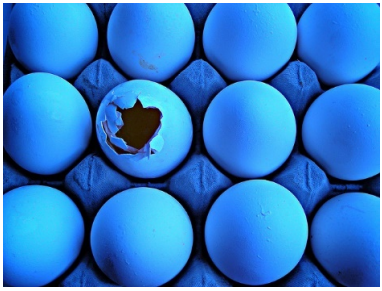
"Obama iPhone Wallpaper" by Tony Gumbel is licensed under CC BY 2.0

- In Edgar Allan Poe's "The Black Cat," the titular black cat symbolizes the narrator's descent into madness, alcoholism, and violence, and later his guilt for that descent.
- The teaspoon used to hypnotize people in the film *Get Out* (2017) symbolizes wealth, power, and privilege (a "silver spoon [Wikipedia entry]"), suggesting that those structures are tools for control and domination.
- In *Beowulf*, the Old English epic poem, the monster Grendel symbolizes a fear of the unknown and the intractability of nature.
- In *The Great Gatsby*, the green light at the end of the Buchanans' dock symbolizes nostalgia and hope.

* A *motif* is closely related to a symbol, but it is different. A motif is a recurring image, word, or phrase that helps to carry a theme or other abstract idea. For example, William Faulkner's short story "A

Rose for Emily" includes frequent use of the word "dust." While the dust is not directly symbolic of anything, it certainly brings to mind a variety of *connotations*: reading "dust" makes you think of time passing, stagnancy, decay, and so on. Therefore, the motif of "dust" helps contribute to bigger characteristics, like tone and themes.

1. Pattern: *Patterns* are created by a number of rhetorical moves, often in form. Repetition of phrases or images, the visual appearance of text on a page, and character archetypes might contribute to patterns. While patterns themselves are interesting and important, you might also notice that *breaking* a pattern is a significant and deliberate move.



No More Breaks" by jlaytarts2090 is licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0

- The episode of the TV series *Master of None* titled "Parents" (Season 1, Episode 2) tells the respective stories of two immigrant families. By tracing the previous generation of each immigrant families through a series of flashbacks, the episode establishes a pattern in chronology: although the families have unique stories, the pattern highlights the similarities of these two families' experiences. In turn, this pattern demonstrates the parallel but distinct challenges and opportunities faced by the immigrants and first-generation American citizens the episode profiles.
- In Wilfred Owen's poem "Dulce Et Decorum Est," each line of the first stanza contains ten syllables. However, the following stanzas contain occasional deviations—more or fewer syllables—creating a sense of disorder and also drawing emphasis to the pattern-breaking lines.
- Tyehimba Jess, author of *Olio* and *Leadbelly*, painstakingly crafts patterns in his poetry. For instance, his series of sonnets

on Millie and Christine McKoy [Wikipedia entry] follows not only the conventions of traditional sonnets, but are also interlocking, exemplifying the distinct but overlapping voices of conjoined twins.

2. Reference: A *reference* is a connection a text makes to another text. By making a reference (whether obvious or hidden), the referencing text adopts some characteristics of the referenced text. References might include allusion, allegory, quotation, or parody.

- C.S. Lewis' classic young adult series, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, is a Christian allegory. The imagery used to describe the main hero, Aslan the lion, as well as a number of the other stories and details, parallel the New Testament. In turn, Aslan is imbued with the savior connotation of Jesus Christ.
- The TV show *Bob's Burgers* makes frequent references to pop culture. For instance, the fictional boy band featured in the show, Boyz 4 Now, closely resembles One Direction, *NSYNC, and Backstreet Boys—and their name is clearly a reference to Boyz II Men.
- "Woman Hollering Creek," a short story by Sandra Cisneros, deals with the dangers of interpersonal violence. The protagonist refers frequently to *telenovelas*, soap operas that set unrealistic and problematic assumptions for healthy relationships. These references suggest to us that interpersonal violence is pervasive in media and social norms.

Sociocultural Lenses6

In addition to looking for symbols, patterns, and references, you might also focus your analytical reading by using a sociocultural critical *lens*. Because your attention is necessarily selective, a limited resource, these lenses give you a suggestion for where you might direct that attention. While it is beyond the scope of this book

to give in-depth history and reading practices for different schools of literary criticism or cultural studies, the following are common lenses applied during textual analysis. (Free resources from the Purdue OWL introduce students to some of these schools of criticism.)

As you engage with a text, you should look for touchstones, tropes, or symbols that relate to one or more of the following critical perspectives.

- Gender and sexuality
  - *How does the text portray the creation and performance of gender? How many people of different genders are included in the story? Do the characters in the text express gender according to traditional standards? How do characters resist the confines of gender? How much attention, agency, and voice are allowed to women, men, and non-binary or genderqueer characters?*
  - *What sorts of relationships—familial, friendly, romantic, sexual, etc.—are portrayed in the text? How do these relationships compare to the relationships of the dominant culture? How much attention, agency, and voice are allowed to LGBTQIA2S+ people?*

- Disability
  - *How does the text represent people with disabilities? Does the text reveal damaging stereotypes or misconceptions about people with disabilities or their life experiences? Does the text illuminate the social/environmental construction of disabilities? How does the text construct or assume the normative body?*

- Race, ethnicity, and nationality
  - *How does the text represent people of color, of minority status, and/or of different nationalities? What does it*

suggest about institutionalized racism and discrimination? How does the text examine or portray cultural and individual identities? How do the characters resist racism, xenophobia, and oppression? How do they reproduce, practice, or contribute to racism, xenophobia, or oppression?

- Social class and economy
  - *How does the text represent differences in wealth, access, and resources? Do people cross the divisions between socioeconomic statuses? Are characters of greater status afforded more power, agency, or freedom—in the plot events or in the text more generally? How do exploited people resist or reproduce exploitation?*

- Ecologies and the environment
  - *Does the setting of the text represent a 'natural' world? How does the text represent nature, ecosystems, non-human animals and other living organisms? Does the text, its narrative, or its characters advocate for environmental protection? Does the text speak to the human impact on global ecological health?*

- (Post)colonialism
  - *What is the relationship of the characters and the setting, historically and culturally? Does the text take place in a currently or formerly colonized nation? Which of the characters are from that place? How have the effects of colonialism and imperialism influenced the place and its indigenous people? How have subjected, enslaved, or exploited people preserved culture or resisted colonialism? How does the text represent patterns of migration—forced or voluntary?*

Some texts will lend themselves to a certain lens (or combination of lenses) based on content or the rhetorical situation of the author or reader. Bring to mind a recent movie you watched, book you read, or other text you've encountered; by asking the italicized questions above, determine whether that text seems to be asking for a certain sociocultural perspective.

Activities

Personal Photo Analysis

For this activity, find a *photograph* (digital or printed) that has some sort of emotional gravity for you: it could be a picture of a loved one, a treasured memory, a favorite place, anything that makes *you* feel something.

On a clean sheet of paper, free-write about the photo in response to the following prompts for three minutes each:

1. Describe the photograph as a whole. What's happening? Who is in it? Use vivid description to capture the photo in writing as best you can.
2. Zoom in on one element of the photo—one color, shape, object, person, etc. How does this part relate to the greater whole?
3. Zoom out and describe what's not shown in the photo. What's happening just out of frame? What's happening just before, just after? What are the emotions you associate with this moment?

Now, trade photos with a friend or classmate who's also working on this activity. Repeat the same free-write prompts and compare your responses. What do the differences indicate about the interpretive process? About context? About the position of the reader and the limitations on the author (photographer)?

Unpacking Advertisements: Analyzing Visual Rhetoric

One of the most common forms of visual rhetoric we encounter on a daily basis are advertisements; indeed, advertisements are more and more prominent with the growth of technology, and increasingly tailored to the target audience. The ads we encounter often blend language, images, sound, and video to achieved their intended purpose—to convince you to buy something.

To practice analysis, you can close read an advertisement or advertising campaign.

1. Choose a brand, product, or corporation that you find interesting. One that I've found especially engaging is Levi's 2009 "Go Forth" advertising campaign.[7]
2. Try to identify the **subject**, **occasion**, **audience**, and **purpose** of the advertisement. Often, there is an obvious or declared answer for each of these (the subject of the Levi's campaign is "Levi's jeans" and the purpose is "to make you buy Levi's jeans"), but there are also more subtle answers (the subject is also "American millennial empowerment" and the purpose is also "create a youthful, labor-oriented brand").
3. Identify what parts of the advertisement contribute to the whole: what colors, shapes, words, images, associations, etc., does the ad play on in order to achieve its purpose? Do you notice symbols, patterns, or references?
4. Interpret the observations you collected in number three. How do the parts contribute to the whole? What might you overlook if you weren't paying close enough attention?

Radical Noticing Promenade

This exercise encourages you to focus on details, rather than the big picture, as a way to better understand the big picture. You will need

a notebook and a camera. (If you have a cell phone with a camera, it will do the trick.)

Take about twenty minutes to wander around an area that you often spend time in: your house, your neighborhood, the halls of your school, etc. Walk slowly and aimlessly; this exercise works best when you don't have a destination in mind.

As you wander, look around you and focus on small details—a piece of garbage on the sidewalk, the color of that guy's shoes, the sound of a leaf blower in the distance. Record (using your camera, notebook, or both) these small details. When you return to your desk, choose three of these details to meditate on. Using descriptive writing (see Chapter One), spend a few minutes exploring these details in writing. Then, consider what they might reflect about the place where you promenaded—the piece of garbage might indicate that neighborhood is well-maintained but not pristine; the leaf blower might reflect a suburban American commitment to both manicured lawns and convenience.

Poem Explication8

Practice analyzing a text using your choice of one of the following poems. First, read a poem through once silently and once aloud. Then read the poem again, this time annotating words and phrases that strike you. Look for patterns (and breaks in patterns) in language, rhyme, meter, and form. Look for potential symbolism, concrete objects that seem to suggest something more abstract. Look for references, connections to other texts you know. You can also consider whether the poem speaks to any analytical lenses and how it compares to your experiences.

Next, develop several questions that the poem raises. What is ambiguous about the content or language? What might it suggest about our lives, our society?

Finally, synthesize your observations and questions into a brief

essay driven by a thesis statement. Use specific parts of the text to support your insight.

Drag the River[9] *by Ryan Mills*

Reproduced with permission from the author. Originally published online and available via 1001 Journal.

On our way to the river
the gist of American storytelling
dragged along like a dog
leashed to the back of the car.
I had to pull over.
You said, "I hope
We switched seats.
Parked at milepost 6, the grease fire night
pulled the river toward the delta.
The water ran low;
the trees performed their shakes.
We removed our hats then went down to the banks.

Richard Cory[10]

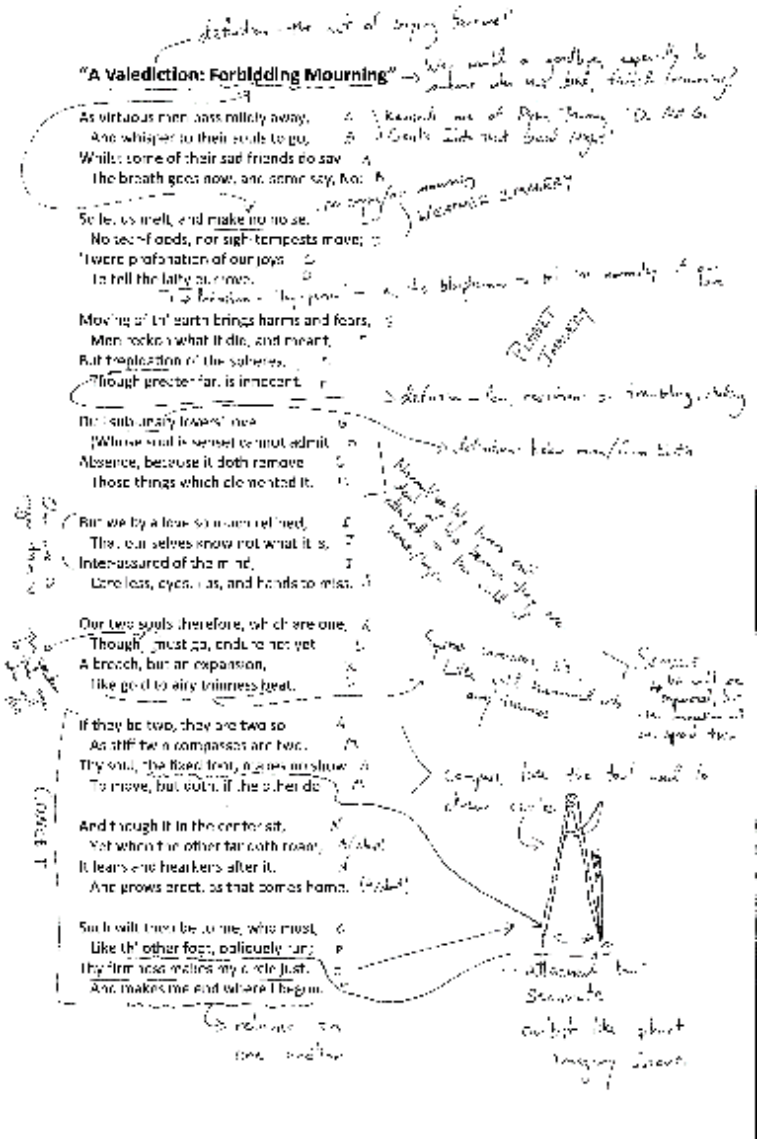
Whenever Richard Cory went down town,
We people on the pavement looked at him:
He was a gentleman from sole to crown,
Clean favored, and imperially slim.
And he was always quietly arrayed,
And he was always human when he talked;
But still he fluttered pulses when he said,
"Good-morning," and he glittered when he walked.
And he was rich—yes, richer than a king—
And admirably schooled in every grace:
In fine, we thought that he was everything

To make us wish that we were in his place.
So on we worked, and waited for the light,
And went without the meat, and cursed the bread;
And Richard Cory, one calm summer night,
Went home and put a bullet through his head.

Model Texts by Student Authors

Annotation: "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning"[11]

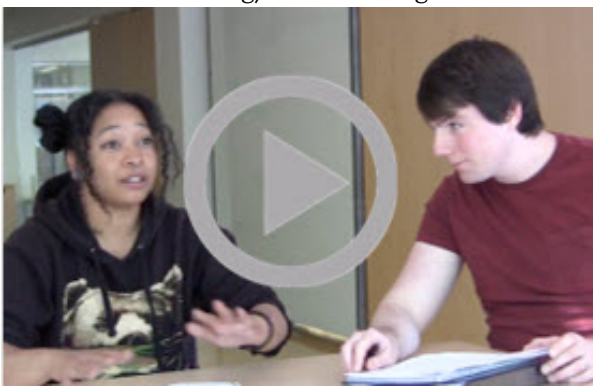
(Image of the annotated text)



Original text:
As virtuous men pass mildly away,
And whisper to their souls to go,
Whilst some of their sad friends do say

The breath goes now, and some say, No:
So let us melt, and make no noise,
No tear-floods, nor sigh-tempests move;
'Twere profanation of our joys
To tell the laity our love.
Moving of th' earth brings harms and fears,
Men reckon what it did, and meant;
But trepidation of the spheres,
Though greater far, is innocent.
Dull sublunary lovers' love
(Whose soul is sense) cannot admit
Absence, because it doth remove
Those things which elemented it.
But we by a love so much refined,
That our selves know not what it is,
Inter-assured of the mind,
Care less, eyes, lips, and hands to miss.
Our two souls therefore, which are one,
Though I must go, endure not yet
A breach, but an expansion,
Like gold to airy thinness beat.
If they be two, they are two so
As stiff twin compasses are two;
Thy soul, the fixed foot, makes no show
To move, but doth, if the other do.
And though it in the center sit,
Yet when the other far doth roam,
It leans and hearkens after it,
And grows erect, as that comes home.
Such wilt thou be to me, who must,
Like th' other foot, obliquely run;
Thy firmness makes my circle just,
And makes me end where I begun.

Video: Text Wrestling/Close Reading Roundtable[12]



Endnotes

1 Of particular note are claims that Gal Gadot of Wonder Woman has supported Israeli imperialism, and therefore her claims to feminism are contradicted by different social justice imperatives: The wonder of imperial feminism [Al Jazeera Article]
2 Although this term originated in the New Critical literary movement, it has permeated most other schools of critical theory and cultural studies. In most settings, it is generalized to refer to the attentive reading practices and philosophies discussed in this chapter; however, it does have additional connotations in New Criticism.
3 Barthes 148; 147. Barthes, Roland. Image, Music, Text, translated by Stephen Heath, Hill and Wang, 1977.
4 Gallop 11. Gallop, Jane. "The Ethics of Reading: Close Encounters." Journal of Curriculum and Theorizing, Vol. 16., No. 3, 2000, pp. 7-17.
5 This framework was inspired by Thomas C. Foster's in How to Read Literature Like a Professor, Harper, 2003.
6 Keep in mind that each of these critical lenses has a broad school of theory behind it. Your teacher might encourage you to do a bit of background research on a certain perspective before applying it.
7 Read more about this campaign and its rhetorical strategies via

the New York Times: Levi's Courts the Young With a Hopeful Call [New York Times Article]
8 For more on poetry explication, consult the UNC Writing Center's web page
9 Ryan Mills, orig. published in 1001, issue 2, by IPRC. Reproduced with permission from the author.
10 Edwin Arlington Robinson. "Richard Cory." 1897. Reproduced through the Public domain.
11 Donne, John. "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning." 1633. Reproduced through the Public domain.
12 This video features Kamiko Jiminez, Annie Wold, Maximilian West, and Christopher Gaylord. It was produced and is included here with their consent. Special thanks to Laura Wilson and Kale Brewer for their support in producing this video.

Chapter Five: Summary and Response

As you sharpen your analytical skills, you might realize that you should use evidence from the text to back up the points you make. You might use direct quotes as support, but you can also consider using summary.

A *summary* is a condensed version of a text, put into your own words. Summarizing is a useful part of the analytical process because it requires you to read the text, interpret and process it, and reproduce the important points using your own language. By doing so, you are (consciously or unconsciously) making choices about what matters, what words and phrases mean, and how to articulate their meaning.

Often (but not always), *response* refers to a description of a reader's experience and reactions as they encounter a text. Response papers track how you feel and what you think as you move through a text. More importantly, responses also challenge you to evaluate exactly *how* a text acts upon you—to make you feel or think a certain way—using language or images. While a response is not an analysis, it will help you generate ideas for the analytical process.

Chapter Vocabulary

Vocabulary	Definition
direct quote	the verbatim use of another author's words. Can be used as evidence to support your claim, or as language to analyze/close-read to demonstrate an interpretation or insight.
paraphrase	author reiterates a main idea, argument, or detail of a text in their own words without drastically altering the length of the passage(s) they paraphrase. Contrast with summary.
response	a mode of writing that values the reader's experience of and reactions to a text.
summary	a rhetorical mode in which an author reiterates the main ideas, arguments, and details of a text in their own words, condensing a longer text into a smaller version. Contrast with paraphrase.

Techniques

Identifying Main Points, Concerns, and Images

If you ever watch TV shows with a serial plot, you might be familiar with the phrase "Previously, on _____." The snippets at the beginning of an episode are designed to remind the viewer of the important parts of previous episodes–but how do makers of the show determine what a viewer needs to be refreshed on? And why am I watching full episodes if they'll just tell me what I need to know in the first minute of the next episode?

Typically, the makers of the show choose short, punchy bits that will be relevant in the new episode's narrative arc. For instance, a "Previously, on *The Walking Dead*" might have a clip from ten episodes ago showing zombies invading Hershel's farm if the new

episode focuses on Hershel and his family. Therefore, these "previously ons" hook the viewer by showcasing only exciting parts and prime the viewer for a new story by planting specific details in their mind. Summaries like this are driven by purpose, and consequently have a specific job to do in choosing main points.

You, too, should consider your rhetorical purpose when you begin writing summary. Whether you are writing a summary essay or using summary as a tool for analysis, your choices about what to summarize and how to summarize it should be determined by what you're trying to accomplish with your writing.

As you engage with a text you plan to summarize, you should begin by identifying main points, recurring images, or concerns and preoccupations of the text. (You may find the Engaged Reading Strategies appendix of this book useful.) After reading and rereading, what ideas stick with you? What does the author seem distracted by? What keeps cropping up?

Tracking Your Reactions

As you read and reread a text, you should take regular breaks to check in with yourself to track your reactions. Are you feeling sympathetic toward the speaker, narrator, or author? To the other characters? What other events, ideas, or contexts are you reminded of as you read? Do you understand and agree with the speaker, narrator, or author? What is your emotional state? At what points do you feel confused or uncertain, and why?

Try out the double-column note-taking method. As illustrated below, divide a piece of paper into two columns; on the left, make a heading for "Notes and Quotes," and on the right, "Questions and Reactions." As you move through a text, jot down important ideas and words from the text on the left, and record your intellectual and emotional reactions on the right. Be sure to ask prodding questions of the text along the way, too.

Notes and Quotes

Questions and Reactions

Writing Your Summary

Summarizing requires you to make choices about what matters, what words and phrases mean, and how

to articulate their meaning.

Once you have read and re-read your text at least once, taking notes and reflecting along the way, you are ready to start writing a summary. Before starting, consider your rhetorical situation: What are you trying to accomplish (purpose) with your summary? What details and ideas (subject) are important for your reader (audience) to know? Should you assume that they have also read the text you're summarizing? I'm thinking back here to the "Previously on…" idea: TV series don't include **everything** from a prior episode; they focus instead on moments that set up the events of their next episode. You too should choose your content in accordance with your rhetorical situation.

I encourage you to start off by articulating the "key" idea or ideas from the text in one or two sentences. Focus on clarity of language: start with simple word choice, a single idea, and a straightforward perspective so that you establish a solid foundation.

> The authors support feminist theories and practices that are critical of racism and other oppressions.

Then, before that sentence, write one or two more sentences that introduce the title of the text, its authors, and its main concerns or interventions. Revise your key idea sentence as necessary.

> In "Why Our Feminism Must Be Intersectional (And 3 Ways to Practice It)," Jarune Uwuajaren and Jamie Utt critique what is known as 'white feminism.' They explain that sexism is wrapped up in racism, Islamophobia, heterosexism, transphobia, and other systems of oppression. The authors support feminist theories and practices that recognize intersectionality.

Whether you are quoting, paraphrasing, or summarizing, you must *always* include an appropriate citation.

For support on citations, visit your Writing Center, access the Purdue OWL, or ask your teacher and classmates for support.

Your next steps will depend largely on the reasons you are summarizing. Has your teacher asked you to summarize objectively, reproducing the ideas of the text without adding your own ideas or reactions? Have they asked you to critique the article, by both showing understanding and then pushing back against the text? Follow the parameters of your assignment; they are an important element of your rhetorical situation.

In most summary assignments, though, you will be expected to draw directly from the article itself by using direct quotes or paraphrases in addition to your own summary.

Paraphrase, Summary, and Direct Quotes

Whether you're writing a summary or broaching your analysis, using support from the text will help you clarify ideas, demonstrate your

understanding, or further your argument, among other things. Three distinct methods, which Bruce Ballenger refers to as "The Notetaker's Triad," will allow you to process and reuse information from your focus text.[1]

A *direct quote* might be most familiar to you: using quotation marks (" ") to indicate the moments that you're borrowing, you reproduce an author's words verbatim in your own writing. Use a direct quote if someone else wrote or said something in a distinctive or particular way and you want to capture their words exactly.

Direct quotes are good for establishing *ethos* and providing evidence. In a text wrestling essay, you will be expected to use multiple direct quotes: in order to attend to specific language, you will need to reproduce segments of that language in your analysis.

Paraphrasing is similar to the process of summary. When we paraphrase, we process information or ideas from another person's text and put it in our own words. The main difference between paraphrase and summary is scope: if summarizing means rewording and condensing, then paraphrasing means rewording without drastically altering length. However, paraphrasing is also generally more faithful to the spirit of the original; whereas a summary requires you to process and invites your own perspective, a paraphrase ought to mirror back the original idea using your own language.

Paraphrasing is helpful for establishing background knowledge or general consensus, simplifying a complicated idea, or reminding your reader of a certain part of another text. It is also valuable when relaying statistics or historical information, both of which are usually more fluidly woven into your writing when spoken with your own voice.

Summary, as discussed earlier in this chapter, is useful for "broadstrokes" or quick overviews, brief references, and providing plot or character background. When you summarize, you reword and condense another author's writing. Be aware, though, that summary also requires individual thought: when you reword, it should be a result of you processing the idea yourself, and when you

condense, you must think critically about which parts of the text are most important. As you can see in the example below, one summary shows understanding and puts the original into the author's own words; the other summary is a result of a passive rewording, where the author only substituted synonyms for the original.

Original Quote: "On Facebook, what you click on, what you share with your 'friends' shapes your profile, preferences, affinities, political opinions and your vision of the world. The last thing Facebook wants is to contradict you in any way" (Filloux).

Summary example

On Facebook, the things you click on and share forms your profile, likings, sympathies, go

When you interact with Facebook, you teach the algorithms about yourself. Those algorit

---

Each of these three tactics should support your summary or analysis: you should integrate quotes, paraphrases, and summary with your own writing. Below, you can see three examples of these tools. Consider how the direct quote, the paraphrase, and the summary each could be used to achieve different purposes.

Original Passage

It has been suggested (again rather anecdotally) that giraffes do communicate using infrasonic vocalizations (the signals are verbally described to be similar—in structure and function—to the low-frequency, infrasonic "rumbles" of elephants). It was further speculated that the extensive frontal sinus of giraffes acts as a resonance chamber for infrasound production. Moreover, particular

neck movements (e.g. the neck stretch) are suggested to be associated with the production of infrasonic vocalizations.[2]

Quote	*Paraphrase*
Some zoological experts have pointed out that the evidence for giraffe hums has been "rather anecdotally" reported (Baotic et al. 3). However, some scientists have "speculated that the extensive frontal sinus of giraffes acts as a resonance chamber for infrasound production" (Ibid. 3).	Giraffes emit a low-pitch noise; some sc that this *hum* can be used for communic other members of the social group, but c skeptical because of the dearth of resear noises. According to Baotic et al., the ana animal suggests that they may be making specific noises (3).

The examples above also demonstrate additional citation conventions worth noting:

- A parenthetical in-text citation is used for all three forms. (In MLA format, this citation includes the author's last name and page number.) The purpose of an in-text citation is to identify key information that guides your reader to your Works Cited page (or Bibliography or References, depending on your format).
- If you use the author's name in the sentence, you do not need to include their name in the parenthetical citation.
- If your material doesn't come from a specific page or page range, but rather from the entire text, you do not need to include a page number in the parenthetical citation.
- If there are many authors (generally more than three), you can use "et al." to mean "and others."
- If you cite the same source consecutively in the same paragraph (without citing any other sources in between), you can use "Ibid." to mean "same as the last one."

In Chapter Six, we will discuss integrating quotes, summaries, and

paraphrases into your text wrestling analysis. Especially if you are writing a summary that requires you to use direct quotes, I encourage you to jump ahead to "Synthesis: Using Evidence to Explore Your Thesis" in that chapter.

Activities

Summary and Response: TV Show or Movie

Practice summary and response using a movie or an episode of a television show. (Although it can be more difficult with a show or movie you already know and like, you can apply these skills to both familiar and unfamiliar texts.)

Watch it once all the way through, taking notes using the double-column structure above.

Watch it once more, pausing and rewinding as necessary, adding additional notes.

Write one or two paragraphs summarizing the episode or movie as objectively as possible. Try to include the major plot points, characters, and conflicts.

Write a paragraph that transitions from summary to response: what were your reactions to the episode or movie? What do you think produced those reactions? What seems troubling or problematic? What elements of form and language were striking? How does the episode or movie relate to your lived experiences?

Everyone's a Critic: Food Review

Food critics often employ summary and response with the purpose of reviewing restaurants for potential customers. You can give it a shot by visiting a restaurant, your dining hall, a fast-food joint, or a food cart. Before you get started, consider reading some food and

restaurant reviews from your local newspaper. (Yelp often isn't quite thorough enough.)

Bring a notepad to your chosen location and take detailed notes on your experience as a patron. Use descriptive writing techniques (see Chapter One), to try to capture the experience.

What happens as you walk in? Are you greeted? What does it smell like? What are your immediate reactions?

Describe the atmosphere. Is there music? What's the lighting like? Is it slow, or busy?

Track the service. How long before you receive the attention you need? Is that attention appropriate to the kind of food-service place you're in?

Record as many details about the food you order as possible.

After your dining experience, write a brief review of the restaurant, dining hall, fast-food restaurant, or food cart. What was it like, specifically? Did it meet your expectations? Why or why not? What would you suggest for improvement? Would you recommend it to other diners like you?

Digital Media Summary and Mini-Analysis

For this exercise, you will study a social media feed of your choice. You can use your own or someone else's Facebook feed, Twitter feed, or Instagram feed. Because these feeds are tailored to their respective user's interests, they are all unique and represent something about the user.

"Social Media Mix 3D Icons – Mix #2" by Blogtrepreneur is licensed under CC BY 2.0

After closely reviewing at least ten posts, respond to the following questions in a brief essay:

What is the primary medium used on this platform (e.g, images, text, video, etc.)?

What recurring ideas, themes, topics, or preoccupations do you see in this collection? Provide examples.

Do you see posts that deviate from these common themes?

What do the recurring topics in the feed indicate about its user? Why?

Bonus: What ads do you see popping up? How do you think these have been geared toward the user?

Model Texts by Student Authors

Maggie as the Focal Point3

Shanna Greene Benjamin attempts to resolve Toni Morrison's emphasis on Maggie in her short story "Recitatif". While many previous scholars focus on racial codes, and "the black-and-white" story that establishes the racial binary, Benjamin goes ten steps further to show "the brilliance of Morrison's experiment" (Benjamin 90). Benjamin argues that Maggie's story which is described through Twyla's and Roberta's memories is the focal point of "Recitatif" where the two protagonists have a chance to rewrite "their conflicting versions of history" (Benjamin 91). More so, Maggie is the interstitial space where blacks and whites can engage, confront America's racialized past, rewrite history, and move forward.

Benjamin highlights that Maggie's story is first introduced by Twyla, labeling her recollections as the "master narrative" (Benjamin 94). Although Maggie's story is rebutted with Roberta's memories, Twyla's version "represent[s] the residual, racialized perspectives" stemming from America's past (Benjamin 89). Since Maggie is a person with a disability her story inevitably becomes marginalized, and utilized by both Twyla and Roberta for their own

self-fulfilling needs, "instead of mining a path toward the truth" (Benjamin 97). Maggie is the interstitial narrative, which Benjamin describes as a space where Twyla and Roberta, "who represent opposite ends of a racial binary", can come together to heal (Benjamin 101). Benjamin also points out how Twyla remembers Maggie's legs looking "like parentheses" and relates the shape of parentheses, ( ), to self-reflection (Morrison 141). Parentheses represent that inward gaze into oneself, and a space that needs to be filled with self-reflection in order for one to heal and grow. Twyla and Roberta create new narratives of Maggie throughout the story in order to make themselves feel better about their troubled past. According to Benjamin, Maggie's "parenthetical body" is symbolically the interstitial space that "prompts self-reflection required to ignite healing" (Benjamin 102). Benjamin concludes that Morrison tries to get the readers to engage in America's past by eliminating and taking up the space between the racial binary that Maggie represents.

Not only do I agree with Benjamin's stance on "Recitatif", but I also disapprove of my own critical analysis of "Recitatif." I made the same mistakes that other scholars have made regarding Morrison's story; we focused on racial codes and the racial binary, while completely missing the interstitial space which Maggie represents. Although I did realize Maggie was of some importance, I was unsure why so I decided to not focus on Maggie at all. Therefore, I missed the most crucial message from "Recitatif" that Benjamin hones in on.

Maggie is brought up in every encounter between Twyla and Roberta, so of course it makes sense that Maggie is the focal point in "Recitatif". Twyla and Roberta project themselves onto Maggie, which is why the two women have a hard time figuring out "'What the hell happened to Maggie'" (Morrison 155). Maggie also has the effect of bringing the two women closer together, yet at times causing them to be become more distant. For example, when Twyla and Roberta encounter one another at the grocery store, Twyla brings up the time Maggie fell and the "gar girls laughed at

her", while Roberta reminds her that Maggie was in fact pushed down (Morrison 148). Twyla has created a new, "self-serving narrative[ ]" as to what happened to Maggie instead of accepting what has actually happened, which impedes Twyla's ability to self-reflect and heal (Benjamin 102). If the two women would have taken up the space between them to confront the truths of their past, Twyla and Roberta could have created a "cooperative narrative" in order to mend.

Maggie represents the interstitial space that lies between white and black Americans. I believe this is an ideal space where the two races can come together to discuss America's racialized past, learn from one another, and in turn, understand why America is divided as such. If white and black America jumped into the space that Maggie defines, maybe we could move forward as a country and help one another succeed. When I say "succeed", I am not referring to the "American dream" because that is a false dream created by white America. "Recitatif" is not merely what characteristics define which race, it is much more than. Plus, who cares about race! I want America to be able to benefit and give comfort to every citizen whatever their "race" may be. This is time where we need black and white America to come together and fight the greater evil, which is the corruption within America's government.

Teacher Takeaways

"This student's summary of Benjamin's article is engaging and incisive. Although the text being summarized seems very complex, the student clearly articulates the author's primary claims, which are a portrayed as an intervention in a conversation (i.e., a claim that challenges what people might think beforehand). The author is also honest about their

reactions to the text, which I enjoy, but they seem to lose direction a bit toward the end of the paper. Also, given a chance to revise again, this student should adjust the balance of quotes and paraphrases/ summaries: they use direct quotes effectively, but too frequently."– Professor Wilhjelm

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*Pronouns & Bathrooms*4

The article "Pronouns and Bathrooms: Supporting Transgender Students," featured on Edutopia, was written to give educators a few key points when enacting the role of a truly (gender) inclusive educator. It is written specifically to high-school level educators, but I feel that almost all of the rules that should apply to a person who is transgender or gender-expansive at any age or grade level. The information is compiled by several interviews done with past and present high school students who identify with a trans-identity. The key points of advice stated are supported by personal

statements made by past or present students that identify with a trans-identity.

The first point of advice is to use the student's preferred name and/or pronoun. These are fundamental to the formation of identity and demand respect. The personal interview used in correlation with the advice details how the person ended up dropping out of high school after transferring twice due to teachers refusing to use their preferred name and pronoun. This is an all-too-common occurrence. The trans community recommend that schools and administrators acquire updated gender-inclusive documentation and update documentation at the request of the student to avoid misrepresentation and mislabeling. When you use the student's preferred name and pronoun in and out of the classroom you are showing the student you sincerely care for their well-being and the respect of their identity.

The second and other most common recommendation is to make "trans-safe" (single-use, unisex or trans-inclusive) bathrooms widely available to students. Often these facilities either do not exist at all or are few-and-far-between, usually inconveniently located, and may not even meet ADA standards. This is crucial to insuring safety for trans-identified students.

Other recommendations are that schools engage in continual professional development training to insure that teachers are the best advocates for their students. Defend and protect students from physical and verbal abuse. Create a visibly welcoming and supportive environment for trans-identified students by creating support groups, curriculum and being vocal about your ally status.

The last piece of the article tells us a person who is trans simply wants to be viewed as human—a fully actualized human. I agree whole-heartedly. I believe that everyone has this desire. I agree with the recommendations of the participants that these exhibitions of advocacy are indeed intrinsic to the role of gender-expansive ally-ship,

While they may not be the most salient of actions of

advocacy, they are the most foundational parts. These actions are the tip of the iceberg, but they must be respected. Being a true ally to the gender-expansive and transgender communities means continually expanding your awareness of trans issues. I am thankful these conversations are being had and am excited for the future of humanity.

Teacher Takeaways

"The author maintains focus on key arguments and their own understanding of the text's claims. By the end of the summary, I have a clear sense of the recommendations the authors make for supporting transgender students. However, this piece could use more context at the beginning of each paragraph: the student could clarify the logical progression that builds from one paragraph to the next. (The current structure reads more like a list.) Similarly, context is missing in the form of citations, and no author is ever mentioned. Overall this author relies a bit too much on summary and would benefit from using a couple direct quotations to give the reader a sense of the author's language and key ideas. In revision, this author should blend summaries, paraphrases, and quotes to develop this missing context."– Professor Dannemiller

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Education Methods: Banking vs. Problem-Posing5

Almost every student has had an unpleasant experience with an educator. Many times this happens due to the irrelevant problems posed by educators and arbitrary assignments required of the student. In his chapter from *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire centers his argument on the oppressive and unsuccessful banking education method in order to show the necessity of a problem-posing method of education.

Freire begins his argument by intervening into the conversation regarding teaching methods and styles of education, specifically responding in opposition to the banking education method, a method that "mirrors the oppressive society as a whole" (73). He describes the banking method as a system of narration and depositing of information into students like "containers" or "receptacles" (72). He constructs his argument by citing examples of domination and mechanical instruction as aspects that create an assumption of dichotomy, stating that "a person is merely in the world, not with the world or with others" (75). Freire draws on the reader's experiences with this method by providing a list of banking attitudes and practices including "the teacher chooses and enforces his choices, and the students comply" (73), thus allowing the reader to connect the subject with their lived experiences.

In response to the banking method, Freire then advocates for a problem-posing method of education comprised of an educator constantly reforming her reflections in the reflection of the students. He theorizes that education involves a constant unveiling of reality, noting that "they come to see the world not as a static reality but as a reality in process, in transformation" (83). Thus, the problem-posing method draws on discussion and collaborative communication between students and educator. As they work together, they are able to learn from one another and impact the world by looking at applicable problems and assignments, which is in direct opposition of the banking method.

While it appears that Freire's problem-posing method is

more beneficial to both the student and educator, he fails to take into account the varying learning styles of te students, as well as the teaching abilities of the educators. He states that through the banking method, "the student records, memorizes, and repeats these phrases without perceiving what four times four really means, or realizing the true significance" (71). While this may be true for many students, some have an easier time absorbing information when it is given to them in a more mechanical fashion. The same theory applies to educators as well. Some educators may have a more difficult time communicating through the problem-posing method. Other educators may not be as willing to be a part of a more collaborative education method.

I find it difficult to agree with a universal method of education, due to the fact that a broad method doesn't take into consideration the varying learning and communication styles of both educator and student. However, I do agree with Freire on the basis that learning and education should be a continuous process that involves the dedication of both student and educator. Students are their own champions and it takes a real effort to be an active participant in one's own life and education. It's too easy to sit back and do the bare minimum, or be an "automaton" (74). To constantly be open to learning and new ideas, to be a part of your own education, is harder, but extremely valuable.

As a student pursuing higher education, I find this text extremely reassuring. The current state of the world and education can seem grim at times, but after reading this I feel more confident that there are still people who feel that the current systems set in place are not creating students who can critically think and contribute to the world. Despite being written forty years ago, Freire's radical approach to education seems to be a more humanistic style, one where students are thinking authentically, for "authentic thinking is concerned with reality" (77). Problem-posing education is one that is concerned with liberation, opposed to oppression. The banking method doesn't allow for liberation, for "liberation is a praxis: the action and reflection of men and women

upon their world in order to transform it" (79). Educational methods should prepare students to be liberators and transformers of the world, not containers to receive and store information.

Teacher Takeaways

"I love that this student combines multiple forms of information (paraphrases, quotes, and summaries) with their own reactions to the text. By using a combined form of summary, paraphrase, and quote, the student weaves ideas from the text together to give the reader a larger sense of the author's ideas and claims. The student uses citations and signal phrases to remind us of the source. The student also does a good job of keeping paragraphs focused, setting up topic sentences and transitions, and introducing ideas that become important parts of their thesis. On the other hand, the reader could benefit from more explanation of some complex concepts from the text being analyzed, especially if the author assumes that the reader isn't familiar with Freire. For example, the banking method of education is never quite clearly explained and the reader is left to derive its meaning from the context clues the student provides. A brief summary or paraphrase of this concept towards the beginning of the essay would give us a better understanding of the contexts the student is working in."– Professor Dannemiller

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Freire, Paulo. "Chapter 2." *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, translated by Myra Bergman Ramos, 30th Anniversary Edition, Continuum, 2009, pp. 71-86.

You Snooze, You Peruse6

This article was an interesting read about finding a solution to the problem that 62% of high school students are facing – chronic sleep deprivation (less than 8 hours on school nights). While some schools have implemented later start times, this article argues for a more unique approach. Several high schools in Las Cruces, New Mexico have installed sleeping pods for students to use when needed. They "include a reclined chair with a domed sensory-reduction bubble that closes around one's head
and torso" and "feature a one-touch start button that activates a relaxing sequence of music and soothing lights" (Conklin). Students rest for 20 minutes and then go back to class. Some of the teachers were concerned about the amount of valuable class time students would miss while napping, while other teachers argued that if the students are that tired, they won't be able to focus in class anyway. Students who used the napping pods reported they were effective in restoring energy levels and reducing stress. While that is great, there was concern from Melissa Moore, a pediatric sleep specialist, that napping during the day would cause students to sleep less during that "all-important nighttime sleep."

Sleep deprivation is a serious issue in high school students. I know there are a lot of high school students that are very involved in extra-curricular activities like I was. I was on student council and played sports year-round, which meant most nights I got home late, had hours of homework, and almost never got enough sleep. I was exhausted all the time, especially during junior and senior year. I definitely agree that there is no point in students sitting in

class if they're so tired they can barely stay awake. However, I don't know if sleeping pods are the best solution. Sure, after a 20-minute nap students feel a little more energetic, but I don't think this is solving the chronic issue of sleep deprivation. A 20-minute nap isn't solving the problem that most students aren't getting 8 hours of sleep, which means they aren't getting enough deep sleep (which usually occurs between hours 6-8). Everyone needs these critical hours of sleep, especially those that are still growing and whose brains are still developing. I think it would be much more effective to implement later start times. High school students aren't going to go to bed earlier, that's just the way it is. But having later start times gives them the opportunity to get up to an extra hour of sleep, which can make a huge difference in the overall well-being of students, as well as their level of concentration and focus in the classroom.

Teacher Takeaways

"I appreciate that this author has a clear understanding of the article which they summarize, and in turn are able to take a clear stance of qualification ('Yes, but…'). However, I would encourage this student to revisit the structure of their summary. They've applied a form that many students fall back on instinctively: the first half is 'What They Say' and the second half is 'What I Say.' Although this can be effective, I would rather that the student make this move on the sentence level so that paragraphs are organized around ideas, not the sources of those ideas."– Professor Wilhjelm

Works Cited

Conklin, Richard. "You Snooze, You Peruse: Some Schools Turn to Nap Time to Recharge Students." *Education World*, 2017 .

Bloom, Benjamin S., et al. *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: The Classification of Educational Goals*. D. McKay Co., 1969.

Also of note are recent emphases to use Bloom's work as a conceptual model, not a hard-and-fast, infallible rule for cognition. Importantly, we rarely engage only one kind of thinking, and models like this should not be used to make momentous decisions; rather, they should contribute to a broader, nuanced understanding of human cognition and development.

In consideration of revised versions Bloom's Taxonomy and the previous note, it can be mentioned that this process necessarily involves judgment/evaluation; using the process of interpretation, my analysis and synthesis require my intellectual discretion.

Mays 1258.

Mays, Kelly J. "The Literature Essay." *The Norton Introduction to Literature*, Portable 12th edition, Norton, 2017, pp. 1255-1278.

"Developing a Thesis." *Purdue* OWL, Purdue University, 2014, https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/616/02/. [Original link has expired. See Purdue OWL's updated version: Developing a Thesis]

Read more advice from the Purdue OWL relevant to close reading at https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/4/17/ .

One particularly useful additional resource is the text "Annoying Ways People Use Sources," externally linked in the Additional Recommended Resources appendix of this book.

Gallop 7.

Essay by an anonymous student author, 2014. Reproduced with permission from the student author.

This essay is a synthesis of two students' work. One of those students is Ross Reaume, Portland State University, 2014, and the other student wishes to remain anonymous. Reproduced with permission from the student authors.

Essay by Marina, who has requested her last name not be included. Portland Community College, 2018. Reproduced with permission from the student author.

Bloom, Benjamin S., et al. *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: The Classification of Educational Goals*. D. McKay Co., 1969.

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In consideration of revised versions Bloom's Taxonomy and the previous note, it can be mentioned that this process necessarily involves judgment/evaluation; using the process of interpretation, my analysis and synthesis require my intellectual discretion.

Endnote

1 Ballenger, Bruce. The Curious Researcher, 9th edition, Pearson, 2018, pp. 88-91.
2 Baotic, Anton, Florian Sicks and Angela S. Stoeger. "Nocturnal 'Humming' Vocalizations: Adding a Piece of the Puzzle of Giraffe Vocal Communication." BioMed Central Research Notes vol. 8, no. 425, 2015. US National Library of Medicine, doi 10.1186/s13104-015-1394-3.
3 Essay by Beth Kreinheder, Portland State University, 2018. Reproduced with permission from the student author.
4 Essay by an anonymous student author, 2017. Reproduced with permission from the student author.
5 Essay by an anonymous student author, 2016. Reproduced with permission from the student author.
6 Essay by Kayti Bell, Portland State University, 2017. Reproduced with permission from the student author.

Chapter Six: Analysis and Synthesis

What does it mean to *know* something? How would you explain the process of thinking? In the 1950s, educational theorist Benjamin Bloom proposed that human cognition, thinking and knowing, could be classified by six categories.[1] Hierarchically arranged in order of complexity, these steps were:

---

judgment

synthesis

analysis

application

comprehension

knowledge

Since his original model, the taxonomy has been revised, as illustrated in the diagram below:

Bloom's Original Design

judgment most complex

synthesis

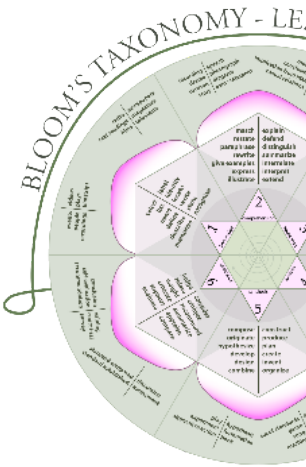
analysis

application

comprehension

knowledge least complex

Another Revised V



- Each word is an action verb instead of a noun (e.g., "applying" instead of "application");
- Some words have been changed for different synonyms;
- One version holds "creating" above "evaluating";
- And, most importantly, other versions are reshaped into a circle, as pictured above.[2]

What do you think the significance of these changes is?

I introduce this model of cognition to contextualize *analysis* as a cognitive tool which can work in tandem with other cognitive tasks and behaviors. Analysis is most commonly used alongside *synthesis*. To proceed with the LEGO® example from Chapter 4, consider my taking apart the castle as an act of analysis. I study each face of each block intently, even those parts that I can't see when the castle is fully constructed. In the process of synthesis, I bring together certain blocks from the castle to instead build something else—let's

say, a racecar. By unpacking and interpreting each *part*, I'm able to build a new *whole*.[3]

In a text wrestling essay, you're engaging in a process very similar to my castle-to-racecar adventure. You'll encounter a text and unpack it attentively, looking closely at each piece of language, its arrangement, its signification, and then use it to build an insightful, critical insight about the original text. I might not use every original block, but by exploring the relationship of part-to-whole, I better understand how the castle *is* a castle. In turn, I am better positioned to act as a sort of tour guide for the castle or a mechanic for the racecar, able to show my readers what about the castle or racecar is important and to explain how it works.

In this chapter, you'll learn about crafting a thesis for a text wrestling essay and using *evidence* to support that *thesis*. As you will discover, an analytical essay involves every tier of Bloom's Taxonomy, arguably even including "judgement" because your thesis will present an interpretation that is evidence-based and arguable.

:jovian:" by bf8done is licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0

"lego pile" by justgrimes is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0

"Brick Head" by DSC_0119 is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0

Chapter Vocabulary

Vocabulary	Definition
analysis	the cognitive process and/or rhetorical mode of studying constituent p
evidence	a part or combination of parts that lends support or proof to an arguab
synthesis	a cognitive and rhetorical process by which an author brings together p found poetry, or a mashup/remix.
Thesis (statement)	a 1-3 sentence statement outlining the main insight(s), argument(s), or o though sometimes embedded later in the paper. Also referred to as a "S

Techniques

So What? Turning Observations into a Thesis

It's likely that you've heard the term "thesis statement" multiple times in your writing career. Even though you may have some idea what a thesis entails already, it is worth reviewing and unpacking the expectations surrounding a thesis, specifically in a text wrestling essay.

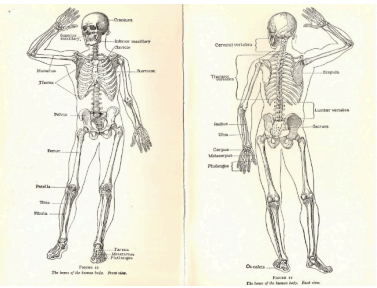
A *thesis statement* is a central, unifying insight that drives your analysis or argument. In a typical college essay, this insight should be articulated in one to three sentences, placed within the introductory paragraph or section. As we'll see below, this is not

always the case, but it is what many of your audiences will expect. To put it simply, a thesis is the "So what?" of an analytical or persuasive essay. It answers your audience when they ask, Why does your writing matter? What bigger insights does it yield about the subject of analysis? About our world?

Thesis statements in most rhetorical situations advocate for a certain vision of a text, phenomenon, reality, or policy. Good thesis statements support such a vision using evidence and thinking that confirms, clarifies, demonstrates, nuances, or otherwise relates to that vision. In other words, a thesis is "a proposition that you *can* prove with evidence…, yet it's one you *have* to prove, that isn't obviously true or merely factual."[4]

In a text wrestling analysis, a thesis pushes beyond basic summary and observation. In other words, it's the difference between:

Observation	Thesis
What does the text say?	*What do I have to say about the text?*
I noticed _____	I noticed _____ and it means _____
	I noticed _____ and it matters because _____.



"Vintage ephemera" by HA! Designs – Artbyheather is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

If you think of your essay as the human body, the thesis is the spine. Yes, the body can still exist without a spine, but its functionings will be severely limited. Furthermore, everything comes back to and radiates out from the spine: trace back from your fingertips to your backbone and consider how they relate. In turn, each paragraph should tie back to your thesis, offering support and clear

connections so your reader can see the entire "body" of your essay. In this way, a thesis statement serves two purposes: it is not only about the *ideas* of your paper, but also the *structure*.

> In addition to capturing the central, unifying insight of your essay, your thesis also acts as a "road map." It anticipates both content and structure.

The Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL)[5] suggests this specific process for developing your thesis statement:

- Once you've read the story or novel closely, look back over your notes for patterns of questions or ideas that interest you. Have most of your questions been about the characters, how they develop or change?

  For example:
  If you are reading Conrad's *The Secret Agent*, do you seem to be most interested in what the author has to say about society? Choose a pattern of ideas and express it in the form of a question and an answer such as the following:

  Question: What does Conrad seem to be suggesting about early twentieth-century London society in his novel *The Secret Agent*?
  Answer: Conrad suggests that all classes of society are corrupt.

  Pitfalls:

Choosing too many ideas.
Choosing an idea without any support.

- Once you have some general points to focus on, write your possible ideas and answer the questions that they suggest.

For example:
Question: How does Conrad develop the idea that all classes of society are corrupt?
Answer: He uses images of beasts and cannibalism whether he's describing socialites, policemen or secret agents.

- To write your thesis statement, all you have to do is turn the question and answer around. You've already given the answer, now just put it in a sentence (or a couple of sentences) so that the thesis of your paper is clear.

For example:
In his novel, *The Secret Agent*, Conrad uses beast and cannibal imagery to describe the characters and their relationships to each other. This pattern of images suggests that Conrad saw corruption in every level of early twentieth-century London society.

- Now that you're familiar with the story or novel and have developed a thesis statement, you're ready to choose the evidence you'll use to support your thesis. There are a lot of good ways to do this, but all of them depend on a strong thesis for their direction.

For example:
Here's a student's thesis about Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent*.
In his novel, The Secret Agent, Conrad

uses beast and cannibal imagery to describe the characters and their relationships to each other. This pattern of images suggests that Conrad saw corruption in every level of early twentieth-century London society.

This thesis focuses on the idea of social corruption and the device of imagery. To support this thesis, you would need to find images of beasts and cannibalism within the text.

There are many ways to write a thesis, and your construction of a thesis statement will become more intuitive and nuanced as you become a more confident and competent writer. However, there are a few tried-and-true strategies that I'll share with you over the next few pages.

> Your thesis statement can and should evolve as you continue writing your paper. Often, I prefer to think of a thesis instead as a (hypo)thesis—an informed estimation of how you think your analysis will come together.

The T3 Strategy

T3 is a formula to create a thesis statement. The T (for Thesis) should be the point you're trying to make—the "So what?" In a text wrestling analysis, you are expected to advocate for a certain interpretation of a text: this is your "So what?" Examples might include:

In "A Wind from the North," Bill Capossere conveys the loneliness of isolated life

or

> Kate Chopin's "The Story of an Hour" suggests that marriage can be oppressive to women

But wait–there's more! In a text wrestling analysis, your interpretation must be based on evidence from that text. Therefore, your thesis should identify both a focused statement of the interpretation (the whole) and also the particular subjects of your observation (the parts of the text you will focus on support that interpretation). A complete T3 thesis statement for a text wrestling analysis might look more like this:

> In "A Wind from the North," Bill Capossere conveys the loneliness of an isolated lifestyle using the motif of snow, the repeated phrase "five or six days" (104), and the symbol of his uncle's car.
>
> or
>
> "The Story of an Hour" suggests that marriage can be oppressive to women. To demonstrate this theme, Kate Chopin integrates irony, foreshadowing, and symbols of freedom in the story.

Notice the way the T3 allows for the part-to-whole thinking that underlies analysis:

Whole **(T)**	Parts **(3)**
Bill Capossere conveys the loneliness of an isolated lifestyle	the motif of snow
	the repeated phrase "five or six days" (104)
	the symbol of his uncle's car.
"The Story of an Hour" suggests that marriage can be oppressive to women	irony
	foreshadowing
	symbols of freedom

This is also a useful strategy because it can provide structure for your paper: each justifying support for your thesis should be one section of your paper.

1. Introduction
    1. Thesis: In "A Wind from the North," Bill Capossere conveys the loneliness of an isolated lifestyle using the motif of snow, the repeated phrase "five or six days" (104), and the symbol of his uncle's car.
2. Section on 'the motif of snow.'
   Topic sentence: The recurring imagery of snow creates a tone of frostiness and demonstrates the passage of time.
3. Section on 'the repeated phrase "five or six days" (104).'
   Topic sentence: When Capossere repeats "five or six days" (104), he reveals the ambiguity of death in a life not lived.
4. Section on 'the symbol of his uncle's car.'
   Topic sentence: Finally, Capossere's uncle's car is symbolic of his lifestyle.
5. Conclusion

Once you've developed a T3 statement, you can revise it to make it feel less formulaic. For example:

> In "A Wind from the North," Bill Capossere conveys the loneliness of an isolated lifestyle by symbolizing his uncle with a "untouchable" car. Additionally, he repeats images and phrases in the essay to reinforce his uncle's isolation.
>
> or
>
> "The Story of an Hour," a short story by Kate Chopin, uses a plot twist to imply that marriage can be oppressive to women. The symbols of freedom in the story create a feeling of joy, but the attentive reader will recognize the imminent irony.

The O/P Strategy

An occasion/position thesis statement is rhetorically convincing because it explains the relevance of your argument and concisely articulates that argument. Although you should already have your position in mind, your rhetorical occasion will lead this statement off: what sociohistorical conditions make your writing timely, relevant, applicable? Continuing with the previous examples:

> As our society moves from individualism to isolationism, Bill Capossere's "A Wind from the North" is a salient example of a life lived alone.
>
> or
>
> Although Chopin's story was written over 100 years ago, it still provides insight to gender dynamics in American marriages.

Following your occasion, state your position—again, this is your "So What?" It is wise to include at least some preview of the parts you will be examining.

> As our society moves from individualism to isolationism, Bill Capossere's "A Wind from the

> North" is a salient example of a life lived alone. Using recurring images and phrases, Capossere conveys the loneliness of his uncle leading up to his death.
>
> or
>
> Although Chopin's story was written over 100 years ago, it still provides insight to gender dynamics in American marriages. "The Story of an Hour" reminds us that marriage has historically meant a surrender of freedom for women.

Research Question and Embedded Thesis

There's one more common style of thesis construction that's worth noting, and that's the inquiry-based thesis. (Read more about inquiry-based research writing in Chapter Eight). For this thesis, you'll develop an incisive and focused question which you'll explore throughout the course of the essay. By the end of the essay, you will be able to offer an answer (perhaps a complicated or incomplete answer, but still some kind of answer) to the question. This form is also referred to as the "embedded thesis" or "delayed thesis" organization.

Although this model of thesis *can* be effectively applied in a text wrestling essay, it is often more effective when combined with one of the other methods above.

Consider the following examples:

> Bill Capossere's essay "A Wind from the North" suggests that isolation results in sorrow and loneliness; is this always the case? How does Capossere create such a vision of his uncle's life?
>
> or
>
> Many people would believe that Kate Chopin's story reflects an outdated perception of

marriage—but can "The Story of an Hour" reveal power imbalances in modern relationships, too?

You may note that these three thesis strategies can be combined to create nuanced and attention-grabbing thesis statements.

Synthesis: Using Evidence to Explore Your Thesis

Now that you've considered what your analytical insight might be (articulated in the form of a thesis), it's time to bring evidence in to support your analysis—this is the synthesis part of Bloom's Taxonomy earlier in this chapter. Synthesis refers to the creation of a new whole (an interpretation) using smaller parts (evidence from the text you've analyzed).

There are essentially two ways to go about collecting and culling relevant support from the text with which you're wrestling. In my experience, students are split about evenly on which option is better for them:

> Option #1: **Before writing your thesis,** while you're reading and rereading your text, annotate the page and take notes. Copy down quotes, images, formal features, and themes that are striking, exciting, or relatable. Then, try to group your collection of evidence according to common traits. Once you've done so, choose one or two groups on which to base your thesis.
>
> Or
>
> Option #2: **After writing your thesis**, revisit the text looking for quotes, images, and themes that support, elaborate, or explain your interpretation.

Record these quotes, and then return to the drafting process.

Once you've gathered evidence from your focus text, you should weave quotes, paraphrases, and summaries into your own writing. A common misconception is that you should write "around" your evidence, i.e. choosing the direct quote you want to use and building a paragraph around it. Instead, you should *foreground* your interpretation and analysis, using evidence in the *background* to explore and support that interpretation. Lead with your idea, then demonstrate it with evidence; then, explain how your evidence demonstrates your idea.

The appropriate ratio of evidence (their writing) to exposition (your writing) will vary depending on your rhetorical situation, but I advise my students to spend at least as many words unpacking a quote as that quote contains. (I'm referring here to Step #4 in the table below.) For example, if you use a direct quote of 25 words, you ought to spend at least 25 words explaining how that quote supports or nuances your interpretation.

There are infinite ways to bring evidence into your discussion,[6] but for now, let's take a look at a formula that many students find productive as they find their footing in analytical writing: **Front-load + Quote/Paraphrase/Summarize + Cite + Explain/elaborate/analyze.**

1. front-load (1-2 sentences)	+	**2. quote, paraphrase, or summarize**	+	**3. (cite)**
Set your reader up for the quote using a signpost (also known as a signal phrase; see Chapter Nine). Don't drop quotes in abruptly: by front-loading, you can guide your reader's interpretation.		Use whichever technique is relevant to your rhetorical purpose at that exact point.		Use an in-text cita appropriate to you discipline. It doesn matter if you quot paraphrase, or summarize–all thi require a citation.

What might this look like in practice?

The recurring imagery of snow creates a tone of frostiness and demonstrates the passage of time. **(1)** Snow brings to mind connotations of wintery cold, quiet, and death **(2)** as a "sky of utter clarity and simplicity" lingers over his uncle's home and "it [begins] once more to snow" (**(3)** Capossere 104). **(4)** Throughout his essay, Capossere returns frequently to weather imagery, but snow especially, to play on associations the reader has. In this line, snow sets the tone by wrapping itself in with "clarity," a state of mind. Even though the narrator still seems ambivalent about his uncle, this clarity suggests that he is reflecting with a new and somber understanding.

1. **Front-load**
   Snow brings to mind connotations of wintery cold, quiet, and death
2. **Quote**
   as a "sky of utter clarity and simplicity" lingers over his uncle's home and "it [begins] once more to snow"
3. **Cite**
   (Capossere 104).
4. **Explain/elaborate/analysis**
   Throughout his essay, Capossere returns frequently to weather imagery, but snow especially, to play on associations the reader has. In this line, snow sets the tone by wrapping itself in with "clarity," a state of mind. Even though the narrator still seems ambivalent about his uncle, this clarity suggests that he is reflecting with a new and somber understanding.

This might feel formulaic and forced at first, but following these steps will ensure that you give each piece of evidence thorough attention. Some teachers call this method a "quote sandwich" because you put your evidence between two slices of your own language and interpretation.

"The Biology of Human Sex Differences" by Reuben Strayer is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0

For more on front-loading (readerly signposts or signal phrases), see the subsection titled "Readerly Signposts" in Chapter Nine.

Activities

Idea Generation: Close Reading Graphic Organizer

The first time you read a text, you most likely will not magically stumble upon a unique, inspiring insight to pursue as a thesis. As discussed earlier in this section, close reading is an iterative process, which means that you must repeatedly encounter a text (reread, re-watch, re-listen, etc.) trying to challenge it, interrogate it, and gradually develop a working thesis.

Very often, the best way to practice analysis is collaboratively, through discussion. Because other people will necessarily provide different perspectives through their unique interpretive positions, reading groups can help you grow your analysis. By discussing a text, you open yourself up to more nuanced and unanticipated interpretations influenced by your peers. Your teacher might ask you to work in small groups to complete the following graphic organizer in response to a certain text. (You can also complete this exercise independently, but it might not yield the same results.)

Title and Author of Text:	Group Members' Names:
Start by "wading" back through the text. Remind yourself of the general idea and annotate important words, phrases, and passages. As a group, discuss and explain: What could the meaning or message of this text be? What ideas does the text communicate? (Keep in mind, there are an infinite number of "right" answers here.)	

What patterns do you see in the text (e.g., repetition of words, phrases, sentences, or images; ways that the text is structured)? What breaks in the patterns do you see? What is the effect of these patterns and breaks of pattern?

What symbols and motifs do you see in the text? What might they represent? What is the effect of these symbols? What themes do they cultivate or gesture to?

What references do you see in the text? Does the author allude to, quote, imitate, or parody another text, film, song, etc.? Does the author play on connotations? What is the effect of these references?

What about this text surprises you? What do you get hung up on? Consider Jane Gallop's brief list from "The Ethics of Reading: Close Encounters" –

> (1) unusual vocabulary, words that surprise either because they are unfamiliar or because they seem to belong to a different context; (2) words that seem unnecessarily repeated, as if the word keeps insisting on being written; (3) images or metaphors, especially ones that are used repeatedly and are somewhat surprising given the context; (4) what is in italics or parentheses; and (5) footnotes that seem too long[7]

– but also anything else that strikes you as a reader.

Analytical lenses: Do you see any of the following threads represented in the work? What evidence of these ideas do you see? How do these parts contribute to a whole?

Race, Ethnicity, and Nationality	Gender and Sexuality
Disability	Social Class and Economy

Ecologies and the Environment	(Post)colonialism

Thesis Builder

Your approach to building a thesis will depend on your rhetorical mode; for instance, an analytical thesis (like this one), might not be most appropriate for a persuasive, expository, or research essay.

Your thesis statement can and should evolve as you continue writing your paper: teachers will often refer to a thesis as a "working thesis" because the revision process should include tweaking, pivoting, focusing, expanding, and/or rewording your thesis. The exercise on the next two pages, though, should help you develop a working thesis to begin your project. Following the examples, identify the components of your analysis that might contribute to a thesis statement.

Topic (Name your focus text and its author)	Ex.: "A Wind from the North" by Bill Capossere
Analytical focus (Identify at least one *part* of the *whole* you're studying)	Ex.: Repeated phrase "five or six days" (104) Symbol – uncle's car Motif – snow

Analytical insight (Explain the function of that *part* in relationship to the *whole*)	Ex.: They imply that living in isolation makes you lonely
Stakes (So what? Why does it matter?)	Ex.: Sheds light on the fragility of life and the relationships we build throughout it.

Consider adding…

A concession statement ("Although," "even though," etc.)

Ex.: Although there's nothing wrong with preferring time alone, …

A question that you might pursue

Ex.: Can Capossere's uncle represent other isolated people?

THESIS:

Ex.: Although there's nothing wrong with preferring time alone, "A Wind from the North" by Bill Capossere sheds light on the fragility of life and the relationships we build throughout it. The text conveys the loneliness of an isolated lifestyle by symbolizing Capossere's uncle with a "untouchable" car. Additionally, the narrator repeats images and phrases in the essay to reinforce his uncle's isolation.

Model Texts by Student Authors

Songs8

(A text wrestling analysis of "Proofs" by Richard Rodriguez)

Songs are culturally important. In the short story "Proofs" by Richard Rodriguez, a young Mexican American man comes to terms with his bi-cultural life. This young man's father came to America from a small and poverty-stricken Mexican village. The young man flashes from his story to his father's story in order to explore his Mexican heritage and American life. Midway through the story Richard Rodriguez utilizes the analogies of songs to represent the cultures and how they differ. Throughout the story there is a clash of cultures. Because culture can be experienced through the arts and teachings of a community, Rodriguez uses the songs of the two cultures to represent the protagonist's bi-cultural experience.

According to Rodriguez, the songs that come from Mexico express an emotional and loving culture and community: "But my mama says there are no songs like the love songs of Mexico" (50). The songs from that culture can be beautiful. It is amazing the love and beauty that come from social capital and community involvement. The language Richard Rodriguez uses to explain these songs is beautiful as well. "—it is the raw edge of sentiment" (51). The author explains how it is the men who keep the songs. No matter how stoic the men are, they have an outlet to express their love and pain as well as every emotion in between. "The cry of a Jackal under the moon, the whistle of a phallus, the maniacal song of the skull" (51). This is an outlet for men to express themselves that is not prevalent in American culture. It expresses a level of love and intimacy between people that is not a part of American culture. The songs from the American culture are different. In America the songs get lost. There is assimilation of cultures. The songs of Mexico are important to the protagonist of the story. There is a clash between the old culture in Mexico and the subject's new American life represented in these songs.

A few paragraphs later in the story, on page 52, the author tells us the difference in the American song. America sings a different tune. America is the land of opportunity. It represents upward mobility and the ability to "make it or break it." But it seems there is a cost for all this material gain and all this opportunity.

There seems to be a lack of love and emotion, a lack of the ability to express pain and all other feelings, the type of emotion which is expressed in the songs of Mexico. The song of America says, "You can be anything you want to be" (52). The song represents the American Dream. The cost seems to be the loss of compassion, love and emotion that is expressed through the songs of Mexico. There is no outlet quite the same for the stoic men of America. Rodriguez explains how the Mexican migrant workers have all that pain and desire, all that emotion penned up inside until it explodes in violent outbursts. "Or they would come into town on Monday nights for the wrestling matches or on Tuesdays for boxing. They worked over in Yolo County. They were men without women. They were Mexicans without Mexico" (49).

Rodriguez uses the language in the story almost like a song in order to portray the culture of the American dream. The phrase "I will send for you or I will come home rich," is repeated twice throughout the story. The gain for all this loss of love and compassion is the dream of financial gain. "You have come into the country on your knees with your head down. You are a man" (48). That is the allure of the American Dream.

The protagonist of the story was born in America. Throughout the story he is looking at this illusion of the American Dream through a different frame. He is also trying to come to terms with his own manhood in relation to his American life and Mexican heritage. The subject has the ability to see the two songs in a different light. "The city will win. The city will give the children all the village could not-VCR's, hairstyles, drumbeat. The city sings mean songs, dirty songs" (52). Part of the subject's reconciliation process with himself is seeing that all the material stuff that is dangled as part of the American Dream is not worth the love and emotion that is held in the old Mexican villages and expressed in their songs.

Rodriguez represents this conflict of culture on page 53. The protagonist of the story is taking pictures during the arrest of illegal border-crossers. "I stare at the faces. They stare at me. To

them I am not bearing witness; I am part of the process of being arrested"(53). The subject is torn between the two cultures in a hazy middle ground. He is not one of the migrants and he is not one of the police. He is there taking pictures of the incident with a connection to both of the groups and both of the groups see him connected with the other.

The old Mexican villages are characterized by a *lack of*: "Mexico is poor" (50). However, this is not the reason for the love and emotion that is held. The thought that people have more love and emotion because they are poor is a misconception. There are both rich people and poor people who have multitudes of love and compassion. The defining elements in creating love and emotion for each other comes from the level of community interaction and trust–the ability to sing these love songs and express emotion towards one another. People who become caught up in the American Dream tend to be obsessed with their own personal gain. This diminishes the social interaction and trust between fellow humans. There is no outlet in the culture of America quite the same as singing love songs towards each other. It does not matter if they are rich or poor, lack of community, trust, and social interaction; lack of songs can lead to lack of love and emotion that is seen in the old songs of Mexico.

The image of the American Dream is bright and shiny. To a young boy in a poor village the thought of power and wealth can dominate over a life of poverty with love and emotion. However, there is poverty in America today as well as in Mexico. The poverty here looks a little different but many migrants and young men find the American Dream to be an illusion. "Most immigrants to America came from villages.

The America that Mexicans find today, at the decline of the century, is a closed-circuit city of ramps and dark towers, a city without God. The city is evil. Turn. Turn" (50). The song of America sings an inviting tune for young men from poor villages. When they arrive though it is not what they dreamed about. The subject of the story can see this. He is trying to come of age in

his own way, acknowledging America and the Mexico of old. He is able to look back and forth in relation to the America his father came to for power and wealth and the America that he grew up in. All the while, he watches this migration of poor villages, filled with love and emotion, to a big heartless city, while referring back to his father's memory of why he came to America and his own memories of growing up in America. "Like wandering Jews. They carried their home with them, back and forth: they had no true home but the tabernacle of memory" (51). The subject of the story is experiencing all of this conflict of culture and trying to compose his own song.

Works Cited

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Normal Person: An Analysis of the Standards of Normativity in "A Plague of Tics"9

David Sedaris' essay "A Plague of Tics" describes Sedaris' psychological struggles he encountered in his youth, expressed through obsessive-compulsive tics. These abnormal behaviors heavily inhibited his functionings, but more importantly, isolated and embarrassed him during his childhood, adolescence, and young adult years. Authority figures in his life would mock him openly, and he constantly struggled to perform routine simple tasks in a timely manner, solely due to the amount of time that needed to be set aside for carrying out these compulsive tics. He lacked the necessary social support an adolescent requires because of his apparent abnormality. But when we look at the behaviors of his parents, as well as the socially acceptable tics of our society more generally, we see how Sedaris' tics are in fact not too different, if not less harmful

than those of the society around him. By exploring Sedaris' isolation, we can discover that socially constructed standards of normativity are at best arbitrary, and at worst violent.

As a young boy, Sedaris is initially completely unaware that his tics are not socially acceptable in the outside world. He is puzzled when his teacher, Miss Chestnut, correctly guesses that he is "going to hit [himself] over the head with [his] shoe" (361), despite the obvious removal of his shoe during their private meeting. Miss Chestnut continues by embarrassingly making fun out of the fact that Sedaris' cannot help but "bathe her light switch with [his] germ-ridden tongue" (361) repeatedly throughout the school day. She targets Sedaris with mocking questions, putting him on the spot in front of his class; this behavior is not ethical due to Sedaris' age. It violates the trust that students should have in their teachers and other caregivers. Miss Chestnut criticizes him excessively for his ambiguous, child-like answers. For example, she drills him on whether it is "healthy to hit ourselves over the head with our shoes" (361) and he "guess[es] that it was not," (361) as a child might phrase it. She ridicules his use of the term "guess," using obvious examples of instances when guessing would not be appropriate, such as "[running] into traffic with a paper sack over [her] head" (361). Her mockery is not only rude, but ableist and unethical. Any teacher—at least nowadays—should recognize that Sedaris needs compassion and support, not emotional abuse.

These kinds of negative responses to Sedaris' behavior continue upon his return home, in which the role of the insensitive authority figure is taken on by his mother. In a time when maternal support is crucial for a secure and confident upbringing, Sedaris' mother was never understanding of his behavior, and left little room for open, honest discussion regarding ways to cope with his compulsiveness. She reacted harshly to the letter sent home by Miss Chestnut, nailing Sedaris, exclaiming that his "goddamned math teacher" (363) noticed his strange behaviors, as if it should have been obvious to young, egocentric Sedaris. When teachers like Miss Chestnut meet with her to discuss young David's problems, she

makes fun of him, imitating his compulsions; Sedaris is struck by "a sharp, stinging sense of recognition" upon viewing this mockery (365). Sedaris' mother, too, is an authority figure who maintains ableist standards of normativity by taunting her own son. Meeting with teachers should be an opportunity to truly help David, not tease him.

On the day that Miss Chestnut makes her appearance in the Sedaris household to discuss his behaviors with his mother, Sedaris watches them from the staircase, helplessly embarrassed. We can infer from this scene that Sedaris has actually become aware of that fact that his tics are not considered to be socially acceptable, and that he must be "the weird kid" among his peers—and even to his parents and teachers. His mother's cavalier derision demonstrates her apparent disinterest in the well-being of he son, as she blatantly brushes off his strange behaviors except in the instance during which she can put them on display for the purpose of entertaining a crowd. What all of these pieces of his mother's flawed personality show us is that she has issues too—drinking and smoking, in addition to her poor mothering—but yet Sedaris is the one being chastised while she lives a normal life. Later in the essay, Sedaris describes how "a blow to the nose can be positively narcotic" (366), drawing a parallel to his mother's drinking and smoking. From this comparison, we can begin to see flawed standards of "normal behavior": although many people drink and smoke (especially at the time the story takes place), these habits are much more harmful than what Sedaris does in private.

Sedaris' father has an equally harmful personality, but it manifests differently. Sedaris describes him as a hoarder, one who has, "saved it all: every last Green Stamp and coupon, every outgrown bathing suit and scrap of linoleum" (365). Sedaris' father attempts to "cure [Sedaris] with a series of threats" (366). In one scene, he even enacts violence upon David by slamming on the brakes of the car while David has his nose pressed against a windshield. Sedaris reminds us that his behavior might have been unusual, but it wasn't violent: "So what if I wanted to touch my nose

to the windshield? Who was I hurting?" (366). In fact, it is in that very scene that Sedaris draws the aforementioned parallel to his mother's drinking: when Sedaris discovers that "a blow to the nose can be positively narcotic," it is while his father is driving around "with a lapful of rejected, out-of-state coupons" (366). Not only is Sedaris' father violating the trust David places in him as a caregiver; his hoarding is an arguably unhealthy habit that simply happens to be more socially acceptable than licking a concrete toadstool. Comparing Sedaris's tics to his father's issues, it is apparent that his father's are much more harmful than his own. None of the adults in Sedaris' life are innocent—"mother smokes and Miss Chestnut massaged her waist twenty, thirty times a day—and here *I* couldn't press my nose against the windshield of a car" (366)—but nevertheless, Sedaris's problems are ridiculed or ignored by the 'normal' people in his life, again bringing into question what it means to be a normal person.

In high school, Sedaris' begins to take certain measures to actively control and hide his socially unacceptable behaviors. "For a time," he says, "I thought that if I accompanied my habits with an outlandish wardrobe, I might be viewed as eccentric rather than just plain retarded" (369). Upon this notion, Sedaris starts to hang numerous medallions around his neck, reflecting that he "might as well have worn a cowbell" (369) due to the obvious noises they made when he would jerk his head violently, drawing more attention to his behaviors (the opposite of the desired effect). He also wore large glasses, which he now realizes made it easier to observe his habit of rolling his eyes into his head, and "clunky platform shoes [that] left lumps when used to discreetly tap [his] forehead" (369). Clearly Sedaris was trying to appear more normal, in a sense, but was failing terribly. After high school, Sedaris faces the new wrinkle of sharing a college dorm room. He conjures up elaborate excuses to hide specific tics, ensuring his roommate that "there's a good chance the brain tumor will shrink" (369) if he shakes his head around hard enough and that specialists have ordered him to perform "eye exercises to strengthen what they call he 'corneal fibers'" (369). He

eventually comes to a point of such paranoid hypervigilance that he memorizes his roommate's class schedule to find moments to carry out his tics in privacy. Sedaris worries himself sick attempting to approximate 'normal': "I got exactly fourteen minutes of sleep during my entire first year of college" (369). When people are pressured to perform an identity inconsistent with their own–pressured by socially constructed standards of normativity–they harm themselves in the process. Furthermore, even though the responsibility does not necessarily fall on Sedaris' peers to offer support, we can assume that their condemnation of his behavior reinforces the standards that oppress him.

Sedaris' compulsive habits peak and begin their slow decline when he picks up the new habit of smoking cigarettes, which is of course much more socially acceptable while just as compulsive in nature once addiction has the chance to take over. He reflects, from the standpoint of an adult, on the reason for the acquired habit, speculating that "maybe it was coincidental, or perhaps … much more socially acceptable than crying out in tiny voices" (371). He is calmed by smoking, saying that "everything's fine as long I know there's a cigarette in my immediate future" (372). (Remarkably, he also reveals that he has not truly been cured, as he revisits his former tics and will "dare to press [his] nose against the doorknob or roll his eyes to achieve that once-satisfying ache" [372.]) Sedaris has officially achieved the tiresome goal of appearing 'normal', as his compulsive tics seemed to "[fade] out by the time [he] took up with cigarettes" (371). It is important to realize, however, that Sedaris might have found a socially acceptable way to mask his tics, but not a *healthy* one. The fact that the only activity that could take place of his compulsive tendencies was the dangerous use of a highly addictive substance, one that has proven to be dangerously harmful with frequent and prolonged use, shows that he is conforming to the standards of society which do not correspond with healthy behaviors.

In a society full of dangerous, inconvenient, or downright strange habits that are nevertheless considered socially acceptable, David

Sedaris suffered through the psychic and physical violence and negligence of those who should have cared for him. With what we can clearly recognize as a socially constructed disability, Sedaris was continually denied support and mocked by authority figures. He struggled to socialize and perform academically while still carrying out each task he was innately compelled to do, and faced consistent social hardship because of his outlandish appearance and behaviors that are viewed in our society as "weird." Because of ableist, socially constructed standards of normativity, Sedaris had to face a long string of turmoil and worry that most of society may never come to completely understand. We can only hope that as a greater society, we continue sharing and studying stories like Sedaris' so that we critique the flawed guidelines we force upon different bodies and minds, and attempt to be more accepting and welcoming of the idiosyncrasies we might deem to be unfavorable.

Teacher Takeaways

"The student clearly states their thesis in the beginning, threading it through the essay, and further developing it through a synthesized conclusion. The student's ideas build logically through the essay via effective quote integration: the student sets up the quote, presents it clearly, and then responds to the quote with thorough analysis that links it back to their primary claims. At times this thread is a bit difficult to follow; as one example, when the student talks about the text's American songs, it's not clear how Rodriguez's text illuminates the student's thesis. Nor is it clear why the student believes Rodriguez is saying the "American Dream is not worth the love and emotion." Without this clarification, it's difficult to follow some of the

connections the student relies on for their thesis, so at times it seems like they may be stretching their interpretation beyond what the text supplies."– Professor Dannemiller

Teacher Takeaways

"I like how this student follows their thesis through the text, highlighting specific instances from Sedaris's essay that support their analysis. Each instance of this evidence is synthesized with the student's observations and connected back to their thesis statement, allowing for the essay to capitalize on the case being built in their conclusion. At the ends of some earlier paragraphs, some of this 'spine-building' is interrupted with suggestions of how characters in the essay should behave, which doesn't always clearly link to the thesis's goals. Similarly, some information isn't given a context to help us understand its relevance, such as what violating the student-teacher trust has to do with normativity being a social construct, or how Sedaris's description of 'a blow to the nose' being a narcotic creates a parallel to his mother's drinking and smoking. Without further analysis and synthesis of this information the reader is left to guess how these ideas connect."– Professor Dannemiller

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Analyzing "Richard Cory"10

In the poem "Richard Cory" by Edward Arlington Robinson, a narrative is told about the character Richard Cory by those who admired him. In the last stanza, the narrator, who uses the pronoun "we," tells us that Richard Cory commits suicide. Throughout most of the poem, though, Cory had been described as a wealthy gentleman. The "people on the pavement" (2), the speakers of the poem, admired him because he presented himself well, was educated, and was wealthy. The poem presents the idea that, even though Cory seemed to have everything going for him, being wealthy does not guarantee happiness or health.

Throughout the first three stanzas Cory is described in a positive light, which makes it seem like he has everything that he could ever need. Specifically, the speaker compares Cory directly and indirectly to royalty because of his wealth and his physical appearance: "He was a gentleman from sole to crown, / Clean favored and imperially slim" (Robinson 3-4). In line 3, the speaker is punning on "soul" and "crown." At the same time, Cory is both a gentleman from foot (sole) to head (crown) and also soul to crown. The use of the word "crown" instead of head is a clever way to show that Richard was thought of as a king to the community. The phrase "imperially slim" can also be associated with royalty because imperial comes from "empire." The descriptions used gave clear insight that he was admired for his appearance and manners, like a king or emperor.

In other parts of the poem, we see that Cory is 'above' the speakers. The first lines, "When Richard Cory went down town, / We people on the pavement looked at him" (1-2), show that Cory

is not from the same place as the speakers. The words "down" and "pavement" also suggest a difference in status between Cory and the people. The phrase "We people on the pavement" used in the first stanza (Robinson 2), tells us that the narrator and those that they are including in their "we" may be homeless and sleeping on the pavement; at the least, this phrase shows that "we" are below Cory.

In addition to being 'above,' Cory is also isolated from the speakers. In the second stanza, we can see that there was little interaction between Cory and the people on the pavement: "And he was always human when he talked; / But still fluttered pulses when he said, / 'Good- morning'" (Robinson 6-8). Because people are "still fluttered" by so little, we can speculate that it was special for them to talk to Cory. But these interactions gave those on the pavement no insight into Richard's real feelings or personality. Directly after the descriptions of the impersonal interactions, the narrator mentions that "he was rich—yes, richer than a king" (Robinson 9). At the same time that Cory is again compared to royalty, this line reveals that people were focused on his wealth and outward appearance, not his personal life or wellbeing.

The use of the first-person plural narration to describe Cory gives the reader the impression that everyone in Cory's presence longed to have the life that he did. Using "we," the narrator speaks for many people at once. From the end of the third stanza to the end of the poem, the writing turns from admirable description of Richard to a noticeably more melancholy, dreary description of what those who admired Richard had to do because they did not have all that Richard did. These people had nothing, but they thought that he was everything. To make us wish that we were in his place. So on we worked, and waited for the light,

And went without the meat, and cursed the bread.... (Robinson 9-12)

They sacrificed their personal lives and food to try to rise up to Cory's level. They longed to not be required to struggle. A heavy focus on money and materialistic things blocked their ability to see what Richard Cory was actually feeling or going through. I suggest

that "we" also includes the reader of the poem. If we read the poem this way, "Richard Cory" critiques the way we glorify wealthy people's lives to the point that we hurt ourselves. Our society values financial success over mental health and believes in a false narrative about social mobility.

Though the piece was written more than a century ago, the perceived message has not been lost. Money and materialistic things do not create happiness, only admiration and alienation from those around you. Therefore, we should not sacrifice our own happiness and leisure for a lifestyle that might not make us happy. The poem's message speaks to our modern society, too, because it shows a stigma surrounding mental health: if people have "everything / To make us wish that we were in [their] place" (11-12), we often assume that they don't deal with the same mental health struggles as everyone. "Richard Cory" reminds us that we should take care of each other, not assume that people are okay because they put up a good front.

Teacher Takeaways

"I enjoy how this author uses evidence: they use a signal phrase (front-load) before each direct quote and take plenty of time to unpack the quote afterward. This author also has a clear and direct thesis statement which anticipates the content of their analysis. I would advise them, though, to revise that thesis by 'previewing' the elements of the text they plan to analyze. This could help them clarify their organization, since a thesis should be a road-map."– Professor Wilhjelm

Works Cited

Robinson, Edward Arlington. "Richard Cory." *The Norton Introduction to Literature*, Shorter 12th edition, edited by Kelly J. Mays, Norton, 2017, p. 482.

Endnotes

1 Bloom, Benjamin S., et al. Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: The Classification of Educational Goals. D. McKay Co., 1969.
2 Also of note are recent emphases to use Bloom's work as a conceptual model, not a hard-and-fast, infallible rule for cognition. Importantly, we rarely engage only one kind of thinking, and models like this should not be used to make momentous decisions; rather, they should contribute to a broader, nuanced understanding of human cognition and development.
3 In consideration of revised versions Bloom's Taxonomy and the previous note, it can be mentioned that this process necessarily involves judgment/evaluation; using the process of interpretation, my analysis and synthesis require my intellectual discretion.
4 Mays 1258.Mays, Kelly J. "The Literature Essay." The Norton Introduction to Literature, Portable 12th edition, Norton, 2017, pp. 1255-1278.
5 "Developing a Thesis." Purdue OWL, Purdue University, 2014, https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/616/02/. [Original link has expired. See Purdue OWL's updated version: Developing a Thesis]Read more advice from the Purdue OWL relevant to close reading at https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/4/17/ .
6 One particularly useful additional resource is the text "Annoying Ways People Use Sources," externally linked in the Additional Recommended Resources appendix of this book.
7 Gallop 7.
8 Essay by an anonymous student author, 2014. Reproduced with permission from the student author.

9 This essay is a synthesis of two students' work. One of those students is Ross Reaume, Portland State University, 2014, and the other student wishes to remain anonymous. Reproduced with permission from the student authors.
10 Essay by Marina, who has requested her last name not be included. Portland Community College, 2018. Reproduced with permission from the student author.

Assignment: Text wrestling Analysis

To practice critical, analytical thinking through the medium of writing, you will perform a text wrestling analysis and synthesize your findings in an essay driven by a central, unifying insight presented as a thesis and supported by evidence.

Assignment

First, you will determine which text it is that you'd like to analyze. Your teacher might provide a specific text or set of texts to choose from, or they may allow you to choose your own.

1. **If your teacher assigns a specific text**, follow the steps in the next section.
2. **If your teacher assigns a set of texts to choose from**, read each of them once. Then, narrow it down by asking yourself,
    1. Which texts were most striking or curious? Which raised the most questions for you as a reader?
    2. How do the texts differ from one another in content, form, voice, and genre?
    3. Which seem like the "best written"? Why?
    4. Which can you relate to personally?
    5. Try to narrow down to two or three texts that you particularly appreciate. Then try to determine which of these will help you write the best close reading essay possible. Follow the steps from #1 once you've determined your focus text.
3. **If your teacher allows you to choose any text you want**, they probably did so because they want you to choose a text that

means a lot to you personally.

1. Consider first what medium (e.g., prose, film, music, etc.) or genre (e.g., essay, documentary, Screamo) would be most appropriate and exciting, keeping in mind any restrictions your teacher might have set.
2. Then, brainstorm what topics seem relevant and interesting to you.
3. Finally, try to encounter at least three or four different texts so you can test the waters.
4. Now that you've chosen a focus text, you should read it several times using the active reading strategies contained in this section and the appendix. Consider what *parts* are contributing to the *whole* text, and develop an analytical perspective about that relationship. Try to articulate this analytical perspective as a working thesis—a statement of your interpretation which you will likely revise in some way or another. (You might also consider whether a specific critical lens seems relevant or interesting to your analysis.)

Next, you will write a 250-word proposal indicating which text you've chosen, what your working thesis is, and why you chose that text and analytical perspective. (This will help keep your teacher in the loop on your process and encourage you to think through your approach before writing.)

Finally, draft a text wrestling essay that analytically explores some part of your text using the strategies detailed in this section. Your essay will advance an interpretation that will

- help your audience understand the text differently (beyond basic plot/comprehension); and/or
- help your audience understand our world differently, using the text as a tool to illuminate the human experience.

Keep in mind, you will have to re-read your text several times

to analyze it well and compile evidence. Consider forming a close reading discussion group to unpack your text collaboratively before you begin writing independently.

Your essay should be thesis-driven and will include quotes, paraphrases, and summary from the original text as evidence to support your points. Be sure to revise at least once before submitting your final draft.

Although you may realize as you evaluate your rhetorical situation, this kind of essay often values Standardized Edited American English, a dialect of the English language. Among other things, this entails a polished, "academic" tone. Although you need not use a thesaurus to find all the fanciest words, your voice should be less colloquial than in a descriptive personal narrative.

Before you begin, consider your rhetorical situation:

Subject:	Occasion:
How will this influence the way you write?	How will this influ
Audience:	Purpose:

How will this influence the way you write?	How will this influ

Assignment: Text-Wrestling Analysis

Each student will write an essay which **analyzes** a text and presents a unique, central, unifying insight as a **thesis**. The essay will incorporate ideas and techniques explored in Section 2, including the use of **evidence** as to support, elaborate, or nuance the student's thesis. The essay will demonstrate thoughtful pre-writing, drafting, and revision based on feedback from the instructor, classmates, and/or the Writing Center.

Criteria	Instructor Comments	Score
Ideas, Focus, and Content *Has the author organized their analysis around a central, unifying insight? Is the scope of this thesis appropriate to the rhetorical situation?*		/____
Structure *Does the analysis unfold logically and fluidly? Does each paragraph relate back to the analytical thesis clearly?*		/____
Style and Language *Does the author use an academic voice appropriate to the rhetorical situation? Does the author effectively integrate evidence by front-loading, punctuating, and explaining?*		/____
Depth, Support, and Analysis *Has the author provided a convincing amount of evidence to support their analytical insight? Does the author foreground their analytical perspective, using the text in the background to support, elaborate, or nuance their thesis?*		/____
Mechanics *Does the essay read smoothly with minimal spelling/grammar/mechanical issues? Does it use proper format?*		/____
		/____ pts. possible

Establishing Your Peer Workshop

To set the tone and expectations for your unique workshop group, talk through the following prompts. Record your answers on the companion sheet. Part One asks you to establish a climate or culture for your group; Part Two will help you talk through logistics.

(1) Culture of your Workshop

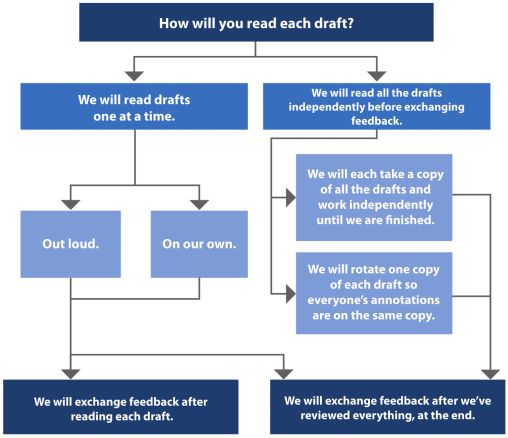
(a.) Choose the 3-5 descriptors of good feedback that are most important to the members of your group.

(b.) Discuss for 3-5 minutes: What do each of you need for this Peer Workshop to be effective?

FROM EACH OTHER? **FROM THE INSTRUCTOR?** **FROM YOURSELVES?** **FROM YOUR ENVIRONMENT?**

Record responses on a separate sheet of paper.

(2) Procedures for your Workshop



Guidelines for Peer Workshop

Before beginning the Peer Workshop and revision process, I recommend consulting the Revision Concepts and Strategies Appendix. In your Peer Workshop group (or based on your teacher's directions), establish a process for workshopping that will work for you. You may find the flowchart titled "Establishing Your Peer Workshop" useful.

Establishing Peer Workshop Process:

Do you prefer written notes, or open discussion? Would you like to read all the drafts first, then discuss, or go one at a time? Should the author respond to feedback or just listen? What anxieties do you each have about sharing your writing? How will you provide feedback that is both critical and kind? How will you demonstrate respect for your peers?

One Example of a Peer Workshop Process

1. **Before** the workshop, each author should spend several minutes generating requests for support (#1 below). Identify specific elements you need help on. Here are a few examples:
    1. I need help honing my thesis statement.
    2. Do you think my analysis flows logically?
    3. I'm not very experienced with in-text citations; can you make sure they're accurate?
    4. Do you think my evidence is convincing enough?
2. **During** the workshop, follow this sequence:
    1. Student A introduces their draft, distributes copies, and makes requests for feedback. *What do you want help with, specifically?*
    2. Student A reads their draft aloud while students B and C annotate/take notes. *What do you notice as the draft is read aloud?*
    3. Whole group discusses the draft; student A takes notes. Use these prompts as a reference to generate and frame your feedback. Try to identify specific places in your

classmates' essays where the writer is successful and where the writer needs support. Consider constructive, specific, and actionable feedback. *What is the author doing well? What could they do better?*

1. What requests does the author have for support? What feedback do you have on this issue, specifically?
2. Identify one "golden line" from the essay under consideration—a phrase, sentence, or paragraph that resonates with you. What about this line is so striking?
3. Consult either the rubric included above or an alternate rubric, if your instructor has provided one. Is the author on track to meet the expectations of the assignment? What does the author do well in each of the categories? What could they do better?
    1. Ideas, Content, and Focus
    2. Structure
    3. Style and Language
    4. Depth, Support, and Reflection
    5. Mechanics
4. What resonances do you see between this draft and others from your group? Between this draft and the exemplars you've read?

4. Repeat with students B and C.

After the workshop, try implementing some of the feedback your group provided while they're still nearby! For example, if Student B said your introduction needed more imagery, draft some new language and see if Student B likes the direction you're moving in. As you are comfortable, exchange contact information with your group so you can to continue the discussion outside of class.

Model Text by Student Authors

To Suffer or Surrender? An Analysis of Dylan Thomas's "Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night"[1]

Death is a part of life that everyone must face at one point or another. The poem "Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night" depicts the grief and panic one feels when a loved is approaching the end of their life, while presenting a question; is it right to surrender to death, or should it be resisted? In this poem Dylan Thomas opposes the idea of a peaceful passing, and uses various literary devices such as repetition, metaphor, and imagery to argue that death should be resisted at all costs.

The first thing that one may notice while reading Thomas's piece is that there are key phrases repeated throughout the poem. As a result of the poem's villanelle structure, both lines "Do not go gentle into that good night" and "Rage, rage against the dying of the light" (Thomas) are repeated often. This repetition gives the reader a sense of panic and desperation as the speaker pleads with their father to stay. The first line showcases a bit of alliteration of n sounds at the beginning of "not" and "night," as well as alliteration of hard g sounds in the words "go" and "good." These lines are vital to the poem as they reiterate its central meaning, making it far from subtle and extremely hard to miss. These lines add even more significance due to their placement in the poem. "Dying of the light" and "good night" are direct metaphors for death, and with the exception of the first line of the poem, they only appear at the end of a stanza. This structural choice is a result of the villanelle form, but we can interpret it to highlight the predictability of life itself, and signifies the undeniable and unavoidable fact that everyone must face death at the end of one's life. The line "my father, there on the sad height" (Thomas 16) confirms that this poem is directed to the speaker's father, the idea presented in these lines is what Thomas wants his father to recognize above all else.

This poem also has many contradictions. In the fifth stanza, Thomas describes men near death "who see with blinding sight" (Thomas 13). "Blinding sight" is an oxymoron, which implies that although with age most men lose their sight, they are wiser and enlightened, and have a greater understanding of the world. In this poem "night" is synonymous with "death"; thus, the phrase "good night" can also be considered an oxymoron if one does not consider death good. Presumably the speaker does not, given their desperation for their father to avoid it. The use of the word "good" initially seems odd, however, although it may seem like the speaker rejects the idea of death itself, this is not entirely the case. Thomas presents yet another oxymoron by saying "Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears" (Thomas 17). By referring to passionate tears as a blessing and a curse, which insinuates that the speaker does not necessarily believe death itself is inherently wrong, but to remain complicit in the face of death would be. These tears would be a curse because it is difficult to watch a loved one cry, but a blessing because the tears are a sign that the father is unwilling to surrender to death. This line is especially significant as it distinguishes the author's beliefs about death versus dying, which are vastly different. "Good night" is an acknowledgement of the bittersweet relief of the struggles and hardships of life that come with death, while "fierce tears" and the repeated line "Rage, rage against the dying of the light" show that the speaker sees the act of dying as a much more passionate, sad, and angering experience. The presence of these oxymorons creates a sense of conflict in the reader, a feeling that is often felt by those who are struggling to say goodbye to a loved one.

At the beginning of the middle four stanzas they each begin with a description of a man, "Wise men… Good men…Wild men… Grave men…" (Thomas 4; 7; 10; 13). Each of these men have one characteristic that is shared, which is that they all fought against death for as long as they could. These examples are perhaps used in an attempt to inspire the father. Although the speaker begs their father to "rage" against death, this is not to say that they believe death is avoidable. Thomas reveals this in the 2nd stanza that "wise

men at their end know dark is right" (Thomas 4), meaning that wise men know that death is inevitable, which in return means that the speaker is conscious of this fact as well. It also refers to the dark as "right", which may seem contradicting to the notion presented that death should not be surrendered to; however, this is yet another example of the contrast between the author's beliefs about death itself, and the act of dying. The last perspective that Thomas shows is "Grave men". Of course, the wordplay of "grave" alludes to death. Moreover, similarly to the second stanza that referred to "wise men", this characterization of "grave men" alludes to the speaker's knowledge of impending doom, despite the constant pleads for their father to resist it.

Another common theme that occurs in the stanzas about these men is regret. A large reason the speaker is so insistent that his father does not surrender to the "dying of the light" is because the speaker does not want their father to die with regrets, and believes that any honorable man should do everything they can in their power to make a positive impact in the world. Thomas makes it clear that it is cowardly to surrender when one can still do good, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant.

All of these examples of men are positively associated with the "rage" that Thomas so often refers to, further supporting the idea that rage, passion, and madness are qualities of honorable men. Throughout stanza 2, 3, 4 and 5, the author paints pictures of these men dancing, singing in the sun, and blazing like meteors. Despite the dark and dismal tone of the piece, the imagery used depicts life as joyous and lively. However, a juxtaposition still exists between men who are truly living, and men who are simply avoiding death. Words like burn, rave, sad, and rage are used when referencing those who are facing death, while words such as blaze, gay, bright, and night are used when referencing the prime of one's life. None of these words are give the feeling of peace; however those alluding to life are far more cheerful. Although the author rarely uses the words "life" and "death", the text symbolizes them through light and night. The contrast between the authors interpretation of life versus

death is drastically different. Thomas wants the reader to see that no matter how old they become, there is always something to strive for and fight for, and to accept death would be to deprive the world of what you have to offer.

In this poem Dylan Thomas juggles the complicated concept of mortality. Thomas perfectly portrays the fight against time as we age, as well as the fear and desperation that many often feel when facing the loss of a loved one. Although the fight against death cannot be won, in "Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night" Dylan Thomas emphasizes how despite this indisputable fact, one should still fight against death with all their might. Through the use of literary devices such as oxymorons and repetition, Thomas inspires readers to persevere, even in the most dire circumstances.

Teacher Takeaways

"One of my favorite things about this essay is that the student doesn't only consider what the poem means, but how it means: they explore the way that the language both carries and creates the message. I notice this especially when the student is talking about the villanelle form, alliteration, and oxymorons. That said, I think that the student's analysis would be more coherent if they foregrounded the main insight—that death and dying are different—in their thesis, then tracked that insight throughout the analysis. In other words, the essay has chosen evidence (parts) well but does not synthesize that evidence into a clear interpretation (whole)."– Professor Dawson

Works Cited

Thomas, Dylan. "Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night." *The Norton Introduction to Literature*, edited by Kelly J. Mays, portable 12th ed., W. W. Norton & Company, 2015, pp. 659.

Christ Like2

In Raymond Carver's "Cathedral", the character Robert plays a Christ-like role. To mirror that, the narrator plays the role of Saul, a man who despised and attacked Christ and his followers until he became converted. Throughout the story there are multiple instances where Robert does things similar to miracles performed in biblical stories, and the narrator continues to doubt and judge him. Despite Robert making efforts to converse with the narrator, he refuses to look past the oddity of his blindness. The author also pays close attention to eyes and blindness. To quote the Bible, "Having eyes, see ye not?" (*King James Bible*, Mark, 8.18). The characters who have sight don't see as much as Robert, and he is able to open their eyes and hearts.

When Robert is first brought up, it is as a story. The narrator has heard of him and how wonderful he is, but has strong doubts about the legitimacy of it all. He shares a specific instance in which Robert asked to touch his wife's face. He says, "She told me he touched his fingers to every part of her face, her nose—even her neck!", and goes on to talk about how she tried to write a poem about it (Carver 34). The experience mentioned resembled the story of Jesus healing a blind man by putting his hands on his eyes and how, afterward, the man was restored (Mark 8.21-26). While sharing the story, however, the only thing the narrator cares about is that the blind man touched his wife's neck. At this point in the story the narrator still only cares about what's right in front of him, so hearing retellings means nothing to him.

When Saul is introduced in the Bible, it is as a man who

spent his time persecuting the followers of Christ and "made havoc of the church" (Acts 8.3-5). From the very beginning of the story, the narrator makes it known that, "A blind man in my house was not something that I looked forward to" (Carver 34). He can't stand the idea of something he'd only seen in movies and heard tell of becoming something real. Even when talking about his own wife, he disregards the poem she wrote for him. When he hears the name of Robert's deceased wife, his first response is to point out how strange it sounds (Carver 36). He despises Robert, so he takes out his aggression on the people who don't, and drives them away.

The narrator's wife drives to the train station to pick up Robert while he stays home and waits, blaming Robert for his boredom. When they finally do arrive, the first thing he notices about Robert is his beard. It might be a stretch to call this a biblical parallel since a lot of people have beards, but Carver makes a big deal out of this detail. The next thing the narrator points out, though, is that his wife "had this blind man by his coat sleeve" (Carver 37). This draws the parallel to another biblical story. In this story a woman who has been suffering from a disease sees Jesus and says to herself, "If I may but touch his garment I shall be whole" (Matt. 9.21). Before they had gotten in the house the narrator's wife had Robert by the arm, but even after they were at the front porch, she still wanted to hold onto his sleeve.

The narrator continues to make observations about Robert when he first sees him. One that stood out was when he was talking more about Robert's physicality, saying he had "stooped shoulders, as if he carried a great weight there" (Carver 38). There are many instances in the Bible where Jesus is depicted carrying some type of heavy burden, like a lost sheep, the sins of the world, and even his own cross. He also points out on multiple occasions that Robert has a big and booming voice, which resembles a lot of depictions of a voice "from on high."

After they sit and talk for a while, they have dinner. This dinner resembles the last supper, especially when the narrator says, "We ate like there was no tomorrow" (Carver 39). He also describes

how Robert eats and says "he'd tear of a hunk of buttered bread and eat that. He'd follow this up with a big drink of milk" (Carver 39). Those aren't the only things he ate, but the order in which he ate the bread and took a drink is the same order as the sacrament, a ritual created at the last supper. The author writing it in that order, despite it being irrelevant to the story, is another parallel that seems oddly specific in an otherwise normal sequence of events. What happens after the dinner follows the progression of the Bible as well.

After they've eaten a meal like it was their last the narrator's wife falls asleep like Jesus' apostles outside the garden of Gethsemane. In the Bible, the garden of Gethsemane is where Jesus goes after creating the sacrament and takes on the sins of all the world. He tells his apostles to keep watch outside the garden, but they fall asleep and leave him to be captured by the non-believers (Matt. 26.36-40). In "Cathedral," Robert is left high and alone with the narrator when the woman who holds him in such high regard falls asleep. Instead of being taken prisoner, however, Robert turns the tables and puts all focus on the narrator. His talking to the narrator is like a metaphorical taking on of his sins. On page 46 the narrator tries to explain to him what a cathedral looks like. It turns out to be of no use, since the narrator has never talked to a blind person before, much like a person trying to pray who never has before. Robert decides he needs to place his hands on the narrator like he did to his wife on the first page.

When Saul becomes converted, it is when Jesus speaks to him as a voice "from on high." As soon as the narrator begins drawing with Robert (a man who is high), his eyes open up. When Jesus speaks to Saul, he can no longer see. During the drawing of the cathedral, Robert asks the narrator to close his eyes. Even when Robert tells him he can open his eyes, the narrator decides to keep them closed. He went from thinking Robert coming over was a stupid idea to being a full believer in him. He says, "I put in windows with arches. I drew flying buttresses. I hung great doors. I couldn't stop" (Carver 45). Even with all the harsh things the narrator said about Robert, being touched by him made his heart open up.

Carver ends the story after the cathedral has been drawn and has the narrator say, "It's really something" (Carver 46).

Robert acts as a miracle worker, not only to the narrator's wife, but to him as well. Despite the difficult personality, the narrator can't help but be converted. He says how resistant he is to have him over, and tries to avoid any conversation with him. He pokes fun at little details about him, disregards peoples' love for him, but still can't help being converted by him. Robert's booming voice carries power over the narrator, but his soft touch is what finally makes him see.

Teacher Takeaways

"This author has put together a convincing and well-informed essay; a reader who lacks the same religious knowledge (like me) would enjoy this essay because it illuminates something they didn't already realize about 'Cathedral.' The author has selected strong evidence from both the short story and the Bible. I would advise the student to work on structure, perhaps starting off by drafting topic-transition sentences for the beginning of each paragraph. I would also encourage them to work on sentence-level fluff. For example, 'Throughout the story there are multiple instances where Robert does things similar to miracles performed in biblical stories' could easily be reduced to 'Robert's actions in the story are reminiscent of Biblical miracles.' It's easiest to catch this kind of fluff when you read your draft out loud."–Professor Wilhjelm

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The Bible. Authorized King James Version, Oxford UP, 1978.

The Space Between the Racial Binary3

Toni Morrison in "Recitatif" confronts race as a social construction, where race is not biological but created from human interactions. Morrison does not disclose the race of the two main characters, Twyla and Roberta, although she does provide that one character is black and the other character is white. Morrison emphasizes intersectionality by confounding stereotypes about race through narration, setting, and allusion. We have been trained to 'read' race through a variety of signifers, but "Recitatif" puts those signifers at odds.

Twyla is the narrator throughout "Recitatif" where she describes the events from her own point of view. Since the story is from Twyla's perspective, it allows the readers to characterize her and Roberta solely based on what she mentions. At the beginning of the story Twyla states that "[her] mother danced all night", which is the main reason why Twyla is "taken to St. Bonny's" (Morrison 139). Twyla soon finds that she will be "stuck… with a girl from a whole other race" who "never washed [her] hair and [she] smelled funny" (Morrison 139). From Twyla's description of Roberta's hair and scent, one could assume that Roberta is black due to the stereotype that revolves around a black individual's hair. Later on in the story Twyla runs into Roberta at her work and describes Roberta's hair as "so big and wild" that "[she] could hardly see her face", which is another indicator that Roberta has Afro-textured hair (Morrison 144). Yet, when Twyla encounters Roberta at a grocery store "her huge hair was sleek" and "smooth" resembling a white woman's hair style (Morrison 146). Roberta's hairstyles are stereotypes that conflict

with one another; one attributing to a black woman, the other to a white woman. The differences in hair texture, and style, are a result of phenotypes, not race. Phenotypes are observable traits that "result from interactions between your genes and the environment" ("What are Phenotypes?"). There is not a specific gene in the human genome that can be used to determine a person's race. Therefore, the racial categories in society are not constructed on the genetic level, but the social. Dr. J Craig Venter states, "We all evolved in the last 100,000 years from the same small number of tribes that migrated out of Africa and colonized the world", so it does not make sense to claim that race has evolved a specific gene and certain people inherit those specific genes (Angier). From Twyla's narration of Roberta, Roberta can be classified into one of two racial groups based on the stereotypes ascribed to her.

Intersectionality states that people are at a disadvantage by multiple sources of oppressions, such their race and class. "Recitatif" seems to be written during the Civil Rights Era where protests against racial integration took place. This is made evident when Twyla says, "strife came to us that fall…Strife. Racial strife" (Morrison 150). According to NPR, the Supreme Court ordered school busing in 1969 and went into effect in 1973 to allow for desegregation ("Legacy"). Twyla "thought it was a good thing until she heard it was a bad thing", while Roberta picketed outside "the school they were trying to integrate" (Morrison 150). Twyla and Roberta both become irritated with one another's reaction to the school busing order, but what woman is on which side? Roberta seems to be a white woman against integrating black students into her children's school, and Twyla suggests that she is a black mother who simply wants best for her son Joseph even if that does mean going to a school that is "far-out-of-the-way" (Morrison 150). At this point in the story Roberta lives in "Annandale" which is "a neighborhood full of doctors and IBM executives" (Morrison 147), and at the same time, Twyla is "Mrs. Benson" living in "Newburgh" where "half the population… is on welfare…" (Morrison 145). Twyla implies that Newburgh is being gentrified by these "smart IBM

people", which inevitably results in an increase in rent and property values, as well as changes the area's culture. In America, minorities are usually the individuals who are displaced and taken over by wealthier, middle-class white individuals. From Twyla's tone, and the setting, it seems that Twyla is a black individual that is angry towards "the rich IBM crowd" (Morrison 146). When Twyla and Roberta are bickering over school busing, Roberta claims that America "is a free country" and she is not "doing anything" to Twyla (Morrison 150). From Roberta's statements, it suggests that she is a affluent, and ignorant white person that is oblivious to the hardships that African Americans had to overcome, and still face today. Rhonda Soto contends that "Discussing race without including class analysis is like watching a bird fly without looking at the sky…". It is ingrained in America as the normative that whites are mostly part of the middle-class and upper-class, while blacks are part of the working-class. Black individuals are being classified as low-income based entirely on their skin color. It is pronounced that Twyla is being discriminated against because she is a black woman, living in a low-income neighborhood where she lacks basic resources. For example, when Twyla and Roberta become hostile with one another over school busing, the supposedly white mothers start moving towards Twyla's car to harass her. She points out that "[my] face[ ] looked mean to them" and that these mothers "could not wait to throw themselves in front of a police car" (Morrison 151). Twyla is indicating that these mothers are privileged based on their skin color, while she had to wait until her car started to rock back and forth to a point where "the four policeman who had been drinking Tab in their car finally got the message and [then] strolled over" (Morrison 151). This shows that Roberta and the mothers protesting are white, while Twyla is a black woman fighting for her resources. Not only is Twyla being targeted due to her race, but as well her class by protesting mothers who have classified her based on intersectionality.

Intersectionality is also alluded in "Recitatif" based on Roberta's interests. Twyla confronts Roberta at the "Howard

Johnson's" while working as a waitress with her "blue and white triangle on [her] head" and "[her] hair shapeless in a net" (Morrison 145). Roberta boasts that her friend has "an appointment with Hendrix" and shames Twyla for not knowing Jimi Hendrix (Morrison 145). Roberta begins to explain that "he's only the biggest" rockstar, guitarist, or whatever Roberta was going to say. It is clear that Roberta is infatuated with Jimi Hendrix, who was an African American rock guitarist. Because Jimi Hendrix is a black musician, the reader could assume that Roberta is also black. At the same time, Roberta may be white since Jimi Hendrix appealed to a plethora of people. In addition, Twyla illustrates when she saw Roberta "sitting in [the] booth" she was "with two guys smothered in head and facial" (Morrison 144). These men may be two white counter culturists, and possible polygamists, in a relationship with Roberta who is also a white. From Roberta's enthusiasm in Jimi Hendrix it alludes that she may be black or white, and categorized from this interest.

Intersectionality states that people are prone to "predict an individual's identity, beliefs, or values based on categories like race" (Williams). Morrison chose not to disclose the race of Twyla and Roberta to allow the reader to make conclusions about the two women based on the vague stereotypes Morrison presented throughout "Recitatif". Narration, setting, and allusion helped make intersectionality apparent, which in turn allowed the readers understand, or see, that race is in fact a social construction. "Recitatif" forces the readers to come to terms with their own racial prejudices.

Teacher Takeaways

"This essay is a good companion to the same author's summary essay, 'Maggie as the Focal Point.' It has a detailed thesis (the last two sentences of the first

paragraph) that give me an idea of the author's argument and the structure they plan to follow in the essay. This is a good example of the T3 strategy and consequent organization. That said, because this student used the three-part thesis and five-paragraph essay that it encourages, each paragraph is long and dense. I would encourage this student to break up those units into smaller, more digestable pieces, perhaps trying to divide the vague topics ('narration, setting, and allusion') into more specific subtopics."– Professor Wilhjelm

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Endnotes

1 Essay by Mary Preble, Portland State University, 2018. Reproduced with permission from the student author.
2 Essay by an anonymous student author, 2017. Reproduced with permission from the student author.
3 Essay by Beth Kreinheder, Portland State University, 2018. Reproduced with permission from the student author.

PART 3: RESEARCH AND ARGUMENTATION

Section Introduction

"Fake news"[1] is a phrase you've probably encountered way more than you would have liked since the 2016 U.S. presidential election. While this phrase has gained more and more momentum and traction, it holds different purposes and meanings in different contexts. Across all these different rhetorical situations, though, we can agree that the popularization of the phrase speaks to an increased skepticism toward the bodies of knowledge that surround us.

For me, such distrust points to the oversimplified dichotomy of fact vs. opinion. The gray area between fact and opinion is much broader than we like to believe, and often we present deeply entrenched opinions as if they were facts. (Whether or not it is intentional, this phenomenon has serious consequences.) As Michael Kinsley points out in his 1995 essay, American individualist ideology dictates that citizens be "omni-opinionated"—at the expense of having many poorly informed opinions.[2] It is crucial, Kinsley says, that we take two steps to confront the "intellectual free lunch": [3]

Develop increased humility about what we can and do know to be true; and

Increase the intensity and frequency of our critical interrogation of truth (or what seems to be true).

Because yes, there is a lot of fake news out there. And there's a lot of real news that certain people insist is fake. How do we mobilize skepticism to produce a more ethical world, rather than letting it undermine the pursuit of truth?

In Section 1 of this text, you explored your own truth through personal narrative; in Section 2, you interrogated the truths embedded in a certain text. Here, in Section 3, you will learn how to encounter a body of texts, then develop an argument that synthesizes diverse truths. Writing in a research-based context

means exploring and interrogating the broad, complex networks of rhetoric and knowledges that you have always been a part of. It means situating yourself in an interconnected world of discourse, and carefully bringing your own voice into that world.

To induct you into this mode of rhetoric production, this section focuses on research concepts and techniques, as well as traditional methods of argumentation. Section 3 concludes with a persuasive research essay assignment in which you will synthesize your ability to research, interpret, and argue in a formal writing situation.

Endnotes

1NPR released a fascinating investigatory piece on fake news production in 2016 called "We Tracked Down A Fake-News Creator in The Suburbs. Here's What We Learned." You can listen to it here.
2 Kinsley, Michael. "The Intellectual Free Lunch." 1995. The Seagull Reader: Essays, Norton, 2016, pp. 251-253.
3 Ibid., 253.

Chapter Seven: Argumentation

To a nonconfrontational person (like me), *argument* is a dirty word. It surfaces connotations of raised voices, slammed doors, and dominance; it arouses feelings of anxiety and frustration.

But argument is not inherently bad. In fact, as a number of great thinkers have described, conflict is necessary for growth, progress, and community cohesion. Through disagreement, we challenge our commonsense assumptions and seek compromise. The negative connotations surrounding 'argument' actually point to a failure in the **way** that we argue.

Check out this video on empathy: it provides some useful insight to the sort of listening, thinking, and discussion required for productive arguments.

Video: The Importance of Empathy by Lifehacker

Now, spend a few minutes reflecting on the last time you had an argument with a loved one. What was it about? What was it *really* about? What made it difficult? What made it easy?

Often, arguments hinge on the relationship between the arguers: whether written or verbal, that argument will rely on the specific language, approach, and evidence that each party deems valid. For that reason, the most important element of the rhetorical situation is audience. Making an honest, impactful, and reasonable connection with that audience is the first step to arguing better.

"Conversation" by Jim Pennucci is licensed under CC BY 2.0

Unlike the argument with your loved one, it is likely that your essay will be establishing a brand-new relationship with your reader, one which is untouched by your personal history, unspoken bonds, or other assumptions about your intent. This clean slate is a double-edged sword: although you'll have a fresh start, you must more deliberately anticipate and navigate your assumptions about the audience. What can you assume your reader already knows and believes? What kind of ideas will they be most swayed by? What life experiences have they had that inform their worldview?

This chapter will focus on how the answers to these questions can be harnessed for productive, civil, and effective arguing. Although

a descriptive personal narrative (Section 1) and a text wrestling analysis (Section 2) require attention to your subject, occasion, audience, and purpose, an argumentative essay is the most sensitive to rhetorical situation of the genres covered in this book. As you complete this unit, remember that you are practicing the skills necessary to navigating a variety of rhetorical situations: thinking about effective argument will help you think about other kinds of effective communication.

Chapter Vocabulary

Vocabulary	Definition
argument	a rhetorical mode in which different perspectives on a common issue are negotiated. See Aristotelian and Rogerian arguments.
Aristotelian argument	a mode of argument by which a writer attempts to convince their audience that one perspective is accurate.
audience	the intended consumers for a piece of rhetoric. *Every* text has at least one audience; sometimes, that audience is directly addressed, and other times we have to infer.
call-to-action	a persuasive writer's directive to their audience; usually located toward the end of a text. Compare with purpose.
ethos	a rhetorical appeal based on authority, credibility, or expertise.
kairos	the setting (time and place) or atmosphere in which an argument is actionable or ideal. Consider alongside "occasion."
logical fallacy	a line of logical reasoning which follows a pattern of that makes an error in its basic structure. For example, *Kanye West is on TV; Animal Planet is on TV. Therefore, Kanye West is on Animal Planet.*
logos	a rhetorical appeal to logical reasoning.
multipartial	a neologism from 'impartial,' refers to occupying and appreciating a variety of perspectives rather than pretending to have no perspective. Rather than unbiased or neutral, multipartial writers are balanced, acknowledging and respecting many different ideas.
pathos	a rhetorical appeal to emotion.

rhetorical appeal	a means by which a writer or speaker connects with their audience to achieve their purpose. Most commonly refers to *logos*, *pathos*, and *ethos*.
Rogerian argument	a mode of argument by which an author seeks compromise by bringing different perspectives on an issue into conversation. Acknowledges that no one perspective is absolutely and exclusively 'right'; values disagreement in order to make moral, political, and practical decisions.
syllogism	a line of logical reasoning similar to the transitive property (If a=b and b=c, then a=c). For example, *All humans need oxygen; Kanye West is a human. Therefore, Kanye West needs oxygen.*

Techniques

"But I Just Want to Write an Unbiased Essay"

Let's begin by addressing a common concern my students raise when writing about controversial issues: neutrality. It's quite likely that you've been trained, at some point in your writing career, to avoid bias, to be objective, to be impartial. However, this is a habit you need to unlearn, because *every text is biased* by virtue of being rhetorical. All rhetoric has a purpose, whether declared or secret, and therefore is partial.

> "Honest disagreement is often a good sign of progress." – Mahatma Gandhi

Instead of being impartial, I encourage you to be *multipartial*. In other words, you should aim to inhabit many different positions in your argument—not zero, not one, but many. This is an important distinction: no longer is your goal to be unbiased; rather, it is to be balanced. You will not provide your audience a neutral perspective, but rather a perspective conscientious of the many other perspectives out there.

Common Forms of Argumentation

In the study of argumentation, scholars and authors have developed a great variety of approaches: when it comes to convincing, there are many different paths that lead to our destination. For the sake of succinctness, we will focus on two: the Aristotelian argument and the Rogerian Argument.[1] While these two are not opposites, they are built on different values. Each will employ *rhetorical appeals* like those discussed later, but their purposes and guiding beliefs are different.

Aristotelian Argument

In Ancient Greece, debate was a cornerstone of social life. Intellectuals and philosophers devoted hours upon hours of each day to honing their argumentative skills. For one group of thinkers, the Sophists, the focus of argumentation was to find a distinctly "right" or "wrong" position. The more convincing argument was the right one: the content mattered less than the technique by which it was delivered.

In turn, the purpose of an *Aristotelian argument* is to persuade someone (the other debater and/or the audience) that the speaker was correct. Aristotelian arguments are designed to bring the audience from one point of view to the other.

In this diagram, you can observe the tension between a point and counterpoint (or, to borrow a term from German philosopher Johann Gottlieb Fichte, "thesis" and "antithesis.") These two viewpoints move in two opposite directions, almost like a tug-of-war.

Therefore, an Aristotelian arguer tries to demonstrate the validity of their direction while addressing counterarguments: "Here's what I believe and why I'm right; here's what you believe and why it's wrong." The author seeks to persuade their audience through the sheer virtue of their truth.

You can see Aristotelian argumentation applied in "We Don't Care about Child Slaves."

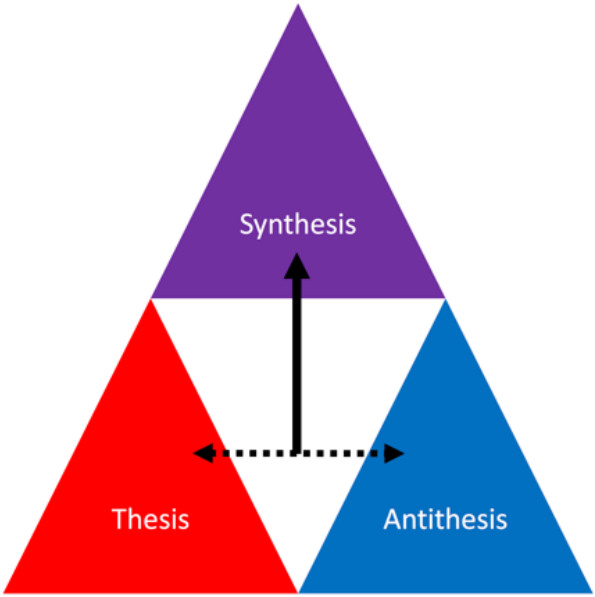
Rogerian Argument

In contrast, *Rogerian arguments* are more invested in compromise. Based on the work of psychologist Carl Rogers, Rogerian arguments are designed to enhance the connection between both sides of an issue. This kind of argument acknowledges the value of disagreement in material communities to make moral, political, and practical decisions.

Often, a Rogerian argument will begin with a fair statement of someone else's position and consideration of how that could be

true. In other words, a Rogerian arguer addresses their 'opponent' more like a teammate: "What you think is not unreasonable; I disagree, but I can see how you're thinking, and I appreciate it." Notice that by taking the other ideas on their own terms, you demonstrate respect and cultivate trust and listening.

The rhetorical purpose of a Rogerian argument, then, is to come to a conclusion by negotiating common ground between moral-intellectual differences. Instead of



debunking an opponent's counterargument entirely, a Rogerian arguer would say, "Here's what each of us thinks, and here's what we have in common. How can we proceed forward to honor our shared beliefs but find a new, informed position?" In Fichte's model of *thesis-antithesis-synthesis*,[2] both debaters would pursue synthesis. The author seeks to persuade their audience by showing them respect, demonstrating a willingness to compromise, and championing the validity of their truth as one among other valid truths.

The **thesis** is an intellectual proposition.

The **antithesis** is a critical perspective on the thesis.

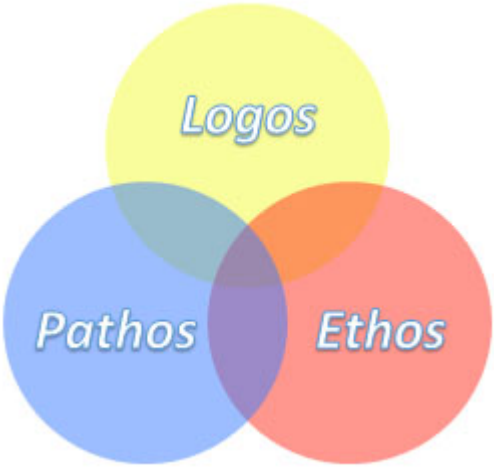
The **synthesis** solves the conflict between the thesis and antithesis by reconciling their common truths and forming a new proposition.

You can see Rogerian argumentation applied in "Vaccines: Controversies and Miracles."

Position	Aristotelian	Rogerian
Wool sweaters are the best clothing for cold weather.	Wool sweaters are the best clothing for cold weather because they are fashionable and comfortable. Some people might think that wool sweaters are itchy, but those claims are ill-informed. Wool sweaters can be silky smooth if properly handled in the laundry.	Some people might think that wool sweaters are itchy, which can certainly be the case. I've worn plenty of itchy wool sweaters. But wool sweaters can be silky smooth if properly handled in the laundry; therefore, they are the best clothing for cold weather. If you want to be cozy and in-style, consider my laundry techniques and a fuzzy wool sweater.

Before moving on, try to identify one rhetorical situation in which Aristotelian argumentation would be most effective, and one in which Rogerian argumentation would be preferable. Neither form is necessarily better, but rather both are useful in specific contexts. In what situations might you favor one approach over another?

Rhetorical Appeals



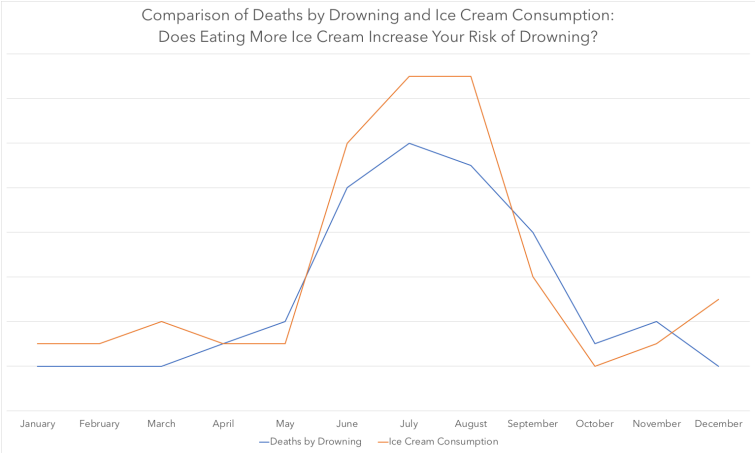
Regardless of the style of argument you use, you will need to consider the ways you engage your audience. Aristotle identified three kinds of *rhetorical appeals*: *logos*, *pathos*, and *ethos*. Some instructors refer to this trio as the "rhetorical triangle," though I prefer to think of them as a three-part Venn diagram.[3] The best argumentation engages all three of these appeals, falling in the center where all three overlap. Unbalanced application of rhetorical appeals is likely to leave your audience suspicious, doubtful, or even bored.

Logos

You may have inferred already, but *logos* refers to an appeal to an audience's logical reasoning. *Logos* will often employ statistics, data, or other quantitative facts to demonstrate the validity of an argument. For example, an argument about the wage gap might indicate that women, on average, earn only 80 percent of the salary

that men in comparable positions earn; this would imply a logical conclusion that our economy favors men.

However, stating a fact or statistic does not alone constitute *logos*. For instance, when I show you this graph[4], I am not yet making a logical appeal:



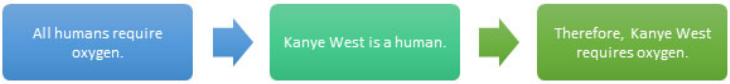
Yes, the graph is "fact-based," drawing on data to illustrate a phenomenon. That characteristic alone, though, doesn't make a logical appeal. For my appeal to be logical, I also need to *interpret* the graph:

> As is illustrated here, there is a direct positive correlation between ice cream consumption and deaths by drowning: when people eat more ice cream, more people drown. Therefore, we need to be more careful about waiting 30 minutes after we eat ice cream.

Of course, this conclusion is inaccurate; it is a *logical fallacy* described in the table below called "post hoc, ergo propter hoc." However, the example illustrates that your logic is only complete when you've drawn a logical conclusion from your facts, statistics, or other information.

There are many other ways we draw logical conclusions. There

are entire branches of academia dedicated to understanding the many kinds of logical reasoning, but we might get a better idea by looking at a specific kind of logic. Let's take for example the logical syllogism, which might look something like this:



Pretty straightforward, right? We can see how a general rule (major premise) is applied to a specific situation (minor premise) to develop a logical conclusion. I like to introduce this kind of logic because students sometimes jump straight from the major premise to the conclusion; if you skip the middle step, your logic will be less convincing.

It does get a little more complex. Consider this false syllogism: it follows the same structure (general rule + specific situation), but it reaches an unlikely conclusion.

This is called a *logical fallacy*. Logical fallacies are part of our daily lives. Stereotypes, generalizations, and misguided assumptions are fallacies you've likely encountered. You may have heard some terms about fallacies already: red herring, slippery slope, non sequitur. Fallacies follow patterns of reasoning that would otherwise be perfectly acceptable to us, but within their basic structure, they make a mistake. Aristotle identified that fallacies happen on the "material" level (the content is fallacious—something about the ideas or premises is flawed) and the "verbal" level (the writing or speech is fallacious—something about the delivery or medium is flawed).

It's important to be able to recognize these so that you can critically interrogate others' arguments and improve your own. Here are some of the most common logical fallacies:

Fallacy	Description	
Post hoc, ergo propter hoc	"After this, therefore because of this" – a confusion of cause-and-effect with coincidence, attributing a consequence to an unrelated event. This error assumes that correlation equals causation, which is sometimes not the case.	Statistics cream co by drown June. Thi cream ca
Non sequitur	"Does not follow" – a random digression that distracts from the train of logic (like a "red herring"), or draws an unrelated logical conclusion. John Oliver calls one manifestation of this fallacy "whataboutism," which he describes as a way to deflect attention from the subject at hand.	Sherlock crimes; t make a g Sherlo pipe, whi what abo McDonal also unhe
Straw Man	An oversimplification or cherry-picking of the opposition's argument to make them easier to attack.	People w destructi monume supremac
Ad hominem	"To the person" – a personal attack on the arguer, rather than a critique of their ideas.	I don't tr on urban wears bo

Slippery Slope	An unreasonable prediction that one event will lead to a related but unlikely series of events that follows.	If we let p get marri start mar
False Dichotomy	A simplification of a complex issue into only two sides.	Given the and Chin simply *m*

Learn about other logical fallacies in the Additional Recommended Resources

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Pathos

The second rhetorical appeal we'll consider here is perhaps the most common: *pathos* refers to the process of engaging the reader's emotions. (You might recognize the Greek root *pathos* in "sympathy," "empathy," and "pathetic.") A writer can evoke a great variety of emotions to support their argument, from fear, passion, and joy to pity, kinship, and rage. By playing on the audience's feelings, writers can increase the impact of their arguments.

There are two especially effective techniques for cultivating *pathos* that I share with my students:

- Make the audience aware of the issue's relevance to them specifically—"How would you feel if this happened to you? What are we to do about this issue?"
- Tell stories. A story about one person or one community can have a deeper impact than broad, impersonal data or abstract, hypothetical statements. Consider the difference between

> About 1.5 million pets are euthanized each year
>
> and
>
> Scooter, an energetic and loving former service dog with curly brown hair like a Brillo pad, was put down yesterday.

Both are impactful, but the latter is more memorable and more specific.

Pathos is ubiquitous in our current journalistic practices because people are more likely to act (or, at least, consume media) when they feel emotionally moved.[5] Consider, as an example, the outpouring of support for detained immigrants in June 2018, reacting to the Trump administration's controversial family separation policy. As stories and images like this one surfaced, millions of dollars were raised in a matter of days on the premise of *pathos*, and resulted in the temporary suspension of that policy.

Ethos

"Icon Leader Leadership Lead Boss Business Group" by TukTuk Design is available under the Pixabay license

Your argument wouldn't be complete without an appeal to *ethos*. Cultivating *ethos* refers to the means by which you demonstrate your authority or expertise on a topic. You'll have to show your audience that you're trustworthy if they are going to buy your argument.

There are a handful of ways to demonstrate *ethos*:

- By personal experience: Although your lived experience might not set hard-and-fast rules about the world, it is worth noting that you may be an expert on certain facets of your life. For

instance, a student who has played rugby for fifteen years of their life is in many ways an authority on the sport.

- By education or other certifications: Professional achievements demonstrate *ethos* by revealing status in a certain field or discipline.
- By citing other experts: The common expression is "Stand on the shoulders of giants." You can develop *ethos* by pointing to other people with authority and saying, "Look, this smart/experienced/qualified/important person agrees with me."

"GovernmentZA President Jacob Zuma attends Indigenous and Traditional Leaders Indaba" by Government ZA is licensed under CC BY-ND 2.0

A common misconception is that *ethos* corresponds with "ethics." However, you can remember that *ethos* is about credibility because it shares a root with "authority."

Sociohistorical Context of Argumentation

This textbook has emphasized consideration of your rhetorical occasion, but it bears repeating here that "good" argumentation depends largely on your place in time, space, and culture. Different cultures throughout the world value the elements of argumentation differently, and argument has different purposes in different contexts. The content of your argument *and* your strategies for delivering it will change in every unique rhetorical situation.

Continuing from *logos*, *pathos*, and *ethos*, the notion of *kairos* speaks to this concern. To put it in plain language, *kairos* is the force that determines what will be the best argumentative approach in the moment in which you're arguing; it is closely aligned with rhetorical occasion. According to rhetoricians, the characteristics of the *kairos* determine the balance and application of *logos*, *pathos*, and *ethos*.

Moreover, your sociohistorical context will bear on what you can assume of your audience. What can you take for granted that your audience knows and believes? The "common sense" that your audience relies on is always changing: common sense in the U.S. in 1950 was much different from common sense in the U.S. in 1920 or common sense in the U.S. in 2018. You can make assumptions about your audience's interests, values, and background knowledge, but only with careful consideration of the time and place in which you are arguing.

As an example, let's consider the principle of logical noncontradiction. Put simply, this means that for an argument to be valid, its logical premises must not contradict one another: if A = B, then B = A. If I said that a dog is a mammal and a mammal is an animal, but a dog is not an animal, I would be contradicting myself. Or, "No one drives on I-84; there's too much traffic." This statement contradicts itself, which makes it humorous to us.

However, this principle of non-contradiction is not universal. Our understanding of cause and effect and logical consistency is defined by the millennia of knowledge that has been produced before us, and some cultures value the contradiction rather than perceive it as invalid.[6] This is not to say that either way of seeing the world is more or less accurate, but rather to emphasize that your methods of argumentation depend tremendously on sociohistorical context.

Activities

Op-Ed Rhetorical Analysis

One form of direct argumentation that is readily available is the opinion editorial, or op-ed. Most news sources, from local to international, include an opinion section. Sometimes, these pieces are written by members of the news staff; sometimes, they're by contributors or community members. Op-eds can be long (e.g.,

comprehensive journalistic articles, like Ta-Nehisi Coates' landmark "The Case for Reparations") or they could be brief (e.g., a brief statement of one's viewpoint, like in your local newspaper's Letter to the Editor section).

To get a better idea of how authors incorporate rhetorical appeals, complete the following rhetorical analysis exercise on an op-ed of your choosing.

Find an op-ed (opinion piece, editorial, or letter to the editor) from either a local newspaper, a national news source, or an international news corporation. Choose something that interests you, since you'll have to read it a few times over.

1. Read the op-ed through once, annotating parts that are particularly convincing, points that seem unsubstantiated, or other eye-catching details.
2. Briefly (in one to two sentences) identify the rhetorical situation (SOAP) of the op-ed.
3. Write a citation for the op-ed in an appropriate format.
4. Analyze the application of rhetoric.
5. Summarize the issue at stake and the author's position.
    1. Find a quote that represents an instance of *logos*.
    2. Find a quote that represents an instance of *pathos*.
    3. Find a quote that represents an instance of *ethos*.
    4. Paraphrase the author's *call-to-action* (the action or actions the author wants the audience to take). A call-to-action will often be related to an author's rhetorical purpose.
6. In a one-paragraph response, consider: Is this rhetoric effective? Does it fulfill its purpose? Why or why not?

VICE News Rhetorical Appeal Analysis

VICE News, an alternative investigatory news outlet, has recently gained acclaim for its inquiry-driven reporting on current issues

and popular appeal, much of which is derived from effective application of rhetorical appeals.

You can complete the following activity using any of their texts, but I recommend "State of Surveillance" from June 8, 2016. Take notes while you watch and complete the organizer on the following pages after you finish.

What is the title and publication date of the text?

Briefly summarize the subject of this text.

How would you describe the purpose of this text?

Pathos	Provide at least 3 examples of *pathos* that you observed in the text:	How would you describe the overall tone of evoke for the viewer/reader?

Logos	Provide at least 3 examples of *logos* that you observed in the text:	In addition to presenting data and statistics interpret evidence?

Ethos	Provide at least 3 examples of *ethos* that you observed in the text:	How might one person, idea, or source both cultivation of *ethos*? (Consider Edward Snow for instance.)

Audience Analysis: Tailoring Your Appeals

Now that you've observed the end result of rhetorical appeals, let's consider how you might tailor your own rhetorical appeals based on your audience.

First, come up with a claim that you might try to persuade an audience to believe. Then, consider how you might develop this claim based on the potential audiences listed in the organizer on the following pages. An example is provided after the empty organizer if you get stuck.

Claim:	
Audience #1: Business owners	What assumptions might you make about this audience? What do you think they currently know and believe?
Logos	
Pathos	
Ethos	
Audience #2: Local political officials	What assumptions might you make about this audience? What do you think they currently know and believe?

Logos	
Pathos	
Ethos	
Audience #3: One of your family members	What assumptions might you make about this audience? What do you think they currently know and believe?
Logos	
Pathos	

Ethos	
Audience #4: Invent your own	What assumptions might you make about this audience? What do you think they currently know and believe?
Logos	
Pathos	
Ethos	

Model:

Claim:	Employers should offer employees discounted or free public transit passes.
Audience #1: Business owners	What assumptions might you make about this audience? What do you think they currently know and believe?
Logos	They are concerned with profit margins – I need to show that this will benefit them financially: "If employees are able to access transportation more reliably, then they are more likely to arrive on time, which increases efficiency."
Pathos	They are concerned with employee morale – I need to show that access will improve employee satisfaction: "Every employer wants their employees to feel welcome at the office. Does your work family dread the start of the day?"
Ethos	They are more likely to believe my claim if other business owners, the chamber of commerce, etc., back it up: "In 2010, Portland employer X started providing free bus passes, and their employee retention rate has increased 30%."
Audience #2: Local political officials	What assumptions might you make about this audience? What do you think they currently know and believe?

Logos	They are held up by political bureaucracy – I need to show a clear, direct path to executing my claim: "The implementation of such a program could be modeled after an existing system, like EBT cards."
Pathos	They are concerned with reelection – I need to show that this will build an enthusiastic voter base: "When politicians show concern for workers, their approval rates increase. If the voters are happy, you'll be happy!"
Ethos	They are more likely to believe my claim if I show other cities and their political officials executing a similar plan – I could also draw on my own experiences because I am a member of the community they represent: "As an employee who uses public transit (and an enthusiastic voter), I can say that I would make good use of this benefit."
Audience #3: One of your family members	What assumptions might you make about this audience? What do you think they currently know and believe?
Logos	My mom has to drive all over the state for her job – I could explain how this will benefit her: "If you had a free or discounted pass, you could drive less. Less time behind the wheel means a reduction of risk!"

Pathos	My mom has to drive all over the state for her job – I could tap into her frustration: "Aren't you sick of a long commute bookending each day of work? The burning red glow of brakelights and the screech of tires—it doesn't have to be this way."
Ethos	My mom might take my word for it since she trusts me already: "Would I mislead you? I hate to say I told you so, but I was totally right about the wool sweater thing."
Audience #4: Invent your own Car drivers	What assumptions might you make about this audience? What do you think they currently know and believe?
Logos	They are concerned with car-related expenses – I need to lay out evidence of savings from public transit: "Have you realized that taking the bus two days a week could save you $120 in gas per month?"
Pathos	They are frustrated by traffic, parking, etc. – I could play to that emotion: "Is that a spot? No. Is that a spot? No. Oh, but th—No. Sound familiar? You wouldn't have to hear this if there were an alternative.

Ethos	Maybe testimonies from former drivers who use public transit more often would be convincing: "In a survey of PSU students who switched from driving to public transit, 65% said they were not only confident in their choice, but that they were much happier as a result!"

Model Texts by Student Authors

Effective Therapy Through Dance and Movement7

Two chairs, angled slightly away from one another, a small coffee table positioned between them, and an ominous bookshelf behind them, stocked with thick textbooks about psychodynamic theory, Sigmund Freud, and of course, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. This is a psychoanalytic psychotherapist's typical clinical set-up. Walking into the room, your entire body feels tense—rigid with stress as you enter the therapist's office only to find the aforementioned sight. Your heartbeat reverberates throughout your body, your throat tightens ever-so-slightly, and your mouth goes dry as an overwhelming sense of nervousness sets in.

Now, imagine instead walking into a beautiful studio, wearing your most comfortable clothing. You take off your shoes, and put your hands in the pockets of your sweatpants as you begin to slip and slide around the sprung hardwood floor whilst a childish smile creeps across your face. Your therapist is not there necessarily to dissect your personality or interpret your behavior, but instead to encourage your mental and physical exploration, leading you on a journey of self-discovery. This is the warm and encouraging environment that dance/movement therapy (DMT) may take place in.

In its essence, DMT is the therapeutic use of physical movement–specifically dance in this context–to encourage and support emotional, intellectual, and motor functions of the mind and body. The focus of the therapy lies within the connection and correlation between movement and emotion ("About"). Unlike so-called "normal" therapies, which are set in a clinical environment, and are conducted by somebody with an extensive background in psychology, DMT is generally practiced by individuals whose background is primarily in dance and the performing arts, with psychology or psychotherapy education falling second. Although some may argue otherwise, I believe that DMT is a viable form of therapy, and that dance and movement can act as the catalyst for profound mental transformation; therefore, when dance and therapy are combined, they create a powerful platform for introspection along with interpersonal discovery, and mental/behavioral change.

Life begins with movement and breathing; they precede all thought and language. Following movement and breath, gesture falls next in the development of personal communication and understanding (Chaiklin 3). Infants and toddlers learn to convey their wants and needs via pointing, yelling, crying, clapping. As adults, we don't always understand what it is they're trying to tell us; however, we know that their body language is intended to communicate something important. As a child grows older, a greater emphasis is placed on verbally communicating their wants and needs, and letting go of the physical expression. Furthermore, the childish means of demonstrating wants and needs become socially inappropriate as one matures. Perhaps we should not ignore the impulses to cry, to yell, or to throw a tantrum on the floor, but instead encourage a channeled physical release of pent-up energy.

I personally, would encourage what some would consider as emotional breakdowns within a therapeutic setting. For example, screaming, sobbing, pounding one's fists against the floor, or kicking a wall all seem taboo in our society, especially when somebody is above the age of three. There is potential for said expressions to

become violent and do more harm than good for a client. Therefore, I propose using dance and movement as a method of expressing the same intense emotions.

As a dancer myself, I can personally attest to the benefits of emotional release through movement. I am able to do my best thinking when I am dancing, and immediately after I stop. When dancing, whether it is improvised movement or learned choreography, the body is in both physical and mental motion, as many parts of the brain are activated. The cerebrum is working in overdrive to allow the body to perform certain actions, while other areas of the brain like the cerebellum are trying to match your breathing and oxygen intake to your level of physical exertion. In addition, all parts of the limbic system are triggered. The limbic system is comprised of multiple parts of the brain including the amygdala, hippocampus, thalamus, and hypothalamus. These different areas of the brain are responsible for emotional arousal, certain aspects of memory, and the willingness to be affected by external stimuli. So, when they are activated with movement, they encourage the endocrine system—specifically the pituitary gland—to release hormones that make you feel good about yourself, how you are moving, and allow you to understand what emotions you're feeling and experiencing (Kinser).

As a form of exercise as well, dancing releases endorphins—proteins that are synthesized by the pituitary gland in response to physiologic stressors. This feeling is so desirable that opioid medications were created with the intent of mimicking the sensation that accompanies an endorphin rush (Sprouse-Blum 70). Along with the beta-proteins comes a level of mental clarity, and a sense of calm. Dance movement therapists should utilize this feeling within therapy, allowing participants to make sense of crises in their life as they exist in this heightened state.

Similar to the potential energy that is explored in physics, when set to music, physical movement manifests a mental state that allows for extensive exploration and introspective discovery. DMT is effective as a therapy in that it allows clients to manifest

and confront deep psychological issues while existing in a state of nirvana—the result of dance. Essentially, DMT allows the participant to feel good about him or herself during the sessions, and be open and receptive to learning about their patterns of thought, and any maladaptive behavior ("About").

Playing specifically to this idea of finding comfort through one's own body, a case study was done involving an adolescent girl (referred to as "Alex") who struggled with acute body dysmorphic disorder—a mental illness whose victims are subject to obsession with perceived flaws in their appearance. The aim of the study was to examine "the relationship between an adolescent female's overall wellness, defined by quality of life, and her participation in a dance/movement therapy [DMT]-based holistic wellness curriculum" (Hagensen 150). During the six-week-long data-collection and observation period, Alex's sessions took place in a private psychotherapy office and included normal dance and movement based therapy, along with a learning curriculum that focused on mindfulness, body image, movement, friendships, and nutrition. Her therapist wanted not only to ensure that Alex receive the necessary DMT to overcome her body dysmorphic disorder, but also to equip her with the tools to better combat it in the future, should it resurface.

In total, the case study lasted four months, and included nine individual therapy sessions, and a handful of parental check-in meetings (to get their input on her progress). Using the Youth Quality of Life-Research Version (YQOL-R) and parent surveys, both qualitative and quantitative data were collected that revealed that Alex did indeed learn more about herself, and how her body and mind function together. The psychologists involved concluded that the use of DMT was appropriate for Alex's case, and it proved to be effective in transforming her distorted image of herself (Hagensen 168).

Some may dispute this evidence by saying that the case of a single adolescent girl is not sufficient to deem DMT effective; however, it is extremely difficult to limit confounding variables in

large-scale therapeutic experiments. In the realm of psychology, individual studies provide data that is just as important as that of bigger experiments. To further demonstrate DMT's effectiveness on a larger scale though, I turn to a study that was conducted in Germany in 2012 for evidence.

After recruiting 17 dance therapists and randomly selecting 162 participants, a study was conducted to test the efficacy of a 10-week long DMT group and whether or not the quality of life (QOL) of the participants improved. Ninety-seven of the participants were randomly assigned to the therapy group (the experimental group), whilst the remaining 65 were placed on a waitlist, meaning that they did not receive any treatment (the control group) (Bräuninger 296). All of the participants suffered from stress, and felt that they needed professional help dealing with it. The study utilized a subject-design, and included a pre-test, post-test, and six-month follow-up test. As hypothesized, the results demonstrated that participants in the experimental DMT group significantly improved the QOL, both in the short term (right after the sessions terminated) and in the long term (at the six-month follow-up). The greatest QOL improvements were in the areas of psychological well-being and general life in both the short- and long-term. At the end of the study, it was concluded that, "Dance movement therapy significantly improves QOL in the short and long term" (Bräuninger 301).

DMT does prove to be an effective means of therapy in the cases of body dysmorphic disorder and stress; however, when it comes to using DMT in the treatment of schizophrenia, it seems to fall short. In an attempt to speak to the effectiveness of dance therapy in the context of severe mental illnesses and disorders, a group of psychologists conducted a study to "evaluate the effects of dance therapy for people with schizophrenia or schizophrenia-like illnesses compared with standard care and other interventions" (Xia 675). Although DMT did not do any harm, there was no identifiable reduction in the participant's symptoms, nor was there an overall improvement in mental cognition. It was concluded that the results

of the study did not affirm nor deny the use of dance/movement therapy amongst the group of schizophrenic participants (Xia 676).

I believe that the aforementioned case study brings to light something key about DMT: the kinds of people and mental illnesses that it can be successful for. As demonstrated by the study conducted on schizophrenic patients, DMT isn't necessarily effective for the entire spectrum of mental illness. DMT has been shown to be more effective for those dealing with less serious mental illnesses, or are simply struggling to cope with passing crises in their life. For example, problems with stress, self-image, family, time management, and relationships are ideal issues to deal with in a DMT setting (Payne 14). Studies have shown that these are the most successfully resolved personal conflicts in this therapy.

Although DMT may not be an effective treatment for certain people or problems, it is unlikely that it will cause detriment to patients, unlike other therapies. For example, it is very common for patients in traditional verbal therapy to feel intense and strong emotions that they were not prepared to encounter, and therefore, not equipped to handle. They can have an increased anxiety and anxiousness as a result of verbal therapy, and even potentially manifest and endure false memories (Linden 308). When a client is difficult to get talking, therapists will inquire for information and ask thought-provoking questions to initiate conversation or better develop their understanding of a patient's situation. In some cases, this has been shown to encourage the development of false memories because the therapist is overbearing and trying too hard to evoke reactions from their reluctant clients. These negative side effects of therapy may also manifest themselves in DMT; however, this is very unlikely given the holistic nature of the therapy, and the compassionate role of the therapist.

Along with its positive effects on participants, another attribute to the utilization of DMT is that a holistic curriculum may be easily interwoven and incorporated alongside the standard therapy. Instead of participation only in standard therapy sessions, a therapist can also act as a teacher. By helping participants learn

about mindfulness and introspection techniques, along with equipping them with coping skills, the therapist/teacher is able to help their clients learn how to combat problems they may face in the future, after therapy has ended. Like in the case of Alex, it is helpful to learn not just about thinking and behavioral patterns, but what they mean, and techniques to keep them in check.

A holistic curriculum is based on "the premise that each person finds identity, meaning, and purpose in life through connections to the community, to the natural world, and to spiritual values such as compassion and peace" (Miller). In other words, when instilled in the context of DMT, participants learn not only about themselves, but also about their interactions with others and the natural world. Although some find such a premise to be too free-spirited for them, the previously mentioned connections are arguably some of the most important one's in an individual's life. Many people place too great of an emphasis on being happy, and finding happiness, but choose to ignore the introspective process of examining their relationships. By combining DMT and a holistic curriculum, one can truly begin to understand how they function cognitively, what effect that has on their personal relationships, and what their personal role is in a society and in the world.

Finally, DMT is simply more practical and fun than other, more conventional forms of therapy. It is in essence the vitamin C you would take to not just help you get over a cold, but that you would take to help prevent a cold. In contrast, other therapy styles act as the antibiotics you would take once an infection has set in—there are no preventative measures. When most people make the decision to attend therapy, it is because all else has failed and speaking with a therapist is their last resort. Since DMT is a much more relaxed and natural style of therapy, learned exercise and techniques can easily be incorporated into daily life. While most people won't keep a journal of their dreams, or record every instance in the day they've felt anxious (as many clinical therapists would advise), it would be practical to attend a dance class once a week or so. Just by being in class, learning choreography and

allowing the body to move, one can lose and discover themself all at the same time. DMT can be as simple as just improvising movement to a song and allowing the mind to be free for a fleeting moment (Eddy 6). And although short, it can still provide enough time to calm the psyche and encourage distinct moments of introspection.

DMT is an extremely underrated area of psychology. With that being said, I also believe it can be a powerful form of therapy and it has been shown to greatly improve participants' quality of life and their outlook on it. As demonstrated by the previous case studies and experiments, DMT allows clients to think critically about their own issues and maladaptive behaviors, and become capable of introspection. Although DMT may not be effective for all mental illnesses, it is still nonetheless a powerful tool for significant psychological change, and should be used far more often as a form of treatment. Instead of instantly jumping to the conclusion that traditional psychotherapy is the best option for all clients, patients and therapists alike should perhaps recognize that the most natural thing to our body–movement–could act as the basis for interpersonal discovery and provide impressive levels of mental clarity.

Teacher Takeaways"This is a good example of Rogerian argument. Rather than taking a confrontational position that might alienate those who disagree, the author acknowledges the grounds for disagreement while explaining why opponents' concerns may be misplaced. Logos and ethos are both successfully employed in that process. However, the use of pathos is largely limited to the first two paragraphs, where the reader is invited to imagine two radically different therapy scenarios. That works well, but using pathos more broadly might vary the tone of the essay and

engage the reader more directly in the argument."–Professor Dunham

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We Don't Care About Child Slaves8

When you walk into the mall or any department store, your main goal is to snatch a deal, right? You scout for the prettiest dress with the lowest price or the best fitting jeans with the biggest discount. And once you find it, you go to the checkout and purchase it right away. Congratulations–now it's all yours! But here's the thing: the item that you just purchased could have possibly been made from the sweat, blood, and tears of a six-year-old child in Vietnam. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), one in ten Vietnamese children aged 5 to 17 are slave workers, and Vietnam is the second biggest source of imported goods to the US. This means that a lot of the things we get from Target, Walmart, and countless other stores are made by child slaves. The problem is that the bargain on that cute shirt we just got was too good for

us to think twice—about where it came from, how it was made. As a society, we need to take action against child labor by being conscious of where we buy our goods so we don't feed the system that exploits children.

When we think of child slavery, we are horrified by it. How can someone treat children in such a way? It's horrific, it's terrible, and it's a serious crime! But then again, those shoes you saw in the store are so cute and are at such a cheap price, you must buy them! Even if they were made by child slaves, you can't do anything about that situation and purchasing them won't do any harm at all, right? The unfortunate reality is that we are all hypocritical when it comes to this issue. I'm pretty sure that all of us have some sort of knowledge of child slave workers in third-world countries, but how come we never take it into consideration when we buy stuff? Maybe it's because you believe your actions as one person are too little to affect anything, or you just can't pass up that deal. Either way, we need to all start doing research about where we are sending our money.

As of 2014, 1.75 million Vietnamese children are working in conditions that are classified as child labor according to the ILO (Rau). Most of these children work in crowded factories and work more than 42 hours a week. These children are the ones who make your clothes, toys, and other knick-knacks that you get from Target, Walmart, etc. If not that, they're the ones who make the zippers on your coats and buttons on your sweater in a horrifying, physically unstable work environment.

How exactly do these children end up in this situation? According to a BBC report, labor traffickers specifically target children in remote and poor villages, offering to take them to the city to teach them vocational training or technical skills. Their parents usually agree because they are not aware of the concept of human trafficking since they live in an isolated area. Also, it gives the family an extra source of income. The children are then sent to other places and are forced to work in mostly farms or factories. These children receive little to no pay and most of the time get

beaten if they made a mistake while working. They are also subject to mental abuse and at the worst, physically tortured by their boss. Another reason why children end up in the labor force is because they must provide for their family; their parents are unable to do so for whatever reason (Brown).

In 2013, BBC uncovered the story of a Vietnamese child labor victim identified as "Hieu." Hieu was a slave worker in Ho Chi Minh city who jumped out of the third floor window of a factory with two other boys to escape his "workplace." Aged 16 at the time, Hieu explained that a woman approached him in his rural village in Dien Bien, the country's poorest province, and offered him vocational training in the city. He and 11 other children were then sent to the city and forced to make clothes for a garment factory in a cramped room for the next two years. "We started at 6AM and finished work at midnight," he said. "If we made a mistake making the clothes they would beat us with a stick." Fortunately for Hieu, he managed to escape and is one of the 230 children saved by The Blue Dragon Foundation, a charity that helps fight against child labor (Brown).

For the rest of the victims, however, hope is yet to be found. According to the US Department of Commerce, most of the apparel that is sold in the US is made overseas, and Vietnam is the second biggest source for imported goods right behind China. Bangladesh, Indonesia, and Sri Lanka are also on the list of the top sources of US apparel imports. This means that the demand for goods from these countries is high; therefore, the need for child slave workers is increasing.

One of the biggest corporations in the world that has an ongoing history of the use of child slaves is Nike. According to IHSCS News, workers at Vietnam shoe manufacturing plants make 20 cents an hour, are beaten by supervisors, and are not allowed to leave their work posts. Vietnam isn't the only place that has factories with dangerous working conditions owned by the athletic-wear giant (Wilsey). Nike also has sweatshops in Bangladesh, Pakistan, Indonesia, and China, just to name a few, that have all

been investigated by officials due to inhumane working conditions. Everything from clothing and shoes, to soccer balls are potentially made by child slaves in these countries (Greenhouse). Please keep this in mind the next time you visit your local Nike store.

Vietnam has actually been praised for its efforts in combating child slave issues. According to The Borgen Project, Vietnam has increased the number of prosecutions it holds to help end overseas gang activity (Rau). However, the country lacks internal control in child trafficking, and traffickers who are caught receive light punishments. The person who trafficked Hieu and the 11 other children only faced a fine of $500 and his factory was closed down, but he did not go to court (Brown).

Let's be real: doing our part to fight against child labor as members of a capitalistic society is not the easiest thing to do. We are all humans who have needs and our constant demand to buy is hard to resist, especially when our society is fueled by consumerism. However, big changes takes little steps. We can start to combat this issue by doing research on where we spend our money and try to not support corporations and companies that will enable the child labor system. We can also donate to charities, such as The Blue Dragon Foundation, to further help the cause. Yes, it is hard to not shop at your favorite stores and I can't stop you from doing so. But all I ask is that you educate yourself on where you are spending your money, and hopefully your moral compass will guide you onto the right path. If you are horrified by the thought of a 5-year-old child being beaten and working 24 hours a day, do not be a part of the problem. Keep Hieu—and the other 1.75 million children who are currently suffering in Vietnam—in mind the next time you buy something.

Teacher Takeaways"This essay provides compelling information from credible sources and offers a mix of

strategies, including anecdotal examples and more objective statistical information. These approaches complement each other by putting a human face to the problem while also demonstrating its extent and severity. I'd like to see better engagement with the opposing positions, though. It seems likely that many people are not aware of this issue, or are not aware of resources that would help them become more ethical consumers. By failing to anticipate the needs of the audience, the author risks frustrating or alienating readers rather than persuading them."– Professor Dunham

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Carnivore Consumption Killing Climate9

The year of 1955 was the year of many revolutionary names: you might remember the rise of Elvis or the valor of Rosa Parks that year. Some might recognize it as the birth year of two of the 20th centuries best and brightest: Mr. Jobs, and Mr. Gates. However, I recognize it as the birth year of a pair even brighter than that of Steve and Bill. A pair of golden arches that is: McDonald's was founded April 15, 1955, and ever since then, the market for fast, greasy, and cheap food has been a staple in many countries around the world. Which has led to a steady rise in the consumption of meat and other animal products. This spells out disaster for not only personal health but the health of the environment. The direct link between the consumption of animal products and global warming is negatively effecting the health of this generation. If action isn't taken by each of us, global warming will be hazardous for future generations who will be left with the burden of reversing the wastefulness of their greedy ancestors.

While there are many industries that contribute to global warming, the food and farming industry has one of the largest impacts on the environment. For starters, every step of the process, from the birth of the calf to the burger patty sizzling on the grill, produces near irreversible damage to the environment. All livestock, not only cows, passively contribute to global warming. "Livestock, especially cattle, produce methane (CH_4) as part of their digestion. This process is called enteric fermentation, and it represents almost one third of the emissions from the Agriculture sector"

("Greenhouse"). While this may seem insignificant to nice small farms with only a few cows, large corporations own thousands of cattle, all of which add up to significant amount of enteric fermentation. Not to mention, the thousands of gallons of gas that goes into transporting the cows and there are tons of coal or fossil fuels being burned to power big warehouses where cows and other various meat-producing animals are crammed into undersized cages, where they are modified and bred for slaughter.

Moreover, the driving of semis release carbon dioxide into the air. These trucks are used to haul the animals, their feed, and the final product, your food. The final number of trips, when all said and done, adds up to an enormous amount of gas being burned. "When we burn fossil fuels, such as coal and gas, we release carbon dioxide (CO_2). CO_2 builds up in the atmosphere and causes Earth's temperature to rise" ("Climate"). In summary, the burning of gas and other fossil fuels in one major way the meat, and the entire food industry contributes to global warming. The rising of the earth's temperature is like the flick of the first domino in the line. Heating of the Earth being the first domino leading to melting the ice caps and so on. Everyone has heard the spiel of melting ice caps and "saving the polar bears!"; however, there are many serious and harmful effects of such CO_2 emissions. Some may rebuttal that "global warming doesn't have any effect on me", but there is a list of health problems caused by global warming that do negatively impact humans.

Unless people can come together and reduce, not just their CO2 footprint, but all greenhouse gas emissions there will continue to be an increase medical problems globally. The rising temperatures is causing longer allergy seasons and an increase in allergens or dust, pollen and other particles in the air. "Research studies associate fine particles [allergens] with negative cardiovascular outcomes such as heart attacks, formation of deep vein blood clots, and increased mortality from several other causes. These adverse health impacts intensify as temperatures rise" (Portier 14). For further explanation, polluting the atmosphere by

burning gas and raising mass numbers of livestock is causing the global temperature to rise. These negative health issues are only the outcome of global warming. I have purposely omitted the health problems, though many, of eating red meat. Cutting meat out of your diet will improve your individual health, but more importantly, it will improve the health of the earth. Some critics might argue that eating just one burger can't raise the entire Earth's temperature. The simple answer is, it doesn't. However, making the conscious decision to eat meat on a day to day basis adds up to a slew of health problems accompanied by a large personal carbon footprint.

Acidification of the oceans is one of the harmful effects on the environment caused by an inflated carbon footprint. This happens when the CO_2 that is released into the atmosphere, absorbs into the ocean, thus leading to a change in the pH level of the ocean. "High concentrations of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere increase the amount that is dissolved into the ocean, leading to acidification… many [people on coastal regions] depend on marine protein for daily subsistence, the consequences of perturbing delicate ocean and coastal systems will be far-reaching" (Portier 6). This is problematic for any who live on coastal regions and may rely heavily on seafood in their diet but is also a problem for the fish as well. Disrupting an entire food chain could have many unforeseen consequences.

Meat lovers will interject: "well food other than meat is produced in factories, don't those contribute to global warming too?" These arguments are not invalid; while the meat industry may cause much of the food and agriculture's emissions, other methods of food production are outdated and harmful as well. The problem of global warming, is not solely the fault of the meat industry, the blame should be put onto anyone who produces more than their fair share of greenhouse gases. For example, the way rice is cultivated could very well be a place CO_2 emissions could be cut. "A change in rice processing and consumption patterns could reduce CO_2 emission by 2-16%" (Norton 42). The implementation made to reduce the footprint of rice cultivation, could then be remodeled

to be effectively used to reduce the pollution of the food and agriculture sector as a whole.

However, more simple things than changing the way food is produced can help save the environment. It can be as simple as picking up a piece of litter off the ground to deciding to recycle all your bottles and cans. But for those looking to make a greater contribution to saving the world, stop eating meat. Or, if that is too difficult, reduce the amount of meat you eat. A paper published by the World Resources Institute "showed that reducing heavy red meat consumption, would lead to a per capita food and land use-related greenhouse gas emissions reduction of between 15 and 35 percent by 2050. Going vegetarian could reduce those per capita emissions by half" (Magill). As a vegetarian I gave up eating meat mainly for this reason. But not only can you save the environment by giving up meat, by doing so you can save more than just your life, but millions of lives; "switching to vegetarianism could help prevent nearly 7m premature deaths and help reduce health care costs by $1b" (Harvey). As mentioned, there are multiple positive impacts of eliminating meat from your diet, and it is the best way to reduce your carbon footprint. In tandem, being aware of your carbon footprint is very important, because not monitoring individual emissions is causing greenhouse gases to reach dangerous levels. Which is beginning to cause a variety of health problems for many people which will only intensify if nothing is done on a personal and global level.

Not only do we have to worry about the changes to ocean and costal life, but life everywhere will get far worse if nothing is done to stop the warming of our planet. A world dominated by scientifically advanced greedy carnivores is not a world worth saving. The earth is on a slippery slope that is leading to extinction. The way we consume animal products is irresponsible because it poses a major threat to the environment and endangers humans. To respond to this, we need to develop new ways to combat ecological problems and change wasteful consumption habits. If we cannot

stop our polluting and wasteful ways, we are destined to lose the planet that harbors everything we know.

To change the eating habits of an entire nation might be a feat all its own; changing the eating habits of an entire world seems impossible. I am confident that it all starts with one person making the right choice. I urge you to follow not only in my footsteps, but join the millions of others who are putting down their steak knives to fight climate change. I find it horrifying that some people would rather destroy their own race than change what goes on their plate. There is overwhelming evidence that illuminates the fiery connection between global warming and serious health problems. Now this generation and future generations will need to create regulations and invent new solutions to enjoy the same planet we have all called home.

Teacher Takeaways

"This essay is a good example of an Aristotelian argument; the author clearly presents their stance and their desired purpose, supporting both with a blend of logos, pathos, and ethos. It's clear that the author is passionate and knowledgeable. I would say as a meat-eater, though, that many readers would feel attacked by some of the rhetorical figures included here: no one wants to be part of the group of 'scientifically advanced greedy carnivores' that will make our world uninhabitable, regardless of the truth of that statement. Additionally, the author seems to lose track of their thesis throughout paragraphs four and five. I would encourage them to make sure every paragraph begins and ends with a connection to the thesis statement."–Professor Dawson

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Endotes

1 The Toulmin model of argumentation is another common framework and structure which is not discussed here.

2 Wetzel, John. "The MCAT Writing Assignment." WikiPremed, Wisebridge Learning Systems LLC, 2013,

http://www.wikipremed.com/mcat_essay.php. [Link has expired since publication. For more information, see WikiPremed website.] Reproduced in accordance with Creative Commons licensure.
3 I find this distinction especially valuable because there is some slippage in what instructors mean by "rhetorical triangle"–e.g., "logos, pathos, ethos" vs. "reader, writer, text." The latter set of definitions, used to determine rhetorical situation, is superseded in this text by SOAP (subject, occasion, audience, purpose).
4 This correlation is an oft-cited example, but the graph is a fabrication to make a point, not actual data.
5 See Frederic Filloux's 2016 article, "Facebook's Walled Wonderland is Inherently Incompatible with News [Medium article]."
6 See "Power and Place Equal Personality" (Deloria) or "Jasmine-Not-Jasmine" (Han) for non-comprehensive but interesting examples.Deloria, Jr., Vine. "Power and Place Equal Personality." Indian Education in America by Deloria and Daniel Wildcat, Fulcrum, 2001, pp. 21-28.Han, Shaogang. "Jasmine-Not-Jasmine." A Dictionary of Maqiao, translated by Julia Lovell, Dial Press, 2005, pp. 352+.
7 Essay by Samantha Lewis, Portland State University, 2015. Reproduced with permission from the student author.
8 Essay by Jennifer Vo-Nguyen, Portland State University, 2017. Reproduced with permission from the student author.
9 Essay by Tim Curtiss, Portland Community College, 2017. Reproduced with permission from the student author.

Chapter Eight: Research Concepts

We live in an age of immediate answers. Although we have not achieved parity in access to technology worldwide, information has never been easier to uncover. This is, of course, a double-edged sword: the proliferation of ideas due to the technological revolution enables new kinds of learning, but also has fundamentally changed the way we think and interact.

One of my friends refers to his iPhone as "The Wonder Killer": because he has such quick access to answers through the miniature computer he carries everywhere, the experience of sustained curiosity is now very rare in his life. All kinds of questions are easily answered by googling–"Who was that guy in *Back to the Future Part II*?" "Do spiders hibernate?"–or a brief crawl through Wikipedia–"How has globalization impacted Bhutan's economy?" "What life experiences influenced Frida Kahlo's painting?" But the answers to these questions, though easily discovered, paint a very one-dimensional portrait of human knowledge.

TED-ed Video: How Simple Ideas Lead to Scientific Discoveries by Adam Savage

Take a look at this brief TED video from Adam Savage of *MythBusters*. For scientists and writers alike, the spirit of curiosity at once motivates individual learning and also the growth and progress of our collective knowledge. Your innate ability to be curious puts you in the league of the most brilliant and prolific scholars–people who were driven by questions, seeking to interrogate the world around them.

In this section, I add my voice to the chorus of writing teachers whose rallying cry is a renewed investment in curiosity[1]. Hopefully, you too will embrace inquisitive fascination by rejecting easy answers and using writing as a means of discovery.

Chapter Vocabulary

Vocabulary	Definition
confirmation bias	a cognitive bias by which a person seeks only ideas which confirm their ex themselves that that worldview is universal and/or truthful.
inquiry-based research	research and research writing that is motivated by questions, not by answ
ongoing conversation	an analogy for the network of discourse surrounding a topic, issue, or idea
research question/ path of inquiry	a question, series of questions, or inquisitive topic that guides an inquiry-
stakes	the potential value or consequence of an exploration or argument; what st subject or advocacy for a position. Consider also "stakeholders," the peopl the outcome of an investigation or argument.

Techniques

Inquiry-Based Research

It's possible that you've already written research papers by this point in your academic career. If your experience has been like mine was, writing these papers went one of two ways:
The teacher assigns a specific topic for you to research, and sometimes even a specific thesis for you to prove.

The teacher provides more freedom, allowing students to choose a topic at their own discretion or from a set of options.

In both situations, my teacher expected me to figure out what I wanted to argue, then find research to back me up. I was expected to have a fully formed stance on an issue, then use my sources to explain and support that stance. Not until graduate school did I encounter *inquiry-based research*, which inverts this sequence.

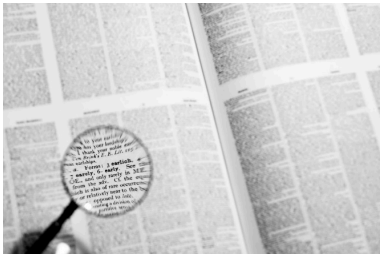
Put simply, inquiry-based research refers to research and research writing that is motivated by

Non-Inquiry-Based Research	***Inquiry-Based Research***
Your research begins with an answer and seeks out evidence that confirms that answer.	Your research begins with a question, reviews all the evidence available, and then develops that answer.
For example, a murder occurs and I get a bad vibe from the butler. I look for all the clues that confirm that the butler did it; assuming I find what I need, I can declare that the butler did it.	For example, a murder occurs. I look for as many clues that I can, then determine the most likely culprit based on that evidence.

It's quite possible that the butler did do it, and both logical processes might lead me to the same conclusion. However, an inquiry-based investigation allows more consideration for the possibility that the butler is innocent.

Consider the difference this can make: if research is about

learning, then an inquiry-based perspective is essential. If you only seek out the ideas that agree with you, you will never learn.



"Investigation" by Paul Vladuchick is licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0

Even in the event that the investigation yields the same answers, their differences are crucial. The example in the table above demonstrates *confirmation bias*, or as we called it in Chapter Four, "projection." (You might be familiar with this phenomenon from politicized social media spheres which tailor content to the user;[2] you may have also identified it as the force behind many axes of prejudice, racialized police violence, and discrimination.) When we only look for answers that agree with our preexisting ideas, we are more likely to ignore other important ideas, voices, and possibilities. Most importantly, confirmation bias inhibits genuine learning, which relies on challenging, expanding, and complicating our current knowledge and worldviews

Consequently, inquiry-based research is time-consuming and intensive: instead of only dealing with evidence that supports a certain answer or perspective, it requires the reasoner to encounter a great diversity of evidence and answers, which can be difficult to sift through.

You don't have to—shouldn't, in fact—have a thesis set in stone before starting research. In lieu of a thesis guiding your process, a *research question* or *path of inquiry* will motivate your research and writing. You might have a hypothesis or a working thesis, but you must be tremendously flexible: be prepared to pivot, qualify, nuance, or entirely change your answer as you proceed.

In order to pursue your research question, you will need to encounter *a lot* of sources. Not all of the sources you encounter will make it into your paper, which is a new practice for some students. (When I engage in inquiry-based research, I would approximate that

one in every twelve sources I encounter makes an appearance in my final draft. The other eleven may be interesting or educational, but might not have a place in my discussion.) This is a time-consuming process, but it leads to more significant learning, more complex thinking, and more interesting and effective rhetoric.

> "The art and science of asking questions is the source of all knowledge." – Thomas Berger
> This distinction has important implications for the kind of research and research writing for which this book advocates.

Ongoing Conversation3

"Discussion" by University of Baltimore Special Collections & Archives is licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0

Imagine yourself arriving at a party or some other social gathering. You walk up to a circle of people chatting casually about *Star Wars*. It's clear they have been on about it for a while. Some of them you know, some of them you've heard of but never met, and some of them are total strangers—but they all seem to have very strong opinions about the film franchise. You want to jump into the conversation, so when someone posits, "Jar Jar Binks was the worst character of the prequels, and maybe even the whole canon," you blurt out, "Yeah, Jar Jar was not good. He was bad. He was the worst character of the prequels. He might even be the worst of the whole canon." The circle of people turn to stare at you,

confused why you just parroted back what the last person said; all of you feel awkward that you derailed the discussion.

Even writing that example makes me socially anxious. Let's try option B instead: as you arrive to the group, you listen attentively. You gradually catch the flow and rhythm of the conversation, noticing its unique focus and language. After hearing a number of people speak regarding Jar Jar, you bring together their ideas along with your ideas and experiences. You ease yourself in to the conversation by saying, "I agree with Stan: Jar Jar is a poorly written character. However, he does accomplish George Lucas's goals of creating comic relief for young audiences, who were a target demographic for the prequels." A few people nod in agreement; a few people are clearly put out by this interpretation. The conversation continues, and as it grows later, you walk away from the discussion (which is still in full force without you) having made a small but meaningful contribution—a ripple, but a unique and valuable ripple.

This dynamic is much like the world of research writing. Your writing is part of *an ongoing conversation*: an exchange of ideas on a certain topic which began long before you and will continue after you. If you were to simply parrot back everyone's ideas to them, you would not advance the conversation and it would probably feel awkward. But by synthesizing many different sources with your unique life experiences, from your unique vantage point (or, "interpretive position" viz. Chapter Four), you can mobilize research and research writing to develop compelling, incisive, and complex insights. You just need to get started by feeling out the conversation and finding your place.

Developing a Topic

Finding a conversation that you're excited about and genuinely interested in is the first and most important step. As you develop a topic, keep in mind that pursuing your curiosities and passions will

make your research process less arduous, more relevant, and more pleasant. Such an approach will also naturally improve the quality of your writing: the interest you have for a topic will come across in the construction of your sentences and willingness to pursue multiple lines of thought about a topic. An author's boredom results in a boring paper, and an author's enthusiasm translates to enthusiastic writing.

Depending on the parameters your teacher has set, your research topic might need to (a) present a specific viewpoint, (b) focus on a specific topic, or (c) focus on a certain theme or set of ideas. It's also possible that your teacher will allow complete autonomy for one or all of your research assignments. Be sure you review any materials your instructor provides and ask clarifying questions to make sure your topic fits the guidelines of their assignment.

To generate ideas, I recommend completing some of the activities included later in this chapter. I find it most productive to identify areas of interest, then develop questions of all sizes and types. Eventually, you will zero in on a question or combination of questions as your path of inquiry.

What makes for a good research question or path of inquiry? Of course, the answer to this question will depend on your rhetorical situation. However, there are some common characteristics of a good research question in any situation:

- **It is answerable, but is not easily answerable.**[4] Engaging and fruitful research questions require complex, informed answers. However, they shouldn't be so subjective, intricate, or expansive that they simply cannot be answered in the scope of your rhetorical situation.[5]
- **It is specific.** By establishing parameters on your scope, you can be sure your research is directed and relevant. More discussion of scope and focus continues below, and you can try the exercise titled "Focus: Expanding and Contracting Scope" later in the chapter to learn more.
- **It matters to someone.** Research questions and the rhetoric

they inform are valuable only because they have *stakes*: even if it's a small demographic, the answers to your research question should impact someone.

- **It allows you to say something new or unique.** As discussed earlier in this chapter, inquiry-based research should encourage you to articulate a unique standpoint by synthesizing many different voices, interpreted from your individual perspective, with your life experiences and ideas. What you say doesn't have to be groundbreaking, but it shouldn't just reiterate ideas, arguments, histories, or perspectives.

It is difficult to find a question that hits all these marks on your first try. As you proceed through research, pre-writing, drafting, and revising, you should refine and adjust your question(s). Just like any other part of writing, developing a path of inquiry is iterative: you've got to take a lot of chances and work your way toward different results. The activity titled "Focus: Expanding and Contracting Scope" in this section can help you complicate and develop your question along a variety of axes.

To hear a different voice on developing research questions, check out this short video from Wilfrid Laurier University.

Video: Developing a Research Question by Laurier Library

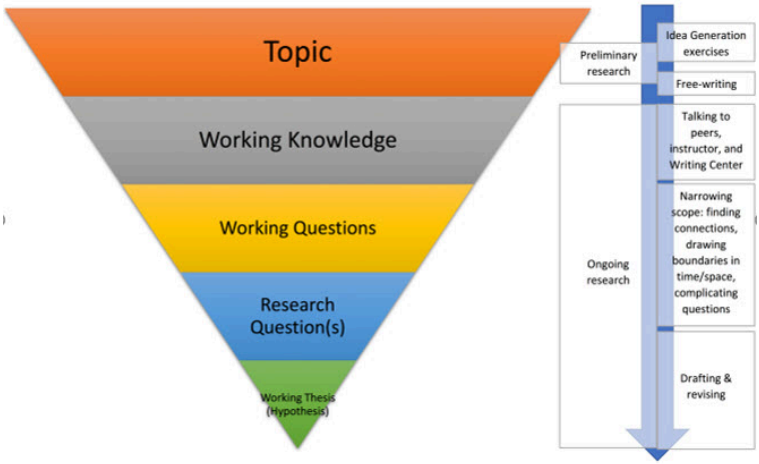
In order to find the best version of your research question, you should develop "working questions"—questions of all sizes and types that are pertinent to your subject. As you can see below, you can start with a handful of simple working questions that will eventually lead to a viable research question.

Working Question	Working Research Question	Revised Research Question
Too easy to answer, low stakes, not specific enough: What do people eat in Vietnam?	Higher stakes, more specific: What does Vietnamese food reflect about Vietnamese culture?	More complex answers, higher stakes, very specific: How does Vietnamese cuisine reflect a history of colonialism?
Too straightforward, not specific enough: Are people in the United States more obese than they used to be?	More specific: Have obesity rates increased in the United States over the last 100 years?	More complex answers, higher stakes, very specific: Is there a correlation between obesity rates and economic instability in the United States over the last 100 years?
Not specific enough, difficult to answer in-depth: What is the role of religion in the Middle East?	More specific, easier to answer: How has religion influenced politics in the Middle East in the last 50 years?	Very specific, higher stakes, more complex answers: How has religion's influence on government impacted the day-to-day lives of Qatari citizens?

As you hone your path of inquiry, you may need to zoom in or out

in terms of scope: depending on your rhetorical situation, you will need different degrees of focus. Just like narration, research writing benefits from a careful consideration of scope. Often, a narrower scope is easier to work with than a broader scope–you will be able to write more and write better if your question asks for more complex thinking.

> It's important to be flexible throughout your research project. Be prepared to pivot topics, adjust your research question, change your opinions, and confront unanticipated challenges.



Consider the diagram above. As you build a working knowledge of your topic (get the feel for the conversation that began before you arrived at the party), you might complicate or narrow your working questions. Gradually, try to articulate a research question (or combination of questions). Remember to be flexible as you research though: you might need to pivot, adjust, refocus, or replace

your research question as you learn more. Consider this imaginary case study as an example of this process.

Ahmed began his project by identifying the following areas of interest: racism in the U.S.; technology in medicine and health care; and independent film-making. After doing some free-writing and preliminary research on each, he decided he wanted to learn more about racially motivated police violence. He developed working questions:

> Are police officers likely to make judgments about citizens based on their race?
>
> Have police forces instituted policies to avoid racism?
>
> Who is most vulnerable to police violence?
>
> Why does it seem like police officers target people of color?
>
> Who is responsible for overseeing the police?

He realized that he needed to narrow his focus to develop a more viable path of inquiry, eventually ending up with the research question,

> Over the last thirty years, what populations are most likely to experience police violence in the U.S.?

However, after completing more research, Ahmed discovered that his answers came pretty readily: young Black men are significantly more vulnerable to be victims of police violence. He realized that he's not really saying anything new, so he had to tweak his path of inquiry.

Ahmed did some more free-writing and dug around to find a source that disagreed with him or added a new layer to his answers. He discovered eventually that there are a handful of police organizations that have made genuine efforts to confront racism in their practices. Despite the widespread and normalized violence enacted against people of color, these groups were working against racial violence. He reoriented his research question to be,

> Have antiracist police trainings and strategies been effective in reducing individual or institutional racism over the last thirty years?

Writing a Proposal

Bigger research projects often require additional steps in preparation and process. Before beginning an extended meditation on a topic—before rushing into a long-term or large-scale research project—it's possible that your teacher will ask you to write a research proposal. The most effective way to make sure your proposal is on the right track is to identify its rhetorical purpose. Are you trying to process ideas? Compile and review initial research? Demonstrate that you're pursuing a viable path of inquiry? Explain the stakes of your subject?

Although every rhetorical audience will value different parts of the proposal, there are a handful of issues you should try to tackle in any proposal.

- **Your subject.** Introduce your topic with a general introduction to your topic—not too general, but enough to give the reader a sense of grounding.

> Too general: Education is something that happens in every facet of our lives.
> Better: Access to education is a major concern for people living in a democratic society.

- **Your occasion.** When you developed your research question, you chose an issue that matters to someone, meaning that it is timely and important. To establish the significance of your topic, explain what's prompting your writing and why it matters.

> Since Betsy Devos' nomination for U.S. Secretary

> of Education, the discussion surrounding school choice has gained significant momentum. Socioeconomic inequality in this country has produced great discrepancies in the quality of education that young people experience, and it is clear that something must be done.

- **Your stakes and stakeholders.** Although you may have alluded to *why* your question matters when introducing your occasion, you might take a sentence or two to elaborate on its significance. What effect will the answer(s) you find have, and on whom?

> Because educational inequality relates to other forms of injustice, efforts to create fairness in the quality of schools will influence U.S. racial politics, gender equality, and socioeconomic stratification. For better or for worse, school reform of any kind will impact greater social structures and institutions that color our daily lives as students, parents, and community members.

- **Your research question or path of inquiry.** After introducing your subject, occasion, and stakes, allow the question guiding your research to step in.

> Some people believe that school choice programs are the answer. But is it likely that people of all socioeconomic backgrounds can experience parity in education through current school voucher proposals?

- **Your position as a working thesis.** Articulate your position as a (hypo)thesis—a potential answer to your question or an idea of where your research might take you. This is an answer which

you should continue to adjust along the way; writing it in the proposal does not set your answer(s) in stone.

> In my research, I will examine whether school choice programs have the potential to create more equitable schooling experiences for all students. Even though proponents of school choice use the language of freedom and equality to justify school vouchers, recent propositions for school choice would likely exacerbate inequality in education and access.

- **The difficulties you anticipate in the research and writing process and how you plan to address them.** In your proposal, you are trying to demonstrate that your path of inquiry is viable; therefore, it is important to show that you're thinking through the challenges you might face along the way. Consider what elements of researching and writing will be difficult, and how you will approach those difficulties.

> There are a vast number of resources on school choice, but I anticipate encountering some difficulty in pursuing my guiding question. For example, many people discussing this topic are entrenched in their current viewpoints. Similarly, this issue is very politicized, dividing people mostly along party lines. I also need to do more preliminary research: I'm not certain if there have been school choice experiments conducted on any significant scale, in the U.S. or elsewhere. Finally, it is difficult to evaluate complex social phenomena of inequality without also considering race, gender, disability status, nationality, etc.; I'll need to focus on socioeconomic status, but I cannot treat it as a discrete issue.

- Optional, depending on your rhetorical situation: **A working list of sources consulted in your preliminary research.** I ask my students to include a handful of sources they have encountered as they identified their topic and path of inquiry: this shows that they are working toward understanding their place in an ongoing conversation.

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Zornick, George. "Bernie Sanders Just Introduced His Free College Tuition Plan." *The Nation [Article]*, The Nation Company LLC, 3 April 2017.

Combining these examples, we can see our proposal come together in a couple of paragraphs:

School Vouchers: Bureaucratizing Inequality

Access to education is a major concern for people living in a democratic society. Since Betsy Devos' nomination for U.S. Secretary of Education, the discussion surrounding school choice has gained significant momentum. Socioeconomic inequality in this country has produced great discrepancies in the quality of education that young people experience, and it is clear that something must be done. Because educational inequality relates to other forms of injustice, efforts to create fairness in the quality of schools will influence U.S. racial politics, gender equality, and socioeconomic stratification. For better or for worse, school reform of any kind will impact greater social structures and institutions that color our daily lives as students, parents, and community members. Some people believe that school choice programs are the answer.

But is it likely that people of all socioeconomic backgrounds can experience parity in education through current school voucher proposals?

In my research, I will examine whether school choice programs have the potential to create more equitable schooling experiences for all students. Even though proponents of school choice use the language of freedom and equality to justify school vouchers, recent propositions for school choice would likely exacerbate inequality in education and access.

There are a vast number of resources on school choice, but I anticipate encountering some difficulty in pursuing my guiding question. For example, many people discussing this topic are entrenched in their current viewpoints. Similarly, this issue is very politicized, dividing people mostly along party lines. I also need to do more preliminary research: I'm not certain if there have been school choice experiments conducted on any significant scale, in the U.S. or elsewhere. Finally, it is difficult to evaluate complex social phenomena of inequality without also considering race, gender, disability status, nationality, etc.; I'll need to focus on socioeconomic status, but I cannot treat it as a discrete issue.

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As you develop your own proposal, I encourage you to follow these steps, answering the questions listed above. However, in order to create a more cohesive proposal, be sure to revise for fluency:

your proposal shouldn't read like a list of answers, but like a short essay outlining your interests and expectations.

Activities

Idea Generation: Curiosity Catalogue6 and Collaborative Inquiry

This exercise encourages you to collaborate with other classmates to develop a topic, working questions, a path of inquiry, and a baseline of communal knowledge. You should complete Part One independently, then gather with a small group of two or three other students for Part Two, and a different small group of two or three other students for Part Three: Small Group. (If you are working on this exercise as a full class, complete Part One, Part Two, and Part Three: Gallery Walk.) Before you get started, divide three large sheets of paper (11×17 is best) into columns like this:

Part One

Create a catalogue of topics you are personally curious about—things that you want to learn more about. These don't have to be revolutionary things right away; it's more important that they're meaningful to you. First, choose three of the following broad topic headings:

Politics	*Sports*	*Social Justice*
Science and Technology	*Music and Art*	*The Environment and Sustainability*
Food	*Other Cultures and Nations*	*Health and Disease*
Education	*Business and Economy*	

Politics	Food	Music and Art

On your first sheet of three-column paper, write those three topic headings.

Politics	Food	Music and Art
• The electoral college • Diplomacy (relations with other countries) • Voter enfranchisement • Autocracies • Relationship to economy	• Michelin stars • Reality TV shows • Stressful kitchens • Processed foods and added sugars • Food deserts • Mexican food and culture	• Publicly funded art museums • Learning musical instruments • Cubism • Calypso • Performance art

Next, underneath each topic heading, write bulleted lists of as many subtopics or related ideas that come to mind that interest you. (Try not to censor yourself here—the idea is to generate a large number of bullet points. To some extent, this is an exercise in free association: what are the first things that come to mind when you think of each topic?) Spend ten to fifteen minutes on your lists. Then, take a five-minute break away from your lists and clear your head; return to your lists for three more minutes to make any additions that you didn't think of at first.

Read over your lists, making note especially of items that surprised you. Choose the three items from the full page that most interest you. You can choose one from each column, three from the same, or any combination of lists, so long as you have three items that you care about.

Part Two

Begin to develop a working knowledge by collaborating with classmates to consider the topic from several perspectives beyond your own.

The electoral college	Processed foods and added sugars	Learning musical instruments
People were talking a lot about it for the 2000 and 2016 elections. It doesn't correspond with "popular vote." Some states divide their electoral votes according to "popular vote." I remember hearing the term "faithless electors" but I don't remember what it means.	People say that processed foods are not good for you. Added sugars are the opposite of natural sugars. Processed foods taste better—at least in my opinion. Most American kids love processed foods.	Some schools require you to learn an instrument in elementary school. Many people teach themselves how to play an instrument. Once you learn one instrument in a family, you can often pick up other ones in that family pretty quickly (e.g., saxophone and clarinet).

Write your three favorite list items from Part One in the headings for your second piece of three-column paper. Sit in a circle with your groupmates; each student should pass their three-column paper one position clockwise. For five minutes, each student will free-write *what they already know* about each topic using prose, lists, or illustrations. Then, rotate your papers another step—repeat until you have your original sheet of paper back.

Review the knowledge your groupmates compiled on your sheet. Have they offered anything that surprises you—stuff you didn't know already, conflicting perspectives, or connections to other ideas or topics?

Part Three: Small Group

Begin to develop working and research questions by collaborating with your classmates to explore different curiosities. (This part of the exercise is designed for a small group of three or four total students, including you, different from the group in Part Two. If you are completing this part of the exercise with your whole class, skip to Part Three: Gallery Walk.)

Write your three favorite list items from Part One, potentially

modified by insights from Part Two, in the headings for your third piece of three-column paper.

The electoral college	Processed foods and added sugars	Learning musical instruments
• How did the electoral college come into being? • How do other democracies conduct elections? • When did different oppressed groups win the right to vote? How? • What alternatives have been proposed for the U.S.? • Why is it called a "college"? • Is it fair?	• How do you avoid processed sugars? • How does the body metabolize natural and added sugars differently? • Does advertising influence children's preferences for sugary foods?	• Does learning a musical instrument influence other parts of your life? • Does sheet music count as a different language? • Which instruments or instrument families are best for young musicians? • Should the government subsidize youth music programs outside of schools?

Sit in a circle with your groupmates; each student should pass their three-column paper one position clockwise. For five minutes, each student will free-write questions about each topic. No question is too big or small, too simple or complex. Try to generate as many questions as you possibly can. Then, rotate your papers another step—repeat until you have your original sheet of paper back.

Review the questions your groupmates compiled on your sheet. Have they offered anything that surprises you—issues you haven't thought of, relationships between questions, recurring themes or patterns of interest, or foci that might yield interesting answers?

Part Three: Gallery Walk

Begin to develop working and research questions by collaborating with your classmates to explore different curiosities. (This part of

the exercise is designed for an entire class of students of about twenty to twenty-five students, including you. If you are completing this part of the exercise a small group of three to four total students, including you, return to Part Three: Small Group.)

The electoral college	Processed foods and added sugars	Learning musical instruments
• How did the electoral college come into being? • How do other democracies conduct elections? • When did different oppressed groups win the right to vote? How? • What alternatives have been proposed for the U.S.? • Why is it called a "college"? • Is it fair?	• How do you avoid processed sugars? • How does the body metabolize natural and added sugars differently? • Does advertising influence children's preferences for sugary foods?	• Does learning a musical instrument influence other parts of your life? • Does sheet music count as a different language? • Which instruments or instrument families are best for young musicians? • Should the government subsidize youth music programs outside of schools?

Write your three favorite list items from Part One, potentially modified by insights from Part Two, in the headings for your third piece of three-column paper. Every student should tape their papers to the classroom wall, just below eye-level, such that it forms a circular shape around the perimeter of the room. Each student in the class should stand in front of their paper, then rotate one position clockwise. At each new page, you will have two minutes to review the headings and free-write questions about each topic. No question is too big or small, too simple or complex. Try to generate as many questions as you possibly can. Then, rotate through clockwise until you've returned to your original position.

Review the questions your classmates compiled on your sheet. Have they offered anything that surprises you—issues you haven't thought of, relationships between questions, recurring themes or patterns of interest, or foci that might yield interesting answers?

After completing all three parts of this exercise, try to articulate a viable and interesting research question that speaks to your

curiosity. Make sure its scope is appropriate to your rhetorical situation; you can use the exercise "Focus: Expanding and Contracting Scope" later in this chapter to help expand or narrow your scope.

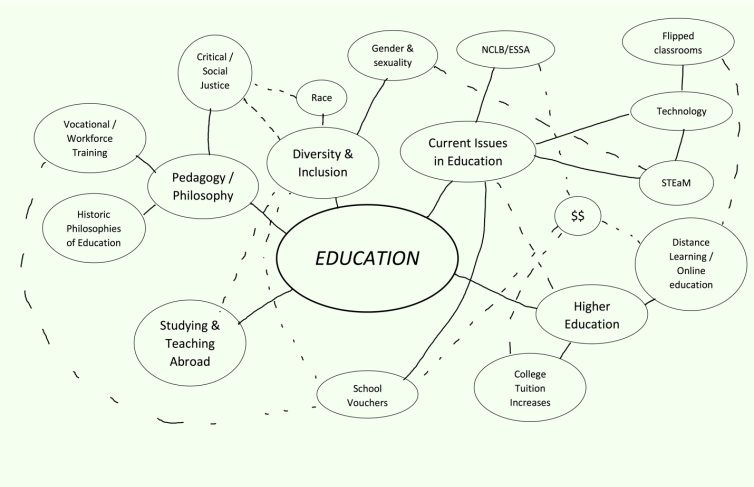
If you're still struggling to find a topic, try some of other idea generation activities that follow this, or check in with your school's Writing Center, your teacher, or your peers.

Idea Generation: Mind-Mapping

By organizing and exploring your current knowledge, you might find an area of interest for your research project. A mind-map, also known as a "web" or "cluster," is a graphic representation of your thought processes. Since this form allows for digressions, free association, and wandering, it allows for organic thinking and knowledge-building.

Start out by putting a general subject area in the middle of a blank piece of paper in a circle—for the example below, I started with "education." (If you don't have any immediate ideas, try Part One of the Curiosity Catalogue exercise above.) Then, branch out from this general subject to more specific or connected subjects. Because this is a pre-writing activity, try to generate as many associations as you can: don't worry about being right or wrong, or using standardized grammar and spelling. Your goal is to create as many potential

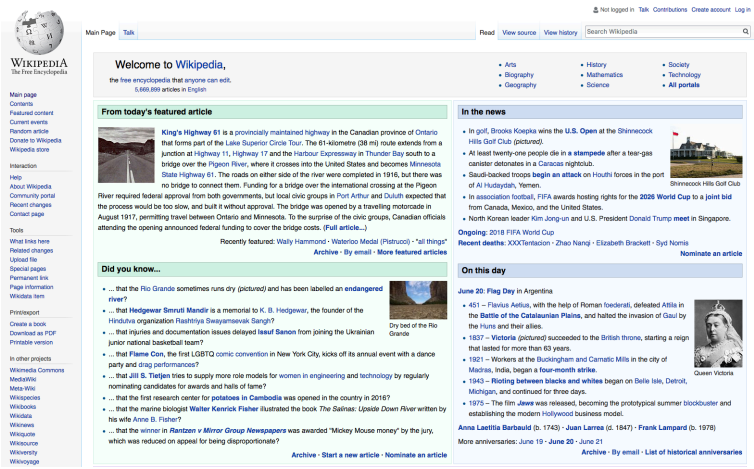
topics as possible.



Once you've finished your mind-map, review the idea or clusters of ideas that seem to demand your attention. Did any of your bubbles or connections surprise you? Do you see any patterns? Which were most engaging to meditate on? From these topics and subtopics, try to articulate a viable and interesting research question that speaks to your curiosity. Make sure its scope is appropriate to your rhetorical situation; you can use the exercise "Focus: Expanding and Contracting Scope" later in this chapter to help expand or narrow your scope.

Idea Generation: Internet Stumbling

In addition to its status as an ever-expanding repository of knowledge, and in addition to its contributions to global human connection, the Internet is also an exceptional free association machine. Through the magic of hyperlinks and social media, random chance can set us in the right direction to develop a research topic. Spend fifteen to twenty minutes clicking around on the Internet, using one of the following media for guidance, and jot down every potential topic that piques your interest.



- **Wikipedia:** Go to the Wikipedia homepage and check out the "featured article" of the day, or choose "Random Article" from the sidebar on the far left. Click any of the hyperlinks in the article to redirect to a different page. Bounce from article to article, keeping track of the titles of pages and sections catch your eye.
- **StumbleUpon:** Set up a free account from this interest randomizer. You can customize what kinds of pages, topics, and media you want to see.
- **An Instagram, Facebook, reddit, or Twitter feed:** Flow through one or more social media feeds, using links, geotags, user handles, and hashtags to encounter a variety of posts.

After stumbling, review the list you've made of potentially interesting topics. Are you already familiar with any of them? Which surprised you? Are there any relationships or intersections worth exploring further? From these topics and subtopics, try to articulate a viable and interesting research question that speaks to your curiosity. Make sure its scope is appropriate to your rhetorical situation; you can use the exercise "Focus: Expanding and Contracting Scope" later in this chapter to help expand or narrow your scope.

Focus: Expanding and Contracting Scope

At this point, you have hopefully identified some topic or path of inquiry for your research project. In order to experiment with scope, try complicating your research question(s) along the different dimensions in the following table. A completed table is included as an example after the blank one.

Your current topic or research question(s):		
Scope dimension:	More narrow	More broad
Time (When?)		
Place (Where?)		

Population (For whom?)		
Connections (Intersections with other issues)		

Other… (Topic-specific adjustments)		

Model:

Your current topic or research question(s): Should marijuana be legalized nationally?		
Scope dimension:	More narrow	More broad
Time	What do trends in marijuana consumption in the last twenty years indicate about legalization?	How has marijuana been treated legally over the last 100 years?
Place	Should marijuana be legal in our state?	Should marijuana be legalized internationally?
Population	Should marijuana be legalized for medical users?	Should marijuana be legalized for all citizens of and visitors to the country?
Connections	Does marijuana legalization correlate to addiction, economy, or crime?	How does marijuana compare to legal pharmaceutical drugs?

Other…	Should marijuana sales be organized by government?	Should all drugs be legalized nationally?

Model Texts by Student Authors

Pirates & Anarchy7

(Research proposal – see the annotated bibliography here and final essay here)

My inquiry has to do with piracy and its relationship with anarchist culture. There seem to be two tipping points to the life cycles of piratical and anarchist cultures. First, there is the societal inequality and/or economic stagnation that cause groups to lose faith in established power structures (Samatar 1377). This disenfranchisement leads to groups' choosing to take self-guided action, to meet needs not satisfied. It is a bid for freedom. The other shift appears to be when the actions of the group become predatory upon vulnerable groups. What begins as notions of self-sufficiency become violent victimizations of other segments of society (Wilson ix).

The current guiding questions that I am following are these: What societal breakdowns lead to groups subscribing to anarchist philosophies? Are pirates and anarchists synonymous? Do the successes and/or failures of pirate organizations create any lasting change in the societies from which they spring?

Piracy has been around for a very long time and has taken on many forms. One of these incarnations was the seafaring sort

terrorizing ships during the golden age of piracy in the seventeenth century. Another example was the Somali pirates preying on the African coast in the early 2000s. Information pirates in cyberspace and anarchist protestors in political activism are current forms. The relevance of why individuals turn to piracy is important to explore.

Political polarization continues to freeze up the government, rendering them ineffectual. Worse, elected officials appear more concerned with ideology and campaign funding than the plight of the common man, leaving their own constituents' needs abandoned. Citizens may turn to extreme political philosophies such as anarchy as a way to take piratical action to counteract economic disparity. A pervasive sense of powerlessness and underrepresentation may lead to the splintering of societal structure, even rebellion. Of import is understanding whether acts of piracy lead to societal erosion via this loss of faith and turn to violence, shrugging off accountability to the system as a countermeasure to what is seen as government's inability to provide a free and fair system. This may be seen as empowering. It may also signal a breakdown of centralized government.

There are several difficulties I anticipate. Dedicating time in an efficient manner is the main concern with managing this project. This topic will require a lot of exploration in research. At the same time, writing and revising need their fair share of dedication. I'm looking to find that balance so each aspect of the process gets its due. I will handle this by utilizing the strategy of setting a timer for research and then for writing. A little of both will get done each day, with greater allotments of time given to writing as I go along.

Also of concern is narrowing this topic further. The phenomenon of piracy is so interesting to me, especially in the context of history. However, considering how this topic may be relevant in the current shifting political landscape, it seems important to dwell on the now as well as the past. Much has been written already on piracy, so I'll be going into the research looking for a more focused place where I can contribute to the subject

matter. I'm going to set up a couple of writing center appointments to get some guidance as I go along.

Finally, I want to be watchful of wandering. Many side paths are open to inspection with this topic. Not only will this waste time, but it will also weaken my argument. Once I tighten up the thesis, I want to make sure my research and writing stay focused.

Teacher Takeaways

"The proposal introduces the subject well and identifies guiding questions (and some context) clearly. However, the questions are not yet specific or complex enough to act as the essay's central research question; the main components (pirates and anarchy) are still too general. Choosing a type of piracy (and perhaps a location), for instance, would lend context and definition to "anarchy" as it is considered here. Then the stakes may be clearly determined. Everything rides on greater specificity. That said, the author has done well to convert an interest into a compelling and unique line of inquiry – an important first step."– Professor Fiscaletti

Works Cited

Samatar, Abdi Ismail, Lindberg, Mark, and Mahayni, Basil. "The Dialectics of Piracy in Somalia: The Rich Versus the Poor." *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 31, no. 8, 2010, pp. 1377-1394. *EBSCOhost*, doi: 10.1080/01436597.2010.538238.

Wilson, Peter Lamborn. Preface. *The Devil's Anarchy: The Sea Robberies of the Most Famous Pirate Claes G. Compaen and The Very*

Remarkable Travels of Jan Erasmus Reyning, Buccaneer by Stephen Snelders, *Autonomedia*, 2005, pp. vii-xi.

A Case of Hysterics8

(Research proposal – see the annotated bibliography here and final essay here)

The concept of female Hysteria was a medical recognition dating back to the 13th century that has been diagnosed by physicians quite liberally until recent times. The diagnosis and treatment of Hysteria were routine for hundreds of years in Western Europe, as well as the United States. Symptoms that indicated Hysteria were broad and all encompassing: nervousness, sexual desire, faintness, insomnia, irritability, loss of appetite, depression, heaviness in abdomen, etc. These symptoms were said to be caused by a "wandering womb," described as a kind of living creature that sought to disrupt biological processes, disrupt breathing, and cause disease.

The number of diagnosed cases of hysteria slowed as medical advancements proceeded, and in the early 1960s (coinciding with the popularization of feminism) the "disease" ceased to be considered a true medical disorder. In modern medicine, however, the treatment and diagnosis of female medical issues continues to be vague and potentially harmful due to lack of knowledge. Does the concept of female hysteria have continuity today?

Although the vocabulary has changed, it is clear that the practice of ignoring serious medical ailments based on sex remains prominent in the world of medicine. It is not uncommon for a physician to diagnose a woman with chronic stress or psychosomatic issues, and then later discover a disease like lupus, fibromyalgia, or polycystic ovarian syndrome, all of which are still commonly dismissed because it is likely the patient is experiencing the chronic pain in their heads. Because of sexism in the medical field, many women are receiving subpar healthcare. In my research,

I will examine the past culture of Hysteria as well as the current state of misdiagnoses of women's health issues and how this reinforces gender norms in today's society; this will demonstrate the need for eliminating bias and sexism in medicine.

In my research process, I imagine I will encounter difficulties in finding detailed scientific research in the misdiagnoses of women's health, despite having found multiple accounts on non-scientific platforms. I also anticipate a possible attitude of mistrust coming from the audience because of this topic; it is common nature to trust doctors blindly, as well as the norm in our culture to assume women are irrational and excessive. Finally, it will be difficult to attribute sexism and bias simply to the idea of misidentification of ailments. While this is common, sexism has also contributed to, plainly, a lack of research and knowledge of female healthcare. Therefore, willful ignorance plays a role in the imbalance between male and female medicine as well. I will mention this concept briefly in my essay, but continue to focus on the idea of frequent female misdiagnosis and how this perpetuates preconceived notions of feminine temperament in society.

Teacher Takeaways

"The author takes the time to give historical context, and that is important for building the analogy referenced in the research question. However, the question itself, and the following discussion, lack some precision. What does 'continuity' mean here? What 'notions of feminine temperament' will be examined? Are they a cause or an effect of misdiagnosis? The author may already have a (hypo)thesis in mind, but the terms of the question must first be clarified. Still, the context and the discussion of gender theory and

medicine indicate a researcher who is eager to synthesize information and join a larger discussion."– Professor Fiscaletti

Wage Transparency and the Gender Divide9

Discussing salaries with neighbors and especially colleagues is often an unthinkable offense against social mores in the United States. Pay secrecy has long been the norm in most of Western society, but it comes with an information imbalance during any salary negotiations. Lately, wage transparency has gained some legal foothold at the national level as a tool to combat gender wage disparity for equal work. Is pay transparency an effective tool to close the gender pay gap, or will it only succeed in making colleagues uncomfortable?

States have been successively passing local laws to reinforce prior national legislation protecting employees' rights to share salary information, and recent hacks have made information public involuntarily. In some situations, like in Norway, wage transparency has been the law for years. Norway also has the third smallest wage gap in the world. Compensation also has an impact on self-esteem and performance, so the wage gap could be causing a systematic decrease in self-worth for women in the workforce relative to their male counterparts. I plan to research whether increased wage transparency would cause a decrease in the gender pay gap.

There are many readily available statistics on the wage gap, although it may be difficult to avoid politically polarized sources. I'm not sure how available analytical studies of pay transparency will be, although sites like Glassdoor have published some admittedly self-serving studies. It will be difficult, although interesting, to assess

the issue of pay transparency and the wage gap, as they are both complex sociological issues.

Teacher Takeaways

"This student has chosen an interesting and focused topic for their inquiry-based research paper. I appreciate their anticipation of difficulties, too. Although I expect their understanding of the issue will evolve as they learn more about it, I would still encourage this author to spend some more time in this proposal hypothesizing about the connection between gender discrimination and pay secrecy; it's not 100% clear to me how those important topics are related to each other. This is germane to my other major concern—that the student doesn't appear to have done any research at this point. A couple of preliminary sources may provide guidance as the student wrestles with complex ideas."– Professor Dawson

Endnotes

1 Perhaps best known in this regard is Bruce Ballenger, author of The Curious Researcher, a text which has greatly impacted my philosophies of research and research writing
2 See Filloux.
3 Inspired by Kenneth Burke.Burke, Kenneth. The Philosophy of Literary Form, University of California Press, 1941.
4 Depending on your rhetorical situation, you might also ask if your question is arguable, rather than answerable.
5 Teachers also refer to very complex or subjective questions as

“not researchable”—so it’s likely that your research question will need to be both arguable NOTEREF _Ref487359393 \h * MERGEFORMAT 101 and researchable.

6 This exercise is loosely based on Ballenger’s “Interest Inventory” exercise.Ballenger, Bruce. The Curious Researcher, 9th edition, Pearson, 2018, pp. 21-22.

7 Proposal by Kathryn Morris, Portland State University, 2017. Reproduced with permission from the student author.

8 Proposal by Hannah Zarnick, Portland State University, 2017. Reproduced with permission from the student author.

9 Proposal by Benjamin Duncan, Portland State University, 2017. Reproduced with permission from the student author.

Chapter Nine: Interacting with Sources

"Card catalog" by Andy Langager is licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0

Less than one generation ago, the biggest challenge facing research writers like you was tracking down relevant, credible, and useful information. Even the most basic projects required sifting through card catalogues, scrolling through endless microfiche and microfilm slides, and dedicating hours to scouring the stacks of different libraries. But now, there is no dearth of information: indeed, the Internet has connected us to more information than any single person could process in an entire lifetime.

Once you have determined which conversation you want to join, it's time to begin finding sources. Inquiry-based research requires many encounters with a diversity of sources, so the Internet serves us well by enabling faster, more expansive access. But while the Internet makes it much easier to find those sources, it comes with its own host of challenges. The biggest problems with primarily Internet-based research can be boiled down to two issues:

- There is too much out there to sift through everything that might be relevant, and
- There is an increased prominence of unreliable, biased, or simply untrue information.

This chapter focuses on developing strategies and techniques to make your research and research writing processes more efficient, reliable, and meaningful, especially when considering the unique difficulties presented by research writing in the digital age. Specifically, you will learn strategies for discovering, evaluating, and integrating sources.

"Another Ethernet Switch in the Rack" by hdaniel is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0

Chapter Vocabulary

Vocabulary	Definition
annotated bibliography	a research tool that organi
believer	a posture from which to re encounter.
block quote	a direct quote of more tha
bootstrapping	the process of finding new
citation mining	the process of using a text'
claim of evaluation	an argument determining evidence and a consistent
claim of phenomenon	an argument exploring a m but should still be arguable
claim of policy	an argument that propose informed by understandin action.

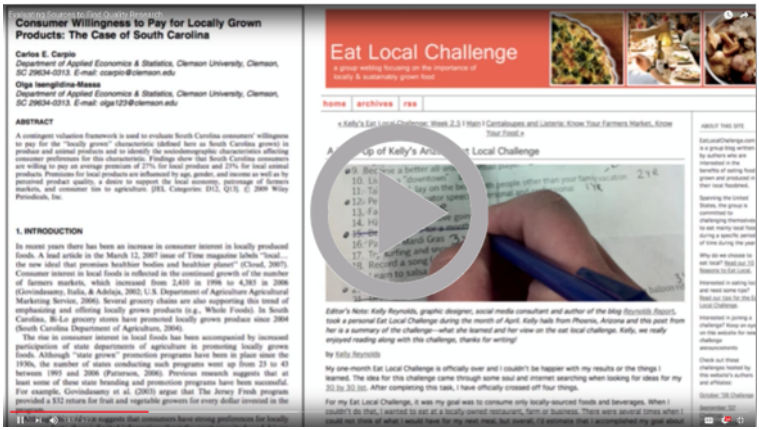
CRAAP Test	a technique for evaluating **R**elevance, **A**ccuracy, **A**uth
credibility	the degree to which a text
direct quote	the verbatim use of anothe analyze/close-read to dem
doubter	a posture from which to re encounter.
evidence	a part or combination of pa
the naysayer's voice	a voice that disagrees with Helps author respond to cr
paraphrase	author reiterates a main id length of the passage(s) the
primacy effect	a psychological effect expe than much of the content b recency effect.

recency effect	a psychological effect expe than much of the content l effect.
signpost	a phrase or sentence that c interpretation, ease transit
summary	a rhetorical mode in which words, condensing a longe
thesis (statement)	a 1-3 sentence statement o every rhetorical situation; paper. Also referred to as a
use-value	the degree to which a text useful or not useful. Use-va Test.

Techniques

Research Methods: Discovering Sources

Let's bust a myth before going any further: there is no such thing as a "good" source. Check out this video from Portland Community College.



Video: Evaluating Sources to Find Quality Research by PCC Library

What makes a source "good" is actually determined by your purpose: *how* you use the source in your text is most important to determining its value. If you plan to present something as truth—like a fact or statistic—it is wise to use a peer-reviewed journal article (one that has been evaluated by a community of scholars). But if you're trying to demonstrate a perspective or give *evidence*, you may not find what you need in a journal.

Your Position	A Supporting Fact (Something you present as factual)	An Exam Position (S
Women are unfairly criticized on social media.	A peer-reviewed scholarly article: Sills, Sophie, et al. "Rape Culture and Social Media: Young Critics and a Feminist Counterpublic." *Feminist Media Studies*, vol. 16, no. 6, 2016, pp. 935–951.	A popular b Tamplin, Massive Na *Daily*, Bust

If you want to showcase a diversity of perspectives, you will want to weave together a diversity of sources.

As you discover useful sources, try to expand your usual research process by experimenting with the techniques and resources included in this chapter.

The first and most important determining factor of your research is *where* you choose to begin. Although there are a great number of credible and useful texts available across different search platforms, I generally encourage my students begin with two resources:

Their college or university's library and its website, and

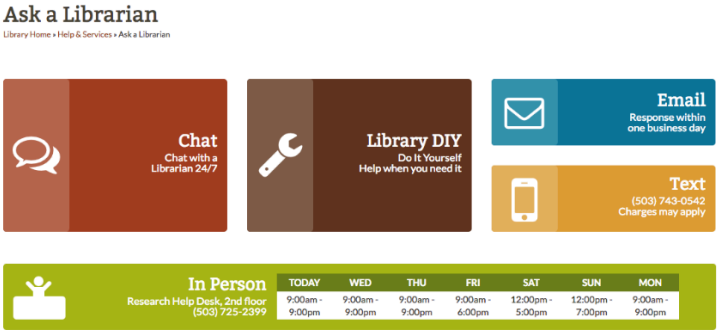
Google Scholar.

These resources are not bulletproof, and you can't always find what you need through them. However, their general search functionality and the databases from which they draw tend to be more reliable, specific, and professional. It is quite likely that your argument will be better received if it relies on the kind of sources you discover with these tools.

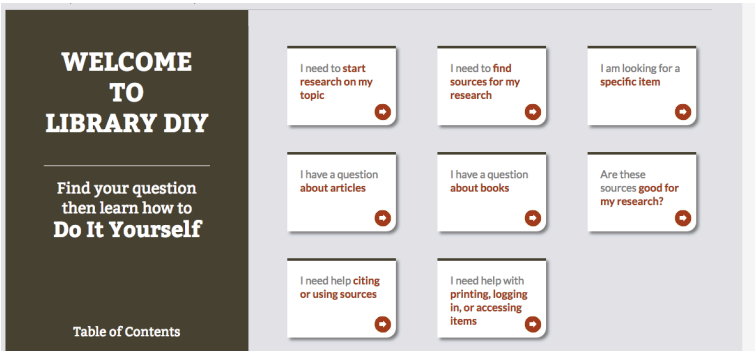
Your Library

Photo by NESA by Makers on Unsplash

Although the following information primarily focuses on making good use of your library's online tools, one of the most valuable and under-utilized resources at your disposal are the librarians themselves. Do you know if your school has research librarians on staff? How about your local library? Research librarians (or, reference librarians) are not only well-versed in the research process, but they are also passionate about supporting students in their inquiry.



It's also possible that your library offers research support that you can access remotely: many colleges and universities provide librarian support via phone, text, instant message/chat, or e-mail. Some libraries even make video tutorials and do-it-yourself research tips and tricks.



The first step in learning how your library will support you is to investigate their website. Although I can't provide specific instruction for the use of your library website—they are all slightly different—I encourage you to spend ten minutes familiarizing yourself with the site, considering the following questions especially:

- Does the site have an FAQ, student support, Librarian Chat, or DIY link in case you have questions?
- Does the site have an integrated search bar (i.e., a search engine that allows you to search some or all databases and the library catalogue simultaneously)?
- How do you access the "advanced search" function of the library's search bar?
- Does your account have an eShelf or reading list to save sources you find?
- Is your library a member of a resource sharing network, like ILLiad or SUMMIT? How do you request a source through this network?
- Does your library subscribe to multimedia or digital resource services, like video streaming or eBook libraries?
- Does the site offer any citation management support software, like Mendeley or Zotero? (You can find links to these tools in the Additional Recommended Resources appendix.)

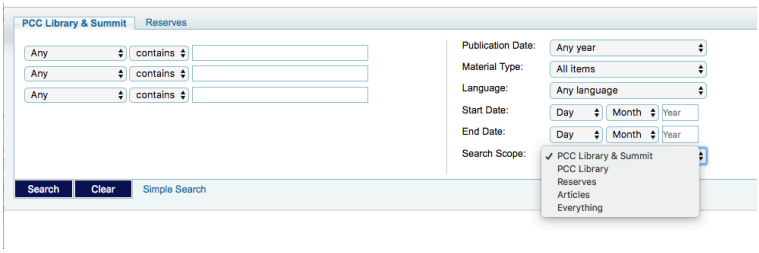
Depending on where you're learning, your school will provide different access to scholarly articles, books, and other media.

Most schools pay subscriptions to databases filled will academic works in addition to owning a body of physical texts (books, DVDs, magazines, etc.). Some schools are members of exchange services for physical texts as well, in which case a network of libraries can provide resources to students at your school.

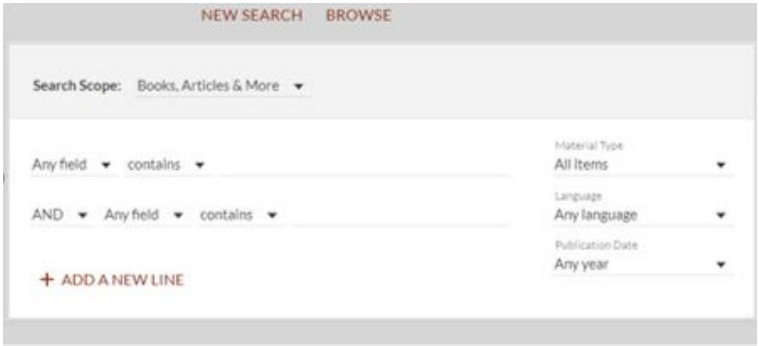
It is worth noting that most library websites use an older form of search technology. You have likely realized that day-to-day search engines like Google will predict what you're searching, correct your spelling, and automatically return results that your search terms might not have exactly aligned with. (For example, I could google *How many basketball players on Jazz roster* and I would still likely get the results I needed.) Most library search engines don't do this, so you need to be very deliberate with your search terms. Here are some tips:

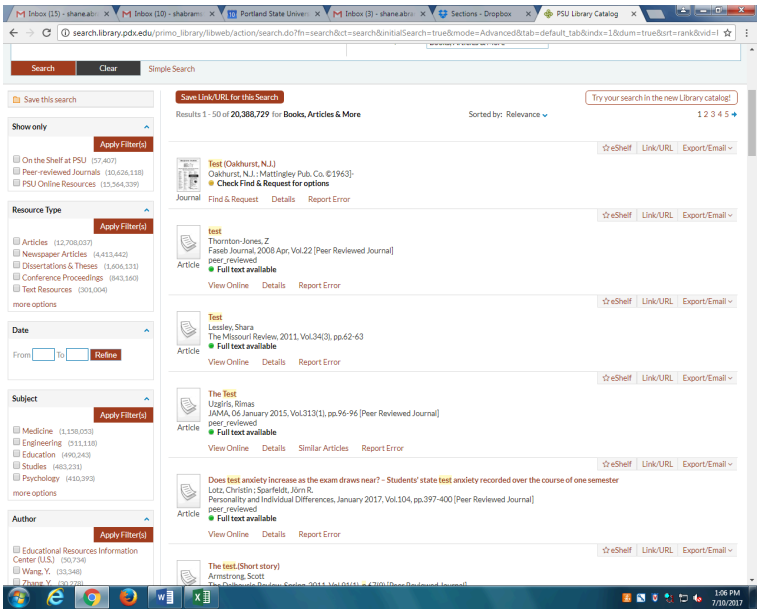
- Consider synonyms and jargon that might be more likely to yield results. As you research, you will become more fluent in the language of your subject. Keep track of vocabulary that other scholars use, and revise your search terms based on this context-specific language.
- Use the Boolean operators ? and * for expanded results:
    - wom?n yields results for woman, women, womyn, etc.
    - medic* yields results for medic, medicine, medication, medicinal, medical, etc.
- Use the advanced search feature to combine search terms, exclude certain results, limit the search terms' applicability, etc.

When using library search engines, be very deliberate with your search terms.

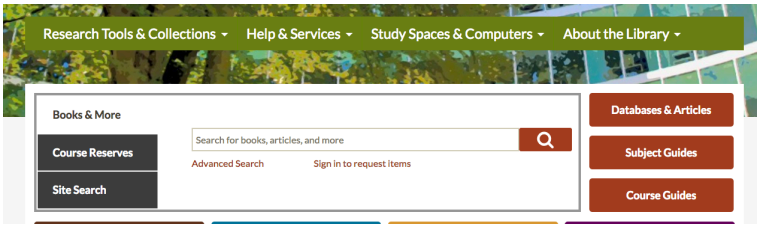


Advanced search fields like these allow you to put more specific constraints on your search. Your library website's search feature will likely allow you to limit the results you get by year of publication, medium, genre or topic, and other constraints.



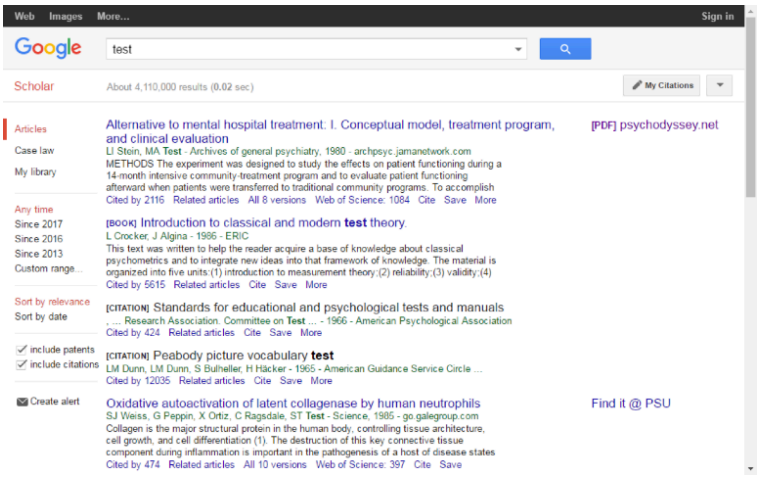


You may also be able to refine your first set of results using filters (typically on the left side of the page and/or above the results). For instance, if your teacher requires you to use a peer-reviewed source, your library database may allow you to limit your results to only peer-reviewed journals, as illustrated here.



JSTOR, Academic Search Premier, and EBSCO are three databases that most schools subscribe to; they are quite broad and well established. Especially if your school's library doesn't have an integrated search function, you may need to access these databases directly. Look for a link on your library website to "Databases" (or something to that effect) to find specific networks of sources.

Google Scholar



Because Google Scholar is a bit more intuitive than most library search engines, and because it draws from large databases, you might find it easier to use. Many of the results you turn up using Google Scholar are available online as free access PDFs.

That said, Scholar will often bring up citations for books, articles, and other texts that you don't have access to. Before you use Google Scholar, make sure you're logged in to your school account in the same browser; the search engine should provide links to "Find it @ [your school]" if your institution subscribes to the appropriate database.

If you find a citation, article preview, or other text via Google Scholar but can't access it easily, you return to your library website and search for it directly. It's possible that you have access to the text via a loaning program like ILLiad.

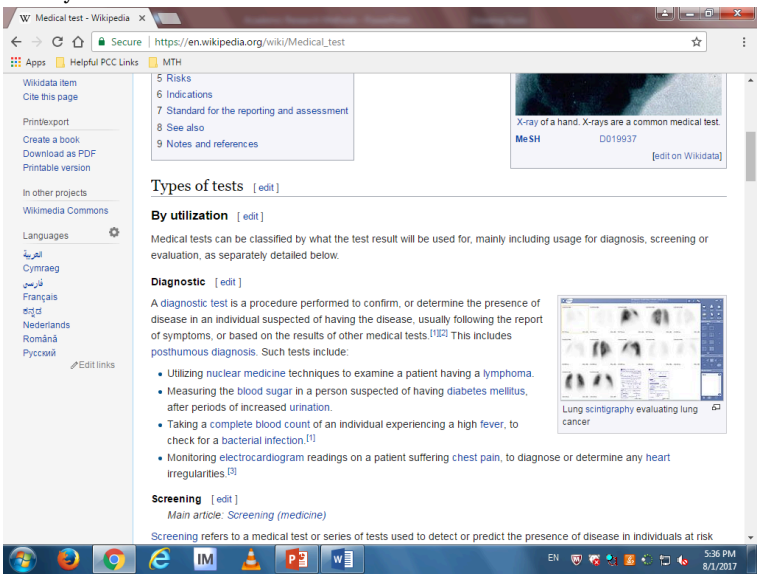
Google Scholar will also let you limit your results by various constraints, making it easier to wade through many, many results.

- Google Tricks That Will Change the Way You Search" by Jack Linshi
- "Refine web searches" and "Filter your search results" from

Google's help section

Wikipedia

A quick note on Wikipedia: many instructors forbid the use of Wikipedia as a cited source in an essay. Wikipedia is a great place for quick facts and background knowledge, but because its content is user-created and -curated, it is vulnerable to the spread of misinformation characteristic of the broader Internet. Wikipedia has been vetting their articles more thoroughly in recent years, but only about 1 in 200 are internally rated as "good articles." There are two hacks that you should know in order to use Wikipedia more critically:



- It is wise to avoid a page has a warning banner at the top, such as:
    - This article needs to be updated,
    - The examples and perspective in this article deal primarily

with the United States and do not represent a worldwide view of the subject,
    - The neutrality of this article is disputed,
    - This article needs additional citations for verification,
    - This article includes a list of references, but its sources remain unclear because it has insufficient inline citations.
- If your Wikipedia information is crucial and seems reliable, use the linked citation to draw from instead of the Wikipedia page, as pictured below. This will help you ensure that the linked content is legitimate (dead links and suspect citations are no good) and avoid citing Wikipedia as a main source.

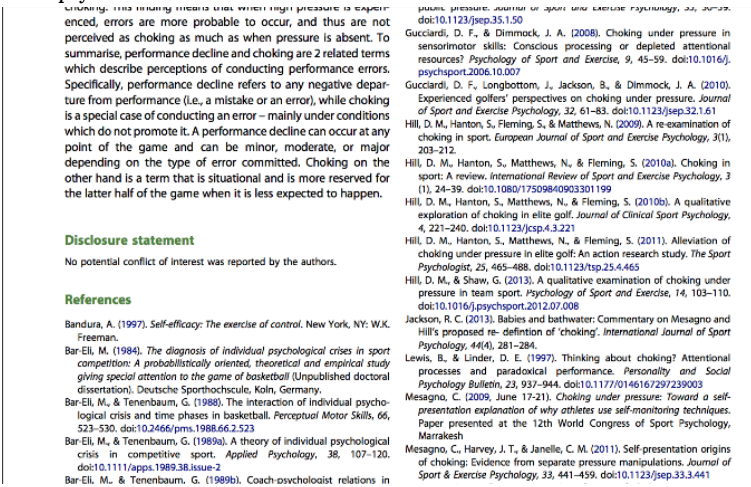
Other Resources

As we will continue to discuss, the most useful sources for your research project are not always proper academic, peer-reviewed articles. For instance, if I were writing a paper on the experience of working for United Airlines, a compelling blog post by a flight attendant that speaks to the actual working conditions they experienced might be more appropriate than a data-driven scholarly investigation of the United Airlines consumer trends. You might find that a TED Talk, a published interview, an advertisement, or some other non-academic source would be useful for your writing. Therefore, it's important that you apply the skills and techniques from "Evaluating Sources" to all the texts you encounter, being especially careful with texts that some people might see as unreliable.

Additional Techniques for Discovering Sources

All it takes is one or two really good sources to get you started. You should keep your perspective wide to catch as much as you can—but

if you've found a handful of good sources, there are four tools that can help you find even more:



choking. This finding means that when high pressure is experienced, errors are more probable to occur, and thus are not perceived as choking as much as when pressure is absent. To summarise, performance decline and choking are 2 related terms which describe perceptions of conducting performance errors. Specifically, performance decline refers to any negative departure from performance (i.e., a mistake or an error), while choking is a special case of conducting an error – mainly under conditions which do not promote it. A performance decline can occur at any point of the game and can be minor, moderate, or major depending on the type of error committed. Choking on the other hand is a term that is situational and is more reserved for the latter half of the game when it is less expected to happen.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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Bar-Eli, M., & Tenenbaum, G. (1989a). A theory of individual psychological crisis in competitive sport. *Applied Psychology, 38*, 107–120. doi:10.1111/apps.1989.38.issue-2

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public pressure. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology, 33*, 50–59. doi:10.1123/jsep.35.1.50

Gucciardi, D. F., & Dimmock, J. A. (2008). Choking under pressure in sensorimotor skills: Conscious processing or depleted attentional resources? *Psychology of Sport and Exercise, 9*, 45–59. doi:10.1016/j.psychsport.2006.10.007

Gucciardi, D. F., Longbottom, J., Jackson, B., & Dimmock, J. A. (2010). Experienced golfers' perspectives on choking under pressure. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology, 32*, 61–83. doi:10.1123/jsep.32.1.61

Hill, D. M., Hanton, S., Fleming, S., & Matthews, N. (2009). A re-examination of choking in sport. *European Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology, 3*(1), 203–212.

Hill, D. M., Hanton, S., Matthews, N., & Fleming, S. (2010a). Choking in sport: A review. *International Review of Sport and Exercise Psychology, 3* (1), 24–39. doi:10.1080/17509840903301199

Hill, D. M., Hanton, S., Matthews, N., & Fleming, S. (2010b). A qualitative exploration of choking in elite golf. *Journal of Clinical Sport Psychology, 4*, 221–240. doi:10.1123/jcsp.4.3.221

Hill, D. M., Hanton, S., Matthews, N., & Fleming, S. (2011). Alleviation of choking under pressure in elite golf: An action research study. *The Sport Psychologist, 25*, 465–488. doi:10.1123/tsp.25.4.465

Hill, D. M., & Shaw, G. (2013). A qualitative examination of choking under pressure in team sport. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise, 14*, 103–110. doi:10.1016/j.psychsport.2012.07.008

Jackson, R. C. (2013). Babies and bathwater: Commentary on Mesagno and Hill's proposed re- defintion of 'choking'. *International Journal of Sport Psychology, 44*(4), 281–284.

Lewis, B., & Linder, D. E. (1997). Thinking about choking? Attentional processes and paradoxical performance. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 23*, 937–944. doi:10.1177/0146167297239003

Mesagno, C. (2009, June 17-21). *Choking under pressure: Toward a self-presentation explanation of why athletes use self-monitoring techniques*. Paper presented at the 12th World Congress of Sport Psychology, Marrakesh

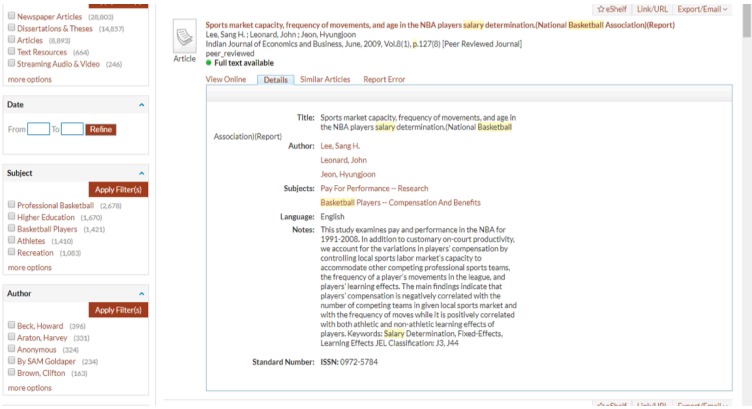
Mesagno, C., Harvey, J. T., & Janelle, C. M. (2011). Self-presentation origins of choking: Evidence from separate pressure manipulations. *Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology, 33*, 441–459. doi:10.1123/jsep.33.3.441

The author of that perfect article probably got some of their information from somewhere else, just like you. *Citation mining* is the

process of using a text's citations, bibliography, or notes to track down other similar or related sources. Plug the author's citations into your school's library search engine or Google Scholar to see if you have access.

Web of Science is like reverse citation mining: instead of using a text's bibliography to find more sources, you find other sources that cite your text in *their* bibliographies. Web of Science is a digital archive that shows you connections between different authors and their writing—and not only for science! If you find a good source that is documented in this database, you can see other texts that cite that source.

Bootstrapping is a technique that works best on search engines with detail features, like your library search engine. As you can see in the screenshot below, these search engines tag each text with certain subject keywords. By clicking on those keywords, you can link to other texts tagged with the same keywords, typically according to Library of Congress standards.



- WorldCat is a tremendous tool that catalogs the most citations of any database I've ever seen. Even though you can't always access texts through WorldCat, you can figure out which nearby libraries might be able to help you out.

The first and most important piece of advice I can offer you as you begin to dig into these sources: stay organized. By taking notes and keeping record of where each idea is coming from, you save yourself a lot of time—and avoid the risk of unintentional plagiarism. If you could stand to brush up on your notetaking skills, take a look at Appendix A: Engaged Reading Strategies.

Research Methods: Evaluating Sources

If there's no such thing as an inherently "good" or "bad" source, how do we determine if a source is right for our purposes? As you sift through sources, you should consider *credibility* and *use-value* to determine whether a source is right for you. Credibility refers to the reliability and accuracy of the author, their writing, and the publisher. Use-value is a broad term that includes whether you should use a text in your research paper, as well as how you will use

that text. The *CRAAP Test* will help you explore both credibility and use-value.

Currency	*How recently was the text created? Does that impact the accuracy or value of its contents, either positively or negatively?*

Generally, a text that is current is more credible and useful: data will be more accurate, the content will reflect more up-to-date ideas, and so on. However, there are some exceptions.

- A text that is not current might be useful because it reflects attitudes of its publication era. For instance, if I were writing a paper on sexism in the office environment, it might be convincing to include a memo on dress codes from 1973.
- A text that is current might not be useful because the phenomena it discusses might not have existed long enough to have substantial evidence or study. For instance, if I were writing a paper on nanorobotics, it would be difficult to evaluate long-term impacts of this emergent technology because it simply hasn't been around long enough.

Relevance	*Is the text closely related to your topic? Does it illuminate your topic, or is it only tangentially connected?*

A text that is relevant is generally more useful, as you probably already realize. Exceptions to this might include:

- A text that is too relevant might not be useful because it might create overlap or redundancy in your argument. You should use texts like this to pivot, complicate, or challenge your topic so you are not just repeating someone else's ideas.
- A text that is only slightly relevant might be useful in providing background knowledge, drawing out an analogy, or gesturing to important questions or ideas you don't have room to discuss in the scope of your paper.

Accuracy

Is there any reason to doubt the validity of the text? Is it possible that the information and ideas included are simply untrue?

You might start out by relying on your instincts to answer these questions, but your evaluation of accuracy should also informed more objectively by the other elements of the CRAAP Test (e.g., if a text is outdated, it might no longer be accurate). Of course, the importance of this element depends on your use of the source; for instance, if I were writing a paper on conservative responses to Planned Parenthood, I might find it useful to discuss the inaccurate videos released by a pro-choice group several years ago.

Authority

Who is the author? Who is the publisher? Do either or both demonstrate ethos *through their experience, credentials, or public perception?*

This element also depends on your use of the source; for instance, if I were writing a paper on cyberbullying, I might find it useful to bring in posts from anonymous teenagers. Often, though, academic presses (e.g., Oxford University) and government publishers (e.g., hhs.gov) are assumed to have an increased degree of authority when compared with popular presses (e.g., *The Atlantic*) or self-published texts (e.g., blogs). It may be difficult to ascertain an author and a publisher's authority without further research, but here are some red flags if you're evaluating a source with questionable authority:

- There is no author listed.
- The website hosting the webpage or article is incomplete, outdated, or broken.
- The author seems to use little factual evidence.
- The author is known for extreme or one-dimensional views.
- The source has a sponsoring organization with an agenda that might undermine the validity of the information.

Purpose

What is the author trying to achieve with their text? What are their motivations or reasons for publication and writing? Does that purpose influence the credibility of the text?

As we've discussed, every piece of rhetoric has a purpose. It's important that you identify and evaluate the implied and/or declared purposes of a text before you put too much faith in it.

Even though you're making efforts to keep an open mind to different positions, it is likely that you've already formed some opinions about your topic. As you review each source, try to read both with and against the grain; in other words, try to position yourself at least once as a *doubter* and at least once as *believer*. Regardless of what

the source actually has to say, you should (a) try to take the argument on its own terms and try to appreciate or understand it; *and* (b) be critical of it, looking for its blind spots and problems. This is especially important when we encounter texts we really like or really dislike—we need to challenge our early perceptions to interrupt projection.

As you proceed through each step of the CRAAP Test, try to come up with answers as both a doubter and a believer. For example, try to come up with a reason why a source's Authority makes it credible and useful; then, come up with a reason why the same source's Authority makes it unreliable and not useful.

This may seem like a cumbersome process, but with enough practice, the CRAAP Test will become second nature. You will become more efficient as you evaluate more texts, and eventually you will be able to identify a source's use-value and credibility without running the entire test. Furthermore, as you may already realize, you can eventually just start eliminating sources if they fail to demonstrate credibility and/or use-value through at least one step of the CRAAP Test.

Interpreting Sources and Processing Information

Once you've found a source that seems both useful and credible, you should spend some time reading, rereading, and interpreting that text. The more time you allow yourself to think through a text, the more likely your use of it will be rhetorically effective.

Although it is time-consuming, I encourage you to process each text by:

- Reading once through, trying to develop a global understanding of the content
- Re-reading at least once, annotating the text along the way, and then copying quotes, ideas, and your reactions into your notes

- Summarizing the text in your notes in casual prose
- Reflecting on how the text relates to your topic and your stance on the topic
- Reflecting on how the text relates to others you've read

You need not perform such thorough reading with texts you don't intend to use—e.g., if you determine that the source is too old to inform your work. However, the above list will ensure that you develop a nuanced and accurate understanding of the author's perspective. Think of this process as part of the ongoing conversation: before you start expressing your ideas, you should listen carefully, ask follow-up questions to clarify what you've heard, and situate the ideas within the context of the bigger discussion.

The Annotated Bibliography

So far, you have discovered, evaluated, and begun to process your sources intellectually. Your next steps will vary based on your rhetorical situation, but it is possible that your teacher will ask you to write an annotated bibliography before or during the drafting process for your actual essay.

An *annotated bibliography* is a formalized exercise in the type of interpretation described throughout this section. An annotated bibliography is like a long works cited page, but underneath each citation is a paragraph that explains and analyzes the text. Examples are included in this section to give you an idea of what an annotated bibliography might look like.

Annotated bibliographies have a few purposes:

1. To organize your research so you don't lose track of where different ideas come from,
2. To help you process texts in a consistent and thorough way, and
3. To demonstrate your ongoing research process for your

teacher.

This kind of writing can also be an end in itself: many scholars publish annotated bibliographies as research or teaching tools. They can be helpful for authors like you, looking for an introduction to a conversation or a variety of perspectives on a topic. As an example, consider the model annotated bibliography "What Does It Mean to Be Educated?" later in this chapter.

Although every teacher will have slightly different ideas about what goes into an annotated bibliography, I encourage my students to include the following:

- A brief summary of the main ideas discussed in the text and/or an evaluation of the rhetoric or argumentation deployed by the author.
    - What are the key insights, arguments, or pieces of information included in the source? What is the author's purpose? How does their language pursue that purpose?

- A consideration of the text's place in the ongoing conversation about your topic.
    - To what other ideas, issues, and texts is your text responding? How would you describe the intended audience? Does the author seem credible, referencing other "speakers" in the conversation?

- A description of the text's use-value.
    - Is the text useful? How do you predict you will use the text in your work?

You might note that your work in the CRAAP Test will provide useful answers for some of these questions.

Sometimes, I'll also include a couple of compelling quotes in my annotations. Typically, I request that students write about 100 words for each annotation, but you should ask your teacher if they have more specific guidelines.

Your annotated bibliography will be an excellent tool as you turn to the next steps of research writing: synthesizing a variety of voices with your ideas and experiences. It is a quick reference guide, redirecting you to the texts you found most valuable; more abstractly, it will support you in perceiving a complex and nuanced conversation on your topic.

Research Methods: Drawing from Sources and Synthesizing

Finding Your Position, Posture, and Perspective

As you begin drafting your research essay, remember the conversation analogy: by using other voices, you are entering into a discussion that is much bigger than just you, even bigger than the authors you cite. However, what you have to say is important, so you are bringing together your ideas with others' ideas from a unique interpretive standpoint. Although it may take you a while to find it, you should be searching for your unique position in a complex network of discourse.

> "Research is to see what everybody else has seen, and to think what nobody else has thought."- Albert Szent-Györgyi

Here are a few questions to ask yourself as you consider this:

- How would I introduce this topic to someone who is completely unfamiliar?
- What are the major viewpoints on this topic? Remember that very few issues have only two sides.
- With which viewpoints do I align? With which viewpoints do I disagree? Consider agreement ("Yes"), disagreement ("No"), and qualification ("Yes, but…").
- What did I know about this issue before I began researching? What have I learned so far?
- What is my rhetorical purpose with this project? If your purpose is to argue a position, be sure that you feel comfortable with the terms and ideas discussed in the previous section on argumentation.

Articulating Your Claim

Once you've started to catch the rhythm of the ongoing conversation, it's time to find a way to put your perspective into words. Bear in mind that your thesis statement should evolve as you research, draft, and revise: you might tweak the wording, adjust your scope, change your position or even your entire topic in the course of your work.

> Your thesis statement can and should evolve as you continue writing your paper. Often, I prefer to think of a thesis instead as a (hypo)thesis—an informed estimation of the answer(s) to your research question.

Because your thesis is a "working thesis" or "(hypo)thesis," you should use the following strategies to draft your thesis but be ready to make adjustments along the way.

In Chapter 6, we introduced the T3, Occasion/Position, and Embedded Thesis models. As a refresher,

- A T3 statement articulates the author's stance, then offers three supporting reasons, subtopics, or components of the argument.

> Throughout history, women have been legally oppressed by different social institutions, including exclusion from the workplace, restriction of voting rights, and regulations of healthcare.

- An Occasion/Position statement starts with a statement of relevance related to the rhetorical occasion, then articulates the author's stance.

> Recent Congressional activity in the U.S. has led me to wonder how women's freedoms have been restricted throughout history. Women have been legally oppressed by many different institutions since the inception of the United States.

- An Embedded Thesis presents the research question, perhaps with a gesture to the answer(s). This strategy requires that you clearly articulate your stance somewhere later in your paper, at a point when your evidence has led you to the answer to your guiding question.

> Many people would agree that women have experienced oppression throughout the history of the United States, but how has this oppression been exercised legally through different social institutions?

Of course, these are only three strategies to write a thesis. You

may use one of them, combine several of them, or use a different strategy entirely.

To build on these three strategies, we should look at three kinds of claims: three sorts of postures that you might take to articulate your stance as a thesis.

- **Claim of Phenomenon**: This statement indicates that your essay will explore a measurable but arguable happening.

  > Obesity rates correlate with higher rates of poverty.

  Claims of phenomenon are often more straightforward, but should still be arguable and worth discussion.

- **Claim of Evaluation**: This statement indicates that your essay will determine something that is better, best, worse, or worst in regard to your topic.

  > The healthiest nations are those with economic safety nets.

  Claims of evaluation require you to make an informed judgment based on evidence. In this example, the student would have to establish a metric for "healthy" in addition to exploring the way that economic safety nets promote healthful behaviors—What makes someone "healthy" and why are safety nets a pathway to health?

- **Claim of Policy**: This statement indicates that your essay will propose a plan of action to best address an issue.

  > State and federal governments should create educational programs, develop infrastructure, and establish food-stamp benefits to promote healthy eating for people experiencing poverty.

  Claims of policy do the most heavy lifting: they articulate a stance that requires action, from the reader or from

another stakeholder. A claim of policy often uses the word "should."

You may notice that these claims can be effectively combined at your discretion. Sometimes, when different ideas overlap, it's absolutely necessary to combine them to create a cohesive stance. For instance, in the example above, the claim of policy would require the author to establish a claim of phenomenon, too: before advocating for action, the author must demonstrate what that action responds to. For more practice, check out the activity in the following section titled "Articulating Your Claim – Practicing Thesis Development."

Situating Yourself Using Your Research

While you're drafting, be diligent and deliberate with your use of other people's words, ideas, and perspectives. Foreground *your* thesis (even if it's still in progress) and use paraphrases, direct quotes, and summary in the background to explain, support, complicate, or contrast your perspective.

Depending on the work you've done to this point, you may have a reasonable body of quotes, summaries, and paraphrases that you can draw from. Whether or not you've been collecting evidence throughout your research process, be sure to return to the original sources to ensure the accuracy and efficacy of your quotes, summaries, and paraphrases.

In Section 2, we encountered paraphrasing, quoting, and summarizing for a text wrestling essay, but let's take a minute to revisit them in this new rhetorical situation. How do you think using support in a research paper is different from using support in an analysis?

A *direct quote* uses quotation marks (" ") to indicate where you're borrowing an author's words verbatim in your own writing. Use a direct quote if someone else wrote or said something in a distinctive or particular way and you want to capture their words exactly.

Direct quotes are good for establishing *ethos* and providing evidence. In a research essay, you will be expected to use some direct quotes; however, too many direct quotes can overwhelm your thesis and actually undermine your sense of *ethos*. Your research paper should strike a balance between quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing—and articulating your own perspective!

Summarizing refers to the action of boiling down an author's ideas into a shorter version in your own words. Summary demonstrates your understanding of a text, but it also can be useful in giving background information or making a complex idea more accessible.

When we *paraphrase*, we are processing information or ideas from another person's text and putting it in our own words. The main difference between paraphrase and summary is scope: if summarizing means rewording and condensing, then

paraphrasing means rewording without drastically altering length. However, paraphrasing is also generally more faithful to the spirit of the original; whereas a summary requires you to process and invites your own perspective, a paraphrase ought to mirror back the original idea using your own language.

> Whether you are quoting, paraphrasing, or summarizing, you must always include an appropriate citation.

Paraphrasing is helpful for establishing background knowledge or general consensus, simplifying a complicated idea, or reminding your reader of a certain part of another text. It is also valuable when relaying statistics or historical information, both of which are usually more fluidly woven into your writing when spoken with your own voice.

Each of these three tactics should support your argument: you should integrate quotes, paraphrases, and summary in with your

own writing. Below, you can see three examples of these tools. Consider how the direct quote, the paraphrase, and the summary each could be used to achieve different purposes.

Original Passage

It has been suggested (again rather anecdotally) that giraffes do communicate using infrasonic vocalizations (the signals are verbally described to be similar—in structure and function—to the low-frequency, infrasonic "rumbles" of elephants). It was further speculated that the extensive frontal sinus of giraffes acts as a resonance chamber for infrasound production. Moreover, particular neck movements (e.g. the neck stretch) are suggested to be associated with the production of infrasonic vocalizations.[1]

Quote	
Some zoological experts have pointed out that the evidence for giraffe hums has been "rather anecdotally" reported (Baotic et al. 3). However, some scientists have "speculated that the extensive frontal sinus of giraffes acts as a resonance chamber for infrasound production" (Ibid. 3).	Giraffes emit a low- used for communica skeptical because of Baotic et al., the ana deliberate and speci

These examples also demonstrate additional citation conventions worth noting:

- A parenthetical in-text citation is used for all three forms. (In MLA format, this citation includes the author's last name and page number.) The purpose of an in-text citation is to identify key information that guides your reader to your Works Cited

page (or Bibliography or References, depending on your format).

- If you use the author's name in the sentence, you do not need to include their name in the parenthetical citation.
- If your material doesn't come from a specific page or page range, but rather from the entire text, you do not need to include a page number in the parenthetical citation.
- If there are many authors (generally more than three), you can use "et al." to mean "and others."
- If you cite the same source consecutively in the same paragraph (without citing any other sources in between), you can use "Ibid." to mean "same as the last one."

There are infinite ways to bring evidence into your discussion,[2] but for now, let's revisit a formula that many students find productive as they find their footing in research writing: **Front-load + Quote/Paraphrase/Summarize + Cite + Explain/elaborate/analyze.**

Front-load + (1-2 sentences)	**Quote, paraphrase, or summarize +**	**(cite) +**	**Explain, elaborate, analyze** (2-3 sentences)
Set your reader up for the quote using a signpost (also known as a "signal phrase"). Don't drop quotes in abruptly: by front-loading, you can guide your reader's interpretation.	Use whichever technique is relevant to your rhetorical purpose at that exact point.	Use an in-text citation appropriate to your discipline. It doesn't matter if you quote, paraphrase, or summarize–all three require a citation	Perhaps most importantly, you need to make the value of this evidence clear to the reader. What does it mean? How does it further your thesis?

This might feel formulaic and forced at first, but following these steps will ensure that you give each piece of evidence thorough attention.

What might this look like in practice?

> **(1)** Humans and dolphins are not the only mammals with complex systems of communication. As a matter of fact, **(2)** some scientists have "speculated that the extensive frontal sinus of giraffes acts as a resonance chamber for infrasound production" ((3) Baotic et al. 3). **(4)** Even though no definitive answer has been found, it's possible that the structure of a giraffe's head allows it to create sounds that humans may not be able to hear. This hypothesis supports the notion that different species of animals develop a sort of "language" that corresponds to their anatomy.

1. Front-load

> Humans and dolphins are not the only mammals with complex systems of communication. As a matter of fact,

2. Quote

> some scientists have "speculated that the extensive frontal sinus of giraffes acts as a resonance chamber for infrasound production"

3. Cite

> (Baotic et al. 3).

4. Explain/elaborate/analyze

> Even though no definitive answer has been found, it's possible that the structure of a giraffe's head allows it to create sounds that humans may not be able to hear. This hypothesis supports the notion that different species of animals develop a sort of "language" that corresponds to their anatomy.

Extended Quotes

A quick note on *block quotes*: Sometimes, you may find it necessary

to use a long direct quote from a source. For instance, if there is a passage that you plan to analyze in-depth or throughout the course of the entire paper, you may need to reproduce the whole thing. You may have seen other authors use block quotes in the course of your research. In the middle of a sentence or paragraph, the text will break into a long direct quote that is indented and separated from the rest of the paragraph.

There are occasions when it is appropriate for you to use block quotes, too, but they are rare. Even though long quotes can be useful, quotes long enough to block are often too long. Using too much of one source all at once can overwhelm your own voice and analysis, distract the reader, undermine your *ethos*, and prevent you from digging into a quote. It's typically a better choice to abridge (omit words from the beginning or end of the quote, or from the middle using an ellipsis [...]), break up (split one long quote into two or three shorter quotes that you can attend to more specifically), or paraphrase a long quote, especially because that gives you more space for the last step of the formula above.

If, in the rare event that you must use a long direct quote, one which runs more than four lines on a properly formatted page, follow the guidelines from the appropriate style guide. In MLA format, block quotes are: (a) indented one inch from the margin, (b) double-spaced, (c) not in quotation marks, and (d) use original end-punctuation and an in-text citation after the last sentence. The paragraph will continue after the block quote without any indentation.

Readerly Signposts

"Signpost Blank" by Karen Arnold is in the Public Domain, CC0

Signposts are phrases and sentences that guide a reader's interpretation of the evidence you are about to introduce. Readerly signposts are also known as "signal phrases" because they give the reader a warning of your next move. In addition to foreshadowing a paraphrase, quote, or summary, though, your signposts can be active agents in your argumentation.

Before using a paraphrase, quote, or summary, you can prime your reader to understand that evidence in a certain way. For example, let's take the imaginary quote, "The moon landing was faked in a sound studio by Stanley Kubrick."

> **[X] insists**, "The moon landing was faked in a sound studio by Stanley Kubrick."
>
> **Some people believe, naively, that** "The moon landing was faked in a sound studio by Stanley Kubrick."
>
> **Common knowledge suggests that** "The moon landing was faked in a sound studio by Stanley Kubrick."
>
> **[X] posits that** "The moon landing was faked in a sound studio by Stanley Kubrick."
>
> **Although some people believe otherwise, the truth is that** "The moon landing was faked in a sound studio by Stanley Kubrick."
>
> **Although some people believe that** "The moon landing was faked in a sound studio by Stanley Kubrick," it is more likely that…
>
> **Whenever conspiracy theories come up, people like to joke that** "The moon landing was faked in a sound studio by Stanley Kubrick."

> **The government has conducted many covert operations in the last century:** "The moon landing was faked in a sound studio by Stanley Kubrick."

What does each signpost do to us, as readers, encountering the same quote?

A very useful resource for applying these signposts is the text *They Say, I Say*, which you may be able to find online or at your school's library.

Addressing Counterarguments

As you recall from the chapter on argumentation, a good argument acknowledges other voices. Whether you're trying to refute those counterarguments or find common ground before moving forward, it is important to include a diversity of perspectives in your argument. One highly effective way to do so is by using the readerly signpost that I call *the naysayer's voice*.

Simply put, the naysayer is a voice that disagrees with you that you imagine into your essay. Consider, for example, this excerpt from Paul Greenough:

> It appears that tigers cannot be accurately counted and that uncertainty is as endemic to their study as to the study of many other wildlife populations. In the meantime, pugmark counting continues. … In the end, the debate over numbers cannot be resolved; while rising trends were discernible through the 1970s and 1980s, firm baselines and accurate numbers were beyond anyone's grasp.
>
> CRITIC: Are you emphasizing this numbers and counting business for some reason?
>
> AUTHOR: Yes. I find it instructive to compare the degree of surveillance demanded by the smallpox eradication campaign…with the sketchy methods sufficient to keep Project Tiger afloat. …

CRITIC: Maybe numbers aren't as central to these large state enterprises as you assume?

AUTHOR: No, no—they live and die by them.[3]

Notice the advantages of this technique:

- Greenough demonstrates, first and foremost, that the topic he's considering is part of a broad conversation involving many voices and perspectives.
- He is able to effectively transition between ideas.
- He *controls* the counterargument by asking the questions he wants to be asked.

Give it a shot in your own writing by adding a reader's or a naysayer's voice every few paragraphs: imagine what a skeptical, curious, or enthusiastic audience might say in response to each of your main points.

Revisiting Your Research Question, Developing an Introduction, and Crafting a Conclusion

Once you've started synthesizing ideas in your drafting process, you should frequently revisit your research question to refine the phrasing and be certain it still encompasses your concerns. During the research and drafting process, it is likely that your focus will change, which should motivate you to adjust, pivot, complicate, or drastically change your path of inquiry and working thesis. Additionally, you will acquire new language and ideas as you get the feel for the conversation. Use the new jargon and concepts to hone your research question and thesis.

Introductions

Introductions are the most difficult part of any paper for me. Not only does it feel awkward, but I often don't know quite what I want

to say until I've written the essay. Fortunately, we don't have to force out an intro before we're ready. Give yourself permission to draft out of order! For instance, I typically write the entire body of the essay before returning to the top to draft an introduction.

If you draft out of order, though, you should dedicate time to crafting an effective introduction before turning in the final draft. The introduction to a paper is your chance to make a first impression on your reader. You might be establishing a conceptual framework, setting a tone, or showing the reader a way in. Furthermore, due to the *primacy effect*, readers are more likely to remember your intro than most of the rest of your essay.

In this brief section, I want to note two pet peeves for introductions, and then offer a handful of other possibilities.

Don't

Avoid these two techniques:

- **Starting with fluffy, irrelevant, or extremely general statements**. Sometimes, developing authors make really broad observations or facts that just take up space before getting to the good stuff. You can see this demonstrated in the "Original" version of the student example below.
- **Offering a definition for something that your audience already knows**. At some point, this method became a stock-technique for starting speeches, essays, and other texts: "Merriam Webster defines *x* as…." You've probably heard it before. As pervasive as this technique is, though, it is generally ineffective for two reasons: (1) it is hackneyed—overused to the point of meaninglessness, and (2) it rarely offers new insight—the audience probably already has sufficient knowledge of the definition. There is an exception to this point, though! You can overcome issue #2 by *analyzing* the definition you give: does the definition reveal something about our common-sense that you want to critique? Does it contradict or overlook connotations? Do you think the definition is too narrow, too broad, or too ambiguous? In other

words, you can use the definition technique as long as you're *doing* something with the definition.

Do

These are a few approaches to introductions that my students often find successful. Perhaps the best advice I can offer, though, is to try out a lot of different introductions and see which ones feel better to you, the author. Which do you like most, and which do you think will be most impactful to your audience?

- **Telling a story**. Not only will this kick your essay off with *pathos* and specificity, but it can also lend variety to the voice you use throughout the rest of your essay. A story can also provide a touchstone, or a reference point, for you and your reader; you can relate your argument back to the story and its characters as you develop more complex ideas.
- **Describing a scene**. Similarly, thick description can provide your reader a mental image to grasp before you present your research question and thesis. This is the technique used in the model below.
- **Asking a question**. This is a common technique teachers share with their students when describing a "hook." You want your reader to feel curious, excited, and involved as they start reading your essay, and posing a thought-provoking question can bring them into the conversation too.
- **Using a striking quote or fact**. Another "hook" technique: starting off your essay with a meaningful quote, shocking statistic, or curious fact can catch a reader's eye and stimulate their curiosity.
- **Considering a case study**. Similar to the storytelling approach, this technique asks you to identify a single person or occurrence relevant to your topic that represents a bigger trend you will discuss.
- **Relating a real or imaginary dialogue**. To help your readers

acclimate to the conversation themselves, show them how people might talk about your topic. This also provides a good opportunity to demonstrate the stakes of the issue—why does it matter, and to whom?

- **Establishing a juxtaposition**. You might compare two seemingly unlike ideas, things, or questions, or contrast two seemingly similar ideas, things, or questions in order to clarify your path of inquiry and to challenge your readers' assumptions about those ideas, things or questions.

Here's an example of a student's placeholder introduction in their draft, followed by a revised version using the scene description approach from above. He tried out a few

of the strategies above before settling on the scene description for his revision. Notice how the earlier version "buries the lede," as one might say—hides the most interesting, relevant, or exciting detail. By contrast, the revised version is active, visual, and engaging.

Original:

> Every year over 15 million people visit Paris, more than any other city in the world. Paris has a rich, artistic history, stunning architecture and decadent mouth-watering food. Almost every visitor here heads straight for the Eiffel Tower ("Top destinations" 2014). Absorbing the breathtaking view, towering over the metropolis below, you might notice something missing from the Parisian landscape: tall buildings. It's easy to overlook but a peculiar thing. Around the world, most mega cities have hundreds of towering skyscrapers, but here in Paris, the vast majority of buildings are less than six stories tall (Davies 2010). The reason lies deep below the surface in the Paris underground where an immense cave system filled with dead bodies is attracting a different kind of visitor.[4]

Revised:

> On a frigid day in December of 1774, residents of a small

> walled district in Paris watched in horror as the ground before them began to crack and shift. Within seconds a massive section of road collapsed, leaving behind a gaping chasm where Rue d'Enfer (Hell Street) once stood. Residents peeked over the edge into a black abyss that has since become the stuff of wonder and nightmares. What had been unearthed that cold day in December, was an ancient tunnel system now known as The Empire of the Dead.[5]

You may notice that neither of these model introductions articulates a thesis statement or a research question. How would you advise this student to transition into the central, unifying insight of their paper?

Conclusions

A close second to introductions, in terms of difficulty, are conclusions. Due to the recency effect, readers are more likely to remember your conclusion than most of the rest of your essay.

[Link to humorous image about writing a conclusion by Endless Origami]

Most of us have been trained to believe that a conclusion repeats your thesis and main arguments, perhaps in different words, to remind the reader what they just read—or to *fluff* up page counts.

This is a misguided notion. True, conclusions shouldn't introduce completely new ideas, but they shouldn't only rehearse everything you've already said. Rather, they should tie up loose ends and leave the reader with an extending thought—something more to meditate on once they've left the world you've created with your essay. Your conclusion is your last chance to speak to your reader on your terms

based on the knowledge you have now shared; repeating what you have already established is a wasted opportunity.

Instead, here are few other possibilities. (You can include all, some, or none of them.)

- **Look back to your introduction**. If you told a story, shared a case study, or described a scene, you might reconsider that story, case study, or scene with the knowledge developed in the course of your paper. Consider the "ouroboros"—the snake eating its own head. Your conclusion can provide a satisfying circularity using this tactic.
- **Consider what surprised you in your research process**. What do those surprises teach us about commonsense assumptions about your topic? How might the evolution of your thought on a topic model the evolution you expect from your readers?
- **End with a quote**. A final thought, meaningfully articulated, can make your readers feel settled and satisfied.
- **Propose a call-to-action**. Especially if your path of inquiry is a matter of policy or behavior, tell the reader what they should do now that they have seen the issue from your eyes.
- **Gesture to questions and issues you can't address in the scope of your paper**. You might have had to omit some of your digressive concerns in the interest of focus. What remains to be answered, studied, or considered?

Here's an example of a placeholder conclusion in a draft, followed by a revised version using the "gesture to questions" and "end with a quote" approach from above. You may not be able to tell without reading the rest of the essay, but the original version simply restates the main points of each paragraph. In addition to being repetitive, the original is also not very exciting, so it does not inspire the reader to keep thinking about the topic. On the other hand, the revised version tries to give the reader more to chew on: it builds from what the paper establishes to provoke more curiosity and lets the subject continue to grow.

Original:

> In conclusion, it is likely that the space tourism industry will flourish as long as venture capitalists and the private sector bankroll its development. As noted in this paper, new technology will support space tourism and humans are always curious to see new places. Space tourism is currently very expensive but it will become more affordable. The FAA and other government agencies will make sure it is regulated and safe.

Revised:

> It has become clear that the financial, regulatory, and technological elements of space tourism are all within reach for humanity—whether in reality or in our imaginations. However, the growth of a space tourism industry will raise more and more questions: Will the ability to leave our blue marble exacerbate income inequity? If space tourism is restricted to those who can afford exorbitant costs, then it is quite possible that the less privileged will remain earthbound. Moreover, should our history of earthly colonization worry us for the fate of our universe? These questions and others point to an urgent constraint: space tourism might be logistically feasible, but can we ensure that what we imagine will be ethical? According to Carl Sagan, "Imagination will often carry us to worlds that never were. But without it we go nowhere" (2).[6]

Activities

Research Scavenger Hunt

To practice using a variety of research tools and finding a diversity of sources, try to discover resources according to the following constraints. Once you find a source, you should make sure you can

access it later—save it to your computer; copy a live, stable URL; request it from the library; and/or save it to your Library eShelf, if you have one. For this assignment, you can copy a URL or doi for digital resources or library call number for physical ones.

If you're already working on a project, use your topic for this activity. If you don't have a topic in mind, choose one by picking up a book, paper, or other written text near you: close your eyes and point to a random part of the page. Use the noun closest to your finger that you find vaguely interesting as a topic or search term for this exercise.

Research Tool
A peer-reviewed journal article through a database
A source you bootstrapped using subject tags
A newspaper article
A source through Google
A source originally cited in a Wikipedia article
A physical text in your school's library (book, DVD, microfilm, etc.)
A source through Google Scholar
A source you citation-mined from another source's bibliography
An eBook
A text written in plain language

A text written in discipline-specific jargon
A text that is not credible
A text older than twenty years
A text published within the last two years

Identifying Fake News

To think more about credibility, accuracy, and truth, read "Fake news 'symptomatic of crisis in journalism'" from Al Jazeera. Then, test your skills using this fake news quiz game.

Interacting with Sources Graphic Organizer

The following graphic organizer asks you to apply the skills from the previous section using a text of your choice. Complete this graphic organizer to practice critical encounters with your research and prepare to integrate information into your essay.

a. Discovering a Source: Find a source using one of the methods described in this chapter; record which method you used below (e.g., "Google Scholar" or "bootstrapped a library article").

b. Evaluating Credibility and Use-Value: Put your source through the CRAAP Test to determine whether it demonstrates credibility and use-value. Write responses for each element that practice reading with the grain and reading against the grain.

	With Grain (Believer) *"This source is great!"*
Currency	
Relevance	

Accuracy		
Authority		

Purpose		

c. Citation: Using citation and style resources like Purdue OWL for guidance, write an accurate citation for this source for a Works Cited page.

d. Paraphrase/Quote/Summarize: Choose a "golden line" from the source.

First, copy the quote, using quotations marks, and include a parenthetical in-text citation.

Second, paraphrase the quote and include a parenthetical in-text citation.

Third, summarize the main point of the source and include a parenthetical in-text citation; you may include the quote if you see fit.

---

e. Integrating Information: Using your response from part d, write a sample paragraph that integrates a quote, paraphrase, or summary. Use the formula discussed earlier in this chapter (front-load + P/Q/S + explain/elaborate/analyze)

Articulating Your Claim – Practicing Thesis Development

To practice applying the strategies for developing and revising a thesis statement explored in this chapter, you will write and revise a claim based on constraints provided by your groupmates. This activity works best with at least two other students.

Part One – Write

First, on a post-it note or blank piece of paper, write any article of clothing. Then, choose one type of claim (Claim of Phenomenon, Claim of Evaluation, or Claim of Policy, introduced in "Research Methods: Drawing from Sources and Synthesizing") and write "Phenomenon," "Evaluation," or "Policy" on a different post-it note or blank piece of paper.

Exchange your article of clothing with one student and your type of claim with another. (As long as you end up with one of each that you didn't come up with yourself, it doesn't matter how you rotate.) Now, write a thesis statement using your choice of strategy:

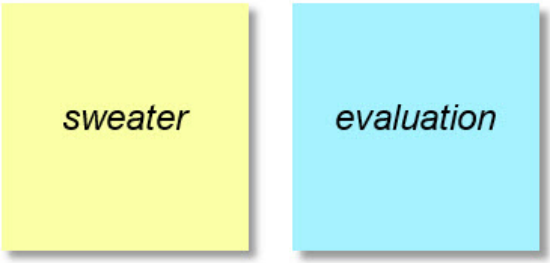
T3 (*Throughout history, women have been legally oppressed by*

different social institutions, including exclusion from the workplace, restriction of voting rights, and regulations of healthcare.)

O/P (*Recent Congressional activity in the U.S. has led me to wonder how women's freedoms have been restricted throughout history. Women have been legally oppressed by many different institutions since the inception of the United States.*)

Embedded Thesis (*Many people would agree that women have experienced oppression throughout the history of the United States, but how has this oppression been exercised legally through different social institutions?*)

Your thesis should make a claim about the article of clothing according to the post-its you received. For example



Now that it's November, it's time to break out the cold weather clothing. When you want to be both warm and also fashionable, a striped wool sweater is the best choice.

Part Two – Revise

Now, write one of the rhetorical appeals (*logos*, *pathos*, or *ethos*) on a new post-it note. Exchange with another student. Revise your thesis to appeal predominantly to that rhetorical appeal.

Example:

Original:
Now that it's November, it's time to break out the cold weather clothing. When you want to be both warm and also

fashionable, a striped wool sweater is the best choice.

Revised:
With the colder months looming, we are obliged to bundle up. Because they help you maintain consistent and comfortable body temperature, wool sweaters are the best option.

Finally, revise your thesis once more by adding a concession statement.

Example:

Original:
With the colder months looming, we are obliged to bundle up. Because they help you maintain consistent and comfortable body temperature, wool sweaters are the best option.

Revised:
With the colder months looming, we are obliged to bundle up. Even though jackets are better for rain or snow, a sweater is a versatile and functional alternative. Because they help you maintain consistent and comfortable body temperature, wool sweaters are the best option.

Guiding Interpretation (Readerly Signposts)

In the organizer on the next page, create a signpost for each of the quotes in the left column that reflects the posture in the top row.

	Complete faith	Uncertainty
"Peanut butter and jelly sandwiches are a nutritious part of a child's lunch."		Most parents have wondered if and jelly sandwiches are a nutri child's lunch."

"The bees are dying rapidly."		

"Jennifer Lopez is still relevant."	We can all agree, "Jennifer Lopez is still relevant."	

"Morality cannot be learned."		

Model Texts by Student Authors

What Does It Mean to Be Educated?[7]

Broton, K. and Sara Goldrick-Rab. "The Dark Side of College (Un)Affordability: Food and Housing Insecurity in Higher Education." *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*, vol. 48, no. 1, 2016, pp. 16-25. *Taylor & Francis*, doi: 10.1080/00091383.2016.1121081.

This article shines a light on food and housing insecurity in higher education. It makes the

argument that not having adequate meals or shelter increase the likelihood of receiving poorer grades and not finishing your degree program. There are a few examples of how some colleges and universities have set up food pantries and offer other types of payment plan or assistance programs. It also references a longitudinal study that follows a group of students from higher education through college and provides supporting data and a compelling case study. This is a useful article for those that would like to bring more programs like these to their campus. This article is a good overview of the problem, but could go a step further and provide starter kits for those interested in enacting a change in their institution.

Davis, Joshua. "A Radical Way of Unleashing a Generation of Geniuses." *Wired*, 15 October 2013.

This article profiles a teacher in a small school in an impoverished area of Mexico. He has created a space where students are encouraged to learn by collaborating and testing, not by lecture. The article ties the current system of learning to being rooted in the industrial age, but goes on to note that this is negative because they have not adapted to the needs of companies in the modern age. This article is particularly useful to provide examples of how relinquishing control over a classroom is beneficial. It also has a timeline of alternative teaching theorists and examples of schools that are breaking the mold of traditional education. My only critique of the article is that, although it presents numerous examples of a changing education system, it is very negative regarding the prospects for education.

Davis, Lois M., and Robert Bozick, Jennifer L. Steele, Jessica Saunders, and Jeremy N.V. Miles. *Evaluating the Effectiveness of Correctional Education: A Meta-Analysis of Programs That Provide Education to Incarcerated Adults*. RAND, 2013.

This meta-analysis from the RAND Corporation, a non-partisan think tank, reviews research done on the topic of education in correctional institutions. The facts show that when incarcerated people have access to education, recidivism drops, career prospects improve, and taxpayers save money. There are differences based on the type of education (vocational versus general education) and the methods (using technology had better outcomes). It is interesting that the direct cost of the education was offset by the reduced recidivism rate, to the point where it is more cost effective to educate inmates. This analysis would be particularly useful for legislators and correctional institution policy makers. I did not see in this research any discussion of student selection; I believe there may be some skewed data if the people choosing to attend education may already be more likely to have positive outcomes.

Emerson, Ralph Waldo. *The Complete Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, Wm. H. Wise & Co., 1929.

In this collection of writing, Emerson insists that primary inspiration comes from nature and education is the vehicle that will "awaken him to the knowledge of this fact." Emerson sees the nonchalance of children as something to aspire to, which should be left alone. He is critical of parents (and all adults) in diminishing the independence of children. This source is particularly useful when considering the alignment of educators and pupils. Emerson contends that true genius is novel and is

not understood unless there is proper alignment between educators and pupils. I think this is a valuable source for pupils by increasing their level of "self-trust."

Gladwell, Malcolm. *David and Goliath: Underdogs, Misfits and the Art of Battling Giants*, Little, Brown & Co., 2014.

Malcolm Gladwell generally has some interesting takes on the world at large. In this book he looks at what is considered a strength and where it may originate. The most interesting part of his argument, I believe, is that which states that a perceived deficiency, like dyslexia, may serve as a catalyst for increased ability in another area. Gladwell says that compensation learning can be achieved when there is a desirable difficulty. This book, and much of Gladwell's work, can be especially useful for those which want to look beyond the surface of the world to make sense of seemingly random data. Much of the book rang true to me since I have had an especially hard time reading at an adequate speed, but can listen to an audiobook and recite it almost verbatim in an essay.

Hurley, J. Casey. "What Does It Mean to Be Educated?" *Midwestern Educational Researcher*, vol. 24, no. 4, 2011, p.2-4.

In his keynote speech, the speaker sets forth an argument for his understanding of an "educated" person. The six virtues he espouses are: understanding, imagination, strength, courage, humility, and generosity. These, he states, can lift a person past the baseline of human nature which is instinctively "ignorant, intellectually incompetent, weak, fearful of truth, proud and selfish" (3). I prefer this definition over any other that I have come across. I have been thinking a bit about the

MAX attacks and how Micah Fletcher has responded to the attention he has received. I am proud to see a 21 year old respond with the level of awareness around social justice issues that he carries. These traits that he exemplifies, would not likely exist in this individual if it not for the education he has received at PSU.

Introduction to El Sistema. Annenberg Learner Firm, 2014. *Films Media Group*, 2016.

This video profiles El Sistema. El Sistema was designed in Venezuela by José Antonio Abreu in 1975 as a method for teaching social citizenship. The method is to have groups of children learn how to play orchestral music. It is community-based (parents participate) and more experienced members of the group are expected to teach younger students. In Venezuela, this program is government-funded as a social program, not an arts program. This video would be useful for those that are interested in how arts can be used for social change. I thought it was interesting that one of the first tasks that groups perform is to construct a paper violin. I am a fan of breaking down a complicated item, like the instrument, to its constituent parts.

Petrosino, Anthony and Carolyn Turpin-Petrosino, and John Buehler. "'Scared Straight' and Other Juvenile Awareness Programs for Preventing Juvenile Delinquency." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 589, 2003, pp. 41-62. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD002796.pub2

This article is a meta-analysis of Scared Straight and similar crime deterrence programs. These programs were very popular when I was in high school and are still in use today. The analysis shows that these programs actually increase the

likelihood for crime, which is the opposite effect of the well-meaning people that implement such programs. This is particularly useful for those that are contemplating implementing such a program. Also, it is a good example of how analysis should drive decisions around childhood education. I do remember programs like this from when I was in high school, but I was not because I was not considered high-risk enough at the time. It would be interesting to see if the data is detailed enough to see if selection bias affected some of the high rates of incarceration for these offenders.

Robinson, Ken. "Do Schools Kill Creativity?" *TED*, February 2006.

In this video Ken Robinson simply states that creativity is as important as literacy. Creativity, he defines, as "the process of having original ideas that have value." Robinson states that children are regrettably "educated out of creativity" and that is imperative that we do not stigmatize failure. To emphasize this point he gives an example of a cohort of children which would retire in 2065, but no one can possibly imagine what the world may look like then. This piece is particularly useful for the fact that it highlights the ways creativity may be stifled or encouraged. There are is a bit of conflating of creativity and ADHD in this video, but in either case the message is to listen and encourage the pupil as a whole being.

Smith, Karen. "Decolonizing Queer Pedagogy." *Journal of Women and Social Work*, vol. 28, no. 4, 2013, pp. 468-470. SAGE, doi: 10.1177/0886109913505814.

`In Karen Smith's essay, the purpose of education—at least the course entitled Queer Theories and Identities—is to "interrupt queer settler colonialism by challenging students to study the ways in which

they inherit colonial histories and to insist that they critically question the colonial institutions through which their rights are sought" (469). This particular course is then, going beyond simply informing pupils, but attempting to interrupt oppressive patriarchal systems. This article is particularly useful as an example of education as social activism. This theme is not one that is explored greatly in other works and looks at education as a means of overthrowing the system, instead of pieces which may looking at increasing an individual's knowledge or their contribution to society.

Teacher Takeaways

"This annotated bibliography fulfills its purpose well: it sets out to answer a question, then brings a variety of voices into conversation as a sort of 'recommended reading.' If the author continued to pursue this purpose, I would advise them to elaborate on how these sources might be applicable/useful. What would a classroom inspired by these texts look like? Although this AB is useful in answering its guiding question, this author would likely struggle with scope if they tried to use this AB as fodder for a research essay. The different sources offer a diversity of ideas, but they don't speak to the same topic."– Professor Dawson

Pirates & Anarchy[8]

(Annotated Bibliography – see the proposal here and the final paper here)

"About Rose City Antifa." Rose City Antifa. http://rosecityantifa.org/about/.

The "about" page of Rose City Antifa's website has no author or date listed. It is referenced as a voice in the conversation around current political events. This is the anarchic group that took disruptive action during the Portland May Day rally, turning the peaceful demonstration into a destructive riot. This page on their website outlines some core beliefs regarding what they describe as the oppressive nature of our society's structure. They specifically point to extreme right wing political groups, so-called neo-nazis, as the antithesis of what antifa stands for. Along with this, they state that they acknowledge the frustration of "young, white, working-class men." Antifa as a group intends to give these men a meaningful culture to join that doesn't include racism in its tenets, but seeks freedom and equality for all. Action is held in higher regards than rhetoric. This voice is important to this body of research as a timely and local consideration on how anarchy and anarchic groups relate to piratical acts in the here and now.

Chappell, Bill. "Portland Police Arrest 25, Saying A May Day Rally Devolved Into 'Riot'." *Oregon Public Broadcasting*, National Public Radio, 2 May 2017.

This very short news report documents the events at the Portland May Day Rally this past May 2nd. What began as a peaceful rally for workers' rights became a violent protest when it was taken over by a self-described anarchist group. The group vandalized property, set fires, and hurled objects at police. This is an example of recent riots by local anarchist groups that organize interruptions

of other political group's permitted demonstrations in order to draw attention to the anarchist agenda. The value of this report is that it shows that anarchy is still a philosophy adopted by certain organizations that are actively seeking to cause disruption in political conversation.

Dawdy, S. L. & J. Bonni. "Towards a General Theory of Piracy." *Anthropological Quarterly*, vol. 85, no. 3, 2012, pp. 673-699. *Project MUSE*, doi: 10.1353/anq.2012.0043.

Comparisons are drawn between Golden Age pirates and current intellectual pirates in this in-depth article looking at piracy over time. The authors offer a definition of piracy as "a form of morally ambiguous property seizure committed by an organized group which can include thievery, hijacking, smuggling, counterfeiting, or kidnapping" (675). They also state that pirates are "organizations of social bandits" going on to discuss piracy as a rebellion against capitalist injustices (696). The intentional anarchic nature of the acts committed are a response to being left behind economically by political structures. The authors conclude with a warning that "we might look for a surge in piracy in both representation and action as an indication that a major turn of the wheel is about to occur" (696) These anthropological ideas reflect the simmering political currents we are experiencing now in 2017. Could the multiple recent bold acts of anarchist groups portend more rebellion in our society's future? The call for jobs and fair compensation are getting louder and louder in western countries. If political structures cannot provide economic stability, will citizens ultimately decide to tear it all down? The clarity of the definitions in this article

are helpful in understanding what exactly is a pirate and what their presence may mean to society at large.

Hirshleifer, Jack. "Anarchy and Its Breakdown." *Journal of Political Economy*, vol. 103, no. 1, 1995, pp. 26-52.

This rather dense article is written around the question of the sustainability of anarchic organizations. The goals and activities are discussed in their most basic form in terms of resource gathering, distribution and defense. It does provide a solid definition of anarchy by stating, "anarchy is a social arrangement in which contenders struggle to conquer and defend durable resources, without effective regulation by either higher authorities or social pressures." While social groups are connected in order to obtain resources, there is not hierarchy of leadership. The author does discuss the fragility of these groups as well. Agreement on a social contract is challenging as is remaining cohesive and resisting merging with other groups with different social contracts. This element of agreement on structure make sense in terms of piratical organizations. Captains are captains at the pleasure of the crew so long as his/her decision making enables the group as a whole to prosper. The anarchy definition is useful to bring understanding on what ties these groups together.

Houston, Chloe, editor. *New Worlds Reflected: Travel and Utopia in the Early Modern Period*, Ashgate, 2010.

This book, which is a collection of essays, explores the idea of utopia. The editor describes it in the introduction as "an ideal place which does not exist"—a notion that there is in human nature a desire to discover the "perfect" place, but that

location is not attainable (1). The desire itself is key because of the exploration it sparks. There are three parts to the book, the second being "Utopian Communities and Piracy." This section mostly contains essays that relate to explorations for the New World and pirate groups' contributions that either helped or hindered the success of such expeditions. While there is much that is interesting here, especially in terms of "utopia" as a motivator, there is not much that lends information on piratical exploits. I'll likely not use this source in my essay.

"I Am Not a Pirate." *This American Life*, episode 616, National Public Radio, 5 May 2017, https://m.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/616/i-am-not-a-pirate.

This podcast showcased three examples of pirates, discussing the circumstances surrounding their choice to enter that world and the consequences that befell them. One example was a gentleman pirate from the early 1700s who bit off more than he could chew. Another was a Somali-American who went back to Somalia to help reestablish government in the region and ended up tangled in the gray area between good intention and criminality. The final pirate is a female Chinese pirate from the early 1800s who was so successful that she was able to remake the rules of piracy to her and her crew's great advantage. The information offered in this podcast includes valuable information (especially regarding Somalia) on the opportunities or lack thereof that attract otherwise normal individuals to piracy. The vacuum of ineffectual governance and unfair economic practices both contribute to this. Citizens' determination to be masters of their own

destiny results from this lack of central societal structure. They choose desperate measures.

Otto, Lisa. "Benefits of Buccaneering: The Political Economy of Maritime Piracy in Somalia and Kenya." *African Security Review*, vol. 20, no. 4, 2011, pp. 45-52. *Taylor & Francis*, doi: 10.1080/10246029.2011.630809.

The economy of piracy in Somalia is addressed in this article. From the economic vacuum of a failed state leaving citizens to turn to desperate measures, to the eventual organization of piracy into burgeoning industry, perfect conditions existed for the normalization of criminal acts. The article goes on to elaborate on the costs to other industries in the region, to the social structure of Somalia, and the cost in lives lost. Finally, the author makes suggestions for counter-piracy strategies. Interestingly, those suggestions are similar to the efforts that ultimately led to the ending of piracy in Somalia, as referenced in the more recent podcast, "I Am Not a Pirate." Published around 2011, this article predates the demise of the industry after 2012. The research value here is in the economic and social factors that led otherwise average citizens to violent criminality. The decentralization of government in particular leading to clans sanctioning piracy is especially interesting in terms of anarchic political structure.

Samatar, Abdi Ismail, Mark Lindberg, and Basil Mahayni. "The Dialectics of Piracy in Somalia: The Rich Versus the Poor." *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 31, no. 8, 2010, pp. 1377-1394. EBSCO, doi: 10.1080/01436597.2010.538238.

This article is similar topically to the Otto article, though it is a much deeper dive into the historical and political events that led to the collapse of the Somali centralized government. It also describes

various piratical incidents as the criminal industry became more rampant. There is a list of four conditions that precipitate the foundation of modern piratical groups with similar themes noted in other articles. These should be referenced in my essay. The author also states, "It appears that the patterns of piracy in East Asia, and West and East Africa shadow global economic cycles and reflect the contestation over resources between the powerful and the poor" (1379).The idea of "moral economy" is addressed as the argument is made that a certain portion of Somali pirates are practicing "defensive piracy." This in particular is useful as it outlines the consequences when the people's expectations of government are not met—those expectations being a certain amount of livelihood and security. Citizens in poverty then believe it is their right to rebel when those in power shirk their responsibilities.

Snelders, Stephen, with a preface by Peter Lamborn Wilson. *The Devil's Anarchy: The Sea Robberies of the Most Famous Pirate Claes G. Compaen and The Very Remarkable Travels of Jan Erasmus Reyning, Buccaneer*, Autonomedia, 2005.

The Devil's Anarchy is a small book of about two hundred pages that outlines the loose societal structures of seafaring pirate groups that shunned hierarchical systems in their ranks. The historical tales of several pirates, including Claes Compaen and Jan Erasmus Reyning, are told. These swashbuckling accounts are full of details describing pirate lifestyles. The truly useful portions of the book are the introduction and the final chapter entitled "The Politics of Piracy." The preface by Peter Wilson discusses ideas of "freedom" as the primary motivator for those

seeking this way of life, a dismissal of expected norms of society. The last chapter talks about the ways in which the anarchical approach both helped and hindered various pirate groups. These ideas will be helpful in drawing connections between anarchy and piracy.

Wachhaus, T. Aaron. "Anarchy as a Model for Network Governance." *Public Administration Review*, vol. 72, no. 1, 2011, pp. 33-42. *Wiley*, doi: 10.1111/j.1540-6210.2011.02481.x.

This author of this article seeks to propose the application of anarchist perspectives onto network studies and theory. There is a shift of mind necessary to turn from hierarchical structures of management to one that is a linkage of groups acting collectively. Several points of direction are listed as suggestions for moving toward this perspective. Repeatedly, the author mentions the necessary strength in the linkages of groups, to provide stability and promote "dynamic" activity and sharing. More research is called for to discover what has made anarchy-oriented groups successful in the past. While this article isn't specific to political groups, it does break down elements of anarchic social structure in a way that provides clarity to how they tend to be organized. There is similar ideas of collective action and sharing of resources, in this case information, and fairness in distribution and contribution of actors in these groups. This will be helpful for synthesizing information on anarchy in application to pirate groups.

Williams, Daniel E. "Refuge Upon the Sea: Captivity and Liberty in *The Florida Pirate*." *Early American Literature*, vol. 36, no. 1, 2001, pp. 71-88. *Project MUSE*, doi: 10.1353/ea1.2001.0009.

This is a review of a text from the 1820's called

The Florida Pirate. The text tells the tale of a slave that escapes slavery and becomes a pirate–the oppressed becoming the oppressor. His ultimate demise comes when he chooses to set free some captives rather than kill them, which is rewarded with those captives betraying the ex-slave to the authorities. He is then executed. According to the author of the review, it is the slave's personal journey through these incarnations of his personhood that were intended as a condemnation of the institution of slavery. The text was intended to compare slave-owners to pirates in an attempt to highlight the criminal nature of owning humans. While this is a fascinating read,
and piques my interest in reading the original text, it is less relevant to my argument. It refers to a fictional work rather than factual events.

Teacher Takeaways

"This annotated bibliography includes very detailed summary with accurate citations. I also like that the student is clearly considering how they will make use of the source in their research essay. If they were to keep working on the annotations, I would ask them to revise with attention to credibility; certainly these sources have different degrees of credibility, and I would like to see more explicit consideration of that."– Professor Dawson

A Case of Hysterics[9]

(Annotated Bibliography – see the proposal here and the final paper here)

Annandale, Ellen. "Missing Connections: Medical Sociology and Feminism." *Medical Sociology Newsletter*, vol. 31, no. 3, 2005, pp. 35-52. *Medical Sociology Online*.

This journal article looks into how society's definition of gender has changed, and how medical sociology needs to change with it. The author proposes that that there is a need to bring feminist theory and gender-related research on health and illness within medical sociology much closer together than they are at present. Annandale argues that "Within this new single system the common experience of health-related oppression is produced differently, and experienced differently, through systematically driven processes of sex/gender fragmentation" (69). This source is unique because it addresses the concept that gender as we know it today is much different than what it was when Hysteria was a common phrase. Annandale recognizes that sexism in the medical field is prominent, and that sexism reinforces these exhausted gender stereotypes.

——. *Women's Health and Social Change*, Routledge, 2009.

Upon researching for this paper, I've learned that Ellen Annandale is a very reputable source on the topics of feminism, sociology, and epidemiology. In this book, she discusses the relation between women's health and their position in society at the time from the perspective of women writers and feminists. Because of the past negative appraisal of feminine capabilities, she argues that we have been forced into a binary society that is characteristic of our patriarchal past. She boldly

defines the system of women's health as a brand of patriarchal capitalism. Interestingly, she also brings forth the knowledge that the gender gap is decreasing in terms of life expectancy. Why has men's life expectancy improved so greatly while women's falls short? Ignorance. This has already proven useful in my research due to the addressing of current health issues that affect both men and women due to sexism.

"Brought to Life: Exploring the History of Medicine – Hysteria." *Science Museum*, www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/broughttolife/techniques/hysteria [Expired link]

This brief web article serves to loosely explain the history of Hysteria as a disease. The author begins with Plato and ends with the eradication of the term hysteria in the mid-1960s. While the article's purpose is to explain where hysteria began and where it has come to, the author offers a brief acknowledgment that the practices are still with us in modern medicine. The author states that modern doctors have merely "cloaked old ideas behind new words." While this source doesn't offer a lot of thesis support, it is useful as a reliable source of facts on the history of Hysteria. This article will be helpful in creating a timeline for the practice of diagnosing women with the disease.

Culp-Ressler, Tara. "When Gender Stereotypes Become a Serious Hazard to Women's Health." *ThinkProgress*, 11 May 2015, https://archive.thinkprogress.org/when-gender-stereotypes-become-a-serious-hazard-to-womens-health-f1f130a5e79/.

In this web article, Culp-Ressler analyzes the widespread and serious effects that gender stereotypes can perpetuate within the medical field. She utilizes individual accounts of women who experienced sexism when seeking medical

attention, as well as current studies which further prove the gap that exists between male and female healthcare quality in the United States. Through these detailed experiences, Culp-Ressler argues that the frequent disregard for women's knowledge of their own bodies contributes to both harmful gender stereotypes as well as deadly diseases that go untreated. She states that society is willfully ignorant in their knowledge of female medicine: "This has been going on for centuries… conversion, hysteria, the name changes but it's still the same and it's happening today." This will be useful in that it presents a number of documented cases of misdiagnosis; especially with a common theme in being treated as a mentally ill patient rather than one experiencing pain. This source follows my argument rather closely, and will be helpful in supporting my thesis.

Gilman, Charlotte Perkins. "The Yellow Wallpaper." 1892. Archived at *U.S. National Library of Medicine*, 7 June 2017, https://www.nlm.nih.gov/exhibition/theliteratureofprescription/exhibitionAssets/digitalDocs/The-Yellow-Wall-Paper.pdf [also available at https://www.gutenberg.org/files/1952/1952-h/1952-h.htm].

The Yellow Wallpaper is an important narrative from the early 1900s that illustrates the delusional medical procedures placed onto women. Gilman herself experienced what was called the "rest cure," which in essence confined women who were diagnosed with Hysteria or nervous diseases in a room to do nothing, limiting their "stressors". They were forced to eat copious amounts of food to gain weight, and they were allowed no company. This story is told from the perspective of an insane person, as she herself admittedly nearly slipped

into madness. If anything, this piece serves as a firsthand account of the damage done to women in a time when they had less rights, and when women's medicine was seriously lacking. This will be helpful in understanding how these treatments were accepted by the public, as well as noting the unintended effects of said treatments.

——. "Why I Wrote 'The Yellow Wallpaper.'" 1913. Archived at *The College of Staten Island*, City University of New York, 8 June 1999, https://csivc.csi.cuny.edu/history/files/lavender/whyyw.html [Link expired]. [Also available via The National Library of Medicine and The American Yawp Reader].

This brief letter was meant to address the many inquiries that Gilman received about her story "The Yellow Wallpaper." This letter is meant to explain that although she added little "embellishments and additions", it remains a fully viable account of a woman who fell into madness because of unsound medical advice. Within, she details her nervous breakdowns. She also provides details of the lifestyle she was told to lead in order to keep her nerves at bay: she was given advice to "'live as domestic a life as far as possible,' to 'have but two hours' intellectual life a day,' and 'never to touch pen, brush, or pencil again' as long as I lived." Of course, this didn't work. Just as "The Yellow Wallpaper" is helpful in providing an in depth look at someone experiencing such a treatment, Gilman's letter is useful in that it was written in a place where she had fully recovered due to not taking her physician's advice. She also notes that a different physician read her book, and since had ceased prescribing "rest cures". First-hand accounts of experiences such as these will help provide credibility to my argument.

Gilman, Sander L., et al. *Hysteria beyond Freud*, University of California Press, 1993.

Though this book has five authors contributing, the section titled "Hysteria, Feminism, and Gender" will be the most useful for this paper. In this essay, Elaine Showalter attempts to explain to the reader that although the term "hysteria" was used mainly by men toward females as a negative term, modern women are "reclaiming" the feminine right of hysteria. Feminism was coming more into the mainstream during the early/mid 90s, when this book was published. It is clear that Showalter's views might not hold true today, because of more recent medical studies confirming the falseness of Hysteria. This piece is interesting because in her attempt to argue the reclamation of hysteria by modern feminists, she succumbs to the long-enforced stereotypes of patriarchal medicine and culture. This source would be helpful to demonstrate the extent to which sexism can reach, internalization of stereotypes is common. While this book might not help in furthering my argument, it is interesting to see women that view Hysteria as a right of femininity and something to be claimed.

Kellogg, John Harvey. *Ladies' Guide in Health and Disease: Girlhood, Maidenhood, Wifehood, Motherhood*, Modern Medicine Publishing Co., 1896. Archived at *University of North Texas Health Science Center*, 4 March 2011, http://digitalcommons.hsc.unt.edu/hmedbks/13 [Link expired]. [Also available via https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.32044025682261&view=1up&seq=11.]

This book's title screams exactly what its purpose was: describing women's health risks based on what part of life they were in (all parts centered

around the presence or absence of a man). Limiting women to particular and confined social roles was the norm in the early 1900s. This book is so sexist, and so perfect for my paper. Not unlike Emily Post, Kellogg attempts to explain to women the necessary steps they ought to take in order to lead healthy, childbearing lives. Aside from being hilarious, this instruction manual is written by a man, for women, and perfectly demonstrates how sexism has continually permeated the medical field.

Scull, Andrew. *Hysteria: The Disturbing History*, Oxford University Press, 2011.

In this book, Andrew Scull covers a lot of ground as he moves through analyzing the history of Hysteria. His argument centers on a Freudian Hysteria, and how his views (or rather all psychoanalytical views) came to be seen as obsolete but Hysteria still lingers with new vocabulary. Scull also delves into the history of men being diagnosed with Hysteria, or nervous diseases, most specifically due to the Second World War. He notes that as Hysteria was seen as a feminine disease and an affliction of the imagination, these men received little to no treatment – similar to females diagnosed with hysteria. They were seen as cowardly and inferior for something that today would be easily recognizable as post-traumatic stress disorder. This source will be helpful in demonstrating that while the patients were male, they were seen as contracting a feminine disease that was "made up in the mind," therefore hindering the help that they needed. This illustrates the bias that exists with illnesses associated with women.

Tasca, Cecilia, et al. "Women and Hysteria in The History of Mental Health." *Clinical Practice & Epidemiology in Mental Health*, vol. 8, no. 1, 2012, pp. 110-119. *BioMed Central Open Access Free*, doi: 10.2174/1745017901208010110.

This is a thought-provoking scientific look at the history of women being diagnosed with mental disorders (specifically nervous diseases like Hysteria) correlated to where in the world and at what historical time these diagnoses occurred. Tasca aims to inform the audience that perhaps the role of women in these different global locations contributes to firstly the opportunity to be diagnosed by a sexist male physician, as well as whether their emotions would be seen as varying from the norm. She further explains this by saying, "We have seen that both the symptomatic expression of women's malaise and the culturally specific interpretation of the same malaise witness the changing role of women. From incomprehensible Being (and therefore mean of the Evil) to frail creatures that try, however, to manipulate the environment to their own ends (in Freud's view) to creature arbiter of his fate (in the modern transformation from hysteria to melancholia), where the woman seems to have traded power with the loneliness and guilt." This article has given me a new look at why and how these misdiagnoses are so common and continuing. It is helpful due to its extensive studies in multiple parts of the world, as well as Tasca's analysis of the effect that the evolution of the role of women has on stereotypes.

Teacher Takeaways

"This annotated bibliography shows that the student is thinking critically about their sources, but also approaching them with an open mind to avoid confirmation bias. Judging by the citations, this student

has made good use of their library's database subscriptions. They have also indicated how they intend to use certain sources in the essay they will write. If anything, I might say that these annotations are a bit too long: the density of each (especially in terms of summary) would make it difficult to use as a research tool."– Professor Wilhjelm

Planting the Seed: Norway's Strong Investment in Parental Leave10

Few experiences, if any, can match the power of becoming a parent, both in terms of sheer magnitude and pure happiness. Many parents consider the birth of their children their lives' single greatest moments–the heart and purpose of human existence. From the instant a tiny, brand-new life is handed off to eager parents, overcome with awe and amazement at the sight of what they created together, friends, family and even strangers come forward bursting with excitement to pour out their deepest affection to the new arrival. To the world, a birth inspires hope and radiates joy, even for those who never have children of their own. But with it also come some intense fears. From worries over the ever-soaring prices of daycare to concerns about simply finding the time to properly raise a child amid work and other life obligations, welcoming a new baby gets frightening quickly. Time off from work to focus fully on the many challenges of baby-rearing can drastically ease the burden for moms and dads. New parents all across the world know this, but few actually experience it as strongly as those in Norway.

From low crime rates to accessible health care to high-quality education, all piled on top of immediately obvious

breathtaking scenery, countless perks make it clear why Norway was ranked the happiest country in the world for 2017 (Hetter)—not the least of which is the country's generosity toward new parents. Norway offers one of the best parental leave policies in the world, granting parents a liberal sum of both shared and individual paid leave so they can stop and concentrate on parenthood during their newborns' critical early months, and fostering gender equality by allowing paid leave time for fathers. Meanwhile, many other countries, like the U.S., the world's only industrialized nation to guarantee no paid parental leave whatsoever, place a lesser focus on time off for parents, seemingly without respect for the myriad struggles new families face. This could be to the disadvantage of not only moms and dads but also the economy at large, given the many benefits of parental leave– reduced infant mortality, better care for babies, reduced likelihood of mental illness for mothers and savings for businesses—most of which carry into the long-term (Wallace). Considering even a few advantages of parental leave, it's easy to wonder why more countries don't make leave for parents a top priority, especially when countries like Norway are realizing its positive impacts.

While Norway (along with a small handful of other countries) currently leads the way when it comes to parental leave following a birth, the country once offered leave for working mothers that more so resembled what the U.S. offers today—which isn't much. Before the introduction of new leave reform in 1977, Norway only gave mothers 12 weeks off after the birth of a child, and with no pay; today, however, mothers get about a full year of paid leave and an additional year of job protection (Carneiro). So what does that mean for the busy, modern-day working mother? For Else Marie Hasle, a 32-year-old marketing professional living in Oslo, Norway's capital city, it meant 11 months at home with her infant daughter while collecting 80 percent of her salary (Grose). In an August 2014 interview with *Slate Magazine*, Hasle explained that she spent the three weeks at home before the birth of her daughter, Natalia, at home and remained home with Natalia until she was 10

months old (Grose). Mothers like Hasle also have the option of a shorter leave period with 100 percent of their pay. The choice of shorter leave with more pay, or vice versa, is up to the mother.

The permission for parents to choose their own terms makes Norway's parental leave not only generous but also flexible. Right now, according to the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration, or NAV for short, Norway offers parents 49 weeks at full salary or 59 weeks at 80 percent pay—one of the longest parental leave allowances in the world. This time includes three weeks of leave for the mother prior to the baby's due date and 10 weeks each for the mother and the father—called "maternal quotas" and "paternal quotas," respectively—as well as 26 or 36 weeks, depending on the terms the couple chooses (salary in full or at 80 percent), which may be distributed among the parents as they see fit ("Parental Benefit"). Parents who adopt a child younger than 15 years of age may also draw benefits. These numbers are only matched by a handful of other countries, which includes Sweden, Denmark and Finland.

The reality for American mothers paints a bleak contrast to the situation in northern Europe. In the U.S., which stands alone as the only developed country in the world to guarantee no paid leave to either parent following a birth, expectant mothers apply for time off through the Family Medical Leave Act of 1993, which allows up to 12 weeks of job-protected and employee benefits-protected leave ("FMLA"). Unfortunately, mothers must spend this time taking a pay cut. Meanwhile, most of the rest of the world mandates some form of paid parental leave. Many countries also provide paid leave for fathers. Nearly half of 167 countries whose leave policies were examined in 2013 by the International Labor Organization offer paternity leave (Lord). The sad state of leave for new parents in the U.S. has remained a top issue of concern among politicians in recent years, oftentimes catching the common counter-argument that it simply costs businesses and the economy too much money. But while this is an important point, parental leave appears to be worth it in the long run.

A new mother leaving her place of work to dedicate time caring for a newborn continues to hold a position within the organization and to draw benefits, and, in countries that mandate paid maternity leave, to also receive a paycheck—all for no work. Considering the same circumstance for fathers as well spells double trouble for both productivity and revenue for businesses. Consider Christa Clapp, an American climate change economist living and working in Oslo with her husband, who took about a full year away from her job in 2016 to care for her son. But Clapp, writing for the "On Parenting" section of the *Washington Post*, argues that paid parental leave is actually a smart move for a country's economy. The economic value of more mothers staying in the workforce full time, she claims, offsets the costs of the parental leave that makes it possible and results in an altogether more productive society (Clapp). Companies also save money on training and turnover costs because mothers are more likely to stay with the same employer after their leave (Wallace). What's more, fathers taking their own paid leave creates a culture in which dads are more present in their children's lives, and a more gender-equal and balanced workforce—a reality that fades in the U.S., where women often transition from employee to stay-at-home mom because it makes more economical sense for the family.

The benefits of parental leave appear to be strongest for mothers, like Clapp, and their children. In the immediate, obvious sense, the mother is home with the baby and free to devote her time to caring for and bonding with her child. But the benefits run deeper and last longer than what one can see at face value. A 2011 study of the leave policies in 141 different countries found that paid parental leave can actually reduce infant mortality by as much as 10 percent; another study found that paid leave also increases the odds that babies will be seen regularly by a health care professional and receive vaccinations on time (Wallace). Paid parental leave also makes breastfeeding, the healthiest meal option for babies, more successful, with women who take leave generally breastfeeding about twice as long as those who don't (Ibid.).

Mothers who take paid parental leave also face a smaller likelihood of mental health challenges, such as depression, even as many as 30 years later in life (Ibid.). This means that not only is mom in better condition when caring for her infant under the protection of paid leave, but the relationship between mother and baby is also healthier. And these benefits are lasting.

Children continue to reap the benefits of paid parental leave even into their adult years. A team of researchers examined the long-term impacts of maternity leave in Norway since the country's introduction of paid, job-protected leave time for mothers on July 1, 1977. The team compared the outcomes of children born both before and after July 1, 1977, when new reform began guaranteeing paid leave to mothers, and found that "reform had strong effects on children's subsequent high school dropout rates and earnings at age 30, especially for those whose mothers had less than 10 years of education" (Carneiro). Thus, increased time at home with children—especially time during which mothers can relax without fear of sacrificing their income—can lead to success in the child's life. These findings, taken with the numerous benefits to mothers, demonstrate that parental leave isn't necessarily a financial liability for businesses, who end up paying employees for no work; rather, it's a wise investment not only in the short-term future of the worker but also in the long-term future of the country's broader economy. But while these benefits focus on mothers and children, as does much of the research on parental leave, paid time off for fathers following a birth has its perks as well.

One of the unique features of parental leave in countries like Norway is that it also allows fathers to break away from work for time with their new children. Fathers in Norway enjoy 10 weeks of paid parental leave—referred to as a "paternal quota"—and they may also take additional time that comes from a leave bank they share with their partners, depending on their agreement with their spouses ("Parental Benefit"). To some, this may seem counterintuitive. For thousands of years, much of the world has believed that mothers exclusively—or at least mostly—handle

newborn and infant care. Perhaps this is because, in the animal kingdom, it often makes the most sense, from the standpoint of survival. It once made sense for humans as well. But the human race of today is different, with fathers involving themselves more and more in their children's lives from an early age—and to the benefit of both child and mother.

Currently, in many households, both parents work full-time. And despite a common theme throughout history of male superiority in the workplace—at least when it comes to salary—in 40 percent of families with children, the mother is the sole or primary provider of income (Livingston). This means that, more than ever, fathers are taking on childcare responsibilities. Aside from simply freeing dads up to shoulder the work of child-rearing equally with their spouses, leave for fathers results in stronger, lasting father-child bonds. Dads who take at least 10 days of parental leave are more likely than those who don't take any leave at all to stay actively involved with child care; in Iceland, 70 percent of men who take parental leave are sharing care with their partners as far out as three years later (Wallace). Active fathers are a norm in Norwegian culture today, most likely because of parental leave.

Keeping dads active in child care, and in turn active in the child's life altogether, is good for the whole family. Research has shown that a strong connection between father and child promotes social and emotional development, such as learning to regulate feelings and behaviors, and also results in better educational outcomes for the child (Oliker). Greater involvement of fathers also fosters gender equality in both the household and the workplace. Through shared and individual leave quotas, a father can help his spouse tackle childcare more like an equal; in doing so, he helps free his partner up to return to work and stay at work, evening the playing in the professional environment.

In the U.S., gender roles still largely represent traditional, more dated values and beliefs. Men are guaranteed no parental leave, paid or otherwise, and are therefore often less active and available in their children's early months and years than their

Norweigan counterparts. Gender inequity is accentuated and even mocked in the U.S. This inequality could be the result of no paid parental leave policy for Americans, and it could also be what's holding such a policy back.

At any rate, it's a central, relevant problem, along with a host of other factors, like extreme individualism, which keeps Americans working 60- to 70-hour weeks just to climb the professional ladder. Thus, for Americans, the birth of a new baby is often scary and intimidating when it should be tender, happy and exciting. With paid leave for new parents, the event could hold the special joy it's naturally meant to. The introduction of paid parental leave would likely mean a challenge to ingrained patriarchal ideologies, although ultimately for the hope of a better society. Change is seldom easy, but it's necessary for progress.

Teacher Takeaways

"The data presented here is well-integrated, and often supported by individual instances, which help to personalize what would otherwise seem like lifeless statistics and percentages. Sentences flow smoothly and main points are clear. However, the essay could use some reorganization and better transitions between sections. Overall, though, the argument benefits from a delayed thesis (a typical result of inquiry-based research); instead of outlining an argumentative stance in full at the beginning of the essay, the author waits until a thorough comparison is made between Norway and the United States, then allows for a natural progression to a final, persuasive conclusion."–Professor Fiscaletti

Carneiro, Pedro et al. "A Flying Start? Maternity Leave Benefits and Long-Run Outcomes of Children." *Journal of Political Economy*, vol. 123, no. 2, 2015, pp. 365-412. *University of Chicago Press Journals*, doi: 10.1086/679627.

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Pirates and Anarchy: Social Banditry Toward a Moral Economy11

(Research essay – see the research proposal here and annotated bibliography here)

The power to prosper: is this not every human's inalienable right? What happens when social, political, and economic systems conspire to limit the power of citizens to gain a fair share of resources? It may be that a government has sanctioned monopolistic practices to large corporate interests. It may be that racism or classism has damaged the ability of certain groups to exercise equal rights to education and employment. Perhaps the government structure has collapsed all together. The case could be that government actors have exchanged the well-being of citizens for ideological power and financial gain. Time and again, these types of inequitable scenarios have supplied the basis for otherwise average people to rise up and seize control of their own destinies. They disown the system. For freedom, for self-sufficiency, for a fair livelihood, they turn to anarchy. They turn pirate.

Pirates can be characterized as rebels rejecting societal structures that disenfranchise those with less access to resources. There is a common element of anarchy as a guiding philosophy of piracy. It is scaffolding on which to attempt to define why pirates do what they do. Viewing current political events through this lens, there seem to be more and more examples recently of small acts of piracy perpetrated by citizenry. This has taken the form of message

hijacking at otherwise peaceful protests, rebellious attitudes and actions toward established government structure, cyber-attacks, and far-left-wing demonstrations and violence. Examining various piratical groups over time may help shed light on what current rebellious acts by citizens may portend.

To that end, let us begin by pinning down what exactly constitutes a pirate. The swashbuckling high-seas crews depicted in movies capture one incarnation. Rather, they display one romantic idea of what pirates might have been. Stripped of those trappings though, pirates can be defined in much simpler terms. Dawdy and Bonni define piracy as: "a form of morally ambiguous property seizure committed by an organized group which can include thievery, hijacking, smuggling, counterfeiting, or kidnapping" (675). These criminal acts have to do with forceful fair distribution of resources. When small powerful segments of society such as corporations, the wealthy, and the well-connected hoard these resources, pirate groups form to break down the walls of the stockpiles to re-establish level ground (Snelders 3).

Put another way, pirate cultures arise when the benefits of obtaining resources outside the rule of law outweigh the risk of violating the laws themselves (Samatar et al. 1378). When resources are unfairly distributed across society, citizens lose faith in the system of government. They see it as their right to take action outside the law because the government in charge of that law has shirked their responsibilities to provide security and a moral economy (Ibid. 1388). When the scope of the world narrows to eating or starving, when there is no one coming to save the day, when there is no other way out, when all that is left is survival, those are the moments that pirates are born. Citizens' determination to be masters of their own destiny results from the lack of fair central societal structure. They choose desperate measures ("I Am Not").

Piratical groups across time have other commonalities. They tend to be cohesive assemblies of displaced people. They have binding social agreements among members, such as work ethic and equal distribution of takings (Dawdy and Bonni 680-681). There

tends to be an anti-capitalist agenda in the prizes sought as a bid for economic freedom. While locally sanctioned by average citizens, pirates act counter to the rule of law, especially when economic opportunity within societal norms becomes scarce (Dawdy and Bonni 677). Pirates act in defiance of government.

In fact, parallels can be drawn between piratical groups and the philosophy of anarchy. Indeed, as noted above, pirates emerge out of the void left when hierarchical governments either collapse or abandon their responsibilities to citizens. Anarchy is the antithesis of centralized government. It is governance by social networks (Wachhaus 33).

The *English Oxford Living Dictionary* defines anarchy as "A state of disorder due to absence or non-recognition of authority or other controlling systems" (Anarchy). However, Hirshleifer provides a more robust explanation by stating "anarchy is a social arrangement in which contenders struggle to conquer and defend durable resources, without effective regulation by either higher authorities or social pressures" (27). The lack of an overarching power structure is the main idea in both definitions, but in the latter, the motivations and activities of such groups are considered.

In a system of anarchy, groups must act collectively to seize and defend resources. Dissolution of ties between members is always a threat dependent on the individual profits of fighting for and defending resources (Hirshleifer 48). Cohesion then is contingent on mutual success.

There is a shift of mind necessary to turn from hierarchical structures of management to one that is a linkage of groups acting communally. Without decisive leaders in the power structure, social contracts can be difficult to construct and manage (Hirshleifer 48). The fluid nature then of anarchic group organization leaves them fragile. Group members must agree on goals and methods in order to achieve stability. Agreement on a social contract is challenging as is remaining cohesive and resisting merging with other groups with different social contracts (Hirshleifer 48). Fairness in distribution of holdings and contribution of actors in these groups is essential

(Wachhaus 33-34). The constraints on authority within anarchic structures and the social agreements necessary for actionable goal achievement, mean that these groups are small and locally oriented. They must focus on the here and now of meeting the needs of members.

The anarchic element of agreement on structure makes sense in terms of piratical organizations as well. Captains are captains at the pleasure of the crew so long as his/her decision-making enables the group as a whole to prosper. His/her skills are useful only if plunder is acquired regularly and allotted equally. Crews are successful so long as they maximize skill sets and cooperate to compete with other groups to seize resources and to defend them. Therein lies their strength. A resistance of submission to anything but self-rule is, of course, paramount. To illustrate this, let us now explore some cases of pirates over time.

Piracy has been in existence throughout the ages and has taken on many forms. It is beyond the scope of this paper to cover the detailed history from its inception to current times. However, a few examples will be described that help to showcase the idea of societal inequalities leading to anarchy and piracy.

One of these incarnations was the seafaring sort terrorizing ships during the Golden Age of Piracy. This was during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, reaching an extreme height of activity from 1690 to 1730 (Skowronek and Ewen 2). This exacerbation began after a combination of economic factors. First, the British Royal Navy released thousands of sailors by 1715 following the end of the War of the Spanish Succession (Snelders 168). Employment competition for these skilled seamen was fierce. Available posts were minimal and working conditions poor. This left many to turn to a life of piracy as a way to find occupation and freedom from oppressive maritime companies. Also, government sanctioned monopolization of trade mercantile companies caused damage to local economies. Smaller operations were not allowed to compete. The glut of unemployed sailors gave rise to piracy as economic protest (Dawdy and Bonni 681-682; Snelders 168). In

fact, piracy in the early 1700s worked to throw trade into turmoil (Dawdy and Bonni 681). They robbed ships specifically to clip the metaphorical purse strings of enterprises such as the East India Company, which held a monopoly on maritime trade. Pirates during this time believed that their practices, violent though they were, were justified. It was their right to find their fortune outside the societal structure that would have them live in poverty.

Piracy was therefore a bid for freedom (Wilson xi). They were "organizations of social bandits," rebelling against capitalistic injustices (Dawdy and Bonni 675). The intentional anarchic nature of the acts committed were a response to being left behind economically by political structures. They were fleeting and yes, floating communities involved in this social banditry intent on "Redistribution of economic wealth that would otherwise flow to merchant capitalists and state bureaucracies" (Snelders 3). They acted to balance the scales, though it should be said that those with even less access to resources also suffered at the hands of the pirates. Though this paper will not be going into specific details of exploits, it should be acknowledged that not all groups during the Golden Age of Piracy acted for the good of the moral economy.

Each of these pirate operations had its own micro-culture. To say they were all the same would be reductive. However, there was a generalizable pirate code during this time. Many of the elements of anarchy discussed above apply to the structure of these brotherhoods. Pirates created their own societies with their own agreed upon rules (Snelders 3). Pirate cultures demanded "mutual discussion, agreement upon goals, strategy, and tactics, and a fair distribution of the plunder" (Ibid. 162). Fraternal bonds were powerful. Without country or refuge, they had only their brotherhood by which to bind themselves (Ibid. 198). Home was a ship. Family was their crew. All the world their country. Pirate life was short and violent. They spent their shared plunder and celebrated often as if it were their last day on earth (Ibid. 198). The fact was that that might just be the case.

The pirate industry of the Golden Age of Piracy could not

last. They had flouted their lawlessness and power too much. They had inflicted massive damage on the fortunes of the East India Company. Governments resolved to hunt down pirate operations (Skowronek and Ewen 2). Some slipped away to anonymity, but the majority were captured and hung as criminals. The Golden Age thus faded to legend. However, this was not the end of piracy.

An example of piracy in more modern times was the Somali pirates that preyed on ships skirting the Eastern African coast from 2008 to 2013. Many elements came together for this to take place. The crumbling state, a non-functioning government, clan rule, and tribal warfare all were contributors. Samatar et al. outline the following conditions that lead to modern piracy:

> 1) the existence of a favourable topographic environment;
> 2) the prevalence of ungoverned spaces—either as the result of legal dispute between states or simply because of their absence;
> 3) the existence of weak law enforcement or weak political will of governments or a cultural environment that is not hostile to piracy; and 4) the availability of great rewards for piracy while the risks are minimal. (1378)

All of these elements came together in Somalia to propagate piracy as a normalized practice. The downfall of the Somali government was the final catalyst for the emergence of piracy in the region (Samatar et al. 1384). State institutions became non-functioning, leaving instability in its wake (Otto 46). Without the structure of a central government, citizens were left to fend for themselves.

Piracy originated as ordinary Somali fishermen defending against foreign interests illegally looting fish from the coastline, depriving them of a valuable resource during desperate times (Otto 46; Samatar et al. 1387). There was no government force to prevent fish from being poached by adversarial enterprises seeking to capitalize on undefended waters. It fell to Somali citizens to maintain security.

What became evident was that there was a larger prize than fish as an economic resource. Protecting the waters became fining or taxing for territory invasion. This in turn became kidnapping and ransoming ("I Am Not"; Otto 46). According to Otto, "a single ransom can generate up to US $10 million" (47). In 2010 alone, 1000 people were taken hostage ("I Am Not"). In the vacuum that was Somalia's economy at the time, ransom piracy became the main industry in the region. Without a centralized government, clans ran the country in a network of warring tribes (Ibid.). Warlords and other clan members helped in the recruitment and coordination of pirate groups (Otto 47). Locals could invest in piracy and expect returns. The pirates grew well-funded and well-armed ("I Am Not").

Eradication of piracy was a long and complicated process. A slow to strengthen central government reformed and began working with clans to end the ransom industry through a three step plan. A condensed look at this goes like this: religious pirate shaming, creation of alternative economic incentives, and rehabilitation of pirates ("I Am Not"). They were, after all, at a basic level, fishermen in need of employment. These were the efforts on land. This combined with seaward endeavors by foreign navies, increased security on shipping industry vessels, along with the practice of sailing farther from the coast allowed for the elimination of the pirate activity (Ibid.). By 2013, the industry of piracy in Somalia was ended.

Somalia remains economically fragile. Clans still maintain a level of power. A re-emergence of rogue efforts to acquire resources doesn't seem far-fetched. Piracy arises in this area of the world when global economic cycles leave the poor without proper access to economic participation (Samatar et al. 1379). It is a tried-and-true means of survival. Between piracy and community death by starvation, there is little choice. Now we will turn to a final and current piratical case.

This last example to be discussed is not a group of actors labeled as pirates. Rather they take action in a piratical manner. Self-identified anarchists, they are morally murky groups that utilize

the practice of appropriating by force the protest demonstrations organized by other groups. This is done for the purpose of showcasing the anarchist agenda to which they subscribe (Farley). They seek to disrupt what they deem as society's oppressive structure, particularly in terms of racism and fascism ("About Rose City"). These groups have become more active in defiance of the current political milieu in the United States.

At the Portland May Day Rally on May 2nd, 2016, what began as a peaceful and legally permitted rally for workers' rights became a violent protest when it was taken over by an anarchist group (Chappell). Covered head to toe in black clothing complete with masked faces, the well-coordinated members of Rose City Antifa emerged from the crowd to sow chaos. The group vandalized property, set fires, and hurled objects at police.

Individual identities of members of anarchist groups are opaque. However, it is possible to find information on the belief system via their online presence. Rose City Antifa's website outlines some core beliefs regarding what they describe as the oppressive nature of society's structure. They see themselves in direct conflict with fascism. This is defined on their website as "an ultra-nationalist ideology that mobilizes around and glorifies a national identity defined in exclusive racial, cultural, and/or historical terms, valuing this identity above all other interests (ie: gender or class)" (About Rose City). The group points specifically to extreme right wing political organizations, so-called neo-nazis, as the antithesis of what Antifa stands for. Along with this is the acknowledgment of the frustration of "young, white, working-class men" in relation to economic opportunity. Antifa as a group intends to give these men a meaningful culture to join that doesn't include racism in the tenets, but seeks freedom and equality for all. Action is held in higher regard than rhetoric. Thus the violent and destructive measures intended to send a strong and highly visible message.

Since the US election of 2016, citizens have become more politically engaged. Protests are once again growing normalized as the public seeks to have their political positions recognized by

government representatives. Another anarchist group known as the Black Bloc create spectacle at a growing number of protests using militant tactics, especially property damage. They see political protests becoming more violent as a call out and call to arms to liberal citizens whom they feel are not taking right-wing activists with enough seriousness. The Black Bloc steadfastly believes in the righteousness of these tactics against fascism in the US, despite the illegality of such actions. They feel that they need to meet far right aggression with equal force in order to protect equal rights. Like other successful pirate operations, these anarchist groups have the will and the organization to take extreme measures (Farley).

The viewpoint is that this is standing up for the disenfranchised in a country where the centralized government has abdicated their duties. Freedom and facts being flouted by the current administration is stirring anarchist anger. The Black Bloc see themselves as rebelling against a system that is sanctioning a corrupt government (Farley).

Throughout this exploration of the above pirate groups, there is the thread of demanding a moral economy. One that provides an equal measure of opportunity and access to resources for all citizens in a nation. Samatar et al. explains it in this way:

> The essence of the moral economy argument is that peasants and the poor in general have a set of expectations that govern their sense of justice. When such values are violated they respond vigorously to protect their livelihood and their sense of fairness. (1388)

Pirates defy the rule of law under hierarchical governments that fail to provide a moral economy. They create their own rules and cultural norms. They take action rather than sit quietly while rights are violated. Yes, there is violence. Yes, other members of society suffer losses at the hands of pirates. However, looking from a distance, it is possible to see the arc of change that occurs due to piratical movements. Golden Age pirates were able to disrupt harmful monopolized trade practices. Somali pirates forced leaders

to reform a centralized government. It is yet to be seen what anarchist groups in the US such as Rose City Antifa and the Black Bloc will accomplish. One thing is certain: they are drawing attention to difficult issues. Perhaps the multiple recent bold acts of anarchist groups portend more rebellion in our society's future.

Pirates can be seen as oracles of change. Dawdy and Bonni warn that "we might look for a surge in piracy in both representation and action as an indication that a major turn of the wheel is about to occur" (696). These anthropological ideas reflect the simmering political currents we are experiencing now in 2017. The call for jobs and fair compensation are getting louder and louder. Political polarization continues to freeze up the government, rendering them ineffectual. Worse, elected officials appear more concerned with ideology and campaign funding than the plight of the common man. They leave their own constituents' needs abandoned. Citizens may turn to extreme political philosophies such as anarchy as a way to take piratical action to counteract economic disparity. A pervasive sense of powerlessness and underrepresentation may lead to the splintering of societal structure, even rebellion. Shrugging off accountability to the system as a countermeasure to what is seen as government's inability to provide a free and fair system. This may be seen as empowering to the public. It may also signal a breakdown of centralized government. If political structures cannot provide economic stability, will citizens ultimately decide to tear it all down?

Teacher Takeaways

"The student makes great use of a variety of sources to provide complex and numerous perspectives on the issue, using both academic and non-academic sources, which allows us to see the topic from both historical and

contemporary viewpoints. The student also synthesizes the information from these sources with their own ideas very well by paraphrasing and summarizing. Some of the shorter paragraphs seem as though they continue the ideas and thoughts of those around them and could likely be merged rather than allowed to stand on their own. It is also a little unclear what the student is arguing for. Is this an examination of piracy through history and in contemporary times? Or is it an argument that piracy is a symptom of failed governments that eventually benefit the oppressed? While the introduction and conclusion are engaging, captivating, and pose great questions, the student should revise with an eye toward giving a clear statement of what they are truly arguing for, or how their research throughout the body of the essay speaks to that argument."– Professor Dannemiller

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The Hysterical Woman12

(Research essay – see the research proposal here and annotated bibliography here)

Hysteria was a medical recognition dating back to 1900 BC, diagnosed by physicians liberally until recent times. The term Hysteria comes from the Greek word "Hystera," which literally translates into "uterus." The diagnosis and treatment of Hysteria were routine for hundreds of years in Western Europe and the

United States, mainly for keeping women in line. Symptoms that indicated Hysteria were broad and all encompassing: nervousness, sexual desire, faintness, insomnia, irritability, loss of appetite, depression, heaviness in abdomen, etc. The number of diagnosed cases of Hysteria slowed as medical advancements proceeded, and in the early 1960's (coinciding with the popularization of feminism) the "disease" ceased to be considered a true medical disorder. In modern medicine, the treatment and diagnosis of female medical issues continues to be vague and potentially harmful due to lack of knowledge. Does the concept of female Hysteria have continuity today? Although the vocabulary has changed, it is clear that the practice of ignoring serious medical ailments based on sex remains prominent in the world of medicine, and contributes to the continuation of harmful gender stereotypes.

The beginnings of Hysteria can be followed back to ancient Egypt, around 1900 BC, when a "misplaced womb" was commonly thought to be the cause of the disease. Plato later expanded on this concept around 500 BC with his explanation of the womb as a living creature that sought to disrupt biological processes, impede breathing, limit emotional regulation, and cause disease (Adair). While Plato agreed with the prevailing theories of the time in regard to the effect of Hysteria, his ideas differed slightly on the cause. It was taken as fact that Hysteria was due to a hormonal imbalance within the female body, causing those afflicted to act out irrationally, or fall into a fit of anger. Plato, however, introduced the idea that Hysteria was due to a "moving psychological force, which arises from the womb: sexual desire perverted by frustration" (Adair). It is important to note that his theory, more insightful than anything that had been proposed before, would be opposed by physicians and commentators for nearly two thousand years following. A more sophisticated and medically forward concept of a psychiatric rather than physical affliction would not be seen for years to come.

The time and place that Hysteria saw its highest peak in relevance was around 1800-1900 in Western countries. Where

Hysteria was previously diagnosed to females who "acted out" or showed signs of irritability, the diagnoses were given out for less specific symptoms in the 1800s. The women who attempted to deviate from the domestic standards of their gender, those who were depressed, and those who were irritable were now also labeled as "hysterical" (Culp-Ressler). Perhaps not so coincidentally was the simultaneous increase in frequency of Hysteria diagnoses and rise in popularity of Freudian psychoanalysis (Scull). This is necessary to consider because Freud himself placed a great deal of importance on gender roles and normative societal behavior of the sexes. It should then come as no surprise that both the stigma for being diagnosed with Hysteria, as well as the treatments and "cures" for the disease, were sexist during this time.

Women labeled "hysterical" in the 1800s and 1900s were placed in insane asylums, given the Rest Cure, and in some extreme cases given hysterectomies (Culp-Ressler). The main goal of the Rest Cure treatment was to confine women in rooms that were not distracting, over-feed them with the goal of weight gain, and allow them no visitors in order to limit their "stressors" and revive them back to their normal temperaments. An article published within the *American Journal of Nursing* in 1936 describes the daily life of a Rest Cure patient: "I'm having a rest cure and I can't see anybody … and all I have to do is eat and sleep and not worry about anything. Just rest … and that's just what I'm doing. I may not look it but that's just what I'm doing" ("The Rest Cure" 451). The article is just one of many accounts, fictional and otherwise, that provide a look into how women that were labeled "hysterical" were treated. It was believed that if women were able to limit their stressful tasks that they would be likely to remain delicate, proper, and feminine—desirable traits in a Victorian wife and mother. John Harvey Kellogg's book titled *Ladies' Guide in Health and Disease: Girlhood, Maidenhood, Wifehood, Motherhood* was a common source on explaining to women the necessary steps they ought to take in order to lead healthy, childbearing lives. On the topic of Hysteria, Kellogg notes that the common causes are "sexual excess, novel reading,

perverted habits of thought, and idleness" (586). As Kellogg mentions that the disease is one of "morality", he further shames women into lives free of hard work and free thinking. Charlotte Perkins Gilman, author of "The Yellow Wallpaper" (a fictional tell-all of her experience with the Rest Cure), once wrote a letter detailing the lifestyle she was told to lead in order to keep her unruly nerves at bay. She was given advice to "live as domestic a life as far as possible", to "have but two hours' intellectual life a day", and "never touch pen, brush, or pencil again" as long as she lived (Gilman). As gender norms went unquestioned in the Victorian era, as did the sexism visible in the medical world.

Due to Hysteria's feminine association, it was further deemed shameful and embarrassing. This stereotype was promoted after the Second World War, when many soldiers returning home from battle were diagnosed with nervous diseases, most specifically Hysteria (Scull). Due to nervous diseases being seen as feminine afflictions of the imagination, these men received little to no treatment—similar to females diagnosed with Hysteria. These men were seen as cowardly and inferior for a malady that today would be easily recognizable as post-traumatic stress disorder. While the patients were male, they were seen as contracting a feminine disease that was "made up in the mind" (Scull), therefore hindering the help that they needed. The lack of attention shown to these soldiers reinforces the idea of a bias that exists with illnesses that are associated with women.

During the 1960s and 1970s, feminist writers were quick to isolate Hysteria's literal definition in order to successfully convey criticisms of Freud's psychoanalytic treatments of the "disease" ("Brought"). Women of this age began to critique the healthcare system, and were able to expose the effect of sexism in medicine. Because of fervent denunciations, the term slowly fell out of medical use but remained a common phrase in day-to-day conversations. Hysteria was officially removed from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) in 1980 (Culp-Ressler), and is now considered a derogatory term. Many physicians and psychologists

attempted to continue the diagnosis of the disease, but under new, more socially acceptable terms. Freud himself claimed to change focus to one's "sexual conflicts" within (Scull), and the effects. He then created a way of disguising old ideas of Hysteria behind fresh words. This trend carries on today despite opportunities to change the culture.

One of the more surprising turns in the history of Hysteria as a concept, is the reclamation of the word by 1990s feminists. In striking contrast to the views held by progressive women of the '60s, '70s, and '80s, some '90s women sought to recover and take ownership of the inherently feminine rights of Hysteria. Elaine Showalter, an author of the 90s on the topics of Hysteria, gender, and feminism, claims that "for some writers, Hysteria has been claimed as the first step on the road to feminism, a specifically feminine pathology that speaks to and against the patriarchy" (286). Interestingly, prior to this time, Hysteria was dubbed a tool of the patriarchy and that notion held true amongst feminists. This insight from Showalter addresses the lengths that sexism can reach. Internalization of patriarchal views on sex is a common effect, especially with views that are enforced blindly without question. The concept of an irrational woman, or a woman possessed by emotion rang true for some women of the '90s, but they saw this falsehood as something to be proud of, and something to aspire to. In their attempts to argue the reclamation of Hysteria, they succumb to the long-enforced stereotypes that many fought to destroy. While emotion, passion, and vulnerability aren't necessarily traits to be ashamed of, they were used through the trustful relationship of physicians as a tool to suppress the social, economic, and personal growth of women through the diagnoses of nervous diseases.

Stereotypes of the feminine gender have made their way into modern medicine as well. As women are socialized from birth to be passive and to respect authority, more specifically male authority, it is uncommon for a woman to resist the diagnosis received from a physician. Typically, if a woman is told that she

is a hypochondriac, or that her symptoms are psychosomatic (all in her head), she will most likely internalize the notion that she is imagining all of her issues. The term "psychosomatic" is a cover-all diagnosis commonly used by physicians to attribute to any symptoms that cannot be explained. As a result, many women continue suffering through treatable and preventable diseases because they are fearful of being told that they are overreacting (Culp-Ressler). This demonstrates that even within ourselves, women fear falling into the feminine gender stereotypes of irrational and excessive behavior—internalized misogyny presents itself here.

From this, we must ask why do we, as individuals and as a society, not trust women to know their own bodies? We see this in cases ranging from the extreme to the everyday—from the treatment of rape survivors to a typical visit to the doctor's office. Aside from flaws in women's reproductive health care, there is also a well-documented gap in the treatment of pain between men and women. Of the 25% of Americans suffering from chronic pain, women make up a disproportionate majority (Edwards). Not only are women more likely to suffer from chronic pain, but that pain is more likely to be categorized as "emotional," "psychogenic," or "not real". Women are also less likely than men to receive aggressive treatment after being diagnosed with autoimmune diseases that cause chronic pain (Edwards). Multiple studies have found that women are far less likely to receive any kind of medical intervention to manage pain (Culp-Ressler). Why? Pain is self-reported and subjective, and treatment of pain fully relies on the idea that a physician trusts the patient reporting symptoms. However, trusting a woman to be a reliable source on her own body is still not the norm. This practice contributes to the long-standing cycle of attributing women's pain to mental disorders, thus reinforcing the stereotype of the Hysterical Woman.

While many medical professionals would agree that there needs to be a shift in how we look at both the gender and sex dynamics of healthcare, there is little being done about it. Clinical

trials are just one example. Women make up roughly half of the country's population, but an astonishing majority of participants in clinical trials within the United States are men. According to the *Journal of Women's Health*, in 2004, women made up less than 25% of all patients enrolled in clinical trials for that year (Moyer). The reasoning for this is that women present a less uniform sample population: they have menstrual cycles and hormones, making results more difficult to analyze. However, this does not eradicate the need for personalized care being available to women. This bias is decades-old, and leads doctors to preferentially study diseases and test drugs in male participants. A bias this prominent is a serious health risk for women, limits the reach of our preventative care and hinders growth of scientific knowledge. Another struggle presenting itself is the unwillingness of medical professionals to make use of what little sex-specific data has been found. For example, despite well-recognized sex differences in coronary heart disease management in critical care units, the guidelines for management are not sex-specific (Holdcroft). Unfortunately, guidelines rarely state that evidence has been mainly obtained from men; disregarding this information perpetuates inequality in treatment of disease and distribution of medication.

The limited scope of our current knowledge on gender/sex differences can be observed in newly discovered differences in disease symptoms, as well as the continuing decrease of the life expectancy gap. Biased medical research and practice focuses on gender differences, and therefore risks overlooking similarities. For example, coronary heart disease was once perceived as strictly affecting males; therefore, less research and attention was given to the possibility of women contracting the disease (Annandale). Now, perhaps as a result, coronary heart disease kills more women than men. Women in the 1960s and 70s lived markedly longer than men, but in recent years the gap has decreased (Ibid.), and shrunken more than one third since the early 80s.The exact cause of the decline in the gender life expectancy gap cannot be pinpointed due to a number of confounding variables. The increase in women working

to retirement and the added stress of contributing financially as well as taking full responsibility of children are just a few. One widely debated cause of the gap decrease is the fact that the quality of men's healthcare is surpassing that of women's. The standard of disregarding women from clinical trials creates an unhealthy environment of willful ignorance on the topic of women's healthcare due to stereotypes, and the effects are measurable.

With the sex-biased culture of medicine so ingrained into its academia and practice, the task of eradicating it seems all the more important. This becomes more true as a greater percent of the population becomes aware of gender stereotypes and the harm that they cause. Unfortunately, due to fear of being labeled a hypochondriac, or neurotic, women refrain from telling their medical experiences and demanding quality care. With a majority of women experiencing patriarchal authority during doctor visits, and many women sharing similar stories of struggling with a lack of accurate diagnosis, it's a shame that this topic isn't discussed on a broad scope. If experiences were documented, it would be a faster way to make society more aware of this specific branch of inequality and how it contributes to negative gender stereotypes.

A practical way of accomplishing this would be to implement changes into the medical school curricula. We should seize the opportunity to implement the best practices for healthcare regardless of gender identification, as well as to establish evidence-based guidance that focuses on both gender and sex differences. Informing

future physicians that it is not in the best interest of the patient to quickly jump to the conclusion that their symptoms are psychosomatic, or to share stories of specific experiences would eventually trickle down into the medical culture.

Informing these students that it is within the realm of possibility that these women might be presenting symptoms to an affliction that is not well understood, even by modern medicine. The exercise of attributing the valid symptoms of women to mental disorders has been commonplace for centuries–Hysteria, Conversion, etc. While

the name continues to change, the meanings behind them stay the same, and women continue to be subjected to sexism, and low-quality healthcare as a result. Acknowledging the bias within is the first and most important step to moving forward and increasing the quality of women's healthcare.

Teacher Takeaways

"This student presents a solid and well-researched argument that builds off a clearly stated thesis in the introduction and returns to this thesis in the conclusion with a fully developed call-to-action and prompt for continued research. Each paragraph follows the path of the thesis's spine, elaborating on the historical contexts the student first presents, to introduce new complexities and further evidence of how these claims add to the need for response to the bias against women in health care. Although the student synthesizes paraphrases, quotes, and summaries well most of the time, there are moments (mostly later in the essay) in which the student gives us information without clearly signaling or citing where that information is coming from."– Professor Dannemiller

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Endnotes

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10 Essay by Christopher Gaylord, Portland State University, 2017. Reproduced with permission from the student author.
11 Essay by Kathryn Morris, Portland State University, 2017. Reproduced with permission from the student author.
12 Essay by Hannah Zarnick, Portland State University, 2017. Reproduced with permission from the student author.

Assignment: Persuasive Research Essay

In order to apply and extend the skills and techniques you've learned in this section on argumentation, research, and research writing, you will write an essay which synthesizes research on an arguable topic to create a well-informed and rhetorically impactful argument.

Assignment

Your task is to write an argumentative essay which takes a position on a topic, supports that position using credible sources, addresses counterarguments, and rebuts those counterarguments. Here's a more detailed breakdown:

1. Choose a Topic
    1. Using the idea generation activities in Chapter Eight, identify a path of inquiry that is open-ended, focused, and—most importantly—interesting to you.
2. Write a Proposal
    1. Before beginning your research, identify your path of inquiry (research question) and your working thesis—this is your research proposal. Keep in mind, this is not set in stone, but is rather a starting point. Your proposal should be no fewer than 250 words. Consult the discussion of research proposals in Chapter Eight for guidelines.
3. Research and Write an Annotated Bibliography
    1. Using multiple resources (your school's library, Google, Google Scholar, and beyond), identify the different

perspectives on your topic. Consider:

    1. What conversation already exists about this topic? Are you saying something new, or aligning with existing viewpoints?
    2. Who are the authorities on this topic? What stance do they take? Who is weighing in?
    3. What aspects of this topic make it arguable?
    4. What other issues is this debate connected to?
2. Try to gather a diversity of sources in order to catch the contours of a complex conversation. Be sure to document your research along the way to save yourself a headache when you begin your annotated bibliography.
3. You should compile any sources you seriously consult (even if they do not seem useful at the time) in a bibliography using a citation style appropriate to your class. Then, you will evaluate them in the form of an annotated bibliography. Each annotation of roughly 100 words should:

    1. briefly summarize the source,
    2. attend to its use-value, and
    3. consider its credibility and place in the ongoing conversation.
4. Your annotated bibliography is a research tool; you are not obliged to use all of the sources from this portion of the project in your essay. You may include any sources you've encountered for your annotated bibliography, even if you don't plan on using all of them as evidence in your essay.

4. Write, Re-research, Revise, Revise, Revise!

    1. Write a first draft of your essay; this can be an outline, mind-map, draft, or hybrid of pre-writing. This will help you organize your ideas and research so your instructor knows you're on track to write a successful final draft. Although a rough draft does not need to hit all these points, your final draft will include:

    1. Your question and your stance
    2. Justification for your stance, including sources
    3. Opposing/varying stances, including sources
    4. Your response to other stances
    5. An ultimate conclusion on your topic
        1. *Note: this is not an outline or prescription, but a set of recommended subtopics.*
2. Using feedback from your instructor, your peers, and the Writing Center—as well as new ideas you discover along the way—revise your first draft as many times as possible until it is ready to submit.

Your essay should be thesis-driven and will include evidence in the form of quotes, paraphrases, and summaries from sources to support your argument.

Before you begin, consider your rhetorical situation:

Subject:	
How will this influence the way you write?	
Audience:	Purpo

How will this influence the way you write?

Assignment: Persuasive Research Essay

Each student will use inquiry-based research to write a persuasive essay informed by credible sources and relevant experiences and knowledges. The author will take a position on a topic using a clearly articulated thesis, support that position using evidence, acknowledge other perspectives, and rebut counter-arguments.

* This rubric is designed to score the final draft of the essay, but not the components that precede it (i.e., annotated bibliography and proposal).

Criteria	Instructor Comments	Score
Ideas, Focus, and Content *Has the author organized their argument around a central, unifying insight and/or research question? Is the scope of this thesis/question appropriate to the rhetorical situation? Does the author develop the contours of the ongoing conversation and locate themself within that conversation?*		/____
Structure *Does the argument unfold logically and fluidly? Does each paragraph relate back to the path of inquiry clearly?*		/____
Style and Language *Does the author use an academic voice appropriate to the rhetorical situation? Does the author effectively integrate evidence by front-loading, punctuating, and explaining? Does the author employ logos, pathos, and ethos?*		/____
Depth, Support, and Analysis *Has the author provided a convincing amount of evidence to support their thesis? Does the author foreground their perspective, using research to support, elaborate, or nuance their thesis? Does the author demonstrate a complex understanding of the issue by integrating a diversity of sources?*		/____
Mechanics *Does the essay read smoothly with minimal spelling/grammar/mechanical issues? Does it use proper format?*		/____

/____ pts. possible

Establishing Your Peer Workshop

To set the tone and expectations for your unique workshop group, talk through the following prompts. Record your answers on the companion sheet. Part One asks you to establish a climate or culture for your group; Part Two will help you talk through logistics.

(1) Culture of your Workshop

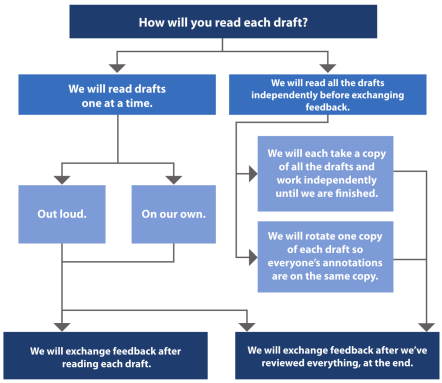
(a.) Choose the 3-5 descriptors of good feedback that are most important to the members of your group.

(b.) Discuss for 3-5 minutes: What do each of you need for this Peer Workshop to be effective?

FROM EACH OTHER? **FROM THE INSTRUCTOR?** **FROM YOURSELVES?** **FROM YOUR ENVIRONMENT?**

Record responses on a separate sheet of paper.

(2) Procedures for your Workshop



Guidelines for Peer Workshop

Before beginning the Peer Workshop and revision process, I recommend consulting the Revision Concepts and Strategies Appendix. In your Peer Workshop group (or based on your teacher's directions), establish a process for workshopping that will work for you. You may find the flowchart titled "Establishing Your Peer Workshop" useful.

Establishing Peer Workshop Process:

Do you prefer written notes, or open discussion? Would you like to read all the drafts first, then discuss, or go one at a time? Should the author respond to feedback or just listen? What anxieties do you each have about sharing your writing? How will you provide feedback that is both critical and kind? How will you demonstrate respect for your peers?

One Example of a Peer Workshop Process

Before the workshop, each author should spend several minutes generating requests for support (#1 below). Identify specific elements you need help on. Here are a few examples:

> I'm worried that my voice is being overwhelmed by other voices in the conversation. How do you think I can foreground my ideas?
>
> Do you think my conclusion is convincing? What do you think my call-to-action should be?
>
> Do you see anywhere that I could better cultivate *pathos*?

During the workshop, follow this sequence:

1. Student A introduces their draft, distributes copies, and makes requests for feedback. *What do you want help with, specifically?*
2. Student A reads their draft aloud while students B and C annotate/take notes. *What do you notice as the draft is read aloud?*

3. Whole group discusses the draft; student A takes notes. Use these prompts as a reference to generate and frame your feedback. Try to identify specific places in your classmates' essays where the writer is successful and where the writer needs support. Consider constructive, specific, and actionable feedback. *What is the author doing well? What could they do better?*
    1. What requests does the author have for support? What feedback do you have on this issue, specifically?
    2. Identify one "golden line" from the essay under consideration—a phrase, sentence, or paragraph that resonates with you. What about this line is so striking?
    3. Consult either the rubric included above or an alternate rubric, if your instructor has provided one. Is the author on track to meet the expectations of the assignment? What does the author do well in each of the categories? What could they do better?
        1. Ideas, Content, and Focus
        2. Structure
        3. Style and Language
        4. Depth, Support, and Reflection
        5. Mechanics
    4. What resonances do you see between this draft and others from your group? Between this draft and the exemplars you've read?
4. Repeat with students B and C.

After the workshop, try implementing some of the feedback your group provided while they're still nearby! For example, if Student B said your introduction needed more imagery, draft some new language and see if Student B likes the direction you're moving in. As you are comfortable, exchange contact information with your group so you can to continue the discussion outside of class.

The Advertising Black Hole[1]

The little girl walked along the brightly lit paths of vibrant colors and enticing patterns. Her close friends watched her as she slowly strolled by. She made sure to inspect each one of them as she moved through the pathways, seeing if there was anything new about them, and wondering which one she was interested in bringing home. She did not know, however, that these so-called friends of hers had the potential to be dangerous and possibly deadly if she spent too much time with them. But she was not aware, so she picked up the colorful box of cereal with her friend Toucan Sam on the outside, put it in the cart and decided that he was her top choice that day. Many children have similar experiences while grocery shopping because numerous large corporations thrive on developing relationships between the young consumer and their products; a regular food item can become so much more than that to children. Due to the bonds that children and products are forming together, early-life weight issues have become an increasingly large issue. While marketing is not the leading or only cause of the obesity epidemic affecting children and teenagers, it does aid in developing and endorsing preferences of unhealthier food options sold in grocery stores, which can lead to higher weights if not controlled.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states that up to 17% of children and adolescents, from ages zero to seventeen, are overweight in the United States. This comes out to approximately 12.7 million young individuals who are affected by the obesity epidemic ("Childhood Obesity"), and there is no projection of this number getting smaller any time soon, as the general population continues to increase. Without any significant changes with how food products are marketed to children and its influence on their food choices, one might predict that there will most likely

not be a decline in obesity in kids and teens as populations continue to rise.

Today, large corporations like Oreo, Trix, and Yoplait, amongst others, spend great sums of money marketing to younger generations in hopes that they will want their products and, more importantly, grow an attachment to them. In 2009 alone, companies spent about $1.79 billion on the endeavor ("FTC Releases"). Leading businesses in the food industry spend a lot of money on advertising so that they can establish an emotional connection between their products and fledgling consumers. They try to inspire feelings of familiarity, comfort, "coolness," adventure, warmth, excitement, and many others that will attract kids and teenagers.

Through trials and studies, leading advertising agencies have found what types of pictures, words, and designs resonate the most with the younger audiences. It is not about selling a product, but creating an experience of joy and wonder for the child. While younger children especially are not aware of the premeditated enticements from the corporate end, they can still become highly engrossed in the products. Some research has shown that a child's attraction to certain brand characteristics may actually be out of their conscious control (Keller 380).

Young children pick up on things very easily, whether something is specifically taught to them or not, and food preferences are no different. Toddlers as early as two or three can be affected by advertising (McGinnis 376) and can develop bonds to certain products. This shows that even without outside pressures from society or a knowledge of advertising, children can bond with food items just like they do people. This makes sense, as brands are created to be as relatable and welcoming as possible, just like a human being.

With this in mind, developing a specific personality for a brand is extremely important. Many advertising authorities believe that without a brand personality that a company would have an extremely hard time standing out from the crowd. In "Brand Personalities Are Like Snowflakes," David Aaker, a well-known

expert in his field, gives examples of large corporations that use branding to bring a likeability or specific personality type to the business in order to identify with certain groups of people, or to have a larger mass appeal. For example, Betty Crocker comes across as motherly, traditional, and "all-American" (Aaker 20). It makes sense why children and adolescents would develop a fondness for a product that seems homey and loving. If a company succeeds in gaining the interest of a child and creating an emotional connection with them, then it is not impossible or unusual that the individual could stay a brand loyalist into adulthood. But with unhealthy food companies being the source of some of the most intelligent marketing techniques, it is easy for them to entice children to eat foods that are not good for them, all the while making them feel content about their choices.

Once a company comes up with a good branding technique or personality, they can start marketing their products, and the avenues in which companies share them is almost as important as the products themselves. In order for the item to become popular and generate high revenue, they need to reach as many people as possible. If the wrong methods are chosen and there is less of a consumer response, then money has been wasted. While marketing food to children has been very successful in the past, it is even more so now in the 21st century because of the prevalence of mobile devices. Kids and teens are very frequently exposed to advertising through websites, games, or applications that they are using on cell phones, tablets, and laptops. Corporations even collect meta-data from sites or applications that kids access on the device in order to figure out what their preferences are, and to further expose them to ads within their frame of interest, hopefully boosting their sales and likeability through repeated exposure ("Should Advertising"). Television has not been phased out by the internet, however, and it is still a huge contributor to advertising success, accounting for almost half of marketing costs (Harris 409). Movies, magazines and other print sources, sporting events, schools, displays in grocery

stores, the boxes themselves, and many other routes are taken in order to create as much of a product "buzz" as possible.

Within these avenues, there are countless techniques that are used in order to gently sway a child or adolescent into wanting a product. Some of these methods are direct, but others are hardly recognizable. I decided to do a little investigating of my own at Fred Meyer's, one of the leading supermarkets in the Portland area, and found many trends and practices that were used to promote kids' food. One of the main techniques used is called cross-branding. Also called cross-promoting, this is where a specific product, like cereal for example, will sign an agreement with another company so that they can use each other's popularity in order to sell more merchandise. The picture shown is a perfect example of this. Kellogg's teamed up with Disney and Pixar in order to create a one-of-a-kind *Finding Dory* cereal. This example is actually different than most of the cross-promoting cereals or products, because this is a whole new item made just for the movie; it is not just a picture on a box for a cereal that had already existed. Both companies will come out ahead in this case, since *Finding Dory* is beloved by children and so will bring revenue to both. Celebrity and sports endorsements are other forms of cross-branding, since they are promoting themselves and the product at the same time. While cartoon characters may be better suited for younger kids, movie and television stars, singers, and athletes help to drawn in the pre-teen and teenage crowds.

Other identified advertising tools from the packages themselves might include sweepstakes to win prizes, toys inside, free games or applications with purchase, and collecting UPC codes for gifts. The picture shown to the right is another example from my personal research, which shows a Go-Gurt box. It not only shows cross-branding with the movie *Trolls*, but it also includes something for free. The top right-hand corner displays that inside of the box there is a special link for a free *Trolls* Spotify playlist. Prizes that used to be included with purchased goods before the onset of the internet were typically toys, stickers, puzzles, or physical games,

whereas they are now mostly songs, videos, digital games, or free applications which generally include either the company's branding mascot or the cross-promotion character they are using at the time. As a child, I remember that getting free gifts was a huge incentive for me to ask my parents for something at the store, and can vouch for how strong of an effect this can have on a kid's mind.

Not all tactics to gain consumer interests are as noticeable though, yet still appear to have positive effects on children. Bright colors, boldness of design, cartoon mascots, and catch phrases are all part of the overall enjoyable experience that corporations try to create for young customers. The location of the product on the shelves is also important. Most children's products are kept on bottom shelves, especially in aisles of grocery stores where adult and child products are mixed. This way the items are in their direct line of sight and reach, creating a higher probability for purchase. Another method that is not so heavily researched, but is extremely convincing, comes from "Eyes in the Aisles: Why is Cap'n Crunch Looking Down at My Child?", an article by Aviva Musicus and other scholars. This article breaks down the research study of whether eye contact with cartoon characters on cereal products creates a sense of comfort and trust, and if it affects the item's purchase. Many cereal characters' eyes look down (as shown), typically looking at the product that pictured on the box–but also at the smaller people perusing the aisles, like children. Researchers wanted to determine if this tactic is intentional, and if so, if it is effective in selling more product. This tactic appears to be used mostly for cereal, but I was able to find similar artistry on Danimals yogurt drinks and some fruit snacks as well. It was concluded through the study that eye-contact by a friendly face in general creates feelings of trust and friendship. In applying this to product branding, the study confirmed with many of its subjects, that a welcoming glance for a child can essentially create positive feelings that make him or her feel more connected to the product and in turn choose it over others. The findings of the study for whether or not characters are

designed to make eye contact were inconclusive, however (Musicus et al. 716-724).

While the amount of money that is spent on food advertising for children seems exorbitant to most, it is not necessarily the amount of money or the advertising in itself that is the problem for many Americans; instead, it is the type of food that is being promoted with such a heavy hand. Soda, fruit snacks, donuts, cereal, granola bars, Pop-Tarts, frozen meals, sugary yogurts, cookies, snack cakes, ice cream, and popsicles are some of the most branded items for children at grocery stores. Most of the things listed are not adequate snacks or meals, and yet it is proven that children want them the most due to their appealing containers. Depending on the age of the child, they may not even know what the product is but still want it, because of the color of the package or because their favorite character is on it. Experts agree that the majority of the highly advertised and branded food products are unhealthy and that they can contribute to higher weights if consumed in too large of quantities or too often. One such expert is Kathleen Keller, along with her research partners from various universities in the United States. They have found that the most marketed food items at the grocery store are generally high in fat, sodium, and sugar, which is easily confirmed with a look in your city's popular supermarkets. Keller also determined that children who are enticed by "good" marketing and branding for unhealthy products often keep going back for more due to the addictive nature of those three main ingredients (409).

Keller and her team also conducted three different experiments, two of which I will discuss. It is important to add that Keller is not the only one that has conducted these studies, but is being used as an example of the type of tests that have been executed in regards to branding, and the movements that have been made in the scientific field to try to help with the obesity epidemic. In the first study, Keller sought to determine whether actively watching commercials made young people eat more. She found that all of the children, regardless of age and weight, ate

more food while watching advertisements about food than when they were not. Others researchers however, have had opposing viewpoints based on their collected data in similar studies, and the issue is that there are too many variables with this type of test. Age, type of food offered, advertisements watched, familiarity with the ads or characters used, and other factors all come into play and can skew the data. Some studies found that none of the children ate more while watching television advertisements about food, while others concluded that despite some children eating more, not all of them did like in Keller's experiment. The issue with the variables are still being worked out in order to have more accurate data (Keller 380-381).

In the second trial, one test group was offered raw fruits and vegetables in containers with characters on the outside, such as Elmo, and included a sticker inside like many of the products that come with free gifts. Both groups consisted of children of different ages that regularly ate below the recommended amounts of fruits and vegetables, which is one to three cups a day depending on age. The kids who had containers with the characters increased their consumption of fruits and vegetables by approximately three servings from where they were before the test started, while the intake for the second group with the plain containers did not go up at all.

The most interesting part of the study is that when the experiment was over the children who were in the character test group continued on eating more fruits and vegetables despite the fact that they no longer had the original containers. This could potentially mean that once a child makes a connection with a product, that it becomes engrained in their minds and that they no longer need stickers, toys, or package designs in order to appreciate or crave a certain food. However, more testing would have to be done to confirm this (Keller 383-384). While this could be a negative thing in the context of unhealthy food product advertising, it also shows that cross-branding could be used to promote healthier alternatives. Keller's results along with the responses of the

scientists that conducted like-studies, appear to have a general consensus that while there is correlational data between advertising, branding, and obesity, it is not a direct one, which is encouraging (Breiner 5). Advertising itself does not increase obesity, but rather the products being advertised and the methods by which they are advertised.

The good news is that since advertising and branding does not have a straight link to obesity then it should be possible to prevent some occurrences from happening, either from the government and food companies themselves, or from inside the home. On the governmental side, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) continue to partner up with each other, along with the leading food manufacturers, to discuss ways that companies can promote healthier eating. Some companies have already joined the fight by offering lower calorie, sugar, fat, or sodium versions of their popular foods by using whole grains or by limiting portion sizes (Wilks 66).

Another example of governmental efforts was in 2010, when Michelle Obama launched the campaign for "Facts Up Front" with the Grocery Manufacturers Association (GMA). The goal of this movement was to encourage food distributors to voluntarily put nutrition information on the front of the package. The act is to encourage label reading and awareness of what is being consumed, with labels being monitored by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to ensure that customers get accurate information ("Facts"). There are still many companies, however, that do not state their health facts on the front of the container though, and the FTC, HHS, and GMA are always pushing for more participation. As you can see in the picture I took at Fred Meyer's, even companies that have sought action can have the same product with and without nutrition labeling sitting right next to each other on the shelves. In the photo, the nutrition label is on the bottom left of the package of Pop-Tarts in the right-hand photo, but is absent from the one on the left. It seems like this could occur if a company either began or stopped their contribution to the "Facts Up Front"

movement and older stock was being sold alongside newer stock. It is possible as well that there could be inconsistent procedures in the company with packaging; however, this seems unlikely since companies would have to set up their machines to create varying products. Hopefully, as more years pass, front-labeling will become the overall standard in the marketplace.

Another governmental organization that joined in the battle against obesity is the Institute of Medicine (IOM) at the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM). While the IOM does not have any direct say on what types of policies are enacted, they do conduct studies on childhood obesity and ways to prevent it, including advertising's effects on eating patterns and weight. After they summarize their findings, they submit the information in a report to agencies like the FDA to see if they can encourage any change. In their report from 2009, they witnessed a correlation between advertising and early weight gain and acknowledged that advertising practices are not in line with healthy eating. The IOM states that food manufacturers should be more aware of what types of foods that they are advertising to children and adolescents. They do also recognize the groups that are working to make a change, like the Healthy Weight Commitment Foundation (which works with the food industry to try to lower caloric content of current food products), as well as the Children's Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative (a non-profit that encourages advertising for nutritionally dense foods only and inspires healthy eating habits within households) (Breiner 6-9). Examples of productive advertising could be using characters on packages of carrots, apples, milk, or any other healthy items, commercials that promote health and wellness for kids, and games or applications that are directed to teach kids about nutrition. However, many experts believe that any type of advertising and branding, even if it is to influence positive food choices, becomes negative as it continues to endorse a society based on consumerism. This is just a broad overview of what type of work is being done and what major players are involved, but because of the severity of

the obesity epidemic, there is much more work going on behind the scenes than what is listed here.

The government is not the only entity that can make a change, however, and modifications can possibly be made inside the home to avoid excessive marketing control on young ones and their consumption of unhealthy food products. It is important to say, though, that not everyone may be able to make certain positive changes; those who can are encouraged to do so. As stated previously, there are many factors that go into children's eating habits. Some of the most common reasons are that unhealthier items are less expensive, and that fresh food goes bad faster, so purchasing nutritional options may not be possible for lower-income families. There is also the issue of research and education: some parents or guardians may not be well-informed of advertising's effects on younger minds or how to serve well-rounded meals, and they may also not have a lot of access to resources that could help. It is unwise to say that all people in the United States have access to the same information, as this is just not the case.

But families that do have the means to purchase healthier products and are knowledgeable on the subjects of advertising and nutrition (or have ways learn about these subjects) are greatly encouraged to take small or big steps to implementing change at home. Some steps could be to limit time spent on mobile devices, so that kids and teens are not viewing as many advertisements each day, or to completely eliminate television viewing and the use of internet-based devices if a more extreme option was needed or wanted. If the cost of groceries is not a major issue, then encouraging the consumption of new fruits and vegetables each week is an easy place to start, as well as offering more lean proteins, healthy fats like olive oil and coconut oil, and less processed starches. Probably the most crucial element is to talk to kids about consumerism: how to be a smart and mindful customer, and how to not let advertisements influence our decision-making. They can also make a point to discuss portion control, and what healthy

eating means for our bodies and our longevity of life. Since children develop preferences as early as two years old, it is best to start implementing healthier eating habits and interactive conversations as early as possible—but it is never too late to start.

It is encouraging to know that companies are making changes to their policies and product ingredients, and that governmental organizations, non-profits, and families continue to strive for a healthier country. There should be better protection of our youth, but what is hindering a more drastic movement for change of advertising techniques targeted to children and adolescents is the amount of variables in studies due to age, weight, background, mental health and capacity, etc. Because of these differences amongst children, studies are not consistent, which creates feeble evidence for marketing and branding's effects on childhood obesity. But there is still hope for the future of our country, as scientists continue to strive to establish better research techniques that can either solidly prove or deny the correlation between the two. In the meantime, households at the least can start having conversations with their children and teenagers about marketing's effect on their preferences and choices, and can proactively work on breaking the hold that food corporations have over so many of them.

Teacher Takeaways

"I like how this essay combines extensive research with the author's own direct observations. Together, these strategies can produce strong logos and ethos appeals, respectively. However, the author too often wants the information speak for itself, and because the findings of many of the studies were inconclusive or contradictory, they don't support the

author's central claim. These studies certainly could still be used effectively, but this essay demonstrates the importance of actively engaging in argument–the author cannot just present the information, but needs to interpret it for the audience to demonstrate how the evidence supports the thesis."– Professor Dunham

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A Changing Ball-Game2

LaVar Ball is changing the National Basketball Association's shoe- and player-branding culture without playing a single NBA minute. His son, Lonzo, is a few short weeks away from hearing his

name among the first few called in the NBA Draft after a standout year playing basketball at UCLA. Lonzo has two younger brothers as well, one of whom, LiAngelo, will play at UCLA in the 2017-2018 season, and another, LaMelo, who committed to the same university as his brothers two years ago even though he was just an eighth-grader (Calle). The three Ball children played on the same high school team in Chino Hills, California, setting the world alight in early 2016 with their high-powered, free-flowing offense centered around the brothers. They would jack shots that "traditionalists would argue against" but after winning a national championship, "Chino Hills [had] proved its effectiveness in ways never seen before" (Calle). Since then, as the Balls have started to transition out of the world of children playing basketball and entered into the more adult level of college sports (and, soon, the NBA), the attention has shifted from the boys to their father. His outspokenness and demands for respect and inclusion are making waves across the basketball world, even possibly having lasting effects on athletes in every sport.

LaVar is attempting to influence everything around his sons, particularly Lonzo as he goes into the league: he is claiming his son will only play for certain teams and, most controversially, distancing himself and his sons from the major shoe companies in a way that an athlete's camp rarely does at such an early stage in their professional career. What he is doing is undoubtedly risky, but it has clear upside too. If it works, it could clear a path for future athletes to be successful building and monetizing a brand that is not dependent on the sneaker industry. Even if it does not work, it will provide a rough blueprint upon which others can improve in order to become as big as the major signature athletes without having to depend on the corporations backing them.

Attacking the status quo is LaVar's forte. When he and his family first moved into their home in the Alterra neighborhood in Chino Hills, he received grief from the homeowner's association for attempting to paint his home white and not sticking with the peach color mandated by the association's guidelines. Fast-forward

to now, and President of the Alterra Homeowner's Association LaVar Ball lives in a white home, proclaiming, "If Obama can have the White House, Goddamnit Big Baller can have a white house!" (Calle). LaVar's haughty yet sometimes wildly ambitious statements about his family and esteemed symbols like the president have become a bit of a… thing, too. To date, he has said that Lonzo would make the best team in the league (the Golden State Warriors) better if they somehow swapped him with Steph Curry, the back-to-back and first-ever unanimous NBA Most Valuable Player. Lavar has called Lonzo the best player in the world; he said that Lonzo would only play for the Los Angeles Lakers. Lavar said that he himself would beat Michael Jordan, arguably the greatest human basketball player to live on the planet Earth, in a one-on-one game. These comments, along with Lonzo's campaign on the court and LaMelo's highly controversial 92-point game at Chino Hills, have all coalesced into making the Balls the most (in)famous family in the basketball world's recent memory. They have created a name for the family that is extraordinarily atypical in a time where players are coming in as more and more nondescript products to the league each passing year.

The Balls' need to have creative control has not stopped at the painted house, either. In fact, the largest dispute surrounding their branding with shoe companies today is centered around their need for creative control. The types of deals that are available to NBA players are very structured and limited to three tiers. According to *Yahoo! Sports*' NBA shoe insider Nick DePaula, undrafted rookies and fringe NBA players typically receive "merchandise" or "merch" deals from shoe companies that gives them sneakers and gear for them to play in. These deals amount to products around $50,000 to $100,000. That is just a baseline though—effectively the minimum wage a professional hooper can be paid to promote a brand like Nike, adidas, or Under Armour, rather than the player cutting a check from their own wallet for footwear.

The next tier of deal is called a "cash" deal, "where the majority of the league falls" (DePaula). Players with these deals will

get a certain amount of cash, essentially a salary, over a set number of years according to the contract they sign with the company. On top of that, though, many of the best players in the league will get their own logos, phrases or ad campaigns along with colorways, known as player exclusives, of the shoes that Nike is running out that season to match their team's jerseys or something connected to the player. The salaries are negotiated by agents and depend on how marketable the player is. Usually, "a rookie will sign a shoe deal with a brand that'll last three or four years" and the "current shoe deal range for a marketable lottery pick [such as Lonzo Ball] can be anywhere to $200,000 to $700,000 [per year], with exceptions every so often for what brands consider to be 'can't-miss' endorsement stars" such as Andrew Wiggins, who signed an $11 million deal spread over five years with the bonus as being a key headliner for their new line of sneakers (DePaula). This is the same tier where Lonzo would probably find himself, given the fame the Balls have crafted for themselves coming into the draft. In an interview with ESPN Radio's *The Dan Le Batard Show with Stugotz*, Lonzo confirmed that Nike, adidas, and Under Armour offered five-year deals worth $2 million per year.

The most exalted compensation a player can get for partnering with a sneaker company, though, is a signature sneaker. A signature sneaker deal offers more money, the status as one of the company's premier athlete in the sport, and a shoe designed and marketed specifically for the individual player. This is only for the most elite of the elite and "will forever be the most sought after deal in basketball" (DePaula). There are only ten basketball players out of the current 450 active NBA players that have signature shoes with American brands: LeBron James, Kevin Durant, Kobe Bryant (now retired), and Kyrie Irving with Nike; Chris Paul, Russell Westbrook, and Carmelo Anthony with Nike's subsidiary Jordan Brand; Derrick Rose, Damian Lillard, and James Harden with adidas; and Stephen Curry with Under Armour. Most of these superstars came into the NBA with cash deals and player exclusives and worked their way up to a signature. Signature shoes are so hard-earned that rookies

are rarely awarded them for their first professional game. The last two times it happened were John Wall's Reebok Zig Slash seven years ago and LeBron James' Nike Air Zoom Generation in 2003, nearly a decade-and-a-half ago (DePaula). The two were surefire commodities, John Wall becoming a multiple time All Star and one of the best players at his position and LeBron James cementing himself as one of the greatest players in the history of the game. So, for someone to waltz into negotiations with sneaker company powerhouses and expect anything more than a cash deal—maybe a player exclusive colorway or two without being billed as a bona fide superstar—would be like a player walking up the court and launching shots up from 20 feet beyond the three-point line.

Of course, shooting shots like this are exactly what the Balls do, whether that is figuratively in LaVar's comments or literally in LaMelo's shot selection in games. There exists a subset of players in the league with cult-like followings because of the shots they shoot. Earl "J.R." Smith, Dion Waiters and others live in this beloved sphere despite their questionable added benefit to their teams. A wise man, Wayne Gretzky, once said, "You miss 100% of the shots you don't shoot," essentially stating that no inherent harm exists in attempting the unimaginable. Even wiser and less accomplished men boiled this down to the phrases "If You Don't Hunt, You Don't Eat" and "Shooters Shoot." The Balls are shooters who walk into any room with two spoons in their holsters equipped to dine. In a widely circulated clip from a Chino Hills game earlier this year, LaMelo dribbled the basketball up from the backcourt, pointed at the half court line to indicate the spot he was going to shoot from and audaciously pulled up from the exact spot. The net subsequently swelled in the purest of ripples. LaVar did the same thing. He told the world that he would take nothing less than a billion—with a B—dollars for his sons to sign with a shoe company. The typical cash deal would not be enough, though, even if they met his billion dollar demands. Companies would need to absorb the family's business, Big Baller Brand (or 3 Bs), rather than simply adding a swoosh or three stripes onto Ball products. They required co-branding, a

partnership that would be more akin to Jordan Brand's current relationship with Nike than to athletes like Kyrie Irving or Kevin Durant's relationships with Nike. LaVar has said, "[We] aren't looking for an endorsement deal.... We're looking for... a true partner" (Rovell). This is relatively unprecedented with Jordan Brand being the only real comparison in the sneaker world and that only became independent towards the end of Michael Jordan's esteemed career (*Sole Man*). Even LeBron, Jordan's only active peer in terms of greatness, operates wholly under Nike when it comes to shoes and athletic-wear.

Naturally, all three of the major shoe companies rejected the Balls' request (Rovell). Not only was the request itself unique but, "never in the history of modern-day shoe endorsements have the big companies all stepped away from a potential top pick nearly two months before the NBA draft" (Rovell). LaVar maintains that he does not care about the rejection and this is all for the greater good, part of the bigger plan. He said that he knew the companies would never agree to his terms but he had to get them to say no because he "wanted to make sure so when they make this mistake and they look back, they're going to say 'man, we should've just given that man a billion dollars'" (Le Batard). Some people, including *FOX Sports*' Lindsey Foltin, have claimed that despite the fact that "LaVar insists he's doing what's best for Lonzo, his behavior could end up costing his son millions." Unsurprisingly, LaVar replied, "you goddang right I'm costing him millions because it ain't about millions with us. It's about them Bs. Billions" (Le Batard).

Beyond the dollar figure and amount of zeros on the contract, the biggest and most important part of these public negotiations have been the extent of input the Balls have on their own brand. That is the essential aspect of co-branding: the retention of creative control. When it comes down to it, LaVar asserts that "as long as my son's got a shoe, if I only made 50 shoes, they're for him. It's his own shoe" (Le Batard). The pride that he has in Lonzo and that the Ball boys can have in their product is vital, and

that is something he says his young, unproven sons would never get from the giants Nike, adidas, and Under Armour.

Besides a father's pride in his sons, an athlete's control over their own brand is increasingly becoming a point of contention between the players and the shoe companies. In his seminal piece examining how and why Stephen Curry walked away at the expiration of his deal with Nike, Ethan Strauss discusses Curry's own journey to create his own space in the sneaker and basketball worlds. A huge concern for Curry while negotiating a renewed deal with Nike, which he signed as a rookie before he became the superstar he is today, was whether he would get to lead his own Nike-sponsored camp for elite youth players. This not only lets young players learn from the best, but it also allows the professionals to tangibly affect the best up-and-coming talents, something much "more meaningful than strangers clamoring for autographs on the street" (Strauss). Nike, though, did not value Curry enough to give him this and put him on their second tier of athletes, the athletes without their own signature. Now, though, with Under Armour, Curry has both his camp and a signature sneaker and is a bigger, more unique star than he ever would be under Nike.

Curry is not alone in this, either. A player's brand is inextricably linked to their footwear nowadays, perhaps more than the teams they play for and their on-court prowess. DePaula points out that shoe deals are actually negotiated in much the same way that free agent contracts are hashed out. He also writes, "[As] players of all levels enter the league, their eventual shoe deal continues to be secondary to team deals, but sneaker contracts have become more lucrative and incentivized." This has gotten so extreme that in the same offseason that LeBron signed a one-year contract with the Cleveland Cavaliers, he signed a lifetime deal with Nike worth more than half a billion (Strauss). *ESPN Radio* host Bomani Jones even argues that, because of this, many players' first loyalties lie with the shoe companies instead of their teams: "your primary employer is who pays you the most money.... LeBron was

Team Nike before he was a Cleveland Cavalier or a member of the Miami Heat or any of those things. We contextualize guys around the teams they play for because that's the relevant variable for the kind of work that we do" (Strauss). In fact, Jones and Curry got into a minor spat on Twitter when Curry saw some jabs that Jones had poked at his Under Armour shoes. Curry took it very seriously and personally, said Jones, pointing out that "there doesn't seem to be much space in his mind between himself and Under Armour" (Strauss). This is why many athletes, the Balls foremost among them, are becoming more and more concerned with their role in crafting their own brand and how it is all integrated into their overall image as public figures: "Curry and James aren't just salvos in a battle between brands; it's a personal war.... It's a fight for something even bigger than a basketball career" (Strauss).

While this is all nice and well for players at the height of their basketball powers, LaVar is endeavoring to claim agency for himself and his family before any of them have stepped on a professional basketball court, a fact few critics have failed to point out. They have not earned this yet. Nobody's ever tried to forge their own lane without already being great. But maybe this is not the case. In fact, LeBron began breaking out of the corporation-defined mold after just one year in the league, albeit an all-time great year. After his rookie year, "Mr. James did the almost unthinkable in the sometimes stuffy world of sports marketing – he handed his off-the-court businesses and marketing over to" his childhood friends Maverick Carter, Rich Paul, and Randy Mims (Thomaselli). LeBron was searching for the same self-definition that the Balls are now. Looking back, LeBron recalls, "I wanted to wake up in the morning and say I did it my way. I'm not being cocky and saying it's my way or the highway; I just wanted to make a decision" (Thomaselli). It is nearly the same exact notion that LaVar and Lonzo are currently pushing more than a decade later. At the time, LeBron "and his friends also wanted a new type of sports marketing. Rather than endorsements, he wanted partnerships" (Thomaselli). This reads almost verbatim to what LaVar is talking about now in the year

2017. History may not be repeating itself but it is, at the very least, rhyming.

Neither of these journeys–LeBron's and the Ball family's–are without speedbumps, though. LeBron and his people created their own management and media agency, LRMR, in Maverick Carter's mother's kitchen after firing LeBron's agent (Torre). LRMR's first major media project was "The Decision – the broadly consumed and deeply unpopular ESPN primetime special wherein James announced he was leaving the Cavs for the Heat" (Torre). This seemingly self-indulgent, look-at-me production made LeBron the most hated player in the league for quite some time (despite it raising tens of millions of dollars for charity). Similarly, the Ball family's notoriety is coming at the expense of many criticisms of LaVar's outspokenness. The resemblances between the two cases are uncanny; the Balls are just more pronounced in their desires while moving the timeline ahead a year. After all, LaVar did declare that they were never planning to "sign with a company and then wait around for five or six years for a shoe" (Rovell).

Now that LeBron has neared the mountaintop of basketball and dominates the sneaker world as well, he has set his sights to other avenues. He has continuously chosen partnerships–such as his with Warner Bros. that the studio called "unprecedented in scope"–that give greater creative control than their competing alternatives offered (Torre). LRMR has created Uninterrupted, a media outlet for players to connect directly with fans. Continuing to buck traditional sensibilities that hang on to the players' teams as their primary allegiance, he headlines and works closely in this effort with Draymond Green, "James' ostensible [Golden State] Warriors rival" (Torre). Notably, Draymond Green is also a Nike athlete, another hint to the waning importance of team conflicts as opposed to promotion of more personal undertakings. According to LeBron, the projects he is participating in now are all part of the "vision that [he] had 10-plus years ago" (Torre).

The Balls' sights, while lofty in their own rights, have only been set on the sneaker industry as of now. Still, with their

"Shooters Shoot" mentality and their propensity to reject established and outdated standards, it is possible that their ventures will lead them to paths outside of shoes. They are branding themselves in a vastly different way than most everyone else has and, most importantly, they are doing it their own individual way. LaVar said a year-and-a-half ago that they are "doing some shit that has never been done before. We kind of march to our own beat in the fact that we make our own rules.... We jumped out the box and took a risk" (Calle).

In a similar vein, LeBron cited the television show *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air*, noting similarities between himself and Will Smith's titular character:

> It was, [LeBron] admits, more than just a character on TV. More like an inspiration. 'The guy makes it out of Philadelphia? I treated that as Akron, Ohio [LeBron's hometown]. He makes it to Los Angeles with a rich family, but he can still be himself? That's what I wanted to be. With the blazer inside out... All of that.' (Torre)

The way players cling to this individuality within the often-starched backdrop is crucial and only growing in importance as values moves away from conventional team-based allegiances towards personal brands. LeBron's circle mentioned how different things were in the early 2000s, when he came into the league, from the '80s, when Michael Jordan made his name because of the uprise of mass media and its use in making wider audiences more accessible (Thomaselli). This applies even more aptly in 2017 with social media's advent, a huge advantage in marketing that has benefitted the viral-ness of many of the more eccentric shots LaVar has put up.

Frankly, the stakes are huge. It may be just sports, but the money exchanged on these playgrounds is massive. Stephen Curry's "potential worth to [Under Armour] is placed at more than a staggering $14 billion" and business experts "peg total sneaker sales somewhere north of $20 billion annually, and rising" (Strauss).

Unsaid but assumed up until now, much of the Balls'

potential as transcendent difference-makers depends upon at least one of the Ball brothers (Lonzo, LiAngelo, and LaMelo) being exceptional at the game that allowed them to get here. They are using what LeBron has been doing for nearly 15 years and refining the blueprint, but LeBron has a leg up as one of the few unequalled players in the game's history. So, let us hypothetically assume the worst—that the Balls all bust or wear upon the public's nerves to the point of no return: the fact that they have gotten this far is nevertheless remarkable. This phenomenon has not occurred in a vacuum. Even if they end up being nothing more than a small blip in Nike's, adidas's, and Under Armour's smooth-sailing Titanics, they matter. They have presented those who follow a longer runway to launch from than was there previously—a runway that does not rely on these major corporations' backing. When recalling his time playing at Chino Hills High School, Lonzo reflected, "I felt like I helped change the culture over there" (Calle). Now, before he has had his name called at the NBA Draft, he and Big Baller Brand are changing have already changed the culture on an even larger scale.

Teacher Takeaways

"This essay is an impressive exploration of a current issue: I can tell how passionate the student is, and they develop a nuanced thesis about the Ball family's influence on sports marketing and branding. While the essay is fluid, segueing from idea to idea pretty smoothly, the overarching organizational logic seems arbitrary. In other words, the structure feels fine while reading, but taking a step back makes the train of ideas blurry. I would encourage this student to make a reverse outline to clarify this issue. On a local level, I would also emphasize that the student should spend more time

unpacking the quotes they use, rather than moving on right away. (Generally, you should avoid ending a paragraph with a quote, which this author does often)."–Professor Wihjlem

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Vaccines: Controversies and Miracles3

Every year billions of people get vaccinated for protection from diseases and illnesses. Before vaccinations, the flu ran rampant; measles would kill thousands yearly; polio would paralyze upwards of 15,000 people a year, and many other diseases would devastate societies (Offit 3). Even with the wonderful advancement of vaccines, people still opt out of getting them, endangering themselves and everyone around them. I have observed that the two most common reasons why people choose not to vaccinate are either that they claim vaccines do not work or that vaccines can even cause autism. These responses are derived from a place of being horribly misinformed. We will explore why these claims have become popular, and what the truth really is. Vaccines are essential for the health of an individual, the people directly around them, and societies overall. The evidence against the most common excuses is very strong and in large quantity. Furthermore, there is absolutely no evidence supporting the autism claim or misunderstanding of vaccines not "working", thus making these excuses invalid.

Sometimes misinterpreting something small can create a big wave of damage. When people say that vaccines do not "work", they think that vaccines are a definitive solution to their health, and when they or someone still gets sick, then the vaccine did not work. This is a fair statement; however, this is not what vaccines actually do. Getting vaccinated is not an absolute healing technique; rather, it is for reducing the chances one will get a disease. It is much like wearing pads while riding a bike: your chances of injury goes

down, but there is still a chance of getting hurt. As for vaccines, the chances of getting the flu after being vaccinated is usually reduced by 40-60% ("Vaccine"). Pair that with healthy habits like frequent washing of hands, and the odds go even more in your favor. An example of a highly successful vaccine is the chickenpox vaccine. It is over 95% effective in preventing severe chickenpox. And only 10-30% of vaccinated children may catch a mild case of chickenpox if they are around someone who has the disease (Hammond). What these statistics show is the benefits of vaccines, but they also show the limitations of them as well. The math is simple: getting vaccinated reduces your chances of disease greatly, and in doing so, you are fulfilling your responsibility to be a healthy individual in society.

In 1998 Andrew Wakefield conducted research to see if there was a link between the measles mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine and autism. But he did not conduct honest research because he tampered with the medical records of all 12 of his test subjects to make the connection between autism and the MMR vaccine seem stronger (Chan). As if this weren't enough, Wakefield was paid by lawyers to create a result they could use in their case to sue vaccine manufacturers. Not only that, but nobody has ever replicated his findings (Gorski).

It goes without saying that being paid to change records automatically terminates the authenticity of a study. Furthermore, if a result cannot be replicated, then the original finding is most likely incorrect. A good theory must be able to be tested and redone with the results being consistent. With Wakefield's study, there are no findings supporting his claims but countless studies refuting them. One example is a study in the *New England Journal of Medicine* conducted in 2002 that had over 500,000 subjects. This large study followed half a million children for seven years and found no link between the MMR vaccine and autism. Wakefield had his medical license revoked in 2010 (Chan).

Even though the Wakefield hoax has been debunked countless times, some parents still believe that the vaccine causes

autism. They often claim they noticed signs of autism after the vaccine, but they usually do not know when autism becomes apparent. Autism is a genetic disorder with signs that become visible at 18 months of age. The MMR vaccine is usually given at 12-15 months of age, before anyone would even know if a child has autism (Bhandari). So, if a child has autism and is given the vaccine at 15 months, it is reasonable for a parent to notice symptoms of autism a couple months later and link them to the vaccine. But if that child did not get the vaccine, those same signs would show due to the genetic factors that cause autism.

Vaccines are known as miracles of medicine; nothing short of a colossal impact on modern society. But a much larger impact is not vaccinating at all. Japan is an example of a country that banned a specific vaccine, and with no surprise, an epidemic broke out. "In 2013, the recent serious measles outbreak was fueled by children who weren't vaccinated a decade ago. The disease primarily affected teenagers but spread to infants who were too young to be vaccinated" (Larson). This is why vaccinating is a responsibility everyone has; one person has the disease, then passes it to the next, and on it passes to those who are too young to vaccinate. Would you be another stepping stone in the spreading of disease? Or would you be protected from the disease, thus slowing the spreading? Immunity is a group effort, and if a portion of the population is not participating in vaccination, then disease is bound to get out of control and infect individuals with no vaccine. This includes innocent infants who have not been vaccinated yet. Every individual is a part of the picture in group health.

Vaccines: the misinterpretations, conspiracies, and saved lives has sparked many of debates. Many believe that vaccines do not "work" and that they are for ultimate healing, but this is far from what vaccines do. Vaccines protect and reduce the chances of getting a disease and allow individuals to do their part in mass health. The conspiracy theory claiming that the MMR vaccine causes autism has been proven
false by countless studies and rendered untrustworthy by the acts

of the man who made the original claims. Vaccines are our tool in keeping ourselves and one another healthy. I challenge you to do your part in preventing outbreaks and maintaining public health by getting your vaccinations.

Teacher Takeaways

"I appreciate the efforts this essay takes to establish a Rogerian argument: the author anticipates the current beliefs of their audience by organizing their exploration around common misconceptions about vaccines. In turn, the author does not reject these misconceptions as foolish, but just misinformed. This organizational choice could be made clearer, though, with stronger topic sentences and a thesis statement that previews the structure, like a road-map."– Professor Wihjlem

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Endnotes

1 Essay by Jessica Beer, Portland State University, 2016. Reproduced with permission from the student author.
2 Essay by Josiah McCallister, Portland State University, 2017. Reproduced with permission from the student author.
3 Essay by Ezra Coble, Portland Community College, 2018. Reproduced with permission from the student author.

Additional Readings: By Both Student and Professional Authors

"LZ Gator, Vietnam, February 1994" excerpt from "The Vietnam in Me" by Tim O'Brien, published in 1994 by the New York Times1

A prior version of this book included an excerpt of "The Vietnam in Me" from "LZ Gator, Vietnam, February 1994" to "Nothing here but ghosts and the wind."

Excerpt: "I'm home, but the house is gone. Not a sandbag, not a nail or a scrap of wire.

On Gator, we used to say, the wind doesn't blow, it sucks. Maybe that's what happened—the wind sucked it all away. My life, my virtue.

In February 1969, 25 years ago, I arrived as a young, terrified pfc. on this lonely little hill in Quang Ngai Province. Back then, the place seemed huge and imposing and permanent. A forward firebase for the Fifth Battalion of the 46th Infantry, 198th Infantry Brigade, LZ Gator was home to 700 or 800 American soldiers, mostly grunts. I remember a tar helipad, a mess hall, a medical station, mortar and artillery emplacements, two volleyball courts, numerous barracks and offices and supply depots and machine shops and entertainment clubs. Gator was our castle. Not safe, exactly, but far preferable to the bush. No land mines here. No paddies bubbling with machine-gun fire.

Maybe once a month, for three or four days at a time, Alpha Company would return to Gator for stand-down, where we took our comforts behind a perimeter of bunkers and concertina

wire. There were hot showers and hot meals, ice chests packed with beer, glossy pinup girls, big, black Sony tape decks booming "We gotta get out of this place" at decibels for the deaf. Thirty or 40 acres of almost-America. With a little weed and a lot of beer, we would spend the days of stand-down in flat-out celebration, purely alive, taking pleasure in our own biology, kidneys and livers and lungs and legs, all in their proper alignments. We could breathe here. We could feel our fists uncurl, the pressures approaching normal. The real war, it seemed, was in another solar system. By day, we'd fill sandbags or pull bunker guard. In the evenings, there were outdoor movies and sometimes live floor shows–pretty Korean girls breaking our hearts in their spangled miniskirts and high leather boots – then afterward we'd troop back to the Alpha barracks for some letter writing or boozing or just a good night's sleep.

So much to remember. The time we filled a nasty lieutenant's canteen with mosquito repellent; the sounds of choppers and artillery fire; the slow dread that began building as word spread that in a day or two we'd be heading back to the bush. Pinkville, maybe. The Batangan Peninsula. Spooky, evil places where the land itself could kill you.

Now I stand in this patch of weeds, looking down on what used to be the old Alpha barracks. Amazing, really, what time can do. You'd think there would be something left, some faint imprint, but LZ (Landing Zone) Gator has been utterly and forever erased from the earth. Nothing here but ghosts and wind."

My Favorite Place2

Starbucks has always been my go-to place. Never have I felt so welcomed with opened arms in an environment other than my home. Every time I enter through the translucent glass door, a familiar joyful barista in their signature bright green apron, shouts out "Welcome in!" My mood instantly lifts up and I already feel

euphoric. I ambitiously make my way past the wall of signature coffees and desirable coffee mugs with the Starbucks logo of the twin-tailed crowned siren imprinted on them and join the lengthy line of famished customers anxiously standing along the crystal-clear polished pastry case. The layered case features its variety of heavenly, toothsome sweets along with their finest breakfast sandwiches displayed like trophies for everyone to admire. The pleasing scent of flakey butter croissants and toffee doodle cookies turn heads as it leaks its way out through the cracks of the pastry case. The scrumptious aroma of one of the slow-roasted ham and swiss breakfast sandwiches escapes out of the oven as one of the baristas pulls it out, finding its way on my lips and making my mouth water, I can almost taste it.

I listen to the indecisive girls in front of me. "Should I get a caramel macchiato or caramel latte?" says one of the brunettes with urgency as she slowly sways closer to the cashier. "Get an iced caramel macchiato!" shouts her eager friend. They place their order then move to the end of the bar chatting about how she forgot to order her drink iced. "What can I get for you today?" the attentive and neighborly barista says as she quickly takes out her sharpie. "Grande Ethiopia pour-over," I say. I pay and take my receipt and make my way to the next counter. A smoky and rich, sweet-caramel breeze wafts up from the espresso machines, racing to my nose, almost strong enough to caffeinate me instantly. I wait patiently for my coffee, zoning out to the sound of milk being aeriated and the crushing sound of iced beverages being blended. My attention is caught by the black display boards hanging above the glossy brick wall behind the bar and register. I marvel at the handcrafted chalk drawings promoting the new seasonal drinks that adds a mellow character to the setting. Another amicable barista heads in my direction, handing me my intense hot black coffee with a cheery smile on her face. Earthy and acidity impressions hit my tongue when I take my first sip. My eyes begin to dilate as I start to unfold the soft and velvety layers of coffee with the hidden notes of dark cocoa and sweet citrus.

I observe the room, admiring its new and sleek modern architecture. The interior has custom murals and exposed brick walls which create a warm atmosphere. Reclaimed slick-smooth woods were used for the bars, tables and condiment stations. The lights in transparent dark-orange colored bulbs dangling from the ceiling, gives the shop a soft and warm hue, making the environment cozy. The chestnut colored tiles surround the bar and register. The smooth, cocoa colored wooden tables are distributed evenly around the mom. The enormous window walls naturally lights the room. I follow the space-grey colored stone bricks beneath my feet and make my way to the pleasantly-warm fireplace with a solid chrome black and gold metal rim around it. A vibrant picture of a green and orange oil painting of Kenya's safari sits on the mantel above. This small spot gives the whole atmosphere a noticeable warm home feel.

Soft-toned jazz and enthusiastic conversations fill the room, blending harmoniously. A family of five surround one of the circular tables by the entrance, laughing and accusing one another of cheating when one loses at Uno. I can hear the sociable barista behind the bar engaging with one of the regulars about how each other's weekend went. Other conversations are being made at the condiment bar with the three well-dressed gentlemen in navy blue suits and red ties with neatly combed hair talk about the overwhelming work week ahead as they sweeten their dark roast coffee with a variety of sweeteners and half and half. Several students have nested at one of the middle tables with their notebooks, laptops and pencils scattered in front of them. The constant clacking of their keyboards starts to create a steady beat. The alerting sound of a timer echoes through the room, going off every fifteen minutes to signal one of the baristas to brew a fresh pot of coffee. The buzzing noise of coffee grinding always follows.

This warm and welcoming, comfortable environment created here is why I always come back to Starbucks. It brings me a place of peace. It's where I get my VIP treatment—my mind is put to ease and I can feel my muscles unclench from head-to-toe as I

continuously take sips of my elegant and balanced coffee that I paired with my favorite soft and flavorful pumpkin loaf. It's an oasis where I can clear my mind of distractions and focus on work or socialize with my friends or the familiar baristas. It's my home away from home.

Video: "Running Down the Hill" by Robyn Vazquez

Video: "21" by Patrick Roche

The Story of an Hour5 by Kate Chopin

This story is in the public domain.

Knowing that Mrs. Mallard was afflicted with a heart trouble, great care was taken to break to her as gently as possible the news of her husband's death.

It was her sister Josephine who told her, in broken sentences; veiled hints that revealed in half concealing. Her husband's friend Richards was there, too, near her. It was he who had been in the newspaper office when intelligence of the railroad disaster was received, with Brently Mallard's name leading the list of "killed." He had only taken the time to assure himself of its truth by a second telegram, and had hastened to forestall any less careful, less tender friend in bearing the sad message.

She did not hear the story as many women have heard the same, with a paralyzed inability to accept its significance. She wept at once, with sudden, wild abandonment, in her sister's arms. When the storm of grief had spent itself she went away to her room alone. She would have no one follow her.

There stood, facing the open window, a comfortable, roomy armchair. Into this she sank, pressed down by a physical exhaustion that haunted her body and seemed to reach into her soul.

She could see in the open square before her house the tops of trees that were all aquiver with the new spring life. The delicious breath of rain was in the air. In the street below a peddler was crying his wares. The notes of a distant song which some one was singing reached her faintly, and countless sparrows were twittering in the eaves.

There were patches of blue sky showing here and there through the clouds that had met and piled one above the other in the west facing her window.

She sat with her head thrown back upon the cushion of the chair, quite motionless, except when a sob came up into her

throat and shook her, as a child who has cried itself to sleep continues to sob in its dreams.

She was young, with a fair, calm face, whose lines bespoke repression and even a certain strength. But now there was a dull stare in her eyes, whose gaze was fixed away off yonder on one of those patches of blue sky. It was not a glance of reflection, but rather indicated a suspension of intelligent thought.

There was something coming to her and she was waiting for it, fearfully. What was it? She did not know; it was too subtle and elusive to name. But she felt it, creeping out of the sky, reaching toward her through the sounds, the scents, the color that filled the air.

Now her bosom rose and fell tumultuously. She was beginning to recognize this thing that was approaching to possess her, and she was striving to beat it back with her will—as powerless as her two white slender hands would have been.

When she abandoned herself a little whispered word escaped her slightly parted lips. She said it over and over under her breath: "free, free, free!" The vacant stare and the look of terror that had followed it went from her eyes. They stayed keen and bright. Her pulses beat fast, and the coursing blood warmed and relaxed every inch of her body.

She did not stop to ask if it were or were not a monstrous joy that held her. A clear and exalted perception enabled her to dismiss the suggestion as trivial.

She knew that she would weep again when she saw the kind, tender hands folded in death; the face that had never looked save with love upon her, fixed and gray and dead. But she saw beyond that bitter moment a long procession of years to come that would belong to her absolutely. And she opened and spread her arms out to them in welcome.

There would be no one to live for her during those coming years; she would live for herself. There would be no powerful will bending hers in that blind persistence with which men and women believe they have a right to impose a private will upon a fellow-

creature. A kind intention or a cruel intention made the act seem no less a crime as she looked upon it in that brief moment of illumination.

And yet she had loved him—sometimes. Often she had not. What did it matter! What could love, the unsolved mystery, count for in face of this possession of self-assertion which she suddenly recognized as the strongest impulse of her being!

"Free! Body and soul free!" she kept whispering.

Josephine was kneeling before the closed door with her lips to the keyhole, imploring for admission. "Louise, open the door! I beg; open the door—you will make yourself ill. What are you doing, Louise? For heaven's sake open the door."

"Go away. I am not making myself ill." No; she was drinking in a very elixir of life through that open window.

Her fancy was running riot along those days ahead of her. Spring days, and summer days, and all sorts of days that would be her own. She breathed a quick prayer that life might be long. It was only yesterday she had thought with a shudder that life might be long.

She arose at length and opened the door to her sister's importunities. There was a feverish triumph in her eyes, and she carried herself unwittingly like a goddess of Victory. She clasped her sister's waist, and together they descended the stairs. Richards stood waiting for them at the bottom.

Some one was opening the front door with a latchkey. It was Brently Mallard who entered, a little travel-stained, composedly carrying his grip-sack and umbrella. He had been far from the scene of accident, and did not even know there had been one. He stood amazed at Josephine's piercing cry; at Richards' quick motion to screen him from the view of his wife.

But Richards was too late.

When the doctors came they said she had died of heart disease—of joy that kills.

Excerpt from My Bondage and My Freedom6 by Frederick Douglass

I lived in the family of Master Hugh, at Baltimore, seven years, during which time—as the almanac makers say of the weather—my condition was variable. The most interesting feature of my history here, was my learning to read and write, under somewhat marked disadvantages. In attaining this knowledge, I was compelled to resort to indirections by no means congenial to my nature, and which were really humiliating to me. My mistress—who, as the reader has already seen, had begun to teach me was suddenly checked in her benevolent design, by the strong advice of her husband. In faithful compliance with this advice, the good lady had not only ceased to instruct me, herself, but had set her face as a flint against my learning to read by any means. It is due, however, to my mistress to say, that she did not adopt this course in all its stringency at the first. She either thought it unnecessary, or she lacked the depravity indispensable to shutting me up in mental darkness. It was, at least, necessary for her to have some training, and some hardening, in the exercise of the slaveholder's prerogative, to make her equal to forgetting my human nature and character, and to treating me as a thing destitute of a moral or an intellectual nature. Mrs. Auld—my mistress—was, as I have said, a most kind and tender-hearted woman; and, in the humanity of her heart, and the simplicity of her mind, she set out, when I first went to live with her, to treat me as she supposed one human being ought to treat another.

It is easy to see, that, in entering upon the duties of a slaveholder, some little experience is needed. Nature has done almost nothing to prepare men and women to be either slaves or slaveholders. Nothing but rigid training, long persisted in, can perfect the character of the one or the other. One cannot easily forget to love freedom; and it is as hard to cease to respect that natural love in our fellow creatures. On entering upon the career of a slaveholding mistress, Mrs. Auld was singularly deficient; nature,

which fits nobody for such an office, had done less for her than any lady I had known. It was no easy matter to induce her to think and to feel that the curly-headed boy, who stood by her side, and even leaned on her lap; who was loved by little Tommy, and who loved little Tommy in turn; sustained to her only the relation of a chattel. I was more than that, and she felt me to be more than that. I could talk and sing; I could laugh and weep; I could reason and remember; I could love and hate. I was human, and she, dear lady, knew and felt me to be so. How could she, then, treat me as a brute, without a mighty struggle with all the noble powers of her own soul. That struggle came, and the will and power of the husband was victorious. Her noble soul was overthrown; but, he that overthrew it did not, himself, escape the consequences. He, not less than the other parties, was injured in his domestic peace by the fall.

When I went into their family, it was the abode of happiness and contentment. The mistress of the house was a model of affection and tenderness. Her fervent piety and watchful uprightness made it impossible to see her without thinking and feeling—"that woman is a Christian." There was no sorrow nor suffering for which she had not a tear, and there was no innocent joy for which she did not a smile. She had bread for the hungry, clothes for the naked, and comfort for every mourner that came within her reach. Slavery soon proved its ability to divest her of these excellent qualities, and her home of its early happiness. Conscience cannot stand much violence. Once thoroughly broken down, who is he that can repair the damage? It may be broken toward the slave, on Sunday, and toward the master on Monday. It cannot endure such shocks. It must stand entire, or it does not stand at all. If my condition waxed bad, that of the family waxed not better. The first step, in the wrong direction, was the violence done to nature and to conscience, in arresting the benevolence that would have enlightened my young mind. In ceasing to instruct me, she must begin to justify herself to herself; and, once consenting to take sides in such a debate, she was riveted to her position. One

needs very little knowledge of moral philosophy, to see where my mistress now landed. She finally became even more violent in her opposition to my learning to read, than was her husband himself. She was not satisfied with simply doing as well as her husband had commanded her, but seemed resolved to better his instruction. Nothing appeared to make my poor mistress—after her turning toward the downward path—more angry, than seeing me, seated in some nook or corner, quietly reading a book or a newspaper. I have had her rush at me, with the utmost fury, and snatch from my hand such newspaper or book, with something of the wrath and consternation which a traitor might be supposed to feel on being discovered in a plot by some dangerous spy.

Mrs. Auld was an apt woman, and the advice of her husband, and her own experience, soon demonstrated, to her entire satisfaction, that education and slavery are incompatible with each other. When this conviction was thoroughly established, I was most narrowly watched in all my movements. If I remained in a separate room from the family for any considerable length of time, I was sure to be suspected of having a book, and was at once called upon to give an account of myself. All this, however, was entirely too late. The first, and never to be retraced, step had been taken. In teaching me the alphabet, in the days of her simplicity and kindness, my mistress had given me the "inch," and now, no ordinary precaution could prevent me from taking the "ell."

Seized with a determination to learn to read, at any cost, I hit upon many expedients to accomplish the desired end. The plea which I mainly adopted, and the one by which I was most successful, was that of using my young white playmates, with whom I met in the streets as teachers. I used to carry, almost constantly, a copy of Webster's spelling book in my pocket; and, when sent of errands, or when play time was allowed me, I would step, with my young friends, aside, and take a lesson in spelling. I generally paid my tuition fee to the boys, with bread, which I also carried in my pocket. For a single biscuit, any of my hungry little comrades would give me a lesson more valuable to me than bread.

Not every one, however, demanded this consideration, for there were those who took pleasure in teaching me, whenever I had a chance to be taught by them. I am strongly tempted to give the names of two or three of those little boys, as a slight testimonial of the gratitude and affection I bear them, but prudence forbids; not that it would injure me, but it might, possibly, embarrass them; for it is almost an unpardonable offense to do any thing, directly or indirectly, to promote a slave's freedom, in a slave state. It is enough to say, of my warm-hearted little play fellows, that they lived on Philpot street, very near Durgin & Bailey's shipyard.

Although slavery was a delicate subject, and very cautiously talked about among grown up people in Maryland, I frequently talked about it—and that very freely—with the white boys. I would, sometimes, say to them, while seated on a curb stone or a cellar door, "I wish I could be free, as you will be when you get to be men." "You will be free, you know, as soon as you are twenty-one, and can go where you like, but I am a slave for life. Have I not as good a right to be free as you have?" Words like these, I observed, always troubled them; and I had no small satisfaction in wringing from the boys, occasionally, that fresh and bitter condemnation of slavery, that springs from nature, unseared and unperverted. Of all consciences let me have those to deal with which have not been bewildered by the cares of life. I do not remember ever to have met with a boy, while I was in slavery, who defended the slave system; but I have often had boys to console me, with the hope that something would yet occur, by which I might be made free.

Between the World and Me: An Important Book on Race and Racism7 by David Saifer

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I rarely read a book that I find to be transformative, that

not only adds to my knowledge and understanding of an issue but significantly alters my way of thinking about it. *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates is one of those works. It's a new book and currently sits at number two on the *New York Times*' nonfiction best seller list.

Coates' book is presented as a letter to his teenage son. It's his attempt to describe what it's like growing up black in present-day America from the inside out, using his own life as his touchstone. He presents his world from a personal, subjective point of view. This isn't a sociological or political text. In the book Coates renders his confusion, his questions, his grief, his anger and his joys with literary clarity, and with a depth that can't be captured in a dry, "objective" discussion of the issues.

It would be incorrect for me to say I "understand" the book. You can only understand the world he's trying to capture if you've lived it, if you've felt it in your psyche and your nerve endings. Intellectual understanding, even combined with valiant attempts at empathy, can't substitute for being there on a day by day, minute by minute basis. I'm an older, white, privileged male who does his best to comprehend the nature of racism in this country, but I know I'm looking at that world from the outside. Coates grants me the ability to get as close to what the life of a black man is like as any recent work I can think of.

People compare Coates' book to James Baldwin's electrifying 1963 work, *The Fire Next Time*. It's a valid comparison, but for me, the experience of reading *Between the World and Me* is more like what I felt when I read Ralph Ellison's great 1952 novel, *Invisible Man*. That's the only other book I can remember that gave me the momentary sense of living the black experience, and helped me understand how distant it is from my experiences and how limited my understanding will always be.

This book deserves to join the literary canon alongside works by Baldwin, Ellison and Toni Morrison. So let me end by quoting what Morrison wrote about *Between the World and Me*.

I've been wondering who might fill the intellectual

void that plagued me after James Baldwin died. Clearly it is Ta-Nehisi Coates. The language of *Between the World and Me*, like Coates's journey, is visceral, eloquent, and beautifully redemptive. And its examination of the hazards and hopes of black male life is as profound as it is revelatory. This is required reading.

Untitled8

(A text wrestling analysis of "Girl" by Jamaica Kincaid)

Societal norms, as well as the skewed expectations of women in society, are in large part passed down from older generations (as well as often being enforced by older generations) to susceptible young children who are just beginning to form their own moral code. "Girl" is an unconventional poem, written by Jamaica Kincaid, that illustrates a mother's detailed instructions on what her daughter must do in order for her to be accepted and successful in society at that time. Separated by semicolons, the mother relentlessly lists the rules and duties forced onto women at that time, never allowing her to intervene or even question what she was being told. This blind (almost mindless) list of expectations of women emphasizes the oppressed role that women are faced with, and often expected to comply with without question.

As children, our morals and values are shaped not only by our own experiences, but that of our family; wisdom, along with hard life lessons that have been learned over years and generations, are passed down from a mother to child. Although the identity of the narrator is never implicitly revealed, I believe that it is a mother passing on life lessons (as bleak as they may be) to her daughter. You can see this mother-daughter relationship best in Kincaid's concluding lines, "always squeeze bread to make sure it's fresh; *but what if the baker won't let me feel the bread*? you mean to say after all you are really going to be the kind of woman who the baker

won't let near the bread?" (Kincaid 129). The italicized line signals that the daughter (or the "girl") is speaking here. There is only one other instance in the poem where the daughter intervenes, interrupting her mother's cascading list of teachings; early in the poem, the mother asks (or rather asserts), "is it true that you sing benna in Sunday school?" and then later insists, "don't sing benna in Sunday school" (128). Chiming in a bit late, the daughter defensively inserts, "*but I don't sing benna on Sundays at all, and never in Sunday school*" (128). In this instance, the mother does not acknowledge o respond to what the daughter has said, rather just continues on with her sporadic list of instructions (like a chant of "this is how you…" and "don't…"). This illustration of the mother as a clear authoritative figure that is educating her child of the gender roles that are present (and that must be followed!) in their present society is a great representation of how these notions survive and are passed down from teachings of older generations.

Concerning the structure of the poem "Girl", I believe that Kincaid made the choice to make her poem into one large paragraph and use semicolons to separate the mother's advice and commands (without ending the sentence) in order to convey that all of the items on the mother's list are related in the sense that, when they are applied together, the sum of these actions and behaviors equals what societal and gender norms say it means to be a well-behaved woman. Having the poem structured this way also creates a sense of power for the mother figure because the discussion is extremely one-sided, and her unending breath creates the sense of urgency that she must get through everything she has to say, and she doesn't even have time to stop and breath in between her lessons. For me, this urgency projects what I consider to be fear from the mother of what will happen to her daughter if she doesn't learn these lessons or behave according to society. This fear is most likely rooted from her own negative personal experiences, as well as knowledge passed down from former generations.

The mother does not want her daughter to be rejected

from or reprimanded by society. So, although the mother is delivering her advice in such way that seems cruel and impersonal, I believe that it emphasizes her seriousness and strong belief for what she is saying. Finally, I propose that this informal structure is a method meant to contrast the insignificance that the mother feels about proper grammar (or even proper education) with the importance she feels towards having her daughter behave as a proper, well-trained woman.

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Untitled9

(A text wrestling analysis of "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" by Ursula K. Le Guin)

A small child, alone, playing his new video game. A stay-at-home dad collapsing into his office chair at his computer after a long day at work. A successful businesswoman starting her day on the treadmill, sweat trickling down her temples. How many would be considered happy: all of them, perhaps none of them? The short story "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" by Ursula Le Guin describes a fictional town during its summer festival and the processions. The story is populated with contrasts and comparisons about the idea of happiness between Le Guin's fictional society and ours, and it suggests reasons as to why both societies fall short of experiencing true joy.

A thought-provoking question arises early in Le Guin's fairytale: "How is one to tell about joy?" (Le Guin 2), as if she is troubled by the idea of trying to describe joy to the reader. Perhaps

she knows the reader will not understand happiness. For how can one understand happiness if they have never experienced it before? "We have almost lost hold; we can no longer describe a happy man, nor make any celebration of joy" (Le Guin 2). With the increase in technology and the rise in power of corporations, we have been receding from happiness. Every big event or holiday celebration is exploding with advertisements, informing us on more "stuff" we could have. Few of these advertisements, almost none, predict an enlightened future, free from overbearing material things. Instead, our celebrations should more similarly follow that of the summer festival of Omelas.

Le Guin begins her story describing the fictional town during its summer festival. This festival consists of different processions–one of them being dance– where citizens of the town celebrate in the streets. "In other streets the music beat faster, the shimmering of gong and tambourine, and the people went dancing" (Le Guin 1). The people of Omelas crowd in the streets to play music and dance, enjoying in the company of their neighbors. One of the factors in this society's happiness is dance. Later in the passage Le Guin goes on to describe a procession of nudes offering rituals of sex to members of society. "Surely the beautiful nudes can just wander about, offering themselves like divine soufflés to the hunger of the needy and the rapture of the flesh. Let them join the processions" (Le Guin 3). The joyful stimulation of lust: nothing brings more joy than a lover's touch. But what else does a society need to be happy beside loving and dancing with others? How about children in the Omelas? Le Guin describes that children are raised communally in this fictional society: "Let the offspring of these rituals [processions of sex] be beloved and looked after by all" (Le Guin 3). In Omelas the infants and children are taken care of by the entire town. This symbolizes the unity in the town and the fact that everyone cares for one another. This may seem like a hard for people of today to grasp, because our society teaches us to only look out for ourselves and things that will stave off our never-ending hunger for joy. Although there are multiple endorphin

producers that curb the appetite of reasonable happiness, there are many that set our society's joy apart from this fictional town's.

One of the main differences between Le Guin's society and ours is the share we place in material items. Our society is caught up on material items, using them to assess personal happiness levels. This is a place of discord between the people in the fictional town and people today: "I think that there would be no cars or helicopters in and above the streets; this follows from the fact that the people of Omelas are happy people" (Le Guin 3). The citizens of Omelas don't take the same pride or comfort in objects as we do. The author is hinting to another reason our society is not happy. Le Guin feels that machines are no means of measuring happiness: the residents of Omelas "could perfectly well have central heating, subway trains, washing machines… Or they could have none of it" (Le Guin 3). This follows from the idea that material items are not what makes these people happy. One of the biggest contrasts between our society and Omelas is the investment we put towards material possessions; people in Omelas thrive on a different kind of happiness.

The author then goes on to contrast the types of happiness and joy experienced by both groups of people: "The trouble is that we have a bad habit… of considering happiness as something rather stupid" (Le Guin 2). Le Guin is conveying the idea that when a society such as ours deems happiness as unimportant, we will start to lose all sense of the word. This is perhaps the reason our society values power, wealth, and weapons over happiness. When a culture condemns knowledge and praises violence, their reality of happiness becomes skewed.

The author continues the juxtaposition between her fictional society and ours: "The joy built upon the successful slaughter is not the right kind of joy" (Le Guin 4). Happiness is not something that can be bought, stolen, or won in battle, and joy isn't found by means of power and pain for the people of Omelas. They don't focus on violence and wealth: "But there is no king. They did not use swords or keep slaves…. [They] also got on without the

stock exchange, the advertisement, the secret police, and the bomb" (Le Guin 2). She contrasts our society from theirs by highlighting these differences. The other main difference between the societies being the value we place on the harm and hurt of others.

However, Le Guin's society may more closely resemble our society than first thought. The child, found in the basement tool closet of one of the town's buildings, is described by the author as "feeble-minded" or "born defective" (Le Guin 5). It is kept there solely for the sake of the town's happiness, enabling citizens in the streets above to reap joy from the festival. This compares to today's society in the sense that people rush through life paying no attention to the needy or homeless, only seldom stealing a glance to reassure themselves that they do indeed have it better. This is where our society generates happiness; to know that we have it better than someone else somehow brings us joy. However, it is wrong for a population to remain happy based on the suffering of a single person or persons. The story goes on to describe that everyone in the town goes to see the child at least once, not one person offering a single shred of help to the poor, withering child. The people of Omelas know if they extended any means of help or gratitude to the child, the entire town will be stripped of all the joy and happiness they experience. This is a conscious choice the citizens must make daily: to idly stand by knowing of the suffering child.

Moreover, I infer that the author intended the child in the tool closet to have a much greater meaning. The child is an allusion to the idiom of "having skeletons in the closet." It symbolizes the very thing that keeps everyone from experiencing true joy—"the right kind of joy" (Le Guin 4). As mentioned, Le Guin points out that the child is what holds this fictional town together, "They would like to do something for this child. But there is nothing they can do.... [If] it were cleaned and fed and comforted..., in that day and hour all the prosperity and beauty and delight of Omelas would wither and be destroyed" (Le Guin 4). Much like the people of the

town, we rely on past mistakes or haunting memories to sprout into the people we are today. In the story, there are members of society that can't handle the guilt festering from knowing of the broken-down child, so they leave behind the "joyous" town. The ones who walk away from Omelas are searching for something more profound—the true meaning of happiness.

The biggest problem with our society is that we are too focused on individual gain and not enough on the happiness and well-being of everyone. We do not need video games, treadmills, or even cars and helicopters to be happy. Nor is happiness determined by account balances, high scores, and followers. While our society feels like we have a sense of joy and happiness it is truly a mask for selfish desires. This clouded iteration of happiness is what keeps us from experiencing true joy. While the fictional town might fall into similar shortcomings as we do, they are far closer to discovering what true joy exactly means. As Le Guin reiterates, what makes the fictional town joyous is a "boundless and generous contentment, a magnanimous triumph felt not against some outer enemy but in communion with the finest and fairest souls of all men" (Le Guin 4). While this might be close, the true meaning of happiness is the coming together of all individuals to take solace purely in the company of others while eradicating the suffering of all.

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Moonlight (Original Motion Picture Soundtrack)

Read the *Pitchfork* article on Moonlight's Original Motion Picture Soundtrack..

Inauthenticity, Inadequacy, and Transience: The Failure of Language in "Prufrock"10

"The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," widely regarded as the work that brought T.S. Eliot into a position of influence and prominence amongst his literary contemporaries, delineates the psychosocial trappings of a first-person speaker struck by the impossibility of identity, interaction, and authenticity in a modern society. Although the poem establishes J. Alfred Prufrock, a typical 'anti-hero' of modernist style, as its speaker and central focus, Eliot seeks to generalize to a broader social commentary: the piece reveals the paralyzing state of universal disempowerment in social interaction by exploring a broken system of signification and identity.

Eliot's poem filters its communication through the first-person speaker, J. Alfred Prufrock; however, the audience is implicated directly and indirectly in the consciousness of Prufrock. Ironically, the central conflict of the poem is the subject's inability to engage and communicate with the world around him. However, in multiple fashions, even in the very process of performance and reading of the poem, we the audience are interpellated into Prufrock's hellish existence. The epigraph of "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" draws from Dante's *Inferno*, immediately conjuring the idea of Hell for the audience. The epigraph, in conjunction with the first line of the piece—"Let us go then, you and I" (1)—and the repetition of second-person and collective first-person pronouns, implicates the reader in an implied tour of Prufrock's personal Hell, a state of imprisonment within his own consciousness.

Prufrock is a speaker characterized first and foremost by overwhelming fear and alienation, stemming from his hypersensitivity to time, his disillusionment with the failure of communication, and his inability to construct a stable self. He frequently questions his capacity to relate to those around him, wondering repeatedly, "[H]ow should I presume?" (54, 61). Prufrock, worrisome over the audacity implicit in *presumption* and fearful of the consequences, hesitates to engage at all, instead setting himself in frustrated isolation and insecurity. Throughout the work, Eliot insists that one of the few certainties of Prufrock's bleak existence is, paradoxically, uncertainty: from Prufrock's overarching and unnamed "overwhelming question" (10) to the oft-quoted "Shall I part my hair behind? Do I dare to eat a peach" (122), the clearest recurring element of the poem is Prufrock's equivocation. The ambiguity of consequence is too dangerous for Prufrock. He is concerned that his participation in society shall "disturb the universe" (45) and so chooses rather to retreat into his tangled web of hypotheticals.

Eliot symbolizes the society Prufrock so fears in the third stanza as a yellow fog, invading the descriptions of the architecture and appearance of the city.

The yellow fog that rubs its back upon the window-panes,
The yellow smoke that rubs its muzzle on the window-panes,
Licked its tongue into the corners of the evening,
Lingered upon the pools that stand in drains,
Let fall upon its back the soot that falls from chimneys,
Slipped by the terrace, made a sudden leap,
And seeing that it was a soft October night,
Curled once about the house, and fell asleep. (15-22)

The description of this yellow fog is animalistic and untamed. Its presence is quiet but oppressive, weighing heavily on the tone of the poem with the sort of gaseous intractability and inescapability of our fluid and chaotic social formation and the hegemony that it relies upon. The yellow fog figuratively permeates the entire piece,

ubiquitous and stifling, but most evidently as it encroaches on Prufrock's discussion and distortion of time, beginning in the following stanza.

While the third stanza most overtly draws attention to Prufrock's temporal hyper-awareness (using the frequent repetition of the word "time"), Eliot constructs an underlying theme of impermanence as early as the epigraph and first stanza of the poem. The original speaker of the epigraph, Guido da Montefeltro, reminds us of the imprisoning and irreversible flow of time, and signal words like "one-night" (6) and "tedious" (8) in the first stanza highlight a hyper-awareness of time. In spite of Prufrock's implied worldview that genuine social interaction is dangerous, impossible, or even futile, he is painfully aware of the disappearance of opportunity within his hesitation. He admits, "I have measured out my life with coffee spoons" (51), "I grow old … I grow old …" (120), and, reflecting on his imprisonment, wonders, "[H]ow should I begin / To spit out all the butt-ends of my days and ways?" (59-60). In his position of retrospect, Prufrock imbues a clear tone of regret and loss, noting that he has expended most of his life in apprehension; he links his spent time to the humdrum by means of the "coffee spoons," to the useless and disposable by means of "butt-ends." By integrating a theme of transience and a tone of urgency, Eliot begins to explore Prufrock's social fears while also preparing to demonstrate the failure of language, as I discuss later. Considering the entanglement of the reader in the poem's exploration of Prufrock's psychological torture, we read that transience and mortality command all of *our* day-to-day actions and interactions—and how could this *not* leave us terrified and alienated like Prufrock himself?

As a consequence of such social fear and detachment, Eliot suggests, Prufrock struggles to establish public or personal identity: because he cannot truly associate with other members of his world, he cannot classify himself within a framework of socially-defined identity. Prufrock frames his failure to adopt an archetype using a strikingly dehumanizing synecdoche: "I should

have been a pair of ragged claws / Scuttling across the floors of silent seas" (73-74). Prufrock finds it more fitting that he be separated from the species than to continually find himself inadequate to the measure of social roles. These lines directly precede a process in which Prufrock evades commitment (as we learn is characteristic) by presenting three models of which he falls short, and then discarding the possibility of ever identifying his purpose.

First, Prufrock summons John the Baptist as a prototype by envisioning his *own* "head (grown slightly bald) brought in upon a platter" (82), but then immediately negates the comparison in the next line: "I am no prophet" (83). Prufrock identifies with the tragic, violent end of John the Baptist, reminding us of his overwhelming fear of the outside world. He makes clear that he can relate *only* to the death of the man, but not to the life: Prufrock believes that he lacks some essence of a prophet—perhaps charisma or confidence, perhaps respectability or status.

Prufrock seeks to find a more apt comparison, now considering a person as socially tortured as he but who ultimately discovered meaning. Prufrock attempts to adopt a different Biblical figure as a model of identity:

> Would it have been worth while [...]
> To say: "I am Lazarus, come from the dead,
> Come back to tell you all, I shall tell you all"—
> If one, settling a pillow by her head,
> Should say: "That is not what I meant at all.
> That is not it, at all." (90-98)

By invoking the character of Lazarus,[1] Prufrock hopes to procure an archetype which fits him better than that of John the Baptist. However, Prufrock realizes that this mold is not adequate either; he questions whether he could interact with someone even with the support of enlightening, didactic knowledge of the afterlife. In so doing, he effectively 'tries on' an identity, only to abandon it upon fear of being misunderstood.

Ultimately, Prufrock comments on the ignobility of his

very equivocation: "No! I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be" (111). Prufrock is intensely aware of his reluctance to commit, to make a decision, reminiscent of the tragic Dane—but he actively degrades himself by rejecting the comparison. He suggests that, if anything, he is only fit to be a supporting character, and even then, only an obsequious and foolish one.

> [I am] an attendant lord, one that will do
> To swell a progress, start a scene or two,
> Advise the prince; no doubt, an easy tool,
> Deferential, glad to be of use,
> Politic, cautious, and meticulous;
> Full of high sentence, but a bit obtuse;
> At time, indeed, almost ridiculous—
> Almost, at times, the Fool. (112-9)

After the adoption and abandonment of three ambitious archetypes (John the Baptist, Lazarus, and Hamlet), Prufrock's "almost" in lines 118 and 119 tells us that he is even reluctant to embody a supporting character with a clearly defined role. Again, considering the involvement of the reader in Prufrock's plight, Eliot tells us that the literary and social characters which shape our models of human identity are inauthentic—that perhaps we are all destined to be no more than backing players to fill out a scene, or if we are lucky, provide comic relief.

To better understand Prufrock's disenfranchisement, we must recognize Eliot's portrayal of human interaction as broken, inadequate, and false. Within the structure of the poem, Eliot seems to imply the inadequacy of direct communication through circuitous, repetitious, and ambiguous text. Even as Prufrock introduces his "overwhelming question," he almost simultaneously refuses our inquiry to understand what he communicates—"Oh, do not ask, 'What is it?'" (9-10). By first calling attention to the ever-fleeting moments of time to instill a tone of haste, and then exacerbating those feelings with Prufrock's continued hesitation, Eliot highlights the infinite insufficiency of language. Even though there will be "time yet for a hundred indecisions, / And for a

hundred visions and revisions, / Before the taking of a toast and tea" (27-34), "in a minute there is time / For decisions and revisions which a minute will reverse" (47-48). Eliot's recursive language implies that while there is time, each moment will be inevitably filled with the paralyzing equivocation that we have come to expect from Prufrock. In a frustrated interjection, Prufrock sums it up well: "It is impossible to say just what I mean!" (104).

More subtly, though, Eliot incorporates only a few voices aside from Prufrock himself, and it is these characters who especially illuminate the alienating nature of interaction and language for Prufrock. It is important to note that while the entirety of "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" seems to be an argumentative internal monologue within Prufrock's consciousness, Eliot provides brief voices from hypothetical speakers imagined through the mediation of Prufrock's mind.

The unnamed women of the poem are particularly telling: "In the room the women come and go / Talking of Michelangelo" (35-6). This seeming non sequitur is repeated twice within the course of four stanzas. Between the two occurrences of this sentence, Prufrock reassures us (and, in turn, himself) that "there will be time / To prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet" (26-27). Eliot combines a deliberate absence of identifying characteristics of these women, the phrase "come and go," and a reference to inauthenticity of identity; this combination implies that these women are fungible, and that their commentary on the celebrated artist is merely a façade to suggest sophistication. They offer no substance of interaction beyond falsehood, flowing in and out of a room with identical, generic conversation while bearing contrived faces, formulated only to meet other contrived faces. In this way, Prufrock is disillusioned and discouraged from communication, realizing his mistrust of language for its inherent unreliability. We, in turn, are encouraged to perceive and reject the duplicity of common social interaction.

The subsequent hypothetical speakers in the poem seem to explain and rationalize Prufrock's fears. In their sole moments of

voice throughout the entire text, Prufrock insists that these speakers will criticize his appearance—"How his hair is growing thin!" (41) and "But how his arms and legs are thin!" (44)—or his failure to communicate, saying, "That is not what I meant at all. / That is not it, at all" (97-98, 109-110). Considering his anxieties of language, it is no surprise that Eliot's character recognizes the quickly-misunderstood nature of communication beyond the superficial "talk of Michelangelo." Nevertheless, Prufrock fears criticism for inadequacies which he must already recognize in himself: his deteriorating physical appearance, wasting away with each measured-out coffee spoon, or his inability to control language. This tension, this certainty of degrading or misconstrued response, further contributes to Eliot's implication of a broken system of language as embodied in Prufrock's alienation.

The penultimate voices Prufrock imagines, the mermaids, identify Prufrock's proximity to interaction. In another moment of doubt and seemingly scattered thought, Prufrock tells us he has "heard the mermaids singing, each to each" (124). These mermaids symbolize Prufrock's last appeal for communicative redemption. But alas, Prufrock realizes his isolation—"I do not think that they will sing to me" (125)—and it is *human* language itself leaves us with the final crushing words of the poem:

I have seen them [the mermaids] riding seaward on the waves
Combing the white hair of the waves blown back
When the wind blows the water white and black.
We have lingered in the chambers of the sea
By sea-girls wreathed with seaweed red and brown
Till human voices wake us, and we drown. (126-31)

This final contrast serves to remind us that while Prufrock is close enough to hear, close enough to "linger in the chambers of the sea," such hopes are dream-like, tenuous, ultimately shattered by human voices and all-engulfing reality. The reader will note that Prufrock and Eliot have shifted back to the collective first-person pronoun "we" for the final stanza, and distinguish in line 130 that the

referent is *not* the sea-girls and Prufrock, but rather Prufrock and another party; we can reasonably interpret the other party is the audience. Eliot is illuminating once again that the plight of J. Alfred Prufrock and the plight of all humanity are parallel in their morbidity, futility, and failure. It is not just Prufrock who drowns; it is *us*.

J. Alfred Prufrock's quest to construct a genuine, personal expression—a "love song," even—results in an excursion through the infernal frustration of Prufrock's psychosocial imprisonment. In his portrayal of this character's alienation, indecision, fear, and disillusionment, T.S. Eliot demands that we too, wandering through certain half-deserted streets, are victims of the putrid yellow-smoke society around us: the snares of inauthentic identity, broken language, and constantly vanishing time.

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Why Our Feminism Must Be Intersectional (And 3 Ways to Practice It) [article] by Jarune Uwuajaren and Jamie Utt. Available via Everyday Feminism.11

Economics and Obesity12

Eating healthy can be difficult for everyone. You have to figure out what is healthy and find out what diet fits your goals, then you have the struggle of actually sticking to the diet and avoiding the temptation of junk food. However, eating a nutritious diet can become even more complicated if you are poor and live in a low-income area. Healthy food is too expensive for low-income

people, forcing them to buy cheaper and less healthy alternatives. People may not even have access to unprocessed foods, like fruits and vegetables, if they live in poor neighborhoods that do not have a grocery store or supermarket. The lack of access to affordable, healthy, and unprocessed foods leads to an increased rate of obesity for low-income people, and current policies and interventions are not effective and need to be changed to help decrease rates of obesity.

Obesity has been a problem in the United States for a long time. In the 1980s, the number of obese people began to increase rapidly. The percentage of obese adults went from 15.0% in 1980 to 32.9% in 2004, more than doubling (Hurt 781). Obesity can be extremely damaging to the body and can lead to other chronic diseases, such as diabetes and hypertension. It is clear and has been for a long time, that obesity is an epidemic in America, and researchers are trying to find the cause. Obesity is commonly associated with people picking food solely based on taste and not on nutritional content, leading them to choose delicious junk food over nutritious vegetables. While this is true for some, the rates of obesity were found to be higher in American counties that were poverty-dense (Levine 2667). This is not the only study to find that obesity affects the poor more than others, as a study ran by U.S. Government found that rates of obesity and diet-related chronic diseases were highest in the most impoverished populations (Story 261). Obesity is affecting those who are least able to cope with it, as obesity and related chronic diseases can have a serious economic impact on people, especially those with diabetes. People with diabetes spend around 2.3 times as much on general medical care a year than someone without diabetes, and on average a diabetic person spends about $7,900 a year just on medical expenses associated with diabetes (Yang 1033). These costs are extremely damaging to low-income people who may already have trouble getting by as it is, and it is important that the economic causes of obesity are examined so that policies and interventions can be designed to help protect public health.

Higher rates of obesity in low-income areas has been associated with a lack of access to healthy foods. Many of these low-income areas are classified as food deserts, meaning there is nowhere to buy fresh fruits, vegetables, or other unprocessed foods. The nearest grocery store or supermarket can be over a mile away, as it is for Casey Bannister a resident of East Portland, Oregon. The closest grocery store to her is a mile and a half away, which can be hard for her to walk or bike especially when she has bags of groceries (Peacher). This is a common problem for many Americans who also live in food deserts. Many people have to rely solely on nearby convenience stores for food. These stores rarely sell fresh fruits, vegetables, or unprocessed meats and have a large selection of unhealthy foods. Along with that, the convenience stores found in low-income areas were more often small, independent stores which sold food for higher prices than chain stores (Beaulac), meaning consumers in poor neighborhoods were spending more there than they would in stores found in higher-income neighborhoods.

There is an appealingly simple answer to food deserts: add a grocery store. However, merely adding a grocery store is not going to solve the obesity problem in impoverished areas, as that is only one part of the problem. According to a study run by researcher Steven Cummins, the stores added to food deserts in Philadelphia did not impact that amount of fruits and vegetables consumed. He attributed this to many causes, including the fact that the kind of stores added may not necessarily sell cheaper food (Corapi). While food deserts do contribute to obesity, the main economic cause is more likely the price of healthy, nutritious food. A healthy diet is too expensive to be accessible to low-income people and families, even if they do have access to a supermarket.

Nutritious foods like fruits and vegetables, while healthy, are low in calories. Unhealthier foods have high amounts of calories for a much lower cost, making them extremely appealing to families on a budget. These calories are made up of grains and starches as well as added fats and sugars, which have been linked

to an increased risk for obesity (Drewnowski 265S). Foods like these are quite clearly unhealthy, however, health must be disregarded when it is the only thing a person can afford to eat. A study by the American Diabetes Association found that on average healthy diets cost $18.16 per thousand calories, while unhealthy diets only cost $1.76 per thousand calories (Parker-Pope). Based on a person who needs two thousand calories a day, it would cost roughly $1,089.60 a month for one person to eat a healthy diet when an unhealthy diet would cost $105.60 a month. This means that a person eating a nutritious diet would spend over ten times as much as a person eating a nutrient deficient diet. People who earn minimum wage, especially those that have more than one person to support, cannot spend this much on food a month and are forced to instead buy unhealthier options and put themselves at a higher risk for obesity.

Influences such as the convenience of unhealthy food and advertisements may also impact the rates of obesity in low-income areas and populations. It is important that they are acknowledged as well before designing new policies or interventions, so that all possible causes and factors of obesity may be addressed. Unhealthy food, for example, fast food is almost always convenient and simple, as most foods come already cooked and ready to be eaten. While healthy food is usually raw and unprocessed, meaning it has to be prepared before being served. Cooking a proper meal can take an hour or more, and many working people do not have the time. Also, cooking requires a lot of knowledge about recipes and how to prepare raw food, as well as expensive resources like pots, pans, and knives. Fast food is quick and requires no prior knowledge about cooking food or any equipment, making it an easy choice for those who are poor or busy. Food advertisements may also influence people's choices. Most food advertisements seen on TV are for fast food and show this food as extremely desirable and a good deal. This may affect people's choices and make them more likely to buy fast food, as it is shown as delicious and within their budget. While these influences are unlikely to be the main cause of

high rates of obesity for low-income people, it is still important that they are examined and thought of while interventions are being made.

With the obesity epidemic being so detrimental to individual's health, people and government have been pushing for interventions and policies to help fight against obesity. Some interventions have helped bring fruits and vegetables to low-income families and neighborhoods. Food pantries have been vitally important to providing food in food deserts. Saul Orduna, another resident of East Portland, lives in a food desert and gets about half to two-thirds of his groceries from the SUN food pantry. They provide him and his two children with fresh fruits and vegetables as well as milk, eggs, and bread. It is an important service for his family, as he only has $380 a month for food (Peacher). Services like this help bring food to those who cannot afford or access it, however, they are not a good long-term solution to food insecurity. Other policies and interventions have been suggested that are likely to have more negative effects. The taxation of junk food, particularly high-calorie beverages, has been proposed to discourage people from purchasing unhealthy foods and hopefully lower obesity rates (Drewnowski 265S). Taxing unhealthy foods might be a good incentive for middle and high income people to buy healthier food. However, without lowering the price of nutritional food, policies like this will only put more of an economic burden on low-income people and make it harder for them to get any food at all.

New policies and interventions are needed, and it is necessary that they address the many different influences on the rates of obesity, including access, price, and advertising. Tax subsidies implemented on healthy foods, such as unprocessed meats, fruits, and vegetables, would encourage people to buy that instead of other options. It is important that if tax subsidies are put on healthy food that it is advertised to the public. Advertising on TV and in stores could be used alongside tax subsidies to promote the newly affordable, healthy choices and make them seem more

desirable. Putting healthy foods in the front of stores so that they are the first thing people see, rather than unhealthier options like chips and candy, would also help people choose more nutritious foods over other choices. These may seem like small changes; however, they could have a huge impact.

Education may also play an important part in lowering rates of obesity. Nutrition is extremely complicated, and there are some who may have never learned what is healthy and what is not. Others may know what is healthy, yet they do not know how to prepare and use such foods. Free community education classes could be used to teach people about health and nutrition. Along with cooking classes to teach people how to properly prepare and cook vegetables and fruits. Both of these classes would help inform people about their own health and build their confidence in choosing and preparing food. Classes may also be helpful for teaching skills other than nutrition and cooking. In an interview with the researcher Steven Cummins, he stated that "We have to think very carefully about giving people the skills to make better decisions when they're in stores, as well as providing access to the stores in the first place" (Corapi). He brings up an important point about the importance of teaching people how to manage their money properly and how to find good deals on healthy food. A class teaching these kinds of skills could help people be more organized and deliberate in what they buy.

The obesity epidemic in low-income populations is a complex problem that has been going on for a long time. The answer sadly is not simple and is going to require involvement from the government, stores, and the communities of America. Until people are able to afford and access food themselves, it is important that people continue to support food banks and pantries, like the Oregon Food Bank, as they provide vital assistance to those who are food-insecure. Solving the problem of obesity in impoverished areas is going to be complicated, however, the result will have more people with equal access to nutritious, healthy food and lower rates of obesity.

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Student Veterans and Their Struggle with Higher Education13

Did you know that student veterans are one of the largest and most diverse sub-cultures to matriculate into higher education in America? Ever since the inception of the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill, the

enrollment of service members post-military-service has skyrocketed. “Institutions have not faced such a significant influx of veteran students on campus since World War II” (Cook iii). Although they receive years of extensive training in military service, the skills that vets have learned are generally not immediately transferrable into civilian employment. With an abysmal job market, most service members are forced into higher education to obtain employment. The passage of the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill was the most significant increase in education benefits for service members and veterans since the original G.I. Bill of 1944; however, recent data from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) shows that only a small percentage of veterans use all of their federal education benefits (Lighthall 81). According to American College Testing (ACT), in the United States approximately one in four freshmen do not return after their first year and almost half will not graduate—but the statistic is significantly worse for veterans (Cass 23). Billions of dollars are lost annually on freshman attrition and wasted G.I. Bill benefits (Ibid.). Why do so many service members struggle to succeed during their transition into higher education? The answer may vary from veteran to veteran, but they underlying theme is an inability to successfully transition from a highly structured military lifestyle into a self-sustaining civilian one.

One major challenge faced by veterans is social reintegration after war. The well-known saying “War changes people” is profoundly true. Although not all vets see combat, it cannot be denied that the experience of battle is physically, emotionally, and spiritually damaging. Other students who have not served can never truly understand this. The people—students and faculty—have no understanding of what student veterans have been through, causing a feeling of alienation (Lighthall 84). Universities have long been a place where young people develop a purpose in life and make friends, but for many veterans, it can have the opposite effect. In “Lonely Men on Campus: Student Veterans Struggle to Fit In,” Alex Horton writes a case study on a combat

veteran struggling from this difficulty with social integration. He explains Josh Martell's experience: "He has quarantined himself almost entirely. He shows up for class, takes notes, and leaves, most of the time without communicating with students or professors" (Horton). Josh isolated himself, never saying "more than a few words to anyone" (Ibid.). This behavior is not abnormal: it is a reaction many veterans exhibit when they go to college. Horton explains how this reclusive behavior betrays the man Josh really is, explaining that he has transformed into an introvert. For many veterans, the feeling of being different or not relating to other students creates a feeling of isolation (Cass 29). Alienation from the student body certainly contributes to veteran attrition.

Coupled with this feeling of isolation, college campuses can have a drastic culture shock for veterans. During their years spent in the military, people in the service are inextricably tied to some sort of social system, and solitude is rare or even absent altogether. In "Ten Things You Should Know about Today's Student Veteran," Alison Lighthall explains how the many vets lose friends upon leaving the military, as well as a sense of purpose, identity, and structure. This can push anyone to their limit. Lighthall goes on to say that the unfamiliar social system of the university has no resemblance to the military. Classes and assignments might have less structure or looser expectations. They might require more self-management of time rather than following a strict schedule.

For myself, being a student veteran, I have faced many of these same struggles during my transition into higher education. I purposefully never solicit that I am a veteran unless I need to. It's not that I'm not proud of it, or even that I am ashamed of anything I have done; it's because I don't want to feel any more singled out than I already do. I also find that people either have strong feelings against the military or simply have no understanding of what myself or other veterans have gone through. I try to avoid hearing questions like, "Did you know anyone who died?" or, "Have you killed anyone?" After spending years always surrounded by military personnel and within a unique culture, it is very difficult to

relate to and want to be around college students. Like Josh, I find myself wanting to be alone rather than attempt to connect with my classmates.

Another major barrier for student veterans are the physical and mental health challenges that might have resulted from their service. This is another place where the vast majority of Americans who choose not to join the military do not have the context to understand the experience. Witnessing your best friend get blown apart or shot is a massive shock and emotionally devastating. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) haunts many of today's student veterans and further hinders their education. This is not to mention the risk of physical disability that veterans take when they enroll in service. Because of anxiety or injury related disorders, some veterans may show up to class late or even miss class. Other may show up early to orient themselves in a seat that has a full view of the classroom to reduce the sense of a physical threat (Lighthall 88). During class, they may have trouble staying focused or have difficulty composing themselves. They may struggle to process the information or skills being taught (Ibid. 85). Teachers should be aware of these challenges and support veterans in their learning and access needs.

Many veterans that suffer from PTSD go undiagnosed and attempt to live, work, and go to school without seeking aid (Cook 8-9). The mentality instilled in them is to not be a victim, and many student veterans fight PTSD without any assistance. Because of the stigma around PTSD and a veteran's desire to be self-sufficient, a student veteran might not seek help from Disability Services, the tutoring centers, or other on-campus resources.

Universities may be logistically suited to help veterans return to civilian life; however, the disconnected social experience, age discrepancies, and unique challenges make it difficult for them to seek help. Faculty and university officials are beginning to understand this issue as the veteran population steadily rises, but it may not be fast enough to help current student veterans. Helping this diverse subculture in today's universities starts first with

awareness and an understanding of their needs. Educators should reach out to them with compassion and respect, accommodate their individual learning needs, and most importantly, see them as unique people who chose to serve our country and endured burdens beyond anything we could imagine. It could make all the difference to that student veteran. It might even mean the difference between finding success in life, or ending up lost, jobless, and homeless.

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"Our Town" from This American Life

An inquiry-driven exploration of the effects of immigration on Albertville, Alabama. Listen to Part One of "Our Town" and Part Two of "Our Town" online.

"The Unfinished Battle in the Capital of the Confederacy" from Code Switch

A research-based investigation into the legacy of the confederacy, including monuments built in tribute 50 years after the Civil War. Listen to the podcast here.

See pages 90-91 of Nickel and Dimed, book by Barbara Ehrenreich.14

Excerpt: Self-restraint becomes more of a challenge when the owner of a million-dollar condo … takes me into the master bathroom to explain the difficulties she's been having with the shower stall. Seems its marble walls have been "bleeding" onto the brass fixtures, and can I scrub the grouting extra hard? That's not your marble bleeding, I want to tell her, it's the worldwide working class—the people who quarried the marble, wove your Persian rugs until they went blind, harvested the apples in your lovely fall-themed dining room centerpiece, smelted the steel for the nails, drove the trucks, put up this building, and now bend and squat to clean it.

Not that I … imagine that I am a member of that oppressed working class. My very ability to work tirelessly hour after hour is a product of decades of better-than-average medical care, a high-protein diet, and workouts in gyms that charge $400 or $500 a year. … But I will say this for myself: I have never employed a cleaning person or service.… [M]ostly I rejected the idea … because this is just not the kind of relationship I want to have with another human being. (*In 1999, somewhere between 14 and 18 percent of households employed an outsider to do the cleaning and the numbers are rising dramatically. Mediamark research reports a 53 percent increase, between 1995 and 1999, in the number of households using a hired cleaner or service once a month or more.…*)

Gaycation

(TV series by Ellen Page)

Watch this investigatory TV series online: VICELAND usually has at least one episode that you can stream for free, or you can stream it for $1.99/episode on YouTube, iTunes, Amazon, or Google Play.

Sweet Crude

(Documentary – ISBN: 9780781513449)

Watch the Sweet Crude trailer. Find this documentary through your school's library via WorldCat [Sweet Crude], or order it online.

Why Boston's Hospitals Were Ready

(*New Yorker* article, informed by research)

Read the article on *The New Yorker*'s website: Why Boston's Hospitals Were Ready [New Yorker article].

Endnotes

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Appendix A: Concepts and Strategies for Revision

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Let's start with a few definitions. What is an *essay*? It's likely that your teachers have been asking you to write essays for years now; you've probably formed some idea of the genre. But when I ask my students to define this kind of writing, their answers vary widely and only get at part of the meaning of "essay. "

Although we typically talk of *an* essay (noun), I find it instructive to think about essay (verb): to try; to test; to explore; to attempt to understand. A*n* essay (noun), then, is an attempt and an exploration. Popularized shortly before the Enlightenment Era by Michel de Montaigne, the essay form was invested in the notion that writing invites discovery: the idea was that he, as a lay-person without formal education in a specific discipline, would learn more about a subject through the act of writing itself. What difference does this new definition make for us, as writers?

- **Writing invites discovery**. Throughout the act of writing, you will learn more about your topic. Even though some people think of writing as a way to capture a fully-formed idea, writing can also be a way to process through ideas: in other words, writing can be an act of thinking. It forces you to look closer and see more. Your revisions should reflect the knowledge you gain through the act of writing.
- **An essay is an attempt, but not all attempts are successful on**

the first try. You should give yourself license to fail, to an extent. If to essay is to try, then it's okay to fall short. Writing is also an iterative process, which means your first draft isn't the final product.

Now, what is *revision*? You may have been taught that revision means fixing

commas, using a thesaurus to brighten up word choice, and maybe tweaking a sentence or two. However, I prefer to think of revision as "re | vision."

Revision isn't just about polishing—it's about seeing your piece from a new angle, with "fresh eyes." Often, we get so close to our own writing that we need to be able to see it from a different perspective in order to improve it. Revision happens on many levels. What you may have been trained to think of as revision—grammatical and mechanical fixes—is just one tier. Here's how I like to imagine it:

Even though all kinds of revision are valuable, your global issues are first-order concerns, and proofreading is a last-order concern. If your entire topic, approach, or structure needs revision, it doesn't matter if you have a comma splice or two. It's likely that you'll end up rewriting that sentence anyway.

There are a handful of techniques you can experiment with in order to practice true revision. First, if you can, take some time away from your writing. When you return, you will have a clearer head. You will even, in some ways, be a different person when you come back—since we as humans are constantly changing from moment to moment, day to day, you will have a different perspective with some time away. This might be one way for you to make procrastination work in your favor: if you know you struggle with procrastination, try to bust out a quick first draft the day an essay is assigned. Then, you can come back to it a few hours or a few days later with fresh eyes and a clearer idea of your goals.

Second, you can challenge yourself to reimagine your writing using global and local revision techniques, like those included later in this appendix.

Third, you can (and should) read your paper aloud, if only to

yourself. This technique distances you from your writing; by forcing yourself you read aloud, you may catch sticky spots, mechanical errors, abrupt transitions, and other mistakes you would miss if you were immersed in your writing. (Recently, a student shared with me that she uses an online text-to-speech voice reader to create this same separation. By listening along and taking notes, she can identify opportunities for local- and proofreading-level revision.)

Photo by Mimi Thian on Unsplash

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, you should rely on your *learning community*. Because you most likely work on tight deadlines and don't always have the opportunity to take time away from our projects, you should solicit feedback from your classmates, the Writing Center, your instructor, your Peer Workshop group, or your friends and family. As readers, they have valuable insight to the rhetorical efficacy of your writing: their feedback can be useful in developing a piece which is conscious of audience. To begin setting expectations and procedures for your Peer Workshop, turn to the first activity in this section.

Throughout this text, I have emphasized that good writing cannot exist in a vacuum; similarly, good rewriting often requires a supportive learning community. Even if you have had negative experiences with peer workshops before, I encourage you to give them another chance. Not only do professional writers consistently work with other writers, but my students are nearly always surprised by just how helpful it is to work alongside their classmates.

The previous diagram (of global, local, and proofreading levels of revision) reminds us that everyone has something valuable to offer in a learning community: because there are so many different elements on which to articulate feedback, you can provide

meaningful feedback to your workshop, even if you don't feel like an expert writer.

During the many iterations of revising, remember to be flexible and to listen. Seeing your writing with fresh eyes requires you to step outside of yourself, figuratively.

Listen actively and seek to truly understand feedback by asking clarifying questions and asking for examples. The reactions of your audience are a part of writing that you cannot overlook, so revision ought to be driven by the responses of your colleagues.

On the other hand, remember that the ultimate choice to use or disregard feedback is at the author's discretion: provide all the suggestions you want as a group member, but use your best judgment as an author. If members of your group disagree—great! Contradictory feedback reminds us that writing is a dynamic, transactional action which is dependent on the specific rhetorical audience.

Chapter Vocabulary

Vocabulary	Definition
Essay	a medium, typically nonfiction, by which an a try; to test; to explore; to attempt to underst
Fluff	uneconomical writing: filler language or unn achieve your rhetorical purpose.
Iterative	literally, a repetition within a process. The w
learning community	a network of learners and teachers, each equ community that learns by adapting to its uni
Revision	the iterative process of changing a piece of w rewriting (trying again, perhaps from a diff adding (new information, new ideas, new e subtracting (unrelated ideas, redundant in rearranging (finding more effective vector switching out (changing words or phrases, mechanical clean-up (standardizing punct

Revision Activities

Establishing Your Peer Workshop

Before you begin working with a group, it's important for you to establish a set of shared goals, expectations, and processes. You might spend a few minutes talking through the following questions:

- Have you ever participated in a Peer Workshop before? What worked? What didn't?
- What do you hate about group projects? How might you mitigate these issues?
- What opportunities do group projects offer that working independently doesn't? What are you excited for?
- What requests do you have for your Peer Workshop group members?

In addition to thinking through the culture you want to create for your workshop group, you should also consider the kind of feedback you want to exchange, practically speaking. In order to arrive at a shared definition for "good feedback," I often ask my students to complete the following sentence as many times as possible with their groupmates: "Good feedback is…"

The list could go on forever, but here a few that I emphasize:

	"Goo
kind	
cognizant of process (i.e., recognizes that a first draft isn't a final draft)	
specific	comprehe

Once you've discussed the parameters for the learning community you're building, you can begin workshopping your drafts, asking, "What does the author do well and what could they do better?" Personally, I prefer a workshop that's conversational, allowing the author and the audience to discuss the work both generally and specifically; however, your group should use whatever format will be most valuable for you. Before starting your workshop, try to get everyone on the same page logistically by using the flowchart on the following two pages.

Establishing Your Peer Workshop

To set the tone and expectations for your unique workshop group, talk through the following prompts. Record your answers on the companion sheet. Part One asks you to establish a climate or culture for your group; Part Two will help you talk through logistics.

(1) Culture of your Workshop

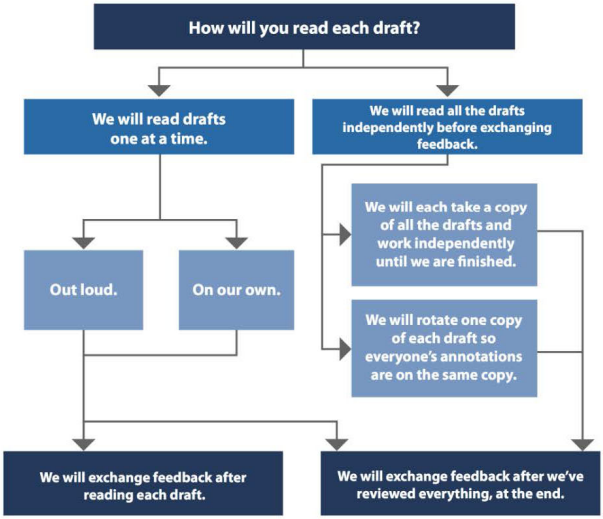
(a.) Choose the 3-5 descriptors of good feedback that are most important to the members of your group.

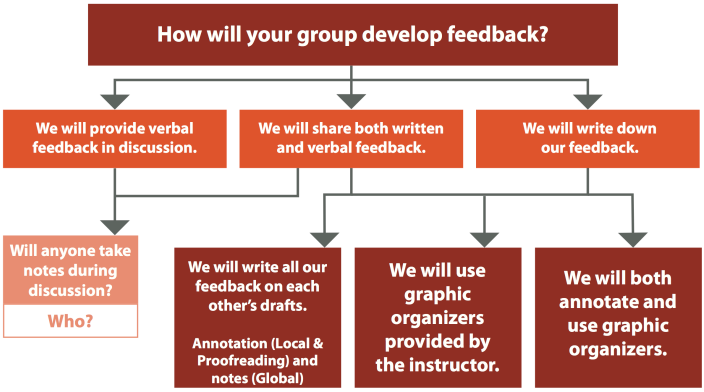
(b.) Discuss for 3-5 minutes: What do each of you need for this Peer Workshop to be effective?

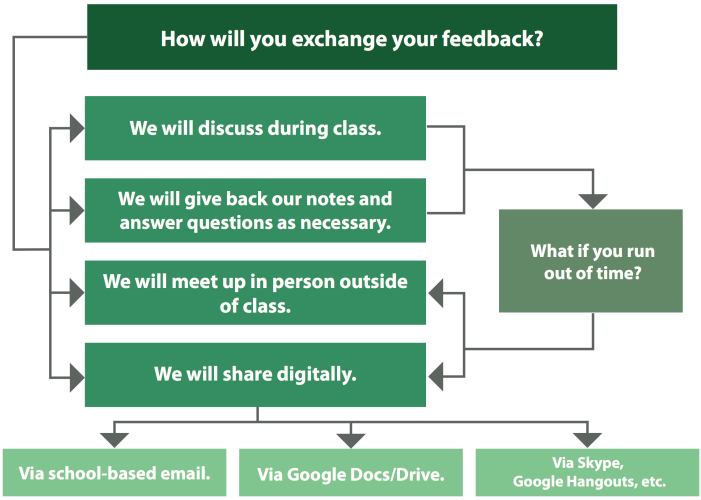
FROM EACH OTHER? FROM THE INSTRUCTOR? FROM YOURSELVES? FROM YOUR ENVIRONMENT?

Record responses on a separate sheet of paper.

(2) Procedures for your Workshop







Global Revision Activity for a Narrative Essay

This assignment challenges you to try new approaches to a draft you've already written. Although you will be "rewriting" in this exercise, you are not abandoning your earlier draft: this exercise is generative, meaning it is designed to help you produce new details,

ideas, or surprising bits of language that you might integrate into your project.

First, choose a part of your draft that (a) you really like but think could be better, or (b) just isn't working for you. This excerpt should be no fewer than 100 words and can include your entire essay, if you want.

Then, complete your choice of one prompt from the list below: apply the instruction to the excerpt to create new content. Read over your original once, but do not refer back to it after you start writing. Your goal here is to deviate from the first version, not reproduce it. The idea here is to produce something new about your topic through constraint; you are reimagining your excerpt on a global scale.

After completing one prompt, go back to the original and try at least one more, or apply a different prompt to your new work.

1. Change genres: For example, if your excerpt is written in typical essay form, try writing it as poetry, or dialogue from a play/movie, or a radio advertisement.
2. Zoom in: Focus on one image, color, idea, or word from your excerpt and zoom way in. Meditate on this one thing with as much detail as possible.
3. Zoom out: Step back from the excerpt and contextualize it with background information, concurrent events, information about relationship or feelings.
4. Change point-of-view: Try a new vantage point for your story by changing pronouns and perspective. For instance, if your excerpt is in first-person (I/me), switch to second- (you) or third-person (he/she/they).
5. Change setting: Resituate your excerpt in a different place, or time.
6. Change your audience: Rewrite the excerpt anticipating the expectations of a different reader than you first intended. For example, if the original excerpt is in the same speaking voice you would use with your friends, write as if your strictest

teacher or the president or your grandmother is reading it. If you've written in an "academic" voice, try writing for your closest friend—use slang, swear words, casual language, whatever.

7. Add another voice: Instead of just the speaker of the essay narrating, add a listener. This listener can agree, disagree, question, heckle, sympathize, apologize, or respond in any other way you can imagine. (See "the nay-sayer's voice" in Chapter Nine.)
8. Change timeline (narrative sequence): Instead of moving chronologically forward, rearrange the events to bounce around.
9. Change tense: Narrate from a different vantage point by changing the grammar. For example, instead of writing in past tense, write in present or future tense.
10. Change tone: Reimagine your writing in a different emotional register. For instance, if your writing is predominantly nostalgic, try a bitter tone. If you seem regretful, try to write as if you were proud.

Reverse Outlining

Have you ever written an outline before writing a draft? It can be a useful pre-writing strategy, but it doesn't work for all writers. If you're like me, you prefer to brain-dump a bunch of ideas on the paper, then come back to organize and refocus during the revision process. One strategy that can help you here is reverse outlining.

Divide a blank piece of paper into three columns, as demonstrated below. Number each paragraph of your draft, and write an equal numbered list down the left column of your blank piece of paper. Write "Idea" at the top of the middle column and "Purpose" at the top of the right column.

¶	Idea (What is the¶ saying?)	Purpos (Wha
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
.		
.		
.		

Now, wade back through your essay, identifying what each paragraph is saying and what each paragraph is doing. Choose a few key words or phrases for each column to record on your sheet of paper.

Try to use consistent language throughout the reverse outline

so you can see where your paragraphs are saying or doing similar things.

A paragraph might have too many different ideas or too many different functions for you to concisely identify. This could be a sign that you need to divide that paragraph up.

Here's a student's model reverse outline:[1]

¶	Idea (What is the ¶ saying?)
1	Theatre is an important part of education and childhood development
2	There have been many changes in recent history to public education in the United States
3	Theatre programs in public schools have been on the decline over the past two decades
4	a) Theatre has social/emotional benefits b) Theatre has academic benefits
5	a) Acknowledge argument in favor of standardized testing b) STEAM curriculum incorporates arts education into other academic subjects
6	Socioeconomic inequality is also an obstacle to theatre education
7	Looking forward at public education reform, we should incorporate theatre into public education

But wait—there's more!

Once you have identified the idea(s) and purpose(s) of each paragraph, you can start revising according to your observations. From the completed reverse outline, create a new outline with a different sequence, organization, focus, or balance. You can reorganize by

- combining or dividing paragraphs,
- re-arranging ideas, and
- adding or subtracting content.

Reverse outlining can also be helpful in identifying gaps and redundancies: now that you have a new outline, do any of your ideas seem too brief? Do you need more evidence for a certain argument? Do you see ideas repeated more than necessary?

After completing the reverse outline above, the student proposed this new organization:[2]

Proposed changes based on rever
1
4a
4b
Combine 2 and 5a
Combine 3 and 6
5b
Write new paragraph on other solutions
7

You might note that this strategy can also be applied on the sentence and section level. Additionally, if you are a kinesthetic or visual learner, you might cut your paper into smaller pieces that you can physically manipulate.

Be sure to read aloud after reverse outlining to look for abrupt transitions.

You can see a simplified version of this technique demonstrated in this video.

Local Revision Activity: Cutting Fluff

When it's late at night, the deadline is approaching, and we've simply run out of things to say… we turn to fluff. Fluff refers to language which doesn't do work for you–language that simply takes up space or sits flat on the page, rather than working economically and impactfully. Whether or not you've used it deliberately, all authors have been guilty of fluffy writing at one time or another.

Example of fluff on social media ["Presidents don't have to be smart" from funnyjunk.com].

Fluff happens for a lot of reasons.

- Of course, reaching a word- or page-count is the most common motivation.
- Introductions and conclusions are often fluffy because the author can't find a way into or out of the subject, or because the author doesn't know what their exact subject will be.
- Sometimes, the presence of fluff is an indication that the author doesn't know enough about the subject or that their scope is too broad.
- Other times, fluffy language is deployed in an effort to sound "smarter" or "fancier" or "more academic"–which is an understandable pitfall for developing writers.

These circumstances, plus others, encourage us to use language that's not as effective, authentic, or economical. Fluff happens in a lot of ways; here are a few I've noticed:

Thesaurus Syndrome	A writer uses inappropriately complex language (often because of the right-click Synonyms function) to achieve a different tone. The more complex language might be used inaccurately or sound inauthentic because the author isn't as familiar with it.
Roundabout phrasing	Rather than making a direct statement ("That man is a fool."), the author uses couching language or beats around the bush ("If one takes into account each event, each decision, it would not be unwise for one to suggest that that man's behaviors are what some would call foolish.")
Abstraction or generalities	If the author hasn't quite figured out what they want to say or has a too broad of a scope, they might discuss an issue very generally without committing to specific, engaging details.
Digression	An author might get off topic, accidentally or deliberately, creating extraneous, irrelevant, or unconnected language.
Ornamentation or flowery language	Similarly to Thesaurus Syndrome, often referred to as "purple prose," an author might choose words that sound pretty or smart, but aren't necessarily the right words for their ideas.
Wordy sentences	Even if the sentences an author creates are grammatically correct, they might be wordier than necessary.

Of course, there's a very fine line between detail and fluff. Avoiding fluff doesn't mean always using the fewest words possible. Instead,

you should occasionally ask yourself in the revision process, *How is this part contributing to the whole? Is this somehow building toward a bigger purpose?* If the answer is no, then you need to revise.

The goal should not necessarily be "Don't write fluff," but rather "Learn to get rid of fluff in revision." In light of our focus on process, you are allowed to write fluff in the drafting period, so long as you learn to "prune" during revisions. (I use the word "prune" as an analogy for caring for a plant: just as you must cut the dead leaves off for the plant's health and growth, you will need to cut fluff so your writing can thrive.)

Here are a few strategies:

- Read out loud,
- Ask yourself what a sentence is doing, rhetorically,
- Combine like sentences, phrases, or ideas,
- Use signposts, like topic-transition sentences (for yourself during revision and for your reader in the final draft), and
- Be specific—stay cognizant of your scope (globally) and the detail of your writing (locally).

To practice revising for fluff, workshop the following excerpt by yourself or with a partner. Your goal is not to cut back to the smallest number of words, but rather to prune out what you consider to be fluff and leave what you consider to be detail. You should be able to explain the choices you make.

There was a time long before today when an event occurred involving a young woman who was known to the world as Goldilocks. On the particular day at hand, Goldilocks made a spontaneous decision to wander through the forest, the trees growing up high above her flowing blonde pigtails. Some time after she commenced her voyage, but not after too long, she saw sitting on the horizon a small residency. Goldilocks rapped her knuckles on the door, but alas, no one answered the door. Therefore, Goldilocks decided that it would be a good idea to enter the unattended house, so she entered it. Atop the average-sized table in the kitchen of

the house, there were three bowls of porridge, which is similar to oatmeal. Porridge is a very common dish in Europe; in fact, the Queen of England is well-known for enjoying at least one daily bowl of porridge per day. Goldilocks, not unlike the Queen of England, enjoys eating porridge for its nutritional value. On this day, she was feeling quite hungry and wanted to eat. She decided that she should taste one of the three bowls of porridge, from which steam was rising indicating its temperature. But, because she apparently couldn't tell, she imbibed a spoonful of the porridge and vocalized the fact that the porridge was of too high a temperature for her to masticate and consume: "This porridge is too hot!

Endnotes

1 Reverse outline by Jacob Alexander, Portland Community College, 2018. Reproduced with permission from the student author.
2 Ibid.

Appendix B: Engaged Reading Strategies

There are a lot of ways to become a better writer, but the best way I know is to read a lot. Why? Not only does attentive reading help you understand grammar and mechanics more intuitively, but it also allows you to develop your personal voice and critical worldviews more deliberately. By encountering a diversity of styles, voices, and perspectives, you are likely to identify the ideas and techniques that resonate with you; while your voice is distinctly *yours*, it is also a unique synthesis of all the other voices you've been exposed to.

But it is important to acknowledge that the *way* we read matters. At some point in your academic career, you've probably encountered the terms "*active reading*" or "*critical reading*." But what exactly does active reading entail?

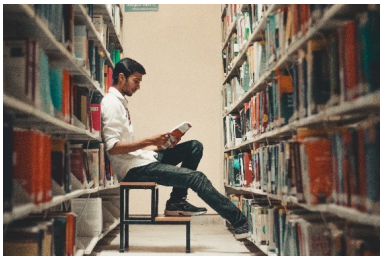


Photo by Dollar Gill on Unsplash

It begins with an acknowledgment that reading, like writing, is a process: active reading is complex, iterative, and recursive, consisting of a variety of different cognitive actions. Furthermore, we must recognize that the reading process can be approached many different ways, based on our backgrounds, strengths, and purposes.

However, many people don't realize that there's more than one way to read; our early training as readers fosters a very narrow vision of critical literacy. For many generations in many cultures across the world, developing reading ability has generally trended toward efficiency and comprehension of main ideas. Your family, teachers, and other folks who taught you to read trained you to

read in particular ways. Most often, novice readers are encouraged to ignore detail and nuance in the name of focus: details are distracting. Those readers also tend to project their assumptions on a text. This practice, while useful for global understanding of a text, is only *one* way to approach reading; by itself, it does not constitute "engaged reading."

In her landmark article on close reading, Jane Gallop explains that ignoring details while reading is effective, but also problematic:

> When the reader concentrates on the familiar, she is reassured that what she already knows is sufficient in relation to this new book. Focusing on the surprising, on the other hand, would mean giving up the comfort of the familiar, of the already known for the sake of learning, of encountering something new, something she didn't already know.
>
> In fact, this all has to do with learning. Learning is very difficult; it takes a lot of effort. It is of course much easier if once we learn something we can apply what we have learned again and again. It is much more difficult if every time we confront something new, we have to learn something new.
>
> Reading what one expects to find means finding what one already knows. Learning, on the other hand, means coming to know something one did not know before. Projecting is the opposite of learning. As long as we project onto a text, we cannot learn from it, we can only find what we already know. Close reading is thus a technique to make us learn, to make us see what we don't already know, rather than transforming the new into the old.[1]

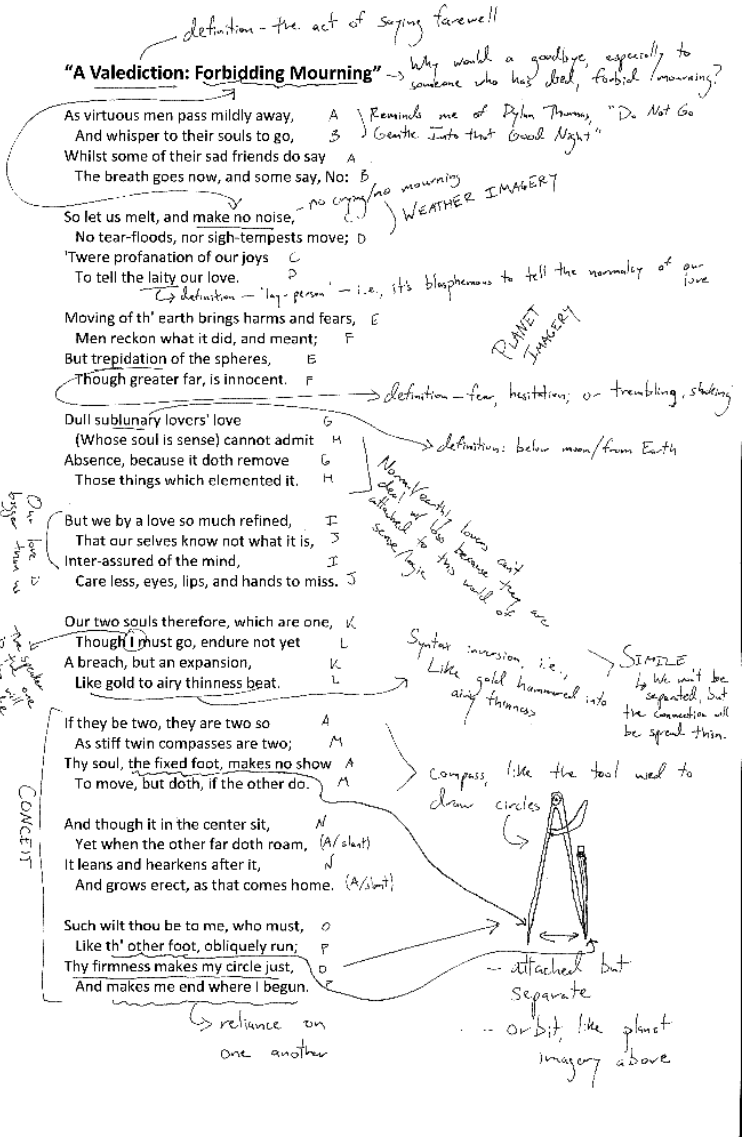
To be engaged readers, we must avoid projecting our preconceived notions onto a text. To achieve deep, complex understanding, we must consciously attend to a text using a variety of strategies.

The following strategies are implemented by all kinds of critical readers; some readers even use a combination of these strategies.

Like the writing process, though, active reading looks different for everyone. These strategies work really well for some people, but not for others: I encourage you to experiment with them, as well as others not covered here, to figure out what *your* ideal critical reading process looks like.

Chapter Vocabulary

Vocabulary	Definition
annotation	engaged reading strategy by which a reader marks up a text with their notes, questions, new vocabulary, ideas, and emphases.
critical/ active reading	also referred to in this text as engaged reading, a set of strategies and concepts to interrupt projection and focus on a text.
SQ3R	an engaged reading strategy to improve comprehension and interrupt projection. **S**urvey, **Q**uestion, **R**ead, **R**ecite, **R**eview.



Annotation

Annotation is the most common and one of the most useful engaged

reading strategies. You might know it better as "marking up" a text. Annotating a reading is visual evidence to your teacher that you read something–but more importantly, it allows you to focus on the text itself by asking questions and making notes to yourself to spark your memory later.

Take a look at the sample annotation on the next page. Note that the reader here is doing several different things:

- **Underlining important words, phrases, and sentences.** Many studies have shown that underlining or highlighting alone does not improve comprehension or recall; however, limited underlining can draw your eye back to curious phrases as you re-read, discuss, or analyze a text.
- **Writing marginal notes.** Even though you can't fit complex ideas in the margins, you can:
    - use keywords to spark your memory,
    - track your reactions,
    - remind yourself where an important argument is,
    - define unfamiliar words,
    - draw illustrations to think through an image or idea visually, or
    - make connections to other texts.

In addition to taking notes directly on the text itself, you might also write a brief summary with any white space left on the page. As we learned in Chapter Two, summarizing will help you process information, ensure that you understand what you've read, and make choices about which elements of the text to focus on.

For a more guided process for annotating an argument, follow these steps from Brian Gazaille,[2] a teacher at University of Oregon:

> Most "kits" that you find in novelty stores give you materials and instructions about how to construct an object: a model plane, a bicycle, a dollhouse. This kit asks you to *deconstruct* one of our readings, identifying its thesis, breaking down its argument, and calling attention

to the ways it supports its ideas. Dissecting a text is no easy task, and this assignment is designed to help you understand the logic and rhetoric behind what you just read.

Print out a clean copy of the text and annotate it as follows:

1. **With a black pen, underline the writer's thesis**. If you think the thesis occurs over several sentences, underline all of them. If you think the text has an implicit (present but unstated) thesis, underline the section that comes closest to being the thesis and *rewrite* it as a thesis in the margins of the paper.
2. **With a different color pen, underline the "steps" of the argument. In the margins of the paper, paraphrase those steps and say whether or not you agree with them.** To figure out the steps of the argument, ask: What was the author's thesis? What ideas did they *need* to talk about to support that thesis? Where and how does each paragraph discuss those ideas? Do you agree with those ideas?
3. **With a different color pen, put [brackets] around any key terms or difficult concepts that the author uses, and define those terms in the margins of the paper.**
4. **With a different color pen, describe the writer's *persona* at the top of the first page.** What kind of person is "speaking" the essay? What kind of expertise do they have? What kind of vocabulary do they use? How do they treat their intended audiences, or what do they assume about you, the reader?
5. **Using a highlighter, identify any rhetorical appeals (logos, pathos, ethos). In the margins, explain *how* the passage works as an appeal.** Ask: *What* is the passage asking you to buy into? *How* does it prompt me to reason (logos), feel (pathos), or believe (ethos)?
6. **At the end of the text, and in any color pen, write any questions or comments or questions *you* have for the author.** What strikes you as interesting/odd/infuriating/ insightful about the argument? Why? What do you think the author has

yet to discuss, either unconsciously or purposely?

For a more guided process for annotating a short story or memoir, follow these steps from Brian Gazaille,[3] a teacher at University of Oregon:

> Most "kits" that you find in novelty stores give you materials and instructions about how to construct an object: a model plane, a bicycle, a dollhouse. This kit asks you to *deconstruct* one of our readings, identifying its thesis, breaking down its argument, and calling attention to the ways it supports its ideas. Dissecting a text is no easy task, and this assignment is designed to help you understand the logic and rhetoric behind what you just read.

Print out a clean copy of the text and annotate it as follows:

1. In one color, chart the story's **plot**. Identify these elements in the margins of the text by writing the appropriate term next to the corresponding part[s] of the story. (Alternatively, draw a chart on a separate piece of paper.) Your plot chart must include the following terms: **exposition, rising action, crisis, climax, falling action, dénouement**.
2. At the top of the first page, identify the story's **point of view** as fully as possible. (Who is telling the story? What kind of narration is given?) In the margins, identify any sections of text in which the narrator's position/intrusion becomes significant.
3. Identify your story's **protagonist** and highlight sections of text that supply **character description or motivation**, labeling them in the margins. In a different color, do the same for the **antagonist(s)** of the story.
4. Highlight (in a different color) sections of the text that describe the story's **setting**. Remember, this can include place, time, weather, and atmosphere. Briefly discuss the significance of the setting, where appropriate.
5. With a different color, identify key uses of figurative

language—**metaphors**, **similes**, and **personifications**—by [bracketing] that section of text and writing the appropriate term.

6. In the margins, identify two distinctive **lexicons** ("word themes" or kinds of vocabulary) at work in your story. Highlight (with new colors) instances of those lexicons.
7. Annotate the story with any comments or questions *you* have. What strikes you as interesting? Odd? Why? What makes you want to talk back? Does any part of the text remind you of something else you've read or seen? Why?

SQ3R

This is far and away the most underrated engaged reading strategy I know: the few students I've had who know about it swear by it.

The SQ3R (or SQRRR) strategy has five steps:

Before Reading:

Survey (or **S**kim): Get a general idea of the text to prime your brain for new information. Look over the entire text, keeping an eye out for bolded terms, section headings, the "key" thesis or argument, and other elements that jump out at you. An efficient and effective way to skim is by looking at the *first* and *last* sentences of each paragraph.

While Reading:

Question: After a quick overview, bring yourself into curiosity mode by developing a few questions about the text. Developing questions is a good way to keep yourself engaged, and it will guide your reading as you proceed.

- What do you anticipate about the ideas contained in the text?
- What sort of biases or preoccupations do you think the text will reflect?

Read: Next, you should read the text closely and thoroughly, using other engaged reading strategies you've learned.

- Annotate the text: underline/highlight important passages and make notes to yourself in the margins.
- Record vocabulary words you don't recognize.
- Pause every few paragraphs to check in with yourself and make sure you're confident about what you just read.
- Take notes on a separate page as you see fit.

Recite: As you're reading, take small breaks to talk to yourself aloud about the ideas and information you're processing. I know this seems childish, but self-talk is actually really important and really effective. (It's only as adolescents that we develop this aversion to talking to ourselves because it's frowned upon socially.) If you feel uncomfortable talking to yourself, try to find a willing second party—a friend, roommate, classmate, significant other, family member, etc.—who will listen. If you have a classmate with the same reading assignment, practice this strategy collaboratively!

After Reading:

Review: When you're finished reading, spend a few minutes "wading" back through the text: not diving back in and re-reading, but getting ankle-deep to refresh yourself. Reflect on the ideas the text considered, information that surprised you, the questions that remain unanswered or new questions you have, and the text's potential use-value. The Cornell note-taking system recommends that you write a brief summary, but you can also free-write or talk

through the main points that you remember. If you're working with a classmate, try verbally summarizing.

Double-Column Notes

Notes & Quotes	**Questions & Reactions**

This note-taking strategy seems very simple at first pass, but will help keep you organized as you interact with a reading.

Divide a clean sheet of paper into two columns; on the left, make a heading for "Notes and Quotes," and on the right, "Questions and Reactions." As you read and re-read, jot down important ideas and words from the text on the left, and record your intellectual and emotional reactions on the right. Be sure to ask prodding questions of the text along the way, too!

By utilizing both columns, you are reminding yourself to stay close to the text (left side) while also evaluating how that text acts on you (right side). This method strengthens the connection you build with a reading.

Increasing Reading Efficiency

Although reading speed is not the most important part of reading, we often find ourselves with too much to read and too little time. Especially when you're working on an inquiry-based research project, you'll encounter more texts than you could possibly have time to read thoroughly. Here are a few quick tips:

Encountering an Article in a Hurry:

1. Some articles, especially scholarly articles, have abstracts. An abstract is typically an overview of the discussion, interests, and findings of an article; it's a lot like a summary. Using the abstract, you can get a rough idea of the contents of an article and determine whether it's worth reading more closely.
2. Some articles will have a conclusion set off at the end of the article. Often, these conclusions will summarize the text and its main priorities. You can read the conclusion before reading the rest of the article to see if its final destination is compatible with yours.
3. If you're working on a computer with search-enabled article PDFs, webpages, or documents, use the "Find" function (Ctrl + F on a PC and ⌘ + F on a Mac) to locate keywords. It's possible that you know what you're looking for: use technology to get you there faster.

Encountering a Book in a Hurry:

Although print books are more difficult to speed-read, they are very valuable resources for a variety of reading and writing situations. To get a broad idea of a book's contents, try the following steps:

1. Check the Table of Contents and the Index. At the front and

back of the book, respectively, these resources provide more key terms, ideas, and topics that may or may not seem relevant to your study.

2. If you've found something of interest in the Table of Contents and/or Index, turn to the chapter/section of interest. Read the first paragraph, the (approximate) middle two to three paragraphs, and the last paragraph. Anything catch your eye? (If not, it may be worth moving on.)
3. If the book has an introduction, read it: many books will develop their focus and conceptual frameworks in this section, allowing you to determine whether the text will be valuable for your purposes.

Finally, check out "5 Ways to Read Faster That ACTUALLY Work – College Info Geek" [Video] that has both practical tips to increase reading speed and conceptual reminders about the learning opportunities that reading creates.

Endnotes

1Gallop 11.
2 This activity was developed by Brian Gazaille, University of Oregon, 2018. Reproduced with permission of the author.
3 Ibid.

Appendix C: Metacognition

"Photo" by National Park Service is in the Public Domain

Glaciers are known for their magnificently slow movement. To the naked eye, they appear to be giant sheets of ice; however, when observed over long periods of time, we can tell that they are actually rivers made of ice.[1]

"Photo" by National Park Service is in the Public Domain

Despite their pace, though, glaciers are immensely powerful. You couldn't notice in the span of your own lifetime, but glaciers carve out deep valleys (like the one to the right) and grind the earth down to bedrock.[2] Massive changes to the landscape and ecosystem take place over hundreds of thousands of years, making them difficult to observe from a human vantage point.

However, humans too are always changing, even within our brief lifetimes. No matter how stable our sense of self, we are constantly in a state of flux, perpetually changing as a result of our experiences and our context. Like with glaciers, we can observe change with the benefit of time; on the other hand, we might not perceive the specific ways in which we grow on a daily basis. When change is gradual, it is easy to overlook.

Particularly after challenging learning experiences, like those embraced by this textbook, it is crucial that you reflect on the impact those challenges had on your knowledge or skillsets, your worldviews, and your relationships.

Throughout your studies, I encourage you to occasionally pause

to evaluate your progress, set new goals, and cement your recent learning. If nothing else, take 10 minutes once a month to free-write about where you were, where you are, and where you hope to be.

You may recognize some of these ideas from Chapter 3: indeed, what I'm talking about is the rhetorical gesture of reflection. Reflection is "looking back in order to look forward," a way of peering back through time to draw insight from an experience that will support you (and your audience) as you move into the future.

I would like to apply this concept in a different context, though: instead of reflecting on an experience that you have narrated, as you may have in Section 1, you will reflect on the progress you've made as a critical consumer and producer of rhetoric through a *metacognitive* reflection.

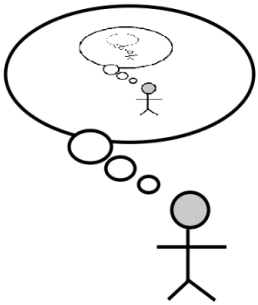


Diagram is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0 / A derivative from the original work

Simply put, metacognition means "thinking about thinking." For our purposes, though, metacognition means thinking about how thinking evolves. Reflection on your growth as a writer requires you to evaluate how your cognitive and rhetorical approaches have changed.

In this context, your metacognitive reflection can evaluate two distinct components of your learning:

- **Concepts that have impacted you:** New ideas or approaches to rhetoric or writing that have impacted the way you write, read, think, or understanding of the world.

  Ex: Radical Noticing, Inquiry-Based Research

- **Skills that have impacted you:** Specific actions or techniques

you can apply to your writing, reading, thinking, or understanding of the world.

Ex: Reverse Outlining, Imagery Inventory

Of course, because we are "looking back in order to look *forward*," the concepts and skills that you identify should support a discussion of how those concepts and skills will impact your future with rhetoric, writing, the writing process, or thinking processes. Your progress to this point is important, but it should enable even more progress in the future.

Chapter Vocabulary

Vocabulary	**Definition**
Metacognition	literally, "thinking about thinking." May also include how thinking evolves and reflection on growth.

Metacognitive Activities

There are a variety of ways to practice metacognition. The following activities will help you generate ideas for a metacognitive reflection. Additionally, though, a highly productive means of evaluating growth is to look back through work from earlier in your learning experience. Drafts, assignments, and notes documented your skills and understanding at a certain point in time, preserving an earlier version of you to contrast with your current position and abilities, like artifacts in a museum. In addition to the following activities, you should compare your current knowledge and skills to your previous efforts.

Writing Home from Camp

For this activity, you should write a letter to someone who is not affiliated with your learning community: a friend or family member who has nothing to do with your class or study of writing. Because they haven't been in this course with you, imagine they

don't know anything about what we've studied.

Your purpose in the letter is to summarize your learning for an audience unfamiliar with the guiding concepts or skills encountered in your writing class. Try to boil down your class procedures, your own accomplishments, important ideas, memorable experiences, and so on.

Metacognitive Interview

With one or two partners, you will conduct an interview to generate ideas for your metacognitive reflection. You can also complete this activity independently, but there are a number of advantages to working collaboratively: your partner(s) may have ideas that you hadn't thought of; you may find it easier to think out loud than on paper; and you will realize that many of your challenges have been shared.

"interview job icon job interview conversation" by Tumisu is available under the Pixabay license

During this exercise, one person should interview another, writing down answers while the interviewee speaks aloud. Although the interviewer can ask clarifying questions, the interviewee should talk most. For each question, the interviewee should speak for 1-2 minutes. Then, for after 1-2 minutes, switch roles and respond to the same question.

Alternate the role of interviewer and interviewee for each question such that every member gets 1-2 minutes to respond while the other member(s) takes notes.

After completing all of the questions, independently free-write for five minutes. You can make note of recurring themes, identify surprising ideas, and fill in responses that you didn't think of at the time.

- What accomplishments are you proud of from this term—in this class, another class, or your non-academic life?
- What activities, assignments, or experiences from this course have been most memorable for you? Most important?
- What has surprised you this term—in a good way or a bad way?
- Which people in your learning community have been most helpful, supportive, or respectful?
- Has your perspective on writing, research, revision, (self-)education, or critical thinking changed this term? How so?
- What advice would you give to the beginning-of-the-term version of yourself?

Model Texts by Student Authors

Model Metacognitive Reflection 13

I somehow ended up putting off taking this class until the very end of my college career. Thus, coming into it I figured that it would be a breeze because I'd already spent the past four years writing and refining my skills. What I quickly realized is that these skills have become extremely narrow; specifically focused in psychological research papers. Going through this class has truly equipped me with the skills to be a better, more organized, and more diverse writer.

I feel that the idea generation and revision exercises that

we did were most beneficial to my growth as a writer. Generally, when I have a paper that I have to write, I anxiously attempt to come up with things that I could write about in my head. I also organize said ideas into papers in my head; rarely conceptualizing them on paper. Instead I just come up with an idea in my head, think about how I'm going to write it, then I sit down and dive straight into the writing. Taking the time to really generate various ideas and free write about them not only made me realize how much I have to write about, but also helped me to choose the best topic for the paper that I had to write. I'm sure that there have been many times in the past when I have simply written a paper on the first idea that came to my mind when I likely could have written a better paper on something else if I really took the time to flesh different ideas out.

Sharing my thoughts, ideas, and writings with my peers and with you have been a truly rewarding experience. I realized through this process that I frequently assume my ideas aren't my comfort zone in this class and forced myself to present the ideas that I really wanted to talk about, even though I felt they weren't all that interesting. What I came to experience is that people were really interested in what I had to say and the topics in which I chose to speak about were both important and interesting. This class has made me realize how truly vulnerable the writing process is.

This class has equipped me with the skills to listen to my head and my heart when it comes to what I want to write about, but to also take time to generate multiple ideas. Further, I have realized the important of both personal and peer revision in the writing process. I've learned the importance of stepping away from a paper that you've been staring at for hours and that people generally admire vulnerability in writing.

Model Metacognitive Reflection 24

I entered class this term having written virtually nothing but short correspondence or technical documents for years. While I may have a decent grasp of grammar, reading anything I wrote was a slog. This class has helped me identify specific problems to improve my own writing and redefine writing as a worthwhile process and study tool rather than just a product. It has also helped me see ulterior motives of a piece of writing to better judge a source or see intended manipulation.

This focus on communication and revision over perfection was an awakening for me. As I've been writing structured documents for years, I've been focusing on structure and grammatical correctness over creating interesting content or brainstorming and exploring new ideas. Our class discussions and the article "Shitty First Drafts" have taught me that writing is a process, not a product. The act of putting pen to paper and letting ideas flow out has value in itself, and while those ideas can be organized later for a product they should first be allowed to wander and be played with.

Another technique I first encountered in this class was that of the annotated bibliography. Initially this seemed only like extra work that may prove useful to a reader or a grader. After diving further into my own research however, it was an invaluable reference to organize my sources and guide the research itself. Not only did it provide a paraphrased library of my research, it also shined light on patterns in my sources that I would not have noticed otherwise. I've already started keeping my own paraphrased notes along with sources in other classes, and storing my sources together to maintain a personal library.

People also say my writing is dry, but I could never pin down the problem they were driving at. This class was my first exposure to the terms logos, ethos, and pathos, and being able to name and identify different styles of argumentation helped me realize that I almost exclusively use logos in my own writing.

Awareness of these styles let me contrast my own writing with how extensively used paths and ethos are in most nonfiction writing found in books and news articles. I've noticed how providing example stories or posing questions can keep readers engaged while meaningfully introducing sources in the text, rather than as a parenthetical aside, improves the flow of writing and helps statements land with more authority.

As for narrative writing, I found the Global Revision Exercise for the first essay particularly interesting. To take a piece of writing and intentionally force a different voice or perspective on it showed how I can take improve a boring part of my paper by using a unique voice or style. This could be useful for expanding on reflective sections to evoke a particular feeling in the reader, or in conjunction with the Image Building Exercise to pull the reader into a specific moment.

This class was a requirement for me from which I didn't expect to gain much. English classes I have taken in the past focused on formulaic writing and grammar or vague literary analysis, and I expected more of the same. Ultimately, I was pleasantly surprised by the techniques covered which are immediately applicable in other classes and more concrete analysis of rhetoric which made the vague ideas touched on before reach a more tangible clarity.

Endnotes

1"Glaciers of Glacier Bay National Park." National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 12 March 2018, https://www.nps.gov/glba/learn/kidsyouth/glaciers-of-glacier-bay-national-park.htm.
2 Ibid.
3 Essay by an anonymous student author, 2017. Reproduced with permission from the student author.
4 Essay by Benjamin Duncan, Portland State University, 2017. Reproduced with permission from the student author.

Additional Recommended Resources

- "Students' Right to Their Own Language" from NCTE's Conference on College Composition and Communication
- "Revising Drafts" by the Writing Center at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- "'I need you to say "I"': Why First Person Is Important in College Writing" by Kate McKinney Maddalena [essay]
- "Annoying Ways People Use Sources" by Kyle D. Stedman [essay]
- Your Logical Fallacy Is…
- "Shitty First Drafts" by Anne Lamott
  from *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life*, Anchor, pp 21-27.
- "Argument as Emergence, Rhetoric as Love" by Jim W. Corder [JSTOR access]
- "The Ethics of Reading: Close Encounters" by Jane Gallop
  from *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing*, volume 16, issue 3, 2000, pp. 7-17.
- Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL)
  - Purdue OWL Home
  - Purdue OWL MLA Style & Citation
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  - Purdue OWL Chicago/Turabian Style & Citation
- A Pocket Style Manual (7th edition, 2016), edited by Diana Hacker and Nancy Sommers [WorldCat]
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- North Carolina State University Citation Builder
- Citation Management Software – Overview Video
- Zotero

- Mendeley

Glossary

iterative

literally, a repetition within a process. The writing process is iterative because it is non-linear and because an author often has to repeat, revisit, or reapproach different steps along the way.

analysis

the cognitive process and/or rhetorical mode of studying constituent parts to demonstrate an interpretation of a larger whole.

annotated bibliography

a research tool that organizes citations with a brief paragraph for each source examined.

annotation

engaged reading strategy by which a reader marks up a text with their notes, questions, new vocabulary, ideas, and emphases.

argument

a rhetorical mode in which different perspectives on a common issue are negotiated. See Aristotelian and Rogerian arguments.

Aristotelian argument

a mode of argument by which a writer attempts to convince their audience that one perspective is accurate.

audience

the intended consumers for a piece of rhetoric. Every text has at least one audience; sometimes, that audience is directly addressed, and other times we have to infer.

authorial intent

the inferred or speculated intention of a writer. Must be overlooked in the process of text wrestling analysis.

believer

a posture from which to read; reader makes efforts to appreciate, understand, and agree with the text they encounter.

block quote

a direct quote of more than four lines which is reformatted according to stylistic guidelines.

bootstrapping

the process of finding new sources using hyperlinked subject tags in the search results of a database.

call-to-action

a persuasive writer's directive to their audience; usually located toward the end of a text. Compare with purpose.

characterization

the process by which an author builds characters; can be accomplished directly or indirectly.

citation mining

the process of using a text's citations, bibliography, or notes to track down other similar or related sources.

claim of evaluation

an argument determining relative value (i.e., better, best, worse, worst). Requires informed judgment based on evidence and a consistent metric.

claim of phenomenon

an argument exploring a measurable but arguable happening. Typically more straightforward than other claims, but should still be arguable and worth discussion.

claim of policy

an argument that proposes a plan of action to address an issue. Articulates a stance that requires action, often informed by understanding of both phenomenon and evaluation. Often uses the word "should." See call-to-action.

close reading

a technique of reading that focuses attention on features of the text to construct an interpretation. (This is in contrast to interpretive methods that rely on research, historical context, biography, or speculation.)

complaint tradition

the recurring social phenomenon in which a generation complains about the way things have changed since their earlier years. Coined by Leonard Greenbaum.

connotation

the associated meanings of a word, phrase, or idea beyond its 'dictionary' definition; the complex, subjective, and dynamic meanings of a word, phrase, or idea the shift based on interpretive position. Contrast with denotation.

constraint-based writing

a writing technique by which an author tries to follow a rule or set of rules in order to create more experimental or surprising content, popularized by the Oulipo school of writers.

CRAAP Test

a technique for evaluating the credibility and use-value of a source; researcher considers the Currency, Relevance, Accuracy, Authority, and Purpose of the source to determine if it is trustworthy and useful.

credibility

the degree to which a text—its content, its author, and/or its publisher—is trustworthy and accurate.

critical/active reading

also referred to in this text as engaged reading, a set of strategies and concepts to interrupt projection and focus on a text.

defamiliarization

a method of reading, writing, and thinking that emphasizes the interruption of automatization. Established as "остранение" ("estrangement") by Viktor Shklovsky, defamiliarization attempts to turn the everyday into the strange, eye-catching, or dramatic.

denotation

the dictionary definition of a word, phrase, or idea; the standard and objective meaning of a word, phrase, or idea which, theoretically, does not vary based on interpretive position. Contrast with connotation.

description

a rhetorical mode that emphasizes eye-catching, specific, and vivid portrayal of a subject. Often integrates imagery and thick description to this end.

dialogue

a communication between two or more people. Can include any mode of communication, including speech, texting, e-mail, Facebook post, body language, etc.

diegetic gap

from "diegesis," the temporal distance between a first-person narrator narrating and the same person acting in the plot events. I.e., the space between author-as-author and author-as-character.

direct quote

the verbatim use of another author's words. Can be used as evidence to support your claim, or as language to analyze/close-read to demonstrate an interpretation or insight.

doubter

a posture from which to read; reader makes efforts to challenge, critique, or undermine the text they encounter.

dynamic character

a character who noticeably changes within the scope of a narrative, typically as a result of the plot events and/or other characters. Contrast with static character.

epiphany

a character's sudden realization of a personal or universal truth. See dynamic character.

Essay

a medium, typically nonfiction, by which an author can achieve a variety of purposes. Popularized by Michel de Montaigne as a method of discovery of knowledge: in the original French, "essay" is a verb that means "to try; to test; to explore; to attempt to understand."

ethnography

a study of a particular culture, subculture, or group of people. Uses thick description to explore a place and its associated culture.

ethos

a rhetorical appeal based on authority, credibility, or expertise.

evidence

a part or combination of parts that lends support or proof to an arguable topic, idea, or interpretation.

figurative language

language which implies a meaning that is not to be taken literally. Common examples include metaphor, simile, personification, onomatopoeia, and hyperbole.

flat character

a character who is minimally detailed, only briefly sketched or named. Generally less central to the events and relationships portrayed in a narrative. Contrast with round character.

Fluff

uneconomical writing: filler language or unnecessarily wordy phrasing. Although fluff occurs in a variety of ways, it can be generally defined as words, phrases, sentences, or paragraphs that do not work hard to help you achieve your rhetorical purpose.

genre

a specific category, subcategory, style, form, or medium (or combination of the above) of rhetoric. A genre may have a "generic imperative," which is an expectation or set of expectations an audience holds for a particular genre of rhetoric; the foundational assumptions that particular genres carry.

imagery

sensory language; literal or figurative language that appeals to an audience's imagined sense of sight, sound, smell, touch, or taste.

interpretation

the process of consuming rhetoric to create meaning. "An interpretation" refers to a specific meaning we build as we encounter a text, focusing on certain ideas, language, or patterns.

interpretive position

the unique position from which each of us interprets a text—necessarily different for all people at any given time, and often different for the same person at different times in their life.

iterative

literally, a repetition within a process. Analysis is iterative because it requires repeated critical encounters with a text.

kairos

the setting (time and place) or atmosphere in which an argument is actionable or ideal. Consider alongside "occasion."

learning community

a network of learners and teachers, each equipped and empowered to provide support through horizontal power relations. Values diversity insofar as it encourages growth and perspective, but also inclusivity. Also, a community that learns by adapting to its unique needs and advantages.

lens

a metaphor for the conceptual framework a reader applies to an analysis. A "lens" brings certain elements into focus, allowing the reader to attend to specific parts of a text to develop an interpretation.

logical fallacy

a line of logical reasoning which follows a pattern of that makes an error in its basic structure. For example, Kanye West is on TV; Animal Planet is on TV. Therefore, Kanye West is on Animal Planet.

logos

a rhetorical appeal to logical reasoning.

medium

the channel, technology, or form through which rhetoric is

constructed and communicated. Different rhetorical situations value different media, and different media value different kinds of rhetoric.

Metacognition

literally, "thinking about thinking." May also include how thinking evolves and reflection on growth.

mode

the style and techniques employed by of a piece of rhetoric to achieve its purpose. Different rhetorical situations value different modes, and different modes value different kinds of rhetoric. Compare to genre.

mood

the emotional dimension which a reader experiences while encountering a text. Compare with tone.

motif

a recurring image or phrase that helps convey a theme. Similar to a symbol, but the relationship between symbol and symbolized is more one-to-one than between motif and theme.

multimedia / multigenre

a term describing a text that combines more than one media and/or more than one genre (e.g., an essay with embedded images; a portfolio with essays, poetry, and comic strips; a mixtape with song reviews).

multipartial

a neologism from 'impartial,' refers to occupying and appreciating a variety of perspectives rather than pretending to have no perspective. Rather than unbiased or neutral,

multipartial writers are balanced, acknowledging and respecting many different ideas.

narration

a rhetorical mode involving the construction and relation of stories. Typically integrates description as a technique.

narrative pacing

the speed with which a story progresses through plot events. Can be influenced by reflective and descriptive writing.

narrative scope

the boundaries of a narrative in time, space, perspective, and focus.

narrative sequence

the order of events included in a narrative.

occasion

the sociohistorical circumstances that prompt the production of a piece of rhetoric, determined by personal experiences, current events, language, and culture. Every text has an occasion.

paraphrase

author reiterates a main idea, argument, or detail of a text in their own words without drastically altering the length of the passage(s) they paraphrase. Contrast with summary.

pathos

a rhetorical appeal to emotion.

pattern

a notable sequence; structure or shape; recurring image, word, or phrase found in a piece of rhetoric.

plot

the events included within the scope of a narrative.

point-of-view

the perspective from which a story is told, determining both grammar (pronouns) and perspective (speaker's awareness of events, thoughts, and circumstances).

primacy effect

a psychological effect experienced by most audiences: the opening statements of a text are more memorable than much of the content because they leave a 'first impression' in the audience's memory. Contrast with recency effect.

process

a complex and multifaceted sequence that results in a product. As applied in "writing process," non-linear and iterative. Contrast with product.

product

the end result of a creative process. Often shows little evidence of the process that created it.

purpose

the intended result of a piece of rhetoric. Can be stated using an infinitive verb phrase ("to entertain," "to persuade," "to explain"). Every text has at least one purpose, sometimes declared explicitly, and other times implied or hidden.

recency effect

a psychological effect experienced by most audiences: the concluding statements of a text are more memorable than much of the content because they are more recent in the audience's memory. Contrast with primacy effect.

reference

a connection a text makes to another text. Can be explicit or implicit; might include allusion, allegory, quotation, or parody. Referencing text adopts some characteristics of the referenced text.

reflection

a rhetorical gesture by which an author looks back, through the diegetic gap, to demonstrate knowledge or understanding gained from the subject on which they are reflecting. May also include consideration of the impact of that past subject on the author's future—"Looking back in order to look forward."

response

a mode of writing that values the reader's experience of and reactions to a text.

Revision

the iterative process of changing a piece of writing. Literally, re-vision: seeing your writing with "fresh eyes" in order to improve it. Includes changes on Global, Local, and Proofreading levels. Changes might include:

rewriting (trying again, perhaps from a different angle or with a different focus)

adding (new information, new ideas, new evidence)

subtracting (unrelated ideas, redundant information, fluff)

rearranging (finding more effective vectors or sequences of organization)

switching out (changing words or phrases, substituting different evidence)

mechanical clean-up (standardizing punctuation, grammar, or formatting)

rhetoric

a combination of textual strategies designed to do something to someone. In other words, 'rhetoric' refers to language, video, images, or other symbols (or some combination of these) that informs, entertains, persuades, compels, or otherwise impacts an audience.

rhetorical appeal

a means by which a writer or speaker connects with their audience to achieve their purpose. Most commonly refers to logos, pathos, and ethos.

rhetorical situation

the circumstances in which rhetoric is produced, understood using the constituent elements of subject, occasion, audience, and purpose. Each element of the rhetorical situation carries assumptions and imperatives about the kind of rhetoric that will be well received. Rhetorical situation will also influence mode and medium.

Rogerian argument

a mode of argument by which an author seeks compromise by bringing different perspectives on an issue into conversation. Acknowledges that no one perspective is absolutely and exclusively 'right'; values disagreement in order to make moral, political, and practical decisions.

round character

a character who is thoroughly characterized and dimensional, detailed with attentive description of their traits and behaviors. Contrast with flat character.

signpost

a phrase or sentence that directs your reader. It can help you make connections, guide your reader's interpretation, ease transitions, and re-orient you to your thesis. Also known as a "signal phrase."

SQ3R

an engaged reading strategy to improve comprehension and interrupt projection. Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review.

static character

a character who remains the same throughout the narrative. Contrast with dynamic character.

subject

the topic, focus, argument, or idea explored in a text

summary

a rhetorical mode in which an author reiterates the main ideas, arguments, and details of a text in their own words, condensing a longer text into a smaller version. Contrast with paraphrase.

syllogism

a line of logical reasoning similar to the transitive property (If a=b and b=c, then a=c). For example, All humans need oxygen; Kanye West is a human. Therefore, Kanye West needs oxygen.

symbol

an artifact (usually something concrete) that stands in for (represents) something else (often something abstract).

synthesis

a cognitive and rhetorical process by which an author brings together parts of a larger whole to create a unique new product. Examples of synthesis might include an analytical essay, found poetry, or a mashup/remix.

text

any artifact through which a message is communicated. Can be written or spoken; digital, printed, or undocumented; video, image, or language. Every text is rhetorical in nature. See rhetoric.

text wrestling

a rhetorical mode in which an author analyzes a text using close reading, then presents an interpretation supported by evidence from the text.

the naysayer's voice

a voice that disagrees with the writer or speaker included within the text itself. Can be literal or imaginary. Helps author respond to criticism, transition between ideas, and manage argumentation.

Thesis (statement)

a 1-3 sentence statement outlining the main insight(s), argument(s), or concern(s) of an essay; not necessary in every rhetorical situation; typically found at the beginning of an essay, though sometimes embedded later in the paper. Also referred to as a "So what?" statement.

thick description

economical and deliberate language which attempts to capture complex subjects (like cultures, people, or environments) in written or spoken language. Coined by anthropologists Clifford Geertz and Gilbert Ryle.

tone

the emotional register of the text. Compare with mood.

use-value

the degree to which a text is usable for your specific project. A source is not inherently good or bad, but rather useful or not useful. Use-value is influenced by many factors, including credibility. See credibility and CRAAP Test.

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