

Jump Start!

ENGLISH



Writing Process

invention
drafting
revision

Grammar

active voice
agreement
sentence structure

Research

strategies
citation
plagiarism

College Writing

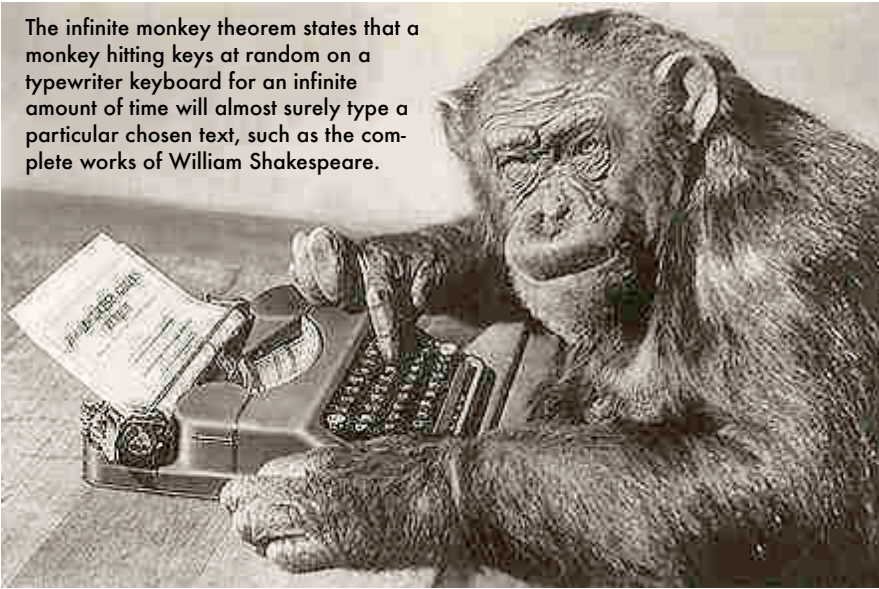
audience
argument
thesis statements
outlines
persuasive essays

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 2008

This handbook was created by Courtney S. Danforth for the 2008 session of English Jump Start! at USC Sumter. Thanks to Purdue, UNC, the Council of Writing Program Administrators, and other resources for their very generous contributions to this document.

The infinite monkey theorem states that a monkey hitting keys at random on a typewriter keyboard for an infinite amount of time will almost surely type a particular chosen text, such as the complete works of William Shakespeare.



Pre-writing

You might call this “planning” or “brainstorming” or “invention,” but pre-writing is all the stuff you do before you sit down to write a paper. It’s how you choose a topic, where you find out what other people think about the topic, when you determine your evidence, and when you consider your audience. You can do this formally, dedicating small chunks of time to specific tasks, or you can do it informally, avoiding the assignment but thinking about it all the time for a few days before you write.

For most writers, it’s probably best to do some formal pre-writing to make sure you’re doing it thoroughly. Plan to spend about 50% of your time and energy on pre-writing.

Drafting

Drafting is what many people think of as “writing.” It is usually the most daunting part of a writing assignment. Staring at that big blank page is not a good feeling.

However, drafting should be so much easier. Ideally, it should be little more than stringing ideas into sentences and paragraphs. If it’s harder than that, there’s a good chance you’re trying to do pre-writing, drafting, and revision all at the same time, and that will usually end up costing rather than saving time. Try to write about 50% more than you think you need so you won’t have to re-draft once you start revising. Spend about 10% of your time drafting.

Revision

Revision includes many of the same tasks as pre-writing but is evaluative rather than exploratory in nature. During revision, you want to determine whether your draft does what you wanted it to, whether it is complete, and whether it is effective. Revising includes refining your thesis, evaluating your evidence, re-structuring your paragraphs or sections, and eliminating points that don’t support your argument. Revision is not the time to add new material—it’s the time to take away stuff that does not fit. Revision should take about 30% of your writing time.

Editing

Editing is about checking grammar and spelling and layout and other small stuff. During editing, you might eliminate passive voice, re-word awkward phrasing, address agreement problems, eliminate redundancies, and improve transitions. Spend 10% of your time editing your paper before you turn it in.

Writing Process

Almost no writer will write exactly the same way as another one. Some writers like to type, others prefer paper & pen. Some work at night and others work before breakfast. However, all writers work through some kind of a process when producing a piece of writing.

You don’t have to follow the same process as anyone else, but think about your process, and try a variety of techniques until you find a process that works for you. Different processes can work for different writers on different assignments at different times.



Techniques

- **Brainstorming:** Set yourself a time limit (5-10 minutes) and get ready to write. List every word or phrase you can think of that's related to your topic. Write them all down. Don't edit! Don't make lists. This method often works best if you write in more than one direction on your paper, but you can also brainstorm in a word processor or other software if you prefer. Keep going for the entire time allotted without stopping. Review, revise, augment, and edit your list once time is up.
- **Freewriting:** Set yourself a time limit (10-15 minutes) and get ready to write. Write for the entire time limit without stopping. Don't worry about spelling, grammar, or even complete sentences. When time is up, look back over your work and circle/highlight/underline words or phrases that you think are particularly interesting or worthwhile.
- **Freespeaking:** Freespeaking is very similar to freewriting. Set a time limit (10-15 minutes) and record yourself on your computer. Talk through your subject for the entire time then listen to your freespeak and pull out words or phrases you want to work into your paper.
- **Chatting:** Recruit a friend or two and talk through your topic for a set time limit (15-20 minutes). Ask one of your friends to take notes for you while you talk. Look through those notes and select ideas that seemed to build in conversation. This method works even better with Instant Messaging software because then nobody has to take notes!
- **Loopstorming:** For 5 minutes, freewrite on your topic. At the end of 5 minutes, circle the most interesting idea you wrote. Set another 5 minute limit then freewrite on the new idea. Repeat this process at least 5 times, or until you have focused in on an interesting angle on or refinement of your original topic.
- **Cluster Charting:** Write your topic in the middle of a blank sheet of paper (or the middle of your software window) and draw a circle around it. In a circle around that idea, make circles of the main concepts that relate to the main idea. Around the secondary circles, keep making circles until you've charted all the details and ideas you have about your topic. Use your chart to draw connections between ideas and help organize your paper.

Invention

Even professional writers complain that the hardest part of writing is getting started! Facing a blank page and knowing that you have to fill five more is daunting, so you don't want to think about that at first.

There are many different techniques for invention. Try a variety of methods to see which are most helpful to you. You will probably find it most helpful if you use 4-6 of these activities before you start "writing" your paper. Most of these activities take 5-30 minutes, and you can do them in short bursts instead of trying to do a whole paper in one long 5 hour session. These prewriting techniques are a necessary part of the writing process.

Invention

- **Reporting:** Become a temporary journalist and answer basic questions about your topic. Are one or two of your answers more interesting or longer than the others? These may give you a clue about a direction for your paper.
 - Who?
 - What?
 - When?
 - Where?
 - Why?
 - How?
 - Who cares?
- **Philosophizing:** Aristotle taught his students to ask different questions to start working on their “common topics.” Answer these questions and see which answers are most interesting or come to you the easiest.
 - How does the dictionary define ____?
 - What parts can ____ be divided into?
 - Does ____ mean something now that it didn't years ago? If so, what?
 - What are some concrete examples of ____?
 - What is ____ similar to? What is ____ different from?
 - What causes ____? What are the effects of ____?
 - What is the purpose of ____?
 - What have I heard people say about ____?
 - If ____ starts, what makes it end?
- **Cubing:** Look at your topic from six different points of view (as though it is a cube).
 - Describe (shape, size).
 - Compare (What's it like?).
 - Associate (What does it remind you of?).
 - Analyze (What are its parts and how do they go together?).
 - Apply (How is it used? What is its purpose?).
- **Hunting/Gathering:** Start searching for other people's ideas about your topic. Search for images and phrases related to your topic and gather them in a single document. This process may feel like, but is NOT the same as doing the research part of your paper. This is a good time to use Google and Wikipedia. Use this method to skim big ideas, not to find out new information. Arrange your collected materials into groups.
- **Outlining:** Yes, a formal outline with roman numerals and everything! Once you've generated some ideas and are beginning to see how different ideas relate to each other and to your main topic, write a formal outline for your paper.

Real World Revising

- Did you do any pre-writing when you wrote your essay on the first day? Did you have trouble getting started and knowing where you were going?
- Try out 3-4 of these invention methods for your paper now. Include both information you originally put in your paper and new material you discover through pre-writing.
- Make a list of information you want to include in your essay.



Revision

Revision is what turns good writing into great writing. It's not about checking commas—it's about rethinking your whole argument, and making sure you're really saying what you want to say. It's a meticulous process of examining and adjusting your writing. Revision is "post-writing." It's just as important a part of the process as pre-writing is and it you can use some of the same techniques.

The really good news, is that, like pre-writing, revision is easily done in small chunks—you do not have to chain yourself to your computer all night. Instead, you can plan several 15-30 minute chunks of time to get revision done well.

Perform Your Paper

- Professional academics write papers to read at regional, national, and international conferences. The paper isn't meant to be read by a teacher, but, rather, to be heard by 100 colleagues. Most people spend more time talking than writing; often, our ears are more skilled at finding certain kinds of issues than our eyes are. It is **ESSENTIAL** that you read your paper out loud as part of your revision process. You can read it to your mom or to your best friend or to your dog or to your webcam, but read it to someone. They might not be able to help you with commas, but you'll find errors and oddities yourself just by reading out loud.
- Read your paper backwards. Start with the conclusion and work your way up to the introduction. When you hear parts of the paper in an unexpected order, it can help you find stuff you wouldn't otherwise have noticed. You can try this sentence by sentence too.
- Count on reading your paper aloud several times, maybe to different people.

Structure

- Locate the topic sentence in each of your paragraphs. Do they all pertain to your thesis? If not, do those paragraphs really belong in the paper? Do you need to adjust your thesis?
- Are your paragraphs in the right order? Would it be better if you shifted them around any?
- Does each paragraph have a topic sentence? If not, that's gonna be a problem...
- Are your sentences varied or do they all sound the same? A good paper has some short sentences and some long ones, some simple and some complicated.
- Do you have enough evidence to support each of your points? Do you have more evidence on some points and none on others? Balance it out.

Circle Game

While you're reading your paper out loud or to yourself, backwards or forwards, identify specific characteristics you want to read for. Circle them, and when you're done reading, revise your draft to make improvements. Do not try to circle more than one thing each time you read through--you'll get confused and miss stuff.

- **To Be or NOT:** circle all the conjugations of the verb "to be" (being, was, is, am, are, will be, has been, etc.). When you're done, look at all the circles and see if they represent passive voice. If so, revise for active voice.

- **Adverbs:** circle all the adverbs (words that modify a verb, usually end in -ly, such as quickly, mistakenly, horribly). Often, adverbs are redundant and can be eliminated.
- **Fancy-shmancy:** circle words that you don't really know. If you can't pronounce a word, and you don't regularly use it, don't put it in your paper. Using a thesaurus and trying to improve your vocabulary are great--but if a word's meaning is not quite what you think it is, your audience will notice. It's better to say something cool in simple language than it is to say something dull with fancy words.

Start and Finish

- Is your thesis clear, complete, and obvious? If your reader can't find your thesis, he or she will feel lost when reading. The easier your paper is to read, the more likely your reader is going to like what you have to say.
- Is your argument controversial? If not, then why would anyone want to read your paper?! It's not a book report.
- Is your introduction interesting enough to get your reader interested?
- Does your conclusion do anything besides summarize? Does the last sentence leave the reader hanging? Is there a clear ending or does it sound more like you got bored and just stopped writing?
- Have you made at least one suggestion for what should be done next on your topic?

Transitions

- Are there good transitions from one sentence to another?
- What about from one paragraph to the next?
- Do all your ideas flow well or is paper chunky and stilted?
- Look at the page on transition words for help if you're stumped.

Last Things Last

- Make sure you've cited everything that needs citing and that your works cited has the proper punctuation and format.
- Have you used any contractions (don't, can't weren't)? It's usually best to avoid contractions in formal writing.
- How's your spelling?
- Have you used appropriate verb tenses? Have you switched tenses by mistake?
- How's your punctuation?
- Do you have a good title?
- Is everything formatted according to guidelines?

Revision

Tips

- Do not try to revise right after you've finished drafting. You should wait several hours, ideally overnight, before you start. Revision works best if you've "forgotten" most of what you were writing about.
- Don't add, just subtract! If you're still adding material during the revision part of your writing process, you should think about spending more time on pre-writing.
- It's helpful to have a revision partner. If you can pair up with a classmate who's writing the same assignment, great! If you can't do that, ask your family or friends for help. Many colleges have writing tutors available to help.



Transitions

Use transition words to guide your reader from one idea to another, from one sentence to the next, and between paragraphs. Transitions make your paper easier to read, which makes your reader more inclined to agree with your message.

Addition

also, again, besides, furthermore, in addition, likewise, moreover, similarly

Consequence

as a result, consequently, otherwise, subsequently, therefore, thus, thereupon

Generalizing

for the most part, generally, ordinarily, usually

Exemplifying

chiefly, especially, for instance, in particular, particularly, including, specifically

Illustration

for example, for instance, for one thing, in this case

Emphasis

above all, chiefly, especially, particularly, singularly

Similarity

comparatively, likewise, moreover, together with

Exception

aside from, besides, except, excluding, other than, outside of

Restatement

in other words, namely, that is to say, in short, in brief, to put it differently

Contrast and Comparison

conversely, instead, likewise, on the contrary, rather, similarly, yet, but, however, still, nevertheless, in contrast

Sequence

first, to begin with, in the first place, at the same time, for now, for the time being, the next step, in time, later on, meanwhile, next, then, soon, the meantime, later, while, earlier, simultaneously, afterward, in conclusion

Summarizing

after all, all things considered, briefly, in any event, in brief, in conclusion, in short, in summary, to summarize, finally

Diversion

by the way, incidentally



Whatever the reason, if you sound like you don't know what you're doing, you're not going to get an A on your writing.

Sometimes the passive voice sneaks in, even when you do say who did something. For example,

The Scarlet Letter was written by the impoverished Nathaniel Hawthorne.

In this sentence, all the necessary information is there, so there's nothing wrong, exactly, but still consider revising.

Nathaniel Hawthorne, impoverished civil servant, eventually wrote The Scarlet Letter.

In most circumstances, the second version will be the better sentence. Here's why:

1. the emphasis is placed on the author instead of on the book,
2. revising to active voice gives me room to include an additional idea--Hawthorne's job,
3. the sentence has some "motion" or "life" to it in revision.

If you remember your 6th grade grammar, you'll know the terms "subject", "verb", and "object". Sound familiar? In a sentence, the subject is the thing that's doing something, the verb is the thing getting done, and the object is the thing having something done to it.

Passive voice happens when a writer takes the object of an action and makes it the subject of a sentence. It is not grammatically wrong, but it is stylistically suspect. Generally, your reader will prefer an active voice construction.

Examples

- **Passive:** Most military strategies are best understood as the products of post-Freudian historicism.
- **Active:** Though established as a discipline of social science, the best critics now evaluate military strategies in a post-Freudian, historicist model.
- **Passive:** The pseudomonas aeruginosa was not affected by the application of salt.
- **Active:** We achieved no result through application of salt to pseudomonas aeuginosa.
- **Passive:** A meeting of the membership subcommittee will be held at 8:30 on Thursday.
- **Active:** The membership subcommittee will hold a meeting at 8:30 on Thursday.

Active Voice

Passive voice can be a wonderful thing; it's how you avoid responsibility for an action. Your little brother might say "The lamp broke" instead of "I broke the lamp" so he won't be punished.

However, in academic writing, it's very important to say who is responsible for what. If you don't say who did something, your reader will suspect that you don't know: you're dumb or you're underprepared (didn't do your research? trying to make the word limit? just want to sound fancy?).

Identifying Passive Voice

1. Look for a phrase that starts with “by” and that includes whomever did the action. In the Scarlet Letter example, the passive sentence says “by the impoverished Nathaniel Hawthorne.”
2. Look for a form of the verb “to be”. Not every “to be” indicates passive voice, but passive voice always includes a “to be.”
 - are
 - is
 - was
 - will be
 - have been
 - can be

Forbidden?

Passive voice is not totally forbidden. For example, academic papers in science fields customarily use the passive voice. Other than science, passive voice is useful when the agent of an action is less important than the action itself. However, mastering active voice and sticking with it is a very safe policy to adopt for most of the college and professional writing that most people do.

Practice

In the sentences below, identify the passive voice “trigger” words (see “Identifying Passive Voice”, above). Circle the trigger(s) and revise the sentence to active voice. Try to add one new idea to the sentence like I did with the Scarlet Letter example.

1. The clown was bitten by a dog.
2. The song will be performed by a replacement drummer tomorrow.
3. Several benefit concerts have already been held to raise money for the girl’s hospital bills.
4. Watching the world roll by the car window is way more boring than watching a movie.
5. Curfew rules were ignored by more than half of prom attendees.
6. The grapes for the wine were crushed by the leaping guinea pig.
7. Your car has been stolen.
8. A decision on changing schedules is being considered by the manager.
9. After four years, the seniors will have been exhausted by their hard work and will have earned a relaxing break.
10. The essays are being read by a committee of teachers to determine students’ placement.

Real World Revising

- Go through your paper and find every “by.” One by one, determine whether these words indicate a passive voice sentence; you’ll know it’s passive if the “by” starts a phrase that says who did the sentence’s action. If it’s passive, rewrite it.
- Go through your paper and circle all the “to be” verbs. Not every “to be” indicates passive voice, but passive voice always includes a “to be”. Determine whether each of your circles indicates passive voice and revise if necessary.
- If you’re having trouble revising to active voice, think about why you wrote in in passive voice to begin with. Are you sure you know what you’re talking about? Did you do enough research? Is your argument well-structured? What is the purpose of the sentence you’re revising? If you don’t know why the sentence is there, you may have a bigger problem than passive voice!

Active Voice



Using Tenses

Here are guidelines on when to use various tenses.

Use the present tense to make generalizations about your topic or the views of scholars.

- * The two Indus artifacts provide insight into ancient Hindu culture.
- * Marxist historians argue that class conflict shapes political affairs.
- * At the end of the chorus, the sopranos repeat the main theme.

Use the present tense to cite an author or another source (except in science writing, where past tense is used; see below).

- * The Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 reflects the idealism of the Second World War.
- * The historian Donna Harsch states that "Social Democrats tried to prevent the triumph of Nazism in order to save the republic and democracy" (3).

Use the past tense to describe actions or states of being that occurred exclusively in the past.

- * Hemingway drew on his experiences in World War I in constructing the character of Jake Barnes.
- * We completed the interviews in January, 2001.

Sometimes you use both present and past tense to show shifts between time relationships. Use present tense for those ideas/observations that are considered timeless and past tense for actions occurring in the past.

- * The Padshahnama is an ancient manuscript owned by the Royal Library at Windsor Castle. This manuscript details the history of Shah-Jahan, the Muslim ruler who commissioned the building of the Taj Mahal (Webb et al. 134).
- * Flynn (1999) concluded that high school students are more likely to smoke cigarettes if they have a parent who smokes.
- * Simon (2000) observed that neutered cats spend less time stalking their prey.

Discipline-Specific

Some disciplines have special situations or special traditions of verb tenses.

Writing About Literature

Use the present tense to describe fictional events that occur in the text.

- * In Milton's Paradise Lost, Satan tempts Eve in the form of a serpent.
- * Voltaire's Candide encounters numerous misfortunes throughout his travels.

Tense

Verb tenses tell a reader about time and mood in your writing. Inconsistent tense can cause confusion and tension. Generally, a writer uses one primary tense for an entire paper, and generally that tense is either simple present (I think) or simple past (they went). You can indicate any changes in time or mood by temporarily changing from the primary tense inside your paper. If there's no change in time or mood, but you see a tense shift, there's a problem.

If you don't know your plu-perfect indicative from a hole in the ground, that's okay-- just think about whether your verb tenses are putting your information in the right sequence.

The logic and practice of the discipline for which you write determine verb tense. If you have questions about tense or other writing concerns, check with the professor who gave the assignment.

Also use the present tense to report your interpretations and the interpretations of other sources.

- * Odysseus represents the archetypal epic hero.
- * Flanagan suggests that Satan is the protagonist of Paradise Lost.

Use the past tense to explain historical context or elements of the author's life that occurred exclusively in the past.

- * Hemingway drew on his experiences in World War I in constructing the character of Jake Barnes.

Use both present and past tense when combining observations about fictional events from the text (present tense) with factual information (past tense).

- * James Joyce, who grew up in the Catholic faith, draws on church doctrine to illuminate the roots of Stephen Dedalus' guilt.
- * In Les Belles Images, Simone de Beauvoir accurately portrays the complexities of a marriage even though she never married in her lifetime.

Use the present perfect tense to describe an event that occurs in the text previous to the principal event you are describing.

- * The governess questions the two children because she believes they have seen the ghosts.
- * Convinced that Desdemona has been unfaithful to him, Othello strangles her.

Use the past tense when referring to an event occurring before the story begins.

- * In the opening scenes of Hamlet, the men are visited by the ghost of Hamlet's father, whom Claudius murdered.

Writing for Science

Most of the time, use past tense when writing for science. Use past tense to discuss completed studies and experiments.

- * We extracted tannins from the leaves by bringing them to a boil in 50% methanol.
- * We hypothesized that adults would remember more items than children.

Use past tense when referring to information from outside sources. (Look out! Science is not like literature here!)

- * Paine (1966) argued that predators and parasites are more abundant in the tropics than elsewhere.
- * Kerr (1993) related the frequency of web-decorating behavior with the presence of birds on different Pacific islands.

As in writing for other disciplines, use present tense in science writing when describing an idea or fact that is still true in the present.

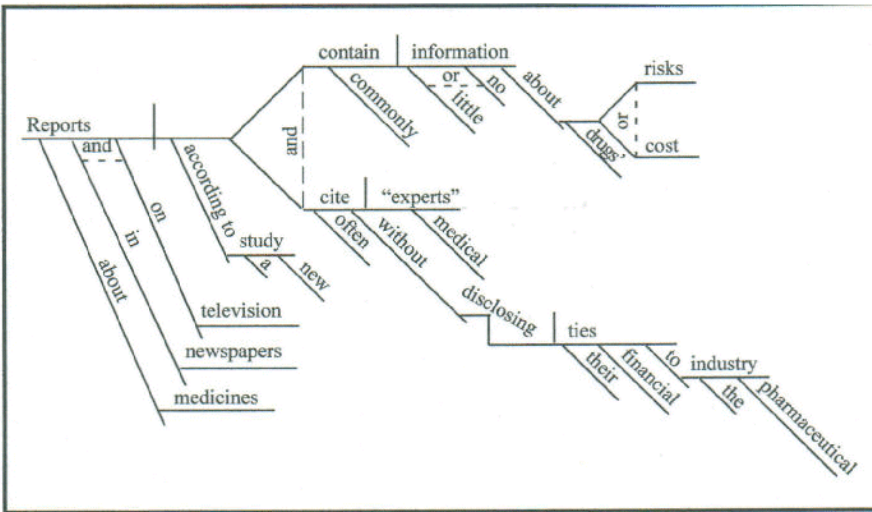
- * Genetic information is encoded in the sequence of nucleotides on DNA.
- * Previous research showed that children confuse the source of their memories more often than adults (Lindsey et al. 1991).

Also use present tense in science writing when the idea is the subject of the sentence and the citation remains fully in parentheses.

- * Sexual dimorphism in body size is common among butterflies (Singer 1982).

Real World Revising

- Look through your entire paper and find every citation you've made. In these sentences, what tense have you used to talk about the citation? Is your paper for a scientific audience? If not, the primary tense of that sentence should probably be present.
- Circle every verb in your third and fifth paragraphs. Read these paragraphs out loud, paying special attention to how those verbs are working. Are they in the right tense? Make any adjustments necessary.



Sentence Structure

Your message isn't the only thing that keeps your reader paying attention to your paper. Your style and the forms you use to convey your message are also important. In addition to word selection and transitions and overall structure, you should also pay attention to the structure of your sentences.

Adding sentence variety to prose can give it life and rhythm. Too many sentences with the same structure and length can grow monotonous for readers. Varying sentence style and structure can also reduce repetition and add emphasis.

It's helpful to have a revision partner. If you can pair up with a classmate who's writing the same assignment, great! If you can't do that, ask your family or friends for help. Many colleges have writing tutors available to help.

Sentence Parts

Independent Clause: a group of words that contains a subject and verb and expresses a complete thought

The most basic English sentence is made of an "independent clause." An independent clause includes two parts: a subject and a predicate. The subject is the person or thing that's doing something. The predicate is what's going on.

Example: Sarah appeared

[Sarah] is the subject and [appeared] is the predicate.

Practice

Underline the subject and [bracket] the predicate.

1. the new movie was a huge disappointment
2. Mom finally quit her horrible job today
3. the article by that brilliant professor can be seen in this month's copy of the journal

Dependent Clause: A dependent clause is a group of words that contains a subject and verb but does not express a complete thought.

A "dependent clause" cannot usually function by itself; it needs to be attached to an independent clause. There are all kinds of dependent clauses (noun clauses, adverbial clauses, adjective clauses, etc.). You don't have to know which kind of dependent clause you're dealing with, but it's important that you recognize when one isn't working right.

Example: though she tried hard not to

Example: while her waitress poured another cup

Example: because the spell had worn off and the time had come

Often, dependent clauses begin with one of these trigger words: after, although, as, as if, because, before, even if, even though, if, in order to, since, though, unless, until, whatever, when, whenever, whether, and while.

Practice

Circle the trigger word, underline the subject and [bracket] the predicate.

4. while the nurse prepared the required instruments
5. even though Kai had already passed the exam
6. unless you want to accept that consequence

Practice

Identify whether each example is an independent or dependent clause.

7. _____ whether you want to or not
8. _____ since broccoli and lizards fell from the sky

9. _____ the successful Beatrice wished
10. _____ when there are so many ugly and irritatingly, constantly broken gutters
11. _____ unless you quickly get out of the room
12. _____ before JR could catch up
13. _____ however they want to get there
14. _____ who couldn't multiply for her entire career
15. _____ while they looked for a place to camp
16. _____ the firefighters got ready to play

Sentence Types

An independent clause can be a complete sentence. A writer combines independent and dependent clauses in different combinations to create the four main types of English sentence. Here are the four types:

- **Simple sentence:** A sentence with one independent clause and no dependent clauses.
 - China's Han Dynasty marked an official recognition of Confucianism.
- **Compound Sentence:** A sentence with multiple independent clauses but no dependent clauses.
 - The Freedom Riders departed on May 4, 1961, and they were determined to travel through many southern states.
- **Complex Sentence:** A sentence with one independent clause and at least one dependent clause
 - While all of his paintings are fascinating, Hieronymus Bosch's triptychs, full of mayhem and madness, are the real highlight of his art.
- **Complex-Compound Sentence:** A sentence with multiple independent clauses and at least one dependent clause.
 - With her reputation on the line, Peggy played against a fierce opponent at the Scrabble competition, and overcoming nerve-racking competition, she won the game with one well-placed word.

Practice

Identify which type of sentence each of these sentences is.

17. My aunt enjoyed taking the hayride with you.
18. After Mary added up all the sales, she discovered that the lemonade stand was 32 cents short
19. Catch-22 is widely regarded as Joseph Heller's best novel, and because Heller served in World War II, which the novel satirizes, the zany but savage wit of the novel packs an extra punch.
20. The clown frightened the little girl, and she ran off screaming when she saw it.

Real World Revising

- Look at the third sentence in each paragraph of your essay. Determine which of the four types each of those sentences is. Are they all the same type? Do you have more of one type than the others? If so, revise some of the sentences to shake up your paper a little.
- Identify the sentence type of each sentence in your fourth paragraph. How many of each sentence type did you use? Does this information represent a varied enough style to keep your reader interested? Revise the sentence types of some of the sentences in that paragraph.



Write Questions

What questions do you want to answer with your research? Imagine what questions your audience will have about the topic and write them down.

Who?

Who could answer the questions you listed? Once you have an idea who can answer the questions, you'll have a better idea of where to look in your research.

Think about who the audience is for your paper. Who are you trying to convince? What sources will be most likely to convince them to agree with your argument?

Divide and Conquer

Look at the terms you've come up. Divide them into the kinds of categories that search tools use: authors, titles, keywords, dates, etc. This step will save you time once you get going on the actual research.

Internet vs. Library

If you're used to finding everything you need on the Internet, you'll need to change your strategy for college writing. Academic writing is largely based on peer-reviewed publications, usually in academic journals. Instead of using Google, you'll probably need to go through the library's web portal. The library purchases thousands of academic journals, newspapers, and other electronic materials for students to use each year. There's still a role for popular publications in academic research, of course, but the sooner you're familiar with academic library research, the easier it will be for you to get your work done.

Search Strategies

If you have spent any time at all on the Internet, you're probably already a skilled researcher. You can apply many of those skills when you do research for school. However, in extra-curricular research, it's common to have less rigorous methods and evaluation criteria than you need to write a paper. You'll also use some different tools to get to the information you want.

When you're doing research for school, the biggest hazard is getting sources that don't really support the project you're working on. There are so many resources available, you must be discriminating in your choices.

Just like you need a plan before you start writing, your research will go better if you have a plan for that too. Your prewriting will help you figure out some strategies for doing your research, but sometimes you may need to do "pre-searching" too--prework for the research.

Evaluating Resources

Don't believe everything you read! You already know that, but it's critical to remember when you're researching for school. Here are some tips for evaluating resources:

- Critical Mass: are there enough resources on the topic? do they represent multiple points-of-view on the topic?
- Continuity: are there both primary and secondary resources on the issue?
 - Primary Resources: documents created at the same time as the events they describe (newspaper reports, speeches, letters, advertisements, original books)
 - Secondary Resources: retrospective documents that review previously existing events (scholarly articles, editorials, reviews)
- Date: is the date of publication appropriate for your project? do you have a mix of dates?
- Audience: what's the intended audience of your resources? what is their tone? what is their goal? what citations do they include?
- Bias: what assumptions does the author make? how are his/her conclusions drawn? does he or she have a goal beyond proving his or her argument?
- Connectivity: does the resource lead you to other materials or ideas? is there a substantial bibliography? have you seen some of the bibliography in your other resources?

Real World Revising

- Pull out your pre-writing and look for words that come up again and again. Circle them. Use these to help you think of synonyms, antonyms, and related phrases that you can use as search terms. Make a list of terms you'll try, and rank them according to how effective you expect them to be. Are they narrow enough? Too narrow?
- Write a list of 10 questions you want to answer in your paper and who you think could answer them.
- Choose one question and one search term to research. Perform each search in Google and through the library's resources.
- Select one resource from each of your searches (4 total) and write the citation in MLA format.
- After each citation, write a paragraph evaluating the resource

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA CITATION NO. 77-000001-05

TRAFFIC CITATION

1. Address of Registered Owner: 123 E. UNION ST. WEST CHESTER, PA 19382

2. Driver License: 123-45678

3. Defendant Name: JANE A. DOE

4. Vehicle: 123 MAIN STREET ANYTOWN PA 12345

5. Make: HONDA

6. Model: SON

7. Year: 1982

8. Color: RED

9. Nature of Offense: [241] Exceeding Speed Limit

10. Location: 123 E. CENTER ST. [351]

11. Date Issued: 6/5/05

12. Officer: JIMMY SMITH [48]

13. Station Address: 401 E. GAY ST. WEST CHESTER PA

14. District Justice: DISTRICT JUSTICE

NOTICE: If you plead guilty or are found guilty, points may be assessed against your driver's record. An accumulation of points may result in the suspension of your driving privilege. Also, your driving privilege will be SUSPENDED if you plead guilty or are found guilty of certain offenses under the Vehicle Code, including but not limited to driving while operating privilege is suspended or revoked, racing on highways, fleeing or attempting to elude police, driving without rights to avoid identification or arrest, accidents involving damage to attended vehicles or property, failure to stop for school bus with flashing lights, or subsequent convictions related to drivers required to be licensed.

Citation

You might be most familiar with citation from footnotes and bibliographies and trying to figure out where all that punctuation goes.

Citation is how you write about somebody else's ideas. It's recognizing a source of information or of a quoted passage. It does several things:

- tells the reader about someone else's idea or work,
- shows the reader where he or she can get more information if they want to better understand or read further on that idea,
- situates your work in a context of existing ideas,
- (when done well) establishes a respectable, trustworthy ethos for the author, who has read broadly and deeply, who is forthright, and who has taken the time to format the paper according to established guidelines.

Don't worry! Citation does not make it look like you have no ideas and nothing to say. Rather, it shows that you've explored your ideas by looking at what other people think about it. Citation is a respectful compliment to other authors. It demonstrates that you value their work, whether or not you agree with it. When you don't agree with someone else's ideas, citation will help your reader understand the boundaries between your (good) ideas and someone else's (bad) ideas.

When to Cite

Whenever you borrow or mention someone else's words or ideas, you must acknowledge their source. For example, cite:

- when you use a quotation
- when you paraphrase
- when you mention or discuss someone else's idea
- when you refer to someone else's work

Paraphrasing

To paraphrase means to state, in your own words, a summary of someone else's idea or work. For example:

Students frequently overuse direct quotation in taking notes, and as a result they overuse quotations in the final [research] paper. Probably only about 10% of your final manuscript should appear as directly quoted matter. Therefore, you should strive to limit the amount of exact transcribing of source materials while taking notes.

Lester, James D. *Writing Research Papers*. 2nd ed. (1976): 46-47.

If you wanted to include this source in your paper, you might paraphrase it like this:

In research papers students often quote excessively, failing to keep quoted material down to a desirable level. Since the problem usually originates during note taking, it is essential to minimize the material recorded verbatim (Lester 46-47).

As you can see, in this example, the name, ideas, and location of the source are all there, and the emphasis is on the ideas. Even though it's a paraphrase, and not a quotation, there is still a complete citation.

Quoting

Quotations are easy to spot because they have " " around them. There's no rule about whether quoting is better or worse than paraphrase. Quoting is sometimes easier, because you don't have to think of a way to rephrase. However, you'd also choose quotation when the source author's style and word choice and expression are part of the information you want to convey.

While incorporating other people's ideas into your writing is great, you should also make sure to focus on your own ideas. Quotations can add length to your paper when you're trying to make a page count, but if your paper is 70% quotes and 30% of your own work, your reader is going to notice and will not be impressed.

Placing a quote into your paper and citing its source is not enough, though. You have to say something about it--at least a reason why you chose to put it in your paper. At a minimum, you should write 50 words for each sentence you quote. It's important to quote only the material you really need to. If you only talk about 8 words, don't quote the whole paragraph!

Bibliography

Bibliography is the science of describing or classifying books and other resources. Rather than quoting stuff there are some types of document that emphasize citation. Sometimes you may be assigned to write a works cited, bibliography, or annotated bibliography.

- Works Cited/Consulted: a page that follows your paper and lists the bibliographic information for each source you cited or consulted within your paper.
- Bibliography: is basically the same as a works cited/consulted, but does not have to be attached to an essay.
- Annotated Bibliography: is often required as part of a research project. In addition to the bibliographic information about a source, you also write a few paragraphs summarizing the source and discussing how it applies to your research topic.

Citation Styles

Different disciplines use different citation styles. Science papers use one style, psychology another, and English yet another. Your instructors will be able to tell you which style you should use on different papers. The two styles you are most likely to encounter are:

- APA: from the American Psychological Association, used in behavioral and social sciences,
- MLA: from the Modern Language Association, used in the humanities.

Each style includes two major parts of a citation: a full bibliographic entry that goes at the end, and some way of marking the citation within the text of your paper.

Citing Sources

Though citation styles differ in the way they structure bibliographic information, each of the different styles needs approximately the same information for citation. No matter which style you use, you still need to be able to give the author's name, the date of publications, the page range, etc.

Practice

- Form teams of 3-4. Look at each of the sample resources and, as a group, write an MLA-style citation for each item.

Book with One Author

Brinkley, Alan. The Unfinished Nation. New York: Knopf, 1993.

Book with an Editor

Kreider, Jan F., ed. Handbook of Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning. Boca Raton: CRC, 1993.

Document by a Corporate Author

Accredited Standards Committee Z49. Safety in Welding, Cutting, and Allied Processes. Miami: American Welding Society, 1999.

Document by a Governmental Agency

Hawaii. Office of the Auditor. Follow-up Audit of the Child Protective Services System. Honolulu: State of Hawaii, 2003.

Piece in an Anthology

Purcell, Arthur H. "Better Waste Management Strategies Are Needed to Avert a Garbage Crisis." Garbage and Recycling: Opposing Viewpoints. Ed. Helen Cothran. San Diego: Greenhaven, 2003. 20-27.

Article in a Magazine

Dominus, Susan. "Why Pretty Isn't Pretty Enough Anymore." Glamour Jan. 2004: 136+.

Article in a Journal

Murphy, Karen L., Roseanne DePasquale, and Erin McNamara. "Meaningful Connections: Using Technology in Primary Classrooms." Young Children 58.6 (2003): 12-18.

Newspaper Article

Daranciang, Nelson. "Sex Offender Web Site Debated." Honolulu Star-Bulletin 8 Apr. 2004, night final ed.: A3.

Document from a Web Site

Sherman, Chris. "Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About URL." SearchEngineWatch. Ed. Danny Sullivan. 24 Aug. 2004. 4 Sept. 2004
<<http://searchenginewatch.com/searchday/article.php/3398511>>.

DVD

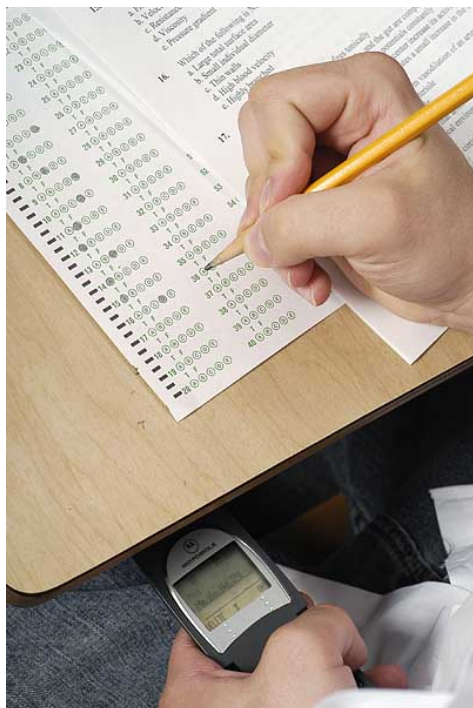
Monet: Legacy of Light. Writ., dir, and prod. Michael Gill. Videocassette. Home Vision, 1989.

Song

Nirvana. "Smells Like Teen Spirit." Nevermind. Geffen, 1991.

Citation Examples

These are examples of citations in the style of the Modern Language Association (MLA). This is the style used for most papers in the humanities.



USC's Policy

According to the USC Honor Code, “[u]se of another person’s work or ideas without proper acknowledgment of source” is a violation. The repercussions of violating this rule can range from failing the assignment to expulsion from the university. Instructors and administrators take plagiarism seriously and you must too.

Reading and Note-Taking

- In your notes, always mark someone else's words with a big Q, for quote, or use big quotation marks
- Indicate in your notes which ideas are taken from sources with a big S, and which are your own insights (ME)
- When information comes from sources, record relevant documentation in your notes (book and article titles; URLs on the Web)

Writing Paraphrases or Summaries

- Use a statement that credits the source somewhere in the paraphrase or summary, e.g., According to Brown, ...”.
- If you're having trouble summarizing, try writing your paraphrase or summary of a text without looking at the original, relying only on your memory and notes
- Check your paraphrase or summary against the original text; correct any errors in content accuracy, and be sure to use quotation marks to set off any exact phrases from the original text
- Check your paraphrase or summary against sentence and paragraph structure, as copying those is also considered plagiarism.
- Put quotation marks around any unique words or phrases that you cannot or do not want to change, e.g., "savage inequalities" exist throughout our educational system (Kozol).

Writing Direct Quotations

- Keep the source author's name in the same sentence as the quote
- Mark the quote with quotation marks, or set it off from your text in its own block, per the style guide your paper follows

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a multifaceted and ethically complex problem. However, it must be clearly understood by administrators, faculty, and students.

In school, plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else’s language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source.

Most commonly, plagiarism occurs for one of these reasons:

1. because the author is submitting someone else’s text as his or her own or attempting to blur the line between his or her own ideas or words and those borrowed from another source, or
2. because the author is carelessly or inadequately citing ideas and words borrowed from another source.

Ethical writers make every effort to acknowledge sources fully and appropriately in accordance with the contexts and genres of their writing. A student who attempts (even if clumsily) to identify and credit his or her source, but who misuses a specific citation format or incorrectly uses quotation marks or other forms of identifying material taken from other sources, has not plagiarized. Instead, such a student should be considered to have failed to cite and document sources appropriately.

- Quote no more material than is necessary; if a short phrase from a source will suffice, don't quote an entire paragraph
- To shorten quotes by removing extra information, use ellipsis points (...) to indicate omitted text, keeping in mind that:
- To give context to a quote or otherwise add wording to it, place added words in brackets. Be careful not to editorialize or make any additions that skew the original meaning of the quote—do that in your main text.
- Use quotes that will have the most rhetorical, argumentative impact in your paper; too many direct quotes from sources may weaken your credibility, as though you have nothing to say yourself, and will certainly interfere with your style

Writing About Someone Else's Ideas

- Note the name of the idea's originator in the sentence or throughout a paragraph about the idea
- Use parenthetical citations, footnotes, or endnotes to refer readers to additional sources about the idea, as necessary
- Be sure to use quotation marks around key phrases or words that the idea's originator used to describe the idea

Real World Revising

Proofread and cross-check with your notes and sources to make sure that anything coming from an outside source is acknowledged in some combination of the following ways:

- In-text citation, otherwise known as parenthetical citation
- Bibliography, References, or Works Cited pages
- Quotation marks around short quotes; longer quotes set off by themselves
- Indirect quotations: citing a source that cites another source



Defining Your Audience

- **Background knowledge, experience, and training:**
 - How much does your audience know about your topic, methodology, and evidence?
 - What will you need to explain to your audience?
- **Needs and interests:**
 - Is this a familiar type of document? what are the “rules” of that type of document?
 - What types of information will be most interesting to your audience? what do they want to read about?
- **Demographic characteristics:**
 - Age?
 - Politics?
 - What other characteristics of your audience might be important to how you write your paper?
- **Complex audiences:**
 - Does your audience span multiple demographics?
 - What if you don't know who your audience is?

Complex Audiences

- **More than one audience?** You can either write all the sections so that all the audiences of your document can understand them (not an easy task), or you can write each section strictly for the audience that would be interested in it, using headings and section introductions to alert your audience about where to go and how to read your paper.
- **Broad audience?** If you've narrowed in on your audience as best you can but still don't know enough about its knowledge, interests, and demographics to address it well, the easiest solution is to aim for the majority or the middle of your audience.
- **Unknown audience?** Often, an assignment will specify the audience for who you should write. If it doesn't, you can ask your instructor for a description or you can assume that its members are basically college-educated people.

Adapting for an Audience

- Add information your audience needs to understand your paper.
- Omit information your audience does not need.

Audience

If your grandmother asks you how your weekend was, you'll probably tell her a slightly different story than you would tell if your best friend asked the same question. Right? Both stories may be truthful, but you want to emphasize different things to the two audiences.

Who is going to read your writing?

If you said, “the teacher,” you're not thinking big enough. College writing is not (only) about getting a grade—it's about communicating an idea and engaging in scholarly conversation.

You “adapt” your writing to meet the needs, interests, and background of the readers who will be reading your writing. When you understand your audience, you can supply the kind and amount of information in a way that most effectively conveys your ideas to readers.

Audience

- Add examples that will appeal to your audience and that will help it understand.
- Change the organization of your information to appeal to your audience.
- You are the expert on your paper. Make your paper easy to read for an audience who is less familiar with the topic and the information. Check transitions between sentences, ideas, and paragraphs and think about how they guide a reader through the paper.
- Use the introduction and thesis to draw a map of your paper to keep your audience from getting lost.
- Decide what tone will be most effective for your audience.

Real World Revising

- Analyze the audience for your existing paper. Answer these questions:
 - How much does it know about about your topic?
 - Has it ever participated in the activities or thought about the ideas you describe?
 - What will you need to explain so your audience will understand?
 - What does your audience expect to find out from your paper?
 - What is your audience most and least interested in?
 - Take a census of your audience. Where does it live? how does it vote? what does it care about? what tone will it like?
- First, answer these questions for if your audience is your group of friends.
- Next, answer the questions for if your audience is your current English teacher and your previous 3 English teachers.
- So which audience are you writing to and how are you going to revise to meet that audience:
 - What changes will you need to make to your paper if you were to revise it for your friends?
 - What changes will you need to make to your paper if you were to revise it for me and your previous English teachers?
 - What changes will you need to make to your paper if you were to revise it for your ideal audience?



What's an Argument?

An argument is the expression of a point of view on a specific subject that is supported with evidence. There are many kinds of argument, though you might not immediately think of them as such. For example:

- **Narration:** what happened?, when did it happen? where did it happen?
- **Description:** what does it look like? what are its characteristics?
- **Exemplification:** what are some typical cases or examples of it?
- **Process:** how did it happen? what makes it work? how is it made?
- **Cause and Effect:** why did it happen? what caused it? what does it cause? what are its effects?
- **Comparison and Contrast:** how is it like other things? how is it different from other things? how is it related to something else?
- **Classification and Division:** what are its parts or types? how can its parts or types be separated or grouped? do its parts or types fit into a logical order? into what categories can its parts or types be arranged?
- **Definition:** what is it? how does it resemble other members of its class? how does it differ from other members of its class? what are its limits?

Formula for an Argument

There are four major parts of an argument and they can be expressed as a formula to help you remember:

argument = topic + methodology + evidence + so what?!

As part of your prewriting for any essay assignment, I suggest you identify each of these argument elements separately before you try to turn it into a sentence.

Topic: _____
Methodology: _____
Evidence: _____
So What?!: _____

The **Topic** of your argument is, basically, whatever you're going to talk about. For most research or argument essays, your topic is probably going to be an author, a piece or writing, an idea, or an event.

The **Methodology** is the way you're going to investigate or the position you plan to take regarding the topic. Your methodology must not be the only way to do something--it should be controversial or arguable.

Argument

In college writing, you're going to need to do more than show what you know; you're going to need to use what you know to prove something more than that you know it. "Argument" is not a bad thing.

In high school writing, students typically do a lot of "reporting" type writing (you show what you know and whether you know the "right" answer). In college writing, students typically do argumentative writing.

The idea of argumentative writing is less about proving what you know than it is about using the stuff you know to prove an idea.

Evidence is how you're going to prove your argument. Facts, statistics, anecdotes, and quotations are all types of evidence. Read your assignment carefully to find out if you need to use a specific type of evidence.

The **So What?!** is often the hardest part of a good argument. This is the element that convinces your reader your paper is smart and interesting. It's hard to define, but the difference between a B- and an A+.

Examples and Identification

These thesis sentences contain each of the necessary elements of an argument. Identify the individual parts.

21. In this passage, Cohen uses different strategies to communicate his argument: a strong and clearly expressed thesis, various facts, logos appeals, the third person point of view, predicting the reactions of the audience, and avoiding common fallacies in order to make it appear as if the author is an "expert" in his field.

Topic: _____
Methodology: _____
Evidence: _____
So What?!: _____

22. In his piece, Sagan shows a lot of situations in which the animals are taught to use sign language, and put together some ideas such as a duck landing in a pond and a chimpanzee calling it a water bird. To explain his view Sagan uses a variety of literary techniques from expert opinions down to his own argumentation.

Topic: _____
Methodology: _____
Evidence: _____
So What?!: _____

23. To implement his ideas about the animal rights movement Regan informally applies ethos appeal to illustrate his devoted character, pathos support of extreme analogies to generate awkward emotions, and logos to slightly reinforce both through common logic.

Topic: _____
Methodology: _____
Evidence: _____
So What?!: _____

Revising an Incomplete Argument

These thesis sentences are missing one or more of the four parts of an argument. Identify the missing element and fill in the blanks or rewrite the sentence to include the missing element. If you haven't read the story, you can guess or make something up!

- I. In "The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven," Sherman Alexie uses _____ to establish a relationship between the reader's time and the speaker's time.
2. He understands that his girlfriend is mad, but doesn't understand why she's mad, which is demonstrated by his failure to quote her arguments at length.
3. "The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven" is about a Native American who really likes junk food which indicates his failure in life.
4. Sherman Alexie uses the 7-11 as a microcosm for life.
5. The breaking and replacing of lamps (13) in Sherman Alexie's story, "The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven," symbolizes _____.
6. The news that Alexie's speaker reports halfway through (14) the story, "The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven," is used to _____.
7. The importance of basketball in Sherman Alexie's story, "The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven," is _____, symbolizing _____.

8. Each changing relationships of pairs, such as Indian v. white, working v. not working, _____, and _____) in “The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven,” are rhetorical parallels that emphasizes Alexie’s idea that _____.

Real World Revising

- Look at your paper and find the argument.
- Using the grid we’ve used above, determine each of the four necessary components of an argument. If you’re missing any of the elements, decide what they are and include them in the grid now.

Topic: _____

Methodology: _____

Evidence: _____

So What?!: _____

- Now take each of the four elements and combine them into a stylish, grammatical single sentence. Replace the argument in your essay with the revised version.

Argument

Thesis

A thesis statement is the summary of the argument you make in an essay. It:

- tells the reader what the essay does
- tells the reader what the essay is about
- answers a question that has more than one answer
- lists the primary evidence you cite/discuss
- tells the reader how the essay works.

The thesis is the single most important part of your paper. In a paper shorter than about 20 pages, it's usually best to keep your thesis to a single sentence.

If you can write a solid thesis statement, you will succeed on almost any writing assignment in college.



Thesis = Argument?

The argument is the most important part of a thesis statement. Sometimes, especially in short papers (5 pages), an argument is the only part of the thesis. However, it's good practice to include all the thesis elements if you can.

thesis = argument + scope + tone + map

Like you did with the argument, make sure you have each separate element before you try to turn it into a thesis sentence.

Argument: _____
Scope: _____
Tone: _____
Map: _____

The **Argument** is what you figured out with the previous formula, **argument = topic + methodology + evidence + so what?!**

The **Scope** is how much you're going to talk about. Are you going to cover all of Buddhism or just the death rituals? Are you going to discuss French history before or after 1733? Will you talk about secondary or higher education?

Tone is how your paper is going to sound. It might be confrontational, authoratative, formal, etc.

The **Map** gives your reader an idea of what path you'll take in order to prove your point--which evidence or point will come first?

Practice

In the following examples, identify each part of the thesis statement.

1. The North and South fought the Civil War for many reasons, some of which were the same and some different.

Argument: _____
Scope: _____
Tone: _____
Map: _____

2. While both sides fought the Civil War over the issue of slavery, the North fought for moral reasons while the South fought to preserve its own institutions.

Argument: _____
Scope: _____
Tone: _____
Map: _____

3. While both Northerners and Southerners believed they fought against tyranny and oppression, Northerners focused on the oppression of slaves while Southerners defended their own right to self-government.

Argument: _____
Scope: _____
Tone: _____
Map: _____

Real World Revising

- Find the argument you wrote for your paper. Copy that to the top of a blank piece of paper.
- Using the grid we've used above, determine each of the four necessary components of an thesis. If you're missing any of the elements, decide what they are and include them in the grid now.

Argument: _____
Scope: _____
Tone: _____
Map: _____

- Now take each of the four elements and combine them into a stylish, grammatical single sentence. Replace the thesis sentence in your essay with the revised version.



Origination Outlines

Your paper is due tomorrow and you haven't started. You know better, but... well, you'll plan better. You promise! Or maybe you have to write an essay as part of a timed exam, in-class, so it's important that you get going quickly. Ideally, you've already done some pre-writing and some research and now you need to figure out how to structure it all into an essay. Making an origination outline is like a fill-in-the-blanks essay. The example below is certainly not the only way to structure an essay, but it's a dependable one for a variety of assignments.

- I. Introduction
 - A. Hook: an anecdote or idea or something that will get your reader interested in reading your essay
 - B. Thesis: a statement of your argument (argument = topic + methodology + evidence + so what?!)
- II. Body Paragraph 1
 - A. Transition: from previous paragraph
 - B. Topic Sentence: a mini-thesis, including all the elements of argument, applied to the topic of this paragraph
 - C. Supporting Evidence:
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
- III. Body Paragraph 2
 - A. Transition: from previous paragraph
 - B. Topic Sentence: a mini-thesis, including all the elements of argument, applied to the topic of this paragraph
 - C. Supporting Evidence:
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
- IV. Body Paragraph 3
 - A. Transition: from previous paragraph
 - B. Topic Sentence: a mini-thesis, including all the elements of argument, applied to the topic of this paragraph
 - C. Supporting Evidence:
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
- V. So What?! Paragraph
 - A. Transition: from previous paragraph
 - B. Topic Sentence: a mini-thesis, including all the elements of argument, applied to the topic of this paragraph
 - C. Supporting Reasoning and/or Evidence:
 - 1.

Outlines

Outlines serve more than one person in the writing process. It's most common to make an outline during your pre-writing to help get your ideas in the right place but you can also use one after you've drafted to check that you did what you thought you were doing. Outlines can really speed things up when you're running short on time! For many writers, spending time on an outline saves them a lot of time on drafting.

2.

3.

VI. Conclusion

A. Transition: relate the So What?! to the thesis

B. Broader Implications: how do your ideas reach beyond your essay?

C. Next Steps: is there more research to be done? are there reforms to be made? what should happen next?

Confirmation Outlines

A confirmation outline works sort of like a geometry proof---it shows how a writer has worked a “problem” and whether he or she has been successful. Here’s when you might make a confirmation outline:

- You didn’t make an origination outline as part of your pre-writing and you want to make sure your essay does what your thesis said it would, whether anything is missing, and whether you’ve stayed on topic
- You and a friend want to check the quality and structure of your drafts so you’re going to switch papers and see what a real reader thinks your essay is doing
- You want to improve your reading skills and figure out how to be a better college writer, so you make confirmation outlines for any essays you’re assigned to read for your classes.

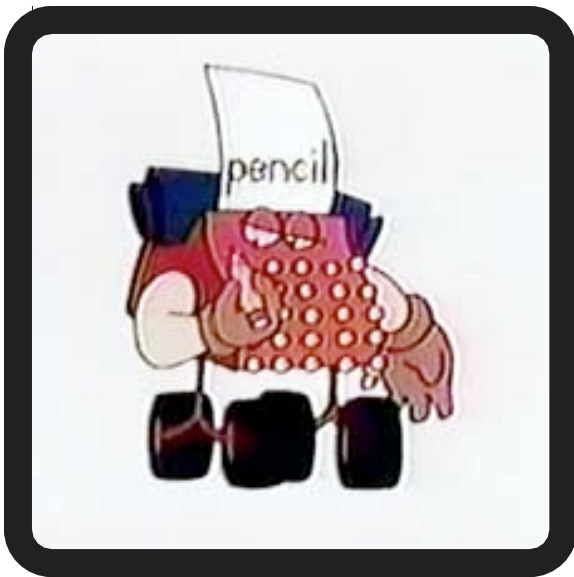
To make a confirmation, you read through the essay, your or someone else’s, and figure out what role each element plays. You’ll need to find the hook and thesis, topic sentences, evidence, and all the other parts of an essay and show how they relate to each other. Pretend you’re Lewis & Clark and map some uncharted territory!

Confirmation Outlines are hard and take a lot of time. However, they are the single most rewarding activity most writers can do to improve your essay writing.

Real World Revising

- Did you do make an outline as pre-writing when you wrote your essay on the first day? Why or why not?
- Switch papers with a classmate and make a confirmation outline for his or her essay. Return your outline with the author’s essay.
- When you get your own paper back, look at the outline your classmate has made. Does it show that your reader understood what you were doing? or does it vary from your intent? List 2 things the confirmation outline suggests you should revise and make those revisions.

Outlines



Essay Actions

Here are some of the words you may see in an assignment and how they figure into a persuasive essay:

- **analyze**: give a detailed examination of the topic and argue for how its parts and functions inform the topic
- **compare**: choose two or more items showing similarities and argue for how they inform the topic
- **contrast**: choose two or more items showing differences and argue for how they inform the topic
- **define**: select or determine the exact meaning of or precise description of the topic and argue for its validity
- **evaluate**: give a reasoned judgment and argue for your point-of-view
- **explain**: give the reasons for or the meaning of something and argue for your point-of-view
- **interpret**: give an explanation of what you think something means and argue for your point-of-view
- **trace**: determine and explain a sequence for the topic and argue for its validity
- **discuss**: use a combination of these actions (above) to support a broader argument

Evidence

Use evidence to support your viewpoint. Evidence might appeal in several ways. The Greek rhetoricians (and contemporary rhetoricians) call these appeals are to “ethos”, “logos”, and “pathos.”

Ethos: is a writer’s credibility, reliability, and authority. It’s a writer’s reputation with his or her audience and the strategies he or she uses to be convincing, believable, and worthwhile to the audience. Ethos is the Greek root to the modern English word, “ethics.”

Logos: is what we usually think of as “evidence.” It’s the data, examples, and reasoning part of an argument. Ethos is the Greek root to the modern English word, “logic.”

Pathos: is an appeal to emotions or feelings. It’s tempting to think these have no place in a persuasive essay, but if you think about TV commercials, you’ll have a better understanding of why they’re a part of persuasion. Our closest English word is “pathetic” (pitiful; lame), but “pathos” is also the root of words like “pa-

Persuasive Essays

You probably have something better to do than to write an essay for school. A paper is a daunting assignment, but you already have a lot of the skills necessary to succeed.

In college, most writing you’ll do is persuasive writing. It may be called something else, but your job is usually to persuade your reader of one thing or another.

The purpose of a persuasive essay is to convince the reader to agree with your viewpoint or to accept your recommendation for a course of action. A successful persuasive essay will use evidence to support your viewpoint, consider opposing views and present a strong conclusion.

thology” or “psychopath.” Its Greek meaning is something closer to “feeling” or “suffering.”

Statistics, facts, quotations from experts and examples and the way a writer uses them can be categorized as one or more of these appeals (ethos, logos, and pathos).

- facts: statements verified by objective means
- statistics: numbers, percentages, and charts
- authorities: topic experts
- anecdotes: true stories
- scenarios: fictional stories

Opposition

Persuasive essays anticipate readers’ objections to a claim. These opposing views are called counterarguments and should be acknowledged (state the counterargument) and refuted (point out the flaws in the counterargument). Consider opposing views in your persuasive writing. Responding to these points will give you the chance to explain why your viewpoint or recommendation is the best one. For each counterargument, explain why your claim addresses the concerns of your opposition. Try to anticipate the concerns and questions that a reader might have about your subject.

Real World Revising

- Switch papers with a classmate.
- Make three columns on a sheet of paper; label them Ethos, Logos, and Pathos.
- Identify evidence and appeals in the paper and copy them into the appropriate column.
- Determine what kind of evidence each piece is (anecdote, statistic, etc.) and label it.
- Make a list of the counterarguments you find in the paper.
- Return the paper and your chart to the paper’s author.
- Look at the distribution of appeals and evidence in your paper (as identified by your reader). Are there gaps? Is this the most effective way to support your argument? Have you effectively used counterarguments? Identify improvements you can make to evidence, appeals, and opposition in your paper.

