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Department of English
2018 - 2019

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Cover and book design by: Lori Bryan

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ISBN: TBD

Printed in the United States of America

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Part 1

The Writing Process

CHAPTER 1

Reading as a Writer

Central Questions

1. What is a rhetorical relationship and how can we draw on familiar digital contexts to explore such relationships?
2. How can a research post about a teen's efforts to maintain Facebook privacy from parents help us to understand more about rhetorical relationships in online social contexts?
3. What role can one academic genre, the extended discussion post, play in building shared understandings and fostering a rhetorical relationship within your class?
4. How can we develop different reading strategies to think about how to enter into new rhetorical relationships through our reading?

Chapter Preview

Barry, as a college student, is embedded in a network of relationships, both inside and outside of the classroom. With each act of speaking or writing, Barry has to consider what he writes (the content and message), why he writes it (his purpose), how to do it in a way that will engage others in the conversation, and where the interaction takes place (the context). Otherwise, his readers may click over to another Facebook page without posting a response, or skip through the posts he makes on the science wiki without drawing his ideas into the team's final collaborative report. Even when he writes an essay for a course assignment, his readers are actively participating in a conversation with him by reading and thinking about his words.

In making these decisions about communication, Barry is taking part in the social and shared process of conversation that is necessary for building and maintaining a relationship with readers. This is what researchers in the field of composition refer to as a rhetorical relationship. In this chapter, we'll explore more fully this kind of relationship between readers and writers in specific communicative situations, focusing especially on our roles as readers.

Exploring Rhetorical Relationships

Whenever a person engages with others in any context, through any mode of communication, a connection develops and some sort of relationship is formed. In

the field of composition, that relationship is seen as part of a rhetorical situation—that particular moment or context when two or more people come together to talk about a shared interest or concern. While such situations certainly arise when we talk with others, they also take shape around the texts we write and compose for others who don't have to be present in the same room and who are likely never to have met in person, but who do have some area of shared interest and a way of communicating, in print or online. What brings speaker and listener, writer and reader, and composer and viewer together is some sort of shared purpose. That purpose might be to keep a friendship going or to inform others or learn about a topic like the best new bicycles, what a hockey team's season has looked like, or the latest results of a scientific experiment. It might even be to persuade others, perhaps toward a particular political viewpoint or a legal or medical course of action. But each exchange is always motivated by the shared purposes both parties bring to it, by the why of the exchange.

Rhetoric as an Evolving Practice and Field of Study

What makes these relationships and situations "rhetorical"? In popular usage, rhetoric is often used unfavorably to describe manipulative language used by politicians to sway public opinion. Rhetoric, in this definition, is artificial eloquence intended to persuade an audience by misleading them. But this type of persuasion is just a small part of actual rhetorical situations and how we participate in rhetorical relationships. The term rhetoric derives from the ancient Greek word rhetor, a word meaning "to speak." The ancient Greeks defined rhetoric as the art of public speaking and oratory, communication practices that stood at the center of social life and governance in ancient Athens (circa 600 BCE), much as writing and digital media are at the center of social and public life today. The Greek philosopher Aristotle (300 BCE) famously defined rhetoric as "the faculty of observing in any given [communicative situation] the available means of persuasion."3:1 Rhetoric, in this definition, is the human ability to observe and understand the range of things we might say when engaged in communication with others. Generations of subsequent scholars have drawn on and expanded Aristotle's definition of rhetoric to study the different types of rhetorical situations and relationships that arise in our use of other media, including written and visual texts.

In our digital age, rhetoric, as both a language practice and a field of study, continues to evolve. While traditional research on rhetoric tended to focus on political contexts and public speech-making, modern research has extended this civic lens to look at the social nature of rhetorical activity as it unfolds in everyday contexts and local communities, including those maintained online and with digital means. Such research has shifted from an emphasis on how public individuals use rhetoric to an emphasis on the context of communication—on the rhetorical situation as the social space that takes shape when people feel the need to discuss an issue of

shared interest and concern. When Barry and his hockey friends make their Facebook posts, it's in response to a felt need to build their friendship by focusing on their shared interests and maintain their small community. Rhetorical situation as a concept includes everything in their context, including a need to be addressed, their shared purposes in addressing it, the topics and events they are concerned about, available media, and their use of those digital media to make it happen.

Another useful concept is rhetorical stance, the active relationship of a speaker/writer/composer to an audience. Stance has to do with the how of an exchange and includes the writer's attitude toward all of the elements of a rhetorical situation as well as the persona or social identity the writer draws on in a particular exchange. Barry and his friends might present themselves as amused or puzzled or annoyed in their hockey fight exchanges. That stance will depend on the persona they want to project and how they think their attitude will be received by the other participants who read a particular example of hockey fight information in a given moment of an ongoing Facebook exchange.

The digital environment in which the hockey friends' exchanges are taking place offers new rhetorical possibilities, but also some limitations and constraints within the rhetorical situation that wouldn't apply to a face-to-face conversation, or one that takes place on a written page. They can easily share photos, videos, and links that contribute to a shared understanding, for example, and they can share their posts at any moment with a wider circle of friends, but the Facebook platform doesn't easily support longer turns and responses. In addition, people often build digital identities in ways that are different from the ones they bring to face-to-face conversations. So, in understanding the shape of a rhetorical situation, we also want to consider the different modes and media used to communicate (voice, written, visual, print, digital) and the benefits and limitations of each for rhetorical action.

Inquiry #1: Seeing rhetorical situations

Look at any brief online or texting exchange and try to map out all of the elements that seem to contribute to the rhetorical situation—all of the persons, events, objects, relationships, needs, identities, and stances that flow within and around it. Does this expanded picture of context contribute to your own understanding of what's involved, in that moment, in building a rhetorical relationship and achieving shared purposes?.

Seeing How a Rhetorical Relationship is Built Through Writing

Barry's Facebook is a good example of how a rhetorical relationship is built through writing. His friend John posts these words with a link to another YouTube hockey video:

> John: "(: barry lava did you see this wicked nice goal? Also are you going to be in Boston for New Years again?"

In understanding this particular rhetorical situation, we might begin with the purposes of such a post. One is most likely more interpersonal, to maintain a friendship. Facebook and other social media platforms have become a common way in which friends do that, letting others know, "I'm thinking about you," "I know what you'll find interesting," or "I'm interested in your plans." A second purpose here is most likely to share some specific information in an area of shared interest, in this case about a winning hockey goal by a well-known player (Benoit Pouliot) on a professional team (and if you're interested in hockey, you may be able to view the video that John shared with Barry). A third purpose is clearly to get some information about Barry's New Year's plans, but also to show how well he knows Barry—knowing that Barry is a Boston Bruins fan and that he spent last New Year's Eve in Boston. These shared purposes fulfill a shared need by Barry and John to communicate and to communicate in this way via an online post rather than, say, a phone call, which would inevitably give rise to a similar but different rhetorical situation.

Within this particular rhetorical situation that includes these participants, their shared connections and interests, and their ongoing conversations both on and off Facebook, as well as the need they're addressing through their exchange at the moment, they are maintaining their relationship by using writing to construct a rhetorical one, drawing on particular personas—John's stance here seems to be that of an "interested friend" who is writing from the social identity that he and Barry share as teammates—and achieving these overlapping purposes. Barry doesn't answer with a Facebook post (although he may have done so by texting or in person), so we don't know exactly how he responded. But any response, even one that is silent, will contribute to the shape of this rhetorical situation and how their rhetorical relationship evolves over time.

As the recipient of a post, Barry was most likely pleased that his friend John was posting for these purposes. But understanding a rhetorical relationship sometimes requires more than understanding the literal meaning of an exchange. If they'd had a disagreement, John could have been making this post to gloss over it, and Barry's response could have been annoyance: "Why does he keep bugging me?" "Maybe I should unfriend him!" While people who know each other well often communicate with shared purposes that are understood by all parties, they can also be at cross purposes some of the time, as anyone who has had a fight with a parent, sibling, or friend knows. To understand this exchange as a rhetorical situation, we need to ask more specific questions about the purpose of each response and how the participants go about the communication.

While there's a lot we can guess about the purposes of one individual exchange, there is more to be learned from looking at a larger conversational context that in-

forms this rhetorical situation and the relationship it supports. John made an earlier post with a YouTube link to a Boston Bruins game. John didn't comment in that post, letting the video with its caption "Milan Lucic hits Ryan Miller" speak for itself. But the exchange that followed that post involved four more turns:

> Barry: haha. I like how the announcer wanted buffalo to try to hit thomas to get back at boston.
>
> John: haha you shoulda heard the Bruins announcers later in the period, something like "the Sabres didn't really go after the Bruins too hard after the hit. If Buffalo had hit Thomas, the Bruins would have killed every one of them."
>
> Barry: more like the whole city of boston would have gone to war.
>
> John: . . . hilarious.

The earlier exchange offers evidence that John's purpose with such posts really is to share information that will interest and/or amuse his friend, maintaining the friendship and trying to elicit a response. We can see that Barry responds to that purpose, adding a comment about the announcer that shows he actually followed the link and watched the video. He then adds a comment that extends John's conjecture about what the Bruins' response would have been if the Sabres had hit Boston's goalie—that not only would the Bruins have killed them, but "the whole city of boston would have gone to war." What we witness in this exchange is how a relationship is built and maintained through an exchange of texts, each text serving multiple purposes and, quite often, seeking to extend the conversation. The exchange ends with John's confirming one-word response, "hilarious," suggesting that, in this particular rhetorical situation, the two friends achieved a sense of shared purpose by developing a shared stance toward the events being discussed, and doing so effectively within the possibilities and constraints of the Facebook digital platform.

We can learn still more about Barry's purposes in communicating by looking at the various kinds of rhetorical situations that arise across many different posts. Barry's own posts often focus on his own team's games, as in this post that seems intended to rally team spirit for his own team before a game:

> Barry: "Big win tonight over UofM, make it happen tribe."

While this post seems intended mainly for his teammates, it also speaks to an audience beyond his team, creating a new rhetorical situation in the process with more participants involved. Eight people—friends and family—showed that they "liked" that particular post by selecting the Facebook "like" icon, conveying the message that they are actively following these Facebook conversations and that they too were rooting for the team.

But Barry does more than play hockey, and each post he makes gives rise to new rhetorical situations. Other posts by him, his friends, and his girlfriend comment on other activities he's part of. When his girlfriend makes an early morning post, "You better be waking your ass up to come get me :)," he doesn't answer directly

but makes a new post: "Cara is the coolest." Again, there's a suggestion of shared purposes—that he understands she's prodding him to get going on the long drive to her college. These shared purposes are realized through Barry's awareness of the rhetorical situation when he responds positively, though indirectly, with a hint of sarcasm. Social media platforms like Facebook have introduced new ways for individuals and communities to build and maintain their rhetorical relationships through writing and exchanging texts online. They expand the social and cultural context in which the writer is composing (Figure 1.1).

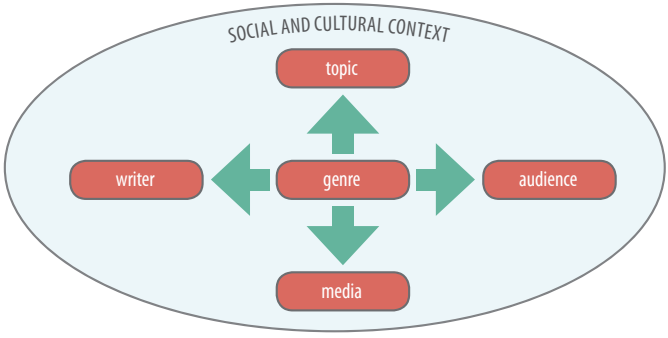

Figure 1.1: Expanded rhetorical situation within a social and cultural context

What understandings can we take away from these ordinary Facebook exchanges that will help us to understand more about how we form and maintain rhetorical relationships?

- These Facebook posters—friends, teammates, boyfriend/girlfriend, are actively involved in building their relationships through their posts and likes. They are involved in an ongoing conversation—that is, they are actively using writing in rhetorical ways to maintain and extend conversations and their relations with others. And they know how to do so within the genre of the Facebook post as it has been shaped by their community of friends.
- Understanding the purpose of a particular post often depends on knowing something about the rhetorical situation, which includes the larger conversational context like the posts that have gone before; the different relationships between the posters; the worlds they share, whether those worlds are on sports teams, in college classrooms, or in a dating relationship; and the technology and platform used.
- Rhetorical relationships in writing aren't exactly the same as full relationships, even among friends. They're created through texts that are written and read. In a full relationship, there are many other channels of communication through looks, touch, and voice. But in thinking about the rhetorical aspects of a relationship, the people posting have only the evidence of the

text itself (and whatever they know about the other person's likely purposes from other exchanges) to draw on. In these examples, we can see that both Barry's friend John and his girlfriend Cara add the smile emoticon :) to provide some textual evidence of their stance: that what they've said is intended in a good-humored way.

Inquiry #2: Observing Facebook posts as rhetorical relationships

Individuals, organizations, and businesses use Facebook for different purposes. Look at your own Facebook page, the page of a friend, of an organization on your campus, or of a public entity or business. Here are some questions to ask in trying to understand the shape of a rhetorical relationship and the different situations that take shape there.

Who is posting? In friendship circles, it's likely that the posts are being made by the owner of the page and by friends or family who write on one another's walls or timelines. For a business page, it might not be possible to identify an individual poster, but you might be able to guess something about the way someone speaks for the company, and where there are response comments, something about the people who respond.

Why are they posting? What seems to be the purposes of some individual posts or a sequence of posts? From the response comments posted (or a lack of comments) or "likes," can you tell whether the typical purposes of the owner of the page seem to be shared by the readers/visitors?

How are people connecting and responding to one another? How is information presented, shared, and built upon? What kinds of conversations are constructed on the page? What seems to be the stance of the contributors, or the attitude they're taking toward whatever they're posting about? Do they seem to be writing from particular personas or social identities?

What sort of rhetorical and conversational context is created or evoked through these pages? Could the participants in these exchanges be said to belong to a particular community of like-minded people who come together for a common purpose? Or do you notice cross purposes? What do you seem to have to know or care about to be part of the community?

Is there anything else you notice about this rhetorical situation? How is the rhetorical relationship between the page owner and the "friends" who appear created and maintained within this particular digital environment?

Making Connections: Reading as a Writer

Different media are an essential component of all rhetorical situations and they affect not only what we write and post, but also how and what we read. Facebook, and social media in general, doesn't represent reading and writing as we traditionally think of them. Facebook, for example, uses a variety of visual elements with limited posting space, making it less than suitable for a writer to create an extended entry or to develop any ideas at length. That in turn changes our experience of reading and the shape of the rhetorical situation we're taking part in. Nevertheless, the rhetorical relationships created through Facebook can tell us something about how we build relationships through writing, reading, and the ongoing rhetorical situations we create together. We've made some observations about Barry's and John's likely shared purposes from John's posts to Barry's wall, but from Barry's brief responses, we have less sense of how he reads these posts and how the rhetorical relationship is being maintained in the reader's mind and perspective.

But we always read with specific purposes in mind, adapting how we read in response to a rhetorical situation that includes the text, different media, and our changing purposes for reading. When we begin to read, we enter a conversation that the writer has initiated, imagining either a known reader like Barry or an imagined reader like yourself, who will read what's been written and become involved with the writer's ideas and purposes. When we read a longer text, we again enter into a rhetorical situation and must draw on prior experience, as well as prior knowledge about whatever is being shared to help us make sense of what we are reading.

In a moment you'll enter a conversation initiated by an expert on social media, danah boyd (who chooses not to capitalize her name), about how teenagers are finding clever ways to hide personal information, particularly from their parents, as they post on Facebook. boyd posted the article on her public research blog, taking one turn in a larger conversation about Facebook and privacy that many others are contributing to.

Writing for a public audience, boyd is contributing to the rhetorical situation that has emerged in response to the topic of teenagers and social media. To make a valued contribution to this growing social concern, boyd has to create a conversation with readers she doesn't know but can only imagine—a conversation in which she uses specific writing moves to achieve particular purposes, and in the process, build a relationship with potential readers. To build this relationship, she has to connect with these unknown readers and hook their interest. She has to do so in a way that brings all of those unknown readers along and keeps them interested, justifying her demanding their time and attention. As she imagines her readers, she has to think about the rhetorical situation: what readers may already know about the topic, their purposes for reading, and how to keep them involved in the conversation. boyd can assume, for example, that most of her readers are familiar with Facebook, so she doesn't need to explain what it is.

At the same time, her readers are also participating in this rhetorical situation, working with the writer to understand what she's saying and to engage with her ideas. The first moves of engaging with boyd through reading are, from the writer's perspective, for inquiry-focused writing: connecting, elaborating, questioning, and speculating. These are all things you'd do if you were participating in a face-to-face conversation, and we'll refer to such reading-to-enter-a-conversation as participatory reading. At other times, as with a face-to-face conversation, you might step back to look at it from a more analytical and evaluative perspective, to think about how the exchange itself is working, and how well, and why, in a form of critical reading. Both ways of reading are involved in reading rhetorically—reading to achieve a larger common purpose with a writer/composer through a written or multimodal text. As one of boyd's readers, we'll ask you to observe your own experience, considering first the ways you read as a participant in this written conversation, but also what you find as you step back from it, reading more analytically and evaluatively.

Participatory Reading

The way in which you read this blog post will be shaped in part by other elements of the rhetorical situation, including the context in which you're reading and the conversations in your classroom that have preceded this reading. You might, as you read, find yourself thinking about your own experiences with Facebook or other online media. You might be reminded of something in your own interaction with a parent. Or you might find yourself focusing on what boyd says about hidden messages. Any of these ways of engaging with the ideas and experiences this writer presents contribute to a participatory reading—one that brings you into a rhetorical situation with the text and its writer and allows you to make as many connections as possible with the understandings represented there. You can think of a participatory reading as reading for meaning—reading to find shared purpose with the writer and gain the knowledge and understandings the writer offers.

When reading something for the first time, a participatory reading initially asks us to give the writer the benefit of the doubt and read with the primary intention of really understanding the goals of the writer and the text. In a participatory reading, we ask exploratory questions as we read, such as the following:

- What does the writer say to me through this text?
- How does it contribute to what I know and have thought about? Does it connect with other things I've read or heard or to aspects of my own experience? If not, what can I learn from encountering a very different experience?
- How might I extend and elaborate on the points being made? Are there points where it clashes with what I know, or where I want to add to the text by arguing with it?

- What questions do I have for the writer or for other readers? What further speculation and new thoughts does it lead me to? What might I want to take away from it to think about later?

To enter a rhetorical situation through participatory reading, make notations in the margins of books and articles to trace and record your responses and reactions. This is often a new practice for many students, as writing in books is typically prohibited in high school; but in college, you are often encouraged to make a text your own through your marginal notes. In taking marginal notes, in which you pose questions, talk back to the writer, underline key passages, or refer to other texts you have read, you create a record of your reactions that you can build upon in the future—maybe to come to a richer understanding of a piece and the rhetorical situation it is a part of.

Such note taking is called annotation. Annotating a text, and doing it well, is a necessary literacy skill for building rhetorical relationships and growing as a reader and writer. As you read boyd's essay for the first time, you'll want to keep track of the conversation you have with her by marking the text and making comments as you read. Actively noting your responses to the reading is a way of capturing your experience and clarifying your own ideas about the writer's points. Such active annotating—going beyond highlighting to comment on what you are finding—helps you to be a more attentive reader and gives you notes to draw on in response to the writer. Annotating is, generally, more successful without a highlighter. It is easily done with pencil and paper, as well as with note-taking apps for digital texts, which let readers use comment functions and add annotations.

Although your conversations with writers will go on in your head any time you read, it's important for your own work as a writer that you leave traces of those conversations. When you annotate as you read, you can see what you made of the things the writer had to say, examining the writer's ideas and integrating them into your own thoughts, ideas, and responses. We encourage you to annotate the text while you read, making notes in the margin or comment space; commenting on the things that interest, puzzle, or annoy you; and keeping track of the ways in which your own thinking moves in relationship to what you're reading. It will help you clarify the rhetorical situation you are taking part in and you'll soon find that you have a wealth of material to draw on for your own writing.

Before Reading: Annotation

Read and annotate "Social Steganography: Learning to Hide in Plain Sight," leaving tracings of your own conversation with this writer through this text. See sample in Figure 1.2.

Note:

- Where you are struck by something boyd says, where you think she offers new and interesting information or a perspective you hadn't thought of before;
- where you find connections to your own experience, to other things you've read, or perhaps to your ongoing classroom conversation about these topics; and
- where you'd ask her a question or disagree with her if she were present in the room.

SAMPLE

Carmen and her mother are close. As far as Carmen's concerned, she has nothing to hide from her mother so she's happy to have her mom as her 'friend' on Facebook. Of course, Carmen's mom doesn't always understand the social protocols on Facebook and Carmen sometimes gets frustrated. She hates that her mom comments on nearly every post, because it "scares everyone away...Everyone kind of disappears after the mom post...It's just uncool having your mom all over your wall. That's just lame." Still, she knows that her mom means well and she sometimes uses this pattern to her advantage. While Carmen welcomes her mother's presence, she also knows her mother overreacts. In order to avoid a freak out, Carmen will avoid posting things that have a high likelihood of mother misinterpretation. This can make communication tricky at times and Carmen must work to write in ways that are interpreted differently by different people.

When Carmen broke up with her boyfriend, she "wasn't in the happiest state." The breakup happened while she was on a school trip and her mother was already nervous. Initially, Carmen was going to mark the breakup with lyrics from a song that she had been listening to, but then she realized that the lyrics were quite depressing and worried that if her mom read them, she'd "have a heart attack and think that something is wrong." She decided not to post the lyrics. Instead, she posted lyrics from Monty Python's "Always Look on the Bright Side of Life." This strategy was effective. Her mother wrote her a note saying that she seemed happy which made her laugh. But her closest friends knew that this song appears in the movie when the characters are about to be killed. They reached out to her immediately to see how she was really feeling.

Interesting that she opens with this mother-daughter relationship. This makes me think of my mom.

My aunt doesn't recognize these conventions either. She often comments on my friends' post if they tag me. Awkward. It does seem like boyd assumes some shared understandings about how to use social media.

Figure 3.2: Sample annotated text

"Social Steganography: Learning to Hide in Plain Sight"

by danah boyd

Apophenia, August 23, 2010

Carmen and her mother are close. As far as Carmen's concerned, she has nothing to hide from her mother so she's happy to have her mom as her 'friend' on Facebook. Of course, Carmen's mom doesn't always understand the social protocols on Facebook and Carmen sometimes gets frustrated. She hates that her mom comments on nearly every post, because it "scares everyone away...Everyone kind of disappears after the mom post...It's just uncool having your mom all over your wall. That's just lame." Still, she knows that her mom means well and she sometimes uses this pattern to her advantage. While Carmen welcomes her mother's presence, she also knows her mother overreacts. In order to avoid a freak out, Carmen will avoid posting things that have a high likelihood of mother misinterpretation. This can make communication tricky at times and Carmen must work to write in ways that are interpreted differently by different people.

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Privacy in a public age

Carmen is engaging in social steganography. She's hiding information in plain sight, creating a message that can be read in one way by those who aren't in the know and read differently by those who are. She's communicating to different audiences simultaneously, relying on specific cultural awareness to provide the right interpretive lens. While she's focused primarily on separating her mother from her friends, her message is also meaningless to broader audiences who have no idea that she had just broken up with her boyfriend. As far as they're concerned, Carmen just posted an interesting lyric.

Social steganography is one privacy tactic teens take when engaging in semi-public forums like Facebook. While adults have worked diligently to exclude people through privacy settings, many teenagers have been unable to exclude certain classes of adults—namely their parents—for quite some time. For this reason, they've had to develop new techniques to speak to their friends fully aware that their parents are overhearing. Social steganography is one of the most common techniques that teens employ. They do this because they care about privacy, they care about misinterpretation, they care about segmented communications strategies. And they know that technical tools for restricting access don't trump parental demands to gain access. So they find new ways of getting around limitations. And, in doing so, reconstruct age-old practices.

Ancient methods

Steganography is an ancient technique where people hide messages in plain sight. Invisible ink, tattoos under hair on messengers, and messages embedded in pictures are just a few ways in which steganography is employed. Cryptographers are obsessed with steganography, in part because it's hardest to decode a message when you don't know where to look. This is precisely why spy movies LOVE steganography. Of course, average people have also employed techniques of hiding in plain sight for a long time, hiding information in everyday communication, knowing that it'll only be interpreted by some. Children love employing codes and adults generally pretend as though they can't understand pig Latin or uncover the messages that children hide using invisible ink pens purchased from toy stores. Yet, as children grow up, they get more mature about their messaging, realizing that language has multiple layers and, with it, multiple meanings. They often learn this by being misinterpreted.

What fascinates me is that teens are taking these strategies into the digital spaces, recognizing multiple audiences and the challenges of persistence, and working to speak in layers. They are not always successful. And things that are meant to mean one thing are often misinterpreted in all sorts of the wrong ways. But that doesn't mean teens aren't experimenting and learning. In fact, I'd expect that they're learning more nuanced ways of managing privacy than any of us adults. Why? Because they have to. The more they live in public, the more I expect them to hide in plain sight. ■

After Reading: Responding analytically as a reader

Once you've read "Social Steganography" and shared your responses with other readers, you'll discover that no two responses from participatory readings are alike. Even the same reader, rereading the essay a second time, will be struck by different things and have different responses, engaging in a new conversation with the text (and thus its writer) each time.

- A favorite annotation. Choose your favorite annotation and elaborate on why it's significant to you.
- Sharing favorite annotations. Contribute to a classroom or online discussion by sharing your favorite annotations and why you chose them to bring your individual responses into a common conversation about boyd's research and what can be learned from the example of Carmen's Facebook writing. What do you see as boyd's purpose(s) in writing about Carmen? How have you and your classmates responded to those possible purposes?
- Making connections. Look back at your annotations of "Social Steganography" to see where you've drawn on your own experiences, and/or where you've gotten a new perspective on social media. Write a journal response in which you describe your experience of reading this essay as a participatory reader. Draw on some of boyd's points by quoting them and respond to them to explore your own thinking and to create the sense of a two-way conversation. See what new understandings you can come to about your own experience or the experience of the young woman, Carmen, described by boyd.

Critical Reading

So far we've focused on how you can enter a rhetorical situation by reading boyd's essay in a participatory way, as if you were having a conversation with her. But there are other times, especially in academic settings, when you'll need to step out of this participatory role to think about a piece of writing more analytically, much as we've done in looking at the posts of Barry's Facebook friends, seeing how the piece works to connect with readers, considering its likely purposes, and also evaluating how well it is working for what we imagine the writer's purpose to be. As a writer who will be making your own choices and trying to capture the interest of your own readers, you can learn a lot by working critically with a piece of writing, seeing how it works to build shared knowledge and purposes with readers, and evaluating how well it does this.

As you step back from the written conversation you are having with boyd, you can begin to see more clearly the rhetorical relationship that is forming between her

text and your reading of the text. We can begin to see more clearly how the piece is organized, what rhetorical moves boyd makes, what her stance seems to be, and what details she includes. In asking these questions, we look specifically at how the writer has built her text—not only what she has included, but also how much she has included, in what order, and how the picture she portrays moves from step to step. This type of analytical reading is the sort of reading we're more likely to do when we return to the text a second or third time, deepening our understanding of the text in the process and seeing how it works rhetorically.

What the writer includes depends on what she thinks we (the imagined readers) already know. boyd assumes an audience of contemporary readers who will be familiar with social media and who will have reflected on concerns about privacy. But she also assumes an audience of readers who will accept her introduction of rather obscure and difficult terminology—the term steganography—for the act of creating hidden messages that are really in plain sight. She is writing a blog post for an audience of readers who are interested in social media (or they wouldn't be reading her blog), and she can make choices with that audience and a sense of shared purpose in mind.

For an analytical reading of boyd's essay, you'll want to extend your understanding of the rhetorical situation it is a part of. You might look at both what ideas and examples she has put forth and how she has done that. In such a reading, you'll want to consider how the writer has proceeded, stepping out of the conversation to identify not only why—the writer's purpose and what—her choices about what ideas and details to include were drawing on your understanding of the rhetorical situation, but also her choices about how to orient readers, how much background to provide, her choices about language, and more. From your own discussion of her essay, you might have determined that part of boyd's purpose seems to be to enter into the public discussion about privacy on social media sites such as Facebook, in response to a perceived need for others to have some of the information she has gathered through her own research. But she involves her audience and builds a rhetorical relationship by the specific choices she makes in how she structures her essay and the details she includes.

In analyzing this text, we also want to ask questions about the rhetorical situation this text is a part of and the social needs that give it shape. In this case, it is the recent concerns over social media and privacy. The question of online privacy has become a larger social issue that individuals and communities alike are grappling to understand as digital media disrupts some of our basic shared understandings of privacy. On the individual level, people have various ways of dealing with it, from not using platforms like Facebook or Twitter or Instagram at all, to trusting in the site's privacy controls and posting anything they think or do. You can see that Barry and his friends are pretty careful about what they post, keeping their comments

focused on general topics like sports, or at most a nudge that any girlfriend might make (and we've respected that privacy as we bring their words to an audience of people who aren't their Facebook friends by changing names and altering pictures and some specific background information, although we've asked permission to use the words themselves for the purposes of this book). And we can also assume that they, like Carmen's friends, know how to read any hidden meanings that might underlie these posts. Such practices are reflected in boyd's essay and the larger rhetorical situation that helps shape how Barry and his friends use language online.

Another form of critical reading is evaluative, looking at how well the essay works to accomplish what seems to be boyd's purpose within this rhetorical situation. Maybe the example she has chosen doesn't seem representative enough to support her larger point. Maybe Carmen's story leads you to a different conclusion. An evaluative response can focus on what works in the essay, as well as what's not completely involving or convincing. You might ask, "What do I find to be the most effective moments in this essay?" and "Why are they effective?" Trying on an evaluative stance with the work of other writers can help you become a better evaluative reader as you work on drafts and revisions of your own writing.

This is a good moment to reread "Learning to Hide in Plain Sight" from an analytical and/or evaluative perspective. For a second reading, particularly when you're reading as a writer who will also be writing articles and posts about new literacies and social media, you'll want to step away from the conversation invited by a written text to reflect more consciously on what it includes, what its purpose is, how it works, and how well it works.

Inquiry #3: Responding Critically

For an analytical reading, you'll want to take a close look at your annotations from a first reading, and add to them as you reread analytically. A paragraph-by-paragraph annotating to note the main point or main focus of each paragraph in the margin will be particularly useful for an analytical reading.

Look closely at the what of boyd's essay—tracing her ideas, her main points, her examples—through your annotations. Then step back to look at the how and the why of her essay, considering these questions.

- How does boyd structure this essay? What examples does she bring in? How does she help you connect to her topic? Where does she move in close to give you details of a real teenager's exchange with her mother? Where does she step back from this story and make larger comments about what she sees as its meaning?
- Why do you think she structures this essay in this way? Why does she move as she does from one very specific example to describing a

more general human activity that has gone on from ancient times to the present? How does that broad framing about social steganography help her to make her own larger point, and what do you think that point is? What is the social need that boyd is addressing?

- Follow the link to boyd's original blog post. Does the original context add anything to your observations of the choices she has made to achieve her purposes as a writer in conversation with her likely audience? What does a digital format contribute to the writing?
- What seems to be her stance toward her topic and her readers' understanding of it? What persona or social identity does she seem to be writing from and what sort of relationship might that create (or has that created) with her readers?
- How well have her writing moves worked in achieving shared purposes with you as a reader?

Write an informal journal response in which you imagine yourself in conversation with boyd about how she has written this piece and how well it has worked for you as a reader. Tell her how her moves in writing this essay have supported what seems to be her larger purpose, including and quoting specific examples from the text that illustrate the points you make. Describe the interaction between what she has written and your own response as a reader and why you find what she's written to be effective or confusing in addressing her apparent purposes as a writer.

Imagining such conversations will also give you practice for responding to the writing of other student writers in your class.

Extending Rhetorical Relationships to the Digital Page

In further exploring the rhetorical situation that boyd's article is participating in, we cannot ignore the great deal of discussion by both popular writers and literacy researchers about how the reading most of us do online differs from how we've traditionally read in print and about whether those differences are cause for concern. One leading researcher, Maryanne Wolf (who tells the story of how the "reading brain" has developed over time in society and develops in individuals in her book Proust and the Squid, 2009), argues that reading the printed page has allowed us time to think and to read "inferentially, analytically and critically." Wolf worries that as we scan quickly through digital pages for "sound bites" and "text bites," we'll become "too distracted by and too drawn to the next piece of new information to allow [ourselves] time to think." What's worse, she fears, is that this will alter the reading brain and that many contemporary readers won't develop the "rich networks which are required in order to read at a high level of sophistication."

So what are some of the ways in which digital contexts might change rhetorical situations and how might our typical reading of the digital page alter the sort of rhetorical relationships we develop in reading the printed page? If you observe your own informal online reading behavior, you'll probably find you spend much of your time browsing and scanning, trying to find the bits of information that speak to your immediate concerns, and that you may be distracted from what you started reading by links and sidebars that send you to other pages. Such reading serves a different purpose, and it's important to be aware of how you are reading. When scanning a text, you don't get much sense of the context of what you read, and you're unlikely to be reading deeply and reflectively. You are engaged in cognitively complex behavior, but it involves making quick associations and connections and is more like multitasking, rather than maintaining a clear cognitive focus. With scanning, you are unlikely to be significantly involved in developing shared purposes with a writer and building a more extended rhetorical relationship.

While reading in these ways is an important literacy skill, understanding the rhetorical aspects of the texts you are reading often requires more focus and concentration when you read. It is important to develop your abilities to engage deeply with written texts, both print and digital, in the participatory ways we've described above, as well as to step out of a text to read it critically. Such deep reading is something we can learn to do on a screen as well as from a printed page. The fluid nature of digital texts and the new media tools for composing and sharing texts present new possibilities for building rhetorical relationships between writers and readers.

Here are several features of digital texts that may alter your path as a reader in either productive or unproductive ways, depending on your different purposes for reading, and the ways your purposes connect to those of the writer/composer.

- **Links.** The ability to make links on the same page, either within a text—perhaps to definitions like that for steganography, or alongside a text—typically to related content, can make it easy to access related information. Such links may alter your reading path, distract you from following the main argument, and take you in new directions. But they can also help you focus on the main content by moving information that might otherwise be in parentheses or a footnote on the page into a different location. And the related information they guide you to can enrich your understanding of the topic. Many sites include breadcrumbs (a trail of terms: news > technology > Facebook) to help you find your way back to your starting point.
- **Multimodality.** Adding images and sound to text can enhance the reader's meaning-making and understanding, but like linked text, they can sometimes be distracting.
- **Context.** We use what surrounds any text to help us to understand it, and we've seen that the rhetorical situation involves multiple elements of context.

For example, the original context for a stretch of text might be a larger book, a print newspaper, or a blog. If we read a segment of text in the context of a book, we'll draw on our sense of the rest of the book as we determine its meaning. The story of Carmen's steganography originally appeared as a post on boyd's own blog, in the context of boyd's other posts on a variety of internet issues (where her prior post is on regulating the use of social media data—another privacy concern). But it also appeared on a multi-authored blog on digital media, DMLCentral, along with a post by another writer on how two Brazilian teens broadcast their sexually intimate activity on Twitcam, doing the opposite of the careful hiding that Carmen does to protect her privacy. It now appears in a full book by boyd, It's Complicated: The Social Lives of Networked Teens, within a larger chapter on privacy that comes between a chapter on identity and one on addiction to social media. In each setting, her essay is situated in a larger conversation, but each of those conversations is somewhat different. (For the same reason, reading a newspaper article on the front page of a paper where it is positioned and given a certain amount of space in relation to other news of the day is different from reading it on the newspaper's online site, where the reader no longer sees it surrounded by the headlines for eight or ten other stories about that day's events, but rather with sidebar links that might connect it to earlier posts on related topics, and followed by a set of readers' comments.)

- **Interactivity.** Digital, online texts are interactive. They ask for our attention and engagement in the shape of links, menus, and comments. One of the primary rhetorical purposes of content producers online is to attract and interact with readers. Sites are designed to not only draw in readers, but to persuade them to come back, stay longer, sign up, or post a comment. Surely, writers of print texts are trying to attract readers too, but interactive digital texts draw on different modes and media (from paper to digital) that radically alter our experience of reading.

Inquiry #4: Observing print and digital contexts

Choose a newspaper that has both a print and a digital version and read an article that interests you, first in the print context and then in the digital. How do the two contexts affect your reading and your understanding of this article?

Reading on the Screen

As a college student who will do a lot of online reading for class assignments, discussions, and research, you will want to devise strategies that position you as an active reader, as someone making connections, coming to conclusions, and challenging your previously held ideas as you read on the screen as well as in print. Effective reading strategies will not only help you remember the content of texts, but they will also help you draw on those pieces through writing as you participate in discussions in class and online, and as you create compositions where you draw on what you've read.

One larger strategy suggested by people who think about the roles emerging technologies play in learning is customization. Scholars like Troy Hicks argue that how we customize our devices matters (as we select particular programs for taking notes, others for composing essays, and still others for reading PDFs). As a college student, you will want to figure out the most effective tools for customizing your own devices—the apps or programs that support your reading as you work with digital materials. Of course, you can always print these pieces, within reason, but it is probably worth your time to figure out some tools for reading, engaging with, and archiving your reactions to texts you read on the screen.

Some possible strategies you might want to experiment with include those listed below.

- Downloading a reading app that allows you to highlight, annotate, and write notes on the texts you read. New note-taking tools are always being created, but popular programs include Evernote and OneNote.
- Creating a separate document in which you type out sections of a text that seem most striking to you (be sure to get down the page number) and then comment on them. This is similar to a double-entry notebook where you create two columns (perhaps by folding a piece of paper down the middle) and write out quotations from a text in the left column and respond to them in the right. Doing this digitally, though, will allow you to search this document for key words later.
- Keeping an online reading journal, in which you respond informally to all of the texts you read for a class, perhaps using a class website, blog, wiki, or a class learning management system (like Blackboard, Moodle, or Canvas).

In addition to considering how you can annotate digital texts, you might also want to consider possibilities for sharing your annotations with others. Some programs (like Evernote) allow you to share notebooks, allowing you to collaborate on reading notes. Others (like Dropbox) allow you to share folders, where you might upload notes or annotated texts). Still others (like the iPad app Documents, or Adobe) allow you to email PDFs you have highlighted, annotated, and documented. These are just a few options, but many more exist. The best thing to do is to try your hand at a few of these and see what works best for you. One distinguishing aspect of being digitally literate is learning to manage and adapt to constantly changing writing and communication tools.

You might also want to consider how you save texts you read on the screen or online. Bookmarking apps (like Delicious or Zotero) allow you to easily return to pieces you have read. Even the simple act of creating a folder on your hard drive for class readings might be helpful. The idea is not to take a particular approach, but to identify and reflect on strategies that help you interact with the digital texts you read.

Inquiry #5: Comparing reading in print and online

Select another post from boyd's blog.If you initially read and annotated "Social Steganography: Learning to Hide in Plain Sight" as a print text, read online and use a digital tool reading app to comment on this blog post. If you read it in a digital form, be sure you've annotated it with a digital tool. Then read and annotate it in a print version. Compare your own two reading and annotation processes and what you've gained from each.

Composing: Extended Discussion Board Post

The discussion post is a recent genre of writing that has emerged as course environments have gone wholly or partially online. Course sites, whether learning management systems like Blackboard or Canvas, class wikis like the one Barry's Blue Team uses, blogs, or other websites, have changed the rhetorical situation of the class discussion, offering new possibilities and also new constraints, as members of the classroom community build rhetorical relationships online as well as, or instead of, face to face. The most common use of the discussion post is to carry on the sort of discussion that has traditionally been a spoken genre, with the purpose of developing a richer shared understanding of a course reading, for instance, laying the ground for working with further readings/further discussions and building a common framework of shared knowledge in the classroom community. And that purpose continues into the written online context. But how the rhetorical relationship is developed and maintained and this shared purpose is achieved in the new online

rhetorical situation is a matter for further inquiry. In this Composing section, we will focus on both the typical moves that are made within the discussion post genre and on how these can work to support the rhetorical relationship you are building as a writer of such posts with your readers—the members of your class community.

Once you've annotated boyd's essay, working from a participatory but also a critical reading, you can craft a discussion post to join the conversation that she has initiated as you invite others to engage your thinking. While an in-class discussion offers the opportunity for such conversation, sharing your response in writing can give you more time to work out your ideas in extensive ways and can provide others more time to reflect on and respond to the points you make. And reading and responding to what others have written allows you to engage with their ideas, as well as with boyd's and your own, building a rhetorical relationship with others in your classroom context who will be reading and responding to your thinking throughout the semester. Posting your ideas to an online discussion site—either within a learning management system (LMS) or on a blog or wiki for your course—allows you to access and respond easily to one another's thinking.

Inquiring and Inventing

In this chapter, we have focused on the idea of a rhetorical relationship, where the writer's purposes and the reader's purposes come together in the text that is created so that, for a successful writing/reading event, a shared purpose or shared why is realized. We saw that rhetoricians refer to everything surrounding that relationship as the rhetorical situation, and the writer's attitude and the social identity or persona the writer is taking on at the moment as a rhetorical stance. We also considered two ways a reader might be involved with a piece of writing—as a participatory reader who enters the reading as if it's a conversation, or as a critical reader who steps back and thinks analytically about how the conversation is working and why, and evaluatively considering whether it worked as well as possible, what made it successful, and/or what might make it work better to meet the purposes of the writer and/or reader.

This notion of rhetorical relationships helps us think through the moves, strategies, approaches, and processes associated with reading and writing as contextualized activities. These generative moves of inquiry are meant to invite you to think not only about how you will want to respond to boyd's work in your discussion post, but also how you will use that piece as an opportunity to create and support the rhetorical relationships that exist within your classroom. This approach, which emphasizes what you want to say as it pushes you to consider the importance of how you position yourself in such a post, will also help you extend your thinking about boyd's piece and your classroom community. Establishing rhetorical relationships is a move to create and extend shared knowledge, but it is also an undertaking that invites you

to consider the social nature of communication as you consider the contexts you write for and how to claim a productive stance in particular rhetorical situations.

Considering your classroom context

When you respond to a text in ways that allow you to support rhetorical relationships, you need to think carefully about the context you are writing from and for. In this case, you'll want to consider the shared expectations, values, and ways that are central to your class. What can you say about this particular classroom context based on previous conversations, the structure and focus of the class itself, and the feedback your instructor has provided (on inquiries, more formal writing tasks, and during class conversations)? What does this data lead you to see about this class and the ways of reading, writing, and interacting that are encouraged in this setting? What moves can you make in your discussion post to respond to the expectations that frame this class?

Drawing on working concepts

Concepts help us better understand the activities we study. Generating and grappling with the meanings of working concepts is a way to push your thinking as you speak to and from a specific rhetorical situation, one provided by the focus of your classroom community. In this case, working concepts can help you better understand the points boyd makes by drawing on the conceptual framework provided by your class and this book. By drawing on working concepts central to your class in your discussion post, you can make sure to contextualize your reading of boyd by grounding it in the work your class is engaged in.

To generate your own working concepts, add to your group's wiki page, choosing two or more concepts, giving your working sense of them at this point in your own words. These concepts can be ones introduced by this book or other course materials or additional terms that help you as you enter the classroom discourse community constructed by your class. They should also be concepts that speak to boyd's work in useful ways. Try to be as specific as you can and question how these terms support your developing understandings.

Returning to your annotations

As you decide what aspect of boyd's piece you will want to focus on in your discussion post, you should return to the annotations you made in the margins of this text as you completed both participatory and critical readings of it. What were you most drawn to as a reader? What patterns seem to emerge from the notes you took? What questions you noted in the margins might you return to now? How were these annotations working in conversation with other aspects of your class?

Once you have an idea of what you want to say and how your discussion post will work for the classroom context you are writing for, you'll want to keep the

rhetorical relationships you are trying to establish and extend through your post in mind as you shape it. So, you are not just responding to boyd here. Instead, you are using this situation, this writing task, as an opportunity to claim a stance that supports a particular kind of rhetorical relationship. Use these moves to approach this discussion post as a highly contextualized turn in the larger conversation your class is structured around.

Drafting and Shaping

Once you have an idea of what you want to say and how your discussion post will work for the classroom context you are writing for, you'll want to keep the rhetorical relationships you are trying to establish and extend through your post in mind as you shape it. So, you are not just responding to boyd here. Instead, you are using this situation, this writing task, as an opportunity to claim a stance that supports a particular kind of rhetorical relationship. Use these moves to approach this discussion post as a highly contextualized turn in the larger conversation your class is structured around.

Stepping into a conversation

Drawing on your various readings of boyd's essay, what points would you finally like to make about the rhetorical relationship she is creating with her text? Who seems to make up her intended audience, and what purposes does she assume her readers share? What shared background knowledge does she expect that they bring, and what new knowledge does she offer? How does she present what she wants her readers to understand? What evidence does she offer? And what evidence (including quotations from her text) can you use to support the points you want to make about the why, what, and how of her text to contribute to the larger online conversation of your class?

Applying working concepts

Return to your generative work defining concepts and use it to provide you with a frame for thinking about boyd and the points she makes about how teenagers use social networking sites. How do they help you talk about her article? What new perspectives do they seem to suggest? How does applying them to boyd's piece strengthen and enrich your understandings of these concepts?

Nodding to what has come before

As you shape and reshape your discussion post, think about the conversations that have already taken place in your class. This might mean remembering past class discussions, or rereading old discussion threads, or looking at early posts some of your classmates might have already shared with the class. Nod to some of the points made during these discussions in explicit ways (saying things like, "As

Phoebe points out," or "Last week we discussed X, but boyd makes me wonder Y"). These explicit connections will help you contextualize the points you are making and connect with your immediate audience.

Crafting a rhetorical stance

As you shape your discussion response and prepare to post it, keep your audience in mind and how you want to address this group. This is not a general audience of readers who may or may not be interested in your ideas; your readers will be made up of your classmates, who have read the same materials as you and are exploring similar lines of inquiry. How can you use that shared enterprise as you compose your extended discussion post to invite them to engage with your thoughts and ideas? How can you position yourself through your writing as a (thoughtful/critical/overwhelmed/underwhelmed/diligent) participant working through your ideas? What impact will the position you craft have on your audience?

Revising and Publishing

The discussion post is a genre built around the act of sharing; these kinds of responses are written for others to read and consider in thoughtful and careful ways. While they can be revised and circulated more broadly, we frame them as communicative acts meant for classroom settings to stress the immediate rhetorical relationships they can foster and support.

Reading others' posts

When you read your classmates' discussion posts, see them as turns in a conversation going on in writing. These are not mini-essays meant to deliver a particular and polished reading of boyd. Instead, they are generative, tentative, and, ideally, thought-provoking responses.

Responding to others' posts

To extend the rhetorical relationship invited by your classmates' discussion posts, respond to a handful of them by stating the new questions they suggest for you as a reader. You can do this in a brief paragraph.

CHAPTER 2

Inventing

Deciding how to begin writing is always a daunting prospect. More often than not, the inexperienced writer will deal with the stress of "not knowing" what to write about by diving straight in, rushing to the blank page (or screen) under the assumption that somehow the finer details of the writing will take care of themselves. Doing so is problematic because you skip over several steps (outlined in this chapter, as well as Chapter 4) geared toward aiding writers in moving from *generality* toward *specificity*.

However, specificity is not the sole purpose of invention (even if it is perhaps the best indicator of whether you have succeeded at inventing a worthwhile project). As with the previous chapter, the invention stage of the writing process has several goals. At this stage you will do the following.

Create a starting point. By sorting through the information you have gathered on a particular subject, you are in fact internally processing that information, determining what is valuable and selecting what is important. In effect, you begin writing when you begin sorting through that material. You begin to explore ideas.

Generate insights. Sorting through this material, you begin to draw connections between specific details; you also have the opportunity to build correlations between the facts and observations you have found and your own ideas. At this stage, you probably will not know what, specifically, you want to write about, or what is important about your topic, but in the process of drawing conclusions from these connections you will have begun the process of narrowing down, of focusing.

Determine the writing situation. While you might not know when starting out what your purpose is—whether you are seeking to inform, compare, or analyze—these components will take shape from your arrangement of the material of your project.

By now, you will have decided on a starting point, something of interest, that will lead you down a path of familiarization and research (recall Chapter 2), using a wide range of

credible sources. You should now be somewhat literate in the subject at hand and know a wide, perhaps disorganized, range of details related to and stemming from your initial point of interest. You might already have some notes with dates, facts, events, names, or even pictures to sort through.

What do you do with all of this information? Moreover, how do you move from your initial curiosity to a more specific focus, a *working thesis* or *unifying idea*? The process of invention is the creative step when you effectively "spill your ideas" down on paper in what might seem like a chaotic manner. This chapter outlines many of the strategies you might consider to accomplish this task, whether brainstorming, making a list, or even drawing maps and sketches. However, getting your ideas on paper is only the initial part of the process. Ultimately, invention is an analytical stage, an opportunity to organize these details once you have put them on paper and to interrogate your initial subject as you attempt to lend it greater depth and focus.

There is a creative concept known as the *bone pile*. You might imagine a figurative cave, the lair of an insatiable creature (a nice analogy for the human imagination) littered with discarded bones, representing the ideas you have chewed over, picked apart, and even discarded—but that may still prove useful at some future time. The invention stage is when you build your bone pile, without fear of outside scrutiny. The bone pile is your stack of supporting topics, key details, and connections. Just as the maid never visits the monster's cave to clean it out, you should never throw away your ideas, whether they are in your journals, freewriting, lists, or brainstorms; you might return to them. They can provide the basis for future revisions or even new projects.

In this act of invention, the goal is never to establish a final, accurate sense of what you wish to write about, but rather to allow your ideas to grow and evolve. Until you get your ideas onto the page (a metaphor for the writing canvas, whether you are writing with pen and paper, a computer screen, or a digital tablet) and select details that represent your interests and observations, you cannot know how your project will take shape or how your audience will interpret your writing. In effect, the invention stage is your first opportunity (one of many) to scrutinize your own ideas in a constructive manner, without fear of rules or grammar, playing with the ideas until the desired level of specificity or focus is achieved. Eventually, when you are ready to move on to the next stage (Chapter 4), you will further develop them into a working thesis and put together the rough skeleton of your project.

Find a Unifying Idea

Ultimately, the goal of invention is to help you find and flesh out a *unifying idea* for your project. What will this essay be about? What key details support this idea? Whom am I addressing with this project, and for what purpose? Again, this step can be extremely frustrating given the weight of such responsibility, especially when you have complete freedom to decide your own subject.

For now, you should have at the very least a rudimentary topic, even if it is a work in progress. For example, you begin with a general area of interest (think back to Chapter 2), let's say the Middle East conflict. The reasons for this could be varied, but assuming you took one of our starting points in Chapter 1, an interest of *global*, *local,* or *cultural* significance, you are probably already familiar with the subject. Whether you have read news feeds online, searched a database for articles, visited the library, or even talked to people with direct experience or knowledge of the region, you have been building a variety of ideas—many bits of information you can develop into a more specific topic to anchor your paper.

Through the processes outlined in this chapter, you might develop the vague "Middle East" into a more pertinent focus, such as "the current conflict in the Middle East," or even more specifically, "the current political climate in Palestine." Further examination of the facts you have gathered on this developing idea might spur you to ask why this is the most relevant direction to take and who your audience might be. The details unearthed by using the following invention strategies should help you refine this statement even further and determine the best strategy for the project (whether it will be a descriptive, comparative, or analytical paper).

You may find you need to repeat these steps many times. Chapter 1 introduced the idea that these strategies are recursive—meaning they are repeatable—so at any time you might return to the familiarization stage and gather more information, should some of these invention strategies result in the discovery of a new line of inquiry you feel is worth exploring or should you decide you need more specific details on a subject.

Remove the Inner Editor

The invention process is often messy. This should be seen as liberating, not restricting. You are able, and in fact encouraged, to disobey what you perceive to be the conventions of writing. This is a free-form stage. As such, it is imperative—and imperative for many of the writing stages discussed in early parts of this textbook—to

turn off the inner editor, the perfectionist inside each of us that threatens to stifle creativity for the sake of that "ideal product."

First off, no such ideal product exists. We have tried to stress early and often that writing is a form of inquiry, of exploration, of discovery, and to build anything meaningful from this process requires you to open doors. Allow yourself not to worry about things such as grammar, correctness, and even, at the preinvention stage, who your audience is and what they might think about your idea—even if you develop a greater understanding of audience through the invention process. What matters most at this stage is that you allow yourself the freedom to get everything you can think of down on the page.

Interrogate Your Topic

The following are strategies you might employ to further test and develop your general area of interest and transform it into a functional topic or central statement. For the time being, consider only that your goal is to move from a general interest area (the turmoil in the Middle East, for example) to a more specific area that will help direct your paper, such as the current political climate in Palestine.

However, as you move from the general to the specific, also ask the following questions.

Who am I addressing? A general American audience? American Jews? Palestinian Americans?

How am I explaining this issue? Am I simply describing the issue, comparing it to another issue or concern, or analyzing it by using a significant concept or theory? What is my purpose?

What do I bring to the discussion? What insights am I adding by addressing this issue? What is the relevance?

The process of getting from a general idea to a more specific focus will largely evolve from the types and amount of information you accumulate, your personal interest in the topic, and the most important points of discussion.

Employ Multiple Strategies

The process of exploring your topic does not contain a set number of steps. You can employ multiple strategies multiple times to achieve your desired goal. Only when you think you have an operating idea capable of becoming the thesis for your paper should you consider this stage complete. Consider the following strategies.

- Brainstorming
- Mind Mapping
- Listing
- Drawing and Sketching
- Using Other Media
- Freewriting
- Collaborative Invention

Brainstorming. *Brainstorming* is the process by which you simply spill ideas or details about a chosen subject onto the page. The primary purpose of brainstorming is to get as many details as possible. The manner in which you organize these details is less important than getting it all down on paper so that you might see the breadth and scope of the ideas you are working with. You can jot them willy-nilly on a paper, or you might type them using phrases or single words. Again, the point of this exercise is to see the broadest shape of your ideas so you might sift through them later, identify further areas of interest, and establish connections between them.

Figure 2.1 is an image of a student brainstorm activity conducted in a first-year writing course. Note how the student, after writing the details down, went through an additional step, circling some items and crossing out others. The first step, writing everything down, was the creation step. The second, circling and crossing out, was a process of interrogating the topic. It helped the student determine what was most important, what was not, and what was worth digging into more deeply. The author could have connected certain ideas or even elaborated by spilling more ideas onto the paper once certain connections became apparent.

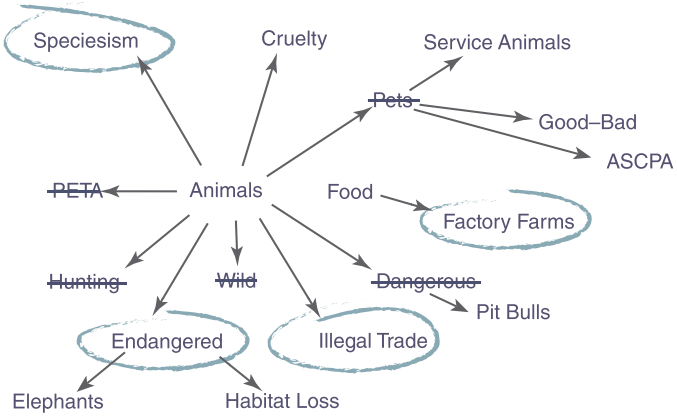

Figure 3.1: Brainstorming

This sounds messy, and it is. However, this process of creating threads and then choosing some, eliminating others, and making connections aids in sifting through material to find a more specific focus. This secondary step is also when you comment upon the importance of your own ideas.

Activity 2.1

Brainstorm two of the following topics, jotting down everything that comes to mind. Use the graphic above as a model. Compare your brainstorms with those of your group.

Topics: high school graduation night, family life, the anxieties of a first date, advantages of a community college, peer pressure, funny TV commercials, careers, sports, love, death.

Mind Mapping. Writers employ *mind mapping* as an early form of an outline to help draw connections between details or roughly shaped ideas. Whereas brainstorming is an indiscriminate jotting of ideas as they come to you, the mind map is a more controlled, conscious attempt to follow a common thread from one idea to another. Figure 2.2 is an example of a mind map.

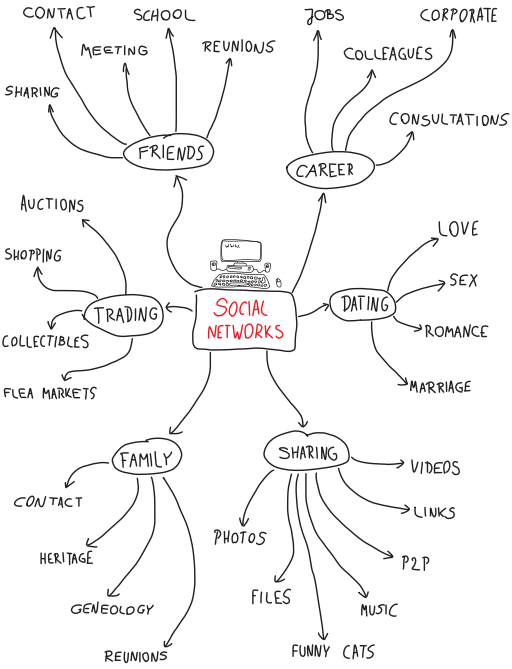

Figure 3.2: Mind Mapping

Listing. Another useful method, akin to brainstorming and mind mapping, is *listing*. Here you simply sort your material into categories to clarify connections and balance your main ideas. The following list started from the general topic, sports, moved to several different types of sports (soccer, football, baseball) the student had participated in, then narrowed to football.

- Football
- Offense
- Defense
- Quarterbacks
- Passing Versus Running
- Blitzing
- Super Bowl
- Penalties
- Coaches

Activity 2.2

Choose one of the topics you brainstormed in the previous activity, and write out a list of details supporting that topic, following the example above. Share and compare with your group.

Now group the list of details, and compose three topic sentences. Next, write a thesis sentence for an essay about the topic you have chosen. Make sure your thesis sentence covers the three major headings you have just listed. Below the thesis sentence, write an outline for an essay on your topic. When you are finished, share your outline with your group.

Drawing and Sketching. Still another method is *drawing and sketching* (Figure 2.2.. Students who think visually might consider drawing, using different-colored pens, or creating shapes to help organize their thoughts. As you conceptualize relationships through drawing and shapes, try to capture the dynamics of your topic—try to show, visually, the relationships of your facts and ideas. Because the ultimate goal of the invention stage is to filter through possible subtopics and key details, visual organization is helpful in culling and balancing your ideas.

Figure 3.2. Drawing and Sketching

Using Other Media. The first time through the invention process, you might consider speaking easier than writing so you might consider using *other media* to help. In fact, you might be speaking out loud or mumbling to yourself as you sort through your material. You might have several lists or brainstorms with bullet points or key facts, but you still cannot see how to connect the dots. So, try recording yourself or asking another person to perform an interview.(See collaborative invention below.) You might even turn on your webcam and create a video. Use the recording as an opportunity to cover as much ground as possible. See whether verbally summarizing key points or research helps you to a greater understanding of the material. Sometimes, when you talk through a subject, you may discover new ideas or ways of presenting those ideas. This method might also assist you to establish a sense of voice or help you determine your audience. Listen to your recording. Be prepared to transcribe this information onto the page in your journal or as another form of invention.

Freewriting. Yet another method of inventing is *freewriting*. It is quite literally a "freedom to write" exercise. You may have no idea where you are headed with the project, but you should still attempt to write your ideas in complete sentences (though at this point, do not be preoccupied with perfect grammar). Some writers prefer this mode because it is how they think—from one idea to the next, without transition, getting all of their thoughts down onto paper (or the screen).

Freewriting may be a good place to begin for those writers who fight the constant urge to "simply get started," to rush to the page because they feel they already have an idea of what they want to say. This practice allows you to write in a fairly conventional method and sample ideas without any restrictions. However, you should not confuse your freewrite with a completed composition.

Collaborative Invention. Finally, *collaborative invention* is one of the more dynamic forms of invention, because it involves working with at least one other person in a shared process. This process may take the shape of an interview with one person asking questions about an initial set of facts or ideas, or a discussion, in which one or more writers invent as a team, discussing a broad topic and producing a wider net of supporting details and connections. Either way, collaborative invention has a greater capacity than many other forms of invention to fuel interest in a project. Collaborative invention also offers added bonuses for the future, as the ability to collaborate is also one of employers' most sought-after qualities in new employees. While there are no limits to how many can collaborate for a successful invention exercise—for example, you could create a video and send it to all your friends—the

number chosen should be small enough to maintain a focused inquiry into a topic. Remember, the strength of a collaboration is in the questions that are raised.

Activity 2.2

Take one of the topics in Activity 2.1 (a different one from the one you worked on in Activity 2.2), and pair up with an individual in your group. Brainstorm this new topic together, list details, and compose three topic sentences for an essay. Was this collaborative invention easier than brainstorming alone? Discuss what you learned with your group, and share it with the whole class.

Balancing Your Ideas

A vibrant invention stage should produce a clear sense of your unifying idea. To use our example of the current situation in the Middle East, you might write, "The current political climate between Palestine and Israel may be used to help define the greater Middle East conflict." You could also have several key subpoints identified in your brainstorm or mind map.

- Israel's expanding policy toward settlements
- Looming water shortages
- Growing religious intolerance on both sides

You might have reached these supporting topics from what was initially "settlements, water, and religion." Having spent the time balancing and exploring these topics until you feel they are now specific, relevant, and balanced in proportion, you can conceive of writing further about them. This is a key benchmark for deciding whether you have spent an adequate amount of time inventing.

Why are balance and specificity so important? Think back to the introduction to this chapter. Specificity is not the only desired characteristic of successful writing. You should be ready to answer the following questions.

- Who does this writing address? Who is your audience?
- Why is this writing relevant? What is your purpose?
- How does this writing attempt to address the issue? What is your approach?

The balance of your supporting points and details is largely a consequence of the time and thought you spend on this stage and demonstrates your preparedness to

move on to the next stage, which is structuring this project for a more thorough exploration through the actual writing of a draft.

A Reflection on This Chapter

In constructing this textbook, the authors used the same strategies we now present to you, the student writer. Invention is a challenging topic to fully flesh out, as it is unique to the writer and his or her personal preferences. In writing this chapter, it was necessary to explore the various topics (brainstormed and then listed at the beginning) and then explore them again, this time through the eyes of a first-year writing student. The initial idea was simply to focus on the move from generality to specificity because, quite frankly, this is a skill with which most writers struggle, however advanced they might feel at the craft of writing.

However, by re-envisioning the chapter through the eyes of a first-year writer, it became evident this challenge was only the first layer of concern. Focusing solely on specifics would render the chapter fairly mechanical, superficial almost. A reinvention of the ideas behind this chapter yielded a more important conclusion: most writers do not realize that it is here, in the invention stage, when the relevance of their work is discovered—the "why am I doing this," and "why will anyone care" moment. While striving to understand this relevance, you should see the key elements of the writing situation begin to take shape—the "who" (the audience) and the "how" (to compare, to determine causation, or to analyze).

Final Word

A final word of caution: Writers do not spend nearly enough time on invention, despite its being a stage without many rules and despite the fairly common agreement among them that they dislike the existence of rules. Why? Why ignore perhaps the most liberating stage of the writing process? Often the answer is time. Writing is seen as a task, something one needs to get on with. Because it needs to be done, writing often ends up lacking the necessary specifics to generate interest for both reader and writer. Might interest be generated by spending more time inventing before a single sentence is written? Instead of "Why read it?" perhaps we should revisit the more important question from Chapter 1, "Why write it?"

This Is the Life

Annie Dillard

Annie Dillard is an American author of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. Her book *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* won the 1975 Pulitzer Prize for nonfiction. She taught for many years in the English Department at Wesleyan University and is particularly recognized for her nature writing, being called a modern Henry David Thoreau. Her latest book is called *The Abundance: Narrative Essays Old & New* (2016). The following essay was published in *Harper's Magazine* in 2002.

Dillard raises a fundamental question in this essay: how should I live my life? This is not only a major question most of us face as we mature and leave high school, but it was also a major question posed by philosophers and thinkers in classical and medieval times. The Greek philosopher Socrates, for example, said that the *unexamined* life is not worth living. We should not simply follow the crowd and believe what everyone around us believes or do as everyone else does. For Socrates, the best life is that of Plato's presentation to him: one of the continual pursuit of truth, of learning. It is the highest attainment of what it means to be human. And knowledge helps us make better choices and so lead better lives. Therefore, at your age particularly, but also throughout your life, you can use the strategies mentioned in Chapter 2.not only to invent ideas for papers you must write for your classes but also to explore ways of being and relating to the world.

Any culture tells you how to live your one and only life: to wit as everyone else does. Probably most cultures prize, as ours rightly does, making a contribution by working hard at work that you love; being in the know, and intelligent; gathering a surplus; and loving your family above all, and your dog, your boat, bird-watching. Beyond those things our culture might specialize in money, and celebrity, and natural beauty. These are not universal. You enjoy work and will love your grandchildren, and somewhere in there you die.

Another contemporary consensus might be: You wear the best shoes you can afford, you seek to know Rome's best restaurants and their staffs, drive the best car, and vacation on Tenerife. And what a cook you are!

Or you take the next tribe's pigs in thrilling raids; you grill yams; you trade for televisions and hunt white-plumed birds. Everyone you know agrees: this is the life. Perhaps you burn captives. You set fire to a drunk. Yours is the human struggle, or the elite one, to achieve . . . whatever your own culture tells you: to publish the paper that proves the point; to progress in the firm and gain high title and salary, stock options, benefits; to get the loan to store the beans till their price rises; to elude capture, to feed your children or educate them to a feather edge; or to count coup or perfect your calligraphy; to eat the king's deer or catch the poacher; to spear the seal, intimidate the enemy, and be a big man or beloved woman and die respected

for the pigs or the title or the shoes. Not a funeral. Forget funeral. A big birthday party. Since everyone around you agrees.

Since everyone around you agrees ever since there were people on earth that land is value, or labor is value, or learning is value, or title, necklaces, degree, murex shells, or ownership of slaves. Everyone knows bees sting and ghosts haunt and giving your robes away humiliates your rivals. That the enemies are barbarians. That wise men swim through the rock of the earth; that houses breed filth, airstrips attract airplanes, tornadoes punish, ancestors watch, and you can buy a shorter stay in purgatory. The black rock is holy, or the scroll; or the pangolin is holy, the quetzal is holy, this tree, water, rock, stone, cow, cross, or mountain and it's all true. The Red Sox. Or nothing at all is holy, as everyone intelligent knows.

Who is your "everyone"? Chess masters scarcely surround themselves with motocross racers. Do you want aborigines at your birthday party? Or are you serving yak-butter tea? Popular culture deals not in its distant past, or any other past, or any other culture. You know no one who longs to buy a mule or be named to court or thrown into a volcano.

So the illusion, like the visual field, is complete. It has no holes except books you read and soon forget. And death takes us by storm. What was that, that life? What else offered? If for him it was contract bridge, if for her it was copyright law, if for everyone it was and is an optimal mix of family and friends, learning, contribution, and joy of making and ameliorating what else is there, or was there, or will there ever be?

What else is a vision or fact of time and the peoples it bears issuing from the mouth of the cosmos, from the round mouth of eternity, in a wide and parti-colored utterance. In the complex weave of this utterance like fabric, in its infinite domestic interstices, the centuries and continents and classes dwell. Each people knows only its own squares in the weave, its wars and instruments and arts, and also the starry sky.

Okay, and then what? Say you scale your own weft and see time's breadth and the length of space. You see the way the fabric both passes among the stars and encloses them. You see in the weave nearby, and aslant farther off, the peoples variously scandalized or exalted in their squares. They work on their projects; they flake spear points, hoe, plant; they kill aurochs or one another; they prepare sacrifices as we here and now work on our projects. What, seeing this spread, multiply infinitely in every direction, would you do differently? No one could love your children more; would you love them less? Would you change your project? To what? Whatever you do, it has likely brought delight to fewer people than either contract bridge or the Red Sox.

However hypnotized you and your people are, you will be just as dead in their war, our war. However dead you are, more people will come. However many more people come, your time and its passions, and yourself and your passions, weigh

equally in the balance with those of any dead who pulled waterwheel poles by the Nile or Yellow rivers, or painted their foreheads black, or starved in the wilderness, or wasted from disease then or now. Our lives and our deaths count equally, or we must abandon one-man-one-vote, dismantle democracy, and assign six billion people an importance-of-life ranking from one to six billion, a ranking whose number decreases, like gravity, with the square of the distance between us and them.

What would you do differently, you up on your beanstalk looking at scenes of all peoples at all times in all places? When you climb down, would you dance any less to the music you love, knowing that music to be as provisional as a bug? Somebody has to make jugs and shoes, to turn the soil, fish. If you descend the long rope-ladders back to your people and time in the fabric, if you tell them what you have seen, and even if someone cares to listen, then what? Everyone knows times and cultures are plural. If you come back a shrugging relativist or tongue-tied absolutist, then what? If you spend hours a day looking around, high astraddle the warp or woof of your people's wall, then what new wisdom can you take to your grave for worms to untangle? Well, maybe you will not go into advertising.

Then you would know your own death better but perhaps not dread it less. Try to bring people up the wall, carry children to see it to what end? Fewer golf courses? What is wrong with golf? Nothing at all. Equality of wealth? Sure; how?

The woman watching sheep over there, the man who carries embers in a pierced clay ball, the engineer, the girl who spins wool into yarn as she climbs, the smelter, the babies learning to recognize speech in their own languages, the man whipping a slave's flayed back, the man digging roots, the woman digging roots, the child digging roots—what would you tell them? And the future people, what are they doing? What excitements sweep peoples here and there from time to time? Into the muddy river they go, into the trenches, into the caves, into the mines, into the granary, into the sea in boats. Most humans who were ever alive lived inside one single culture that never changed for hundreds of thousands of years; archaeologists scratch their heads at so conservative and static a culture.

Over here, the rains fail; they are starving. There, the caribou fail; they are starving. Corrupt leaders take the wealth. Not only there but here. Rust and smut spoil the rye. When pigs and cattle starve or freeze, people die soon after. Disease empties a sector, a billion sectors.

People look at the sky and at the other animals. They make beautiful objects, beautiful sounds, beautiful motions of their bodies, beating drums in lines. They pray; they toss people in peat bogs; they help the sick and injured; they pierce their lips, their noses, ears; they make the same mistakes despite religion, written language, philosophy, and science; they build, they kill, they preserve, they count and figure, they boil the pot, they keep the embers alive; they tell their stories and gird themselves.

Will knowledge you experience directly make you a Buddhist? Must you forfeit excitement per se? To what end?

Say you have seen something. You have seen an ordinary bit of what is real, the infinite fabric of time that eternity shoots through, and time's soft-skinned people working and dying under slowly shifting stars. Then what?

Topics for Writing and Discussion

1. In a well-developed paragraph, summarize what you think is the point of Dillard's essay.
2. In a short paper, define what you think would be the "best life" you think a person today could live.
3. How do you see yourself living in twenty years? What will you be doing? Where will you be living? What will your society look like?

CHAPTER 3

Structuring

Too often, novice writers move from the invention to the drafting stage of their writing without interruption. After an exhaustive process of brainstorming or list making, the details of the project should be ready to be employed—yet many writers stall at precisely this point in the process, staring at a blank screen or embarking on a freewriting exercise. However, the writer has skipped an integral stage of the writing process—structuring the project. The structuring stage provides the map—the key elements of the project, such as the thesis statement and discussion points—which anchors the composition and eliminates the panic that often comes when trying to figure out how to proceed.

Think of a construction blueprint. Can you start a building without knowing where the supports or the plumbing will go? A related metaphor might be to consider the scaffolding surrounding a building under construction—visible while the building takes shape but easily removed after construction is completed. For writers, the structuring stage functions much the same way; whether you use an outline, a proposal, or some other form of "map," you are placing the key ideas you have invented into a logical order before proceeding with the actual draft.

It is important to remember that structural tools, such as outlines, are flexible and designed to adjust to the shape of your original ideas. There is no prescription to follow, no neat formula designed to replicate an "out-of-the-box" composition, such as an essay; rather, the structure should replicate your own thought process and provide logical places to reinforce your major points with supporting details (all products of your successful invention stage).

To begin structuring your paper, draw on your invention material to craft a *working thesis statement* and *main discussion points*. Once you have those, you can move onto two key structuring strategies: writing an *outline* and/or writing a *proposal*.

Elements of Structure

As you develop the structure of your paper, begin thinking in terms of two key structural elements: your *thesis*, which defines what you want to say, and your *discussion points*, which define the support of that thesis. By writing a good thesis and then arranging your ideas and research under your discussion points, you will find that the work of drafting your paper becomes much easier.

Pretend for a moment your writing is a human skeleton. Once your work is completed and you give it to the world, your writing needs to stand on its own. You might see the thesis statement as the head of your project, the guiding force behind your composition. The related discussion points might serve as the vertebrae or the spine of your skeleton—the backbone of your ideas. Moving forward with your project without these elements would be akin to animating a pool of jelly. The writing will have difficulty holding its shape, let alone standing on its own.

These analogies are intended to help you to see the key elements of writing in a different context. Many of us tend to have difficulty verbalizing our ideas; we prefer visual images. The structuring stage will help you see your ideas in an organized pattern.

The Working Thesis

Most college writers are familiar with the idea of a thesis statement as part of the introductory paragraph. It is a specific statement of what your writing project will discuss, argue, or accomplish, and it is an important part of preparing a reader for your finished paper. The thesis statement provides guidance for your readers, as it gives them a general overview of your paper and helps them notice the major points you are making. A good thesis helps your reader feel that everything fits together.

However, before you write your introduction and before you consider the thesis statement that will appear in your final paper, it is helpful to think in terms of a *working thesis*. A working thesis is still a road map, but it is a road map for your benefit that gives you a plan for moving forward with your paper. It is a road map that will likely be revised as your paper develops in order to better reflect the changing landscape of your essay, although it will rarely be the thesis statement that appears in your final paper.

From Topic to Thesis

In the invention stage of your writing, you have probably come up with many great ideas about your topic. In crafting a working thesis, you will in essence set boundaries within that topic that define what your specific paper will do. Such boundaries will help you know which information will take you down useful paths and which information will lead off to dead ends (or whole other maps). The process of defining a thesis is one of moving from the broad topic, with which you began your invention phase, toward a very specific statement of what you will actually do in your writing project. It is a process of moving from the general to the specific, and it will require you to ask a lot of important questions about what your writing project will accomplish.

For example, you might have begun your invention stage knowing that you were interested in writing about food—especially your favorite food, avocados. Through the process of inquiry and invention, you might have narrowed down your broad topic to a more specific idea about avocados and personal health and then ended up with a possible statement, such as the following: *Avocados are a healthy food, but many avoid them because of their high fat content*. Ideas you could use to develop this thought might include the following points.

- Saturated Versus Unsaturated Fat
- Vitamin Content
- Fiber Content
- Public Perceptions of Fat
- Low-Fat Product Sales
- The Impact of the Diet Industry on Food Sales
- Avocado Farming
- The Importance of Avocados in Mexican History
- The Cost of Avocados

In order to turn your statement and the most related ideas into a working thesis, you will need to start by thinking about your audience and what you want to offer them. Are you interested in showing a *comparison* between avocados and a more commonly understood "healthy" food in order to demonstrate the health benefits of avocados? Are you more interested in *informing* your audience, through *description* of the situation, about the way perceptions of fat have changed? Or are you more interested in an *analysis* of why a food that has health benefits is considered unhealthy because of its fat content—what is it about fat content that makes people nervous? Arriving at your working thesis will involve more invention and digging into the material you developed in your invention stage in order to notice connections and

important details. For example, to develop an idea about the connections between a common healthy food—such as a low-fat granola bar—and avocados, we could do some further research on the similarities and differences between these products (Table 3.1).

Low-Fat Granola Bar	Half an Avocado
90 calories	160 calories
2 g fat	15 g fat
1 g fiber	7 g fiber
7 g sugar	0 g sugar
Preservatives and "nonfood" ingredients	No preservatives
Some versions with artificial sugar	Nothing artificial
Not a significant source of vitamins	Vitamins A, C, B-6, B-12, iron, magnesium
0.5 g trans fats	Unsaturated fat, shown to help aid absorption of vitamins

Table 3.1: Low-Fat Granola Bar Versus Avocado

See Chapter 3 >

Other intervention strategies might leave us with the following observations.

- The association between "low fat" and "healthy" appears on the marketing/boxes for low-fat foods, so it seems to be something that probably helps their sales.
- "Fat" (the macronutrient found in foods) sounds the same as "fat" (the subcutaneous adipose tissues in our bodies), which might confuse people worried about fat (the macronutrient).
- Low-fat processed foods are particularly marketed toward women, so fear of fat might be tied to gender in particular. Ideals of healthy eating have vacillated between low sugar and low fat.

Armed with these further invention resources, you can move on to the work of crafting a working thesis.

Crafting Your Thesis

As you develop your ideas into a clear road map of your project, it is important to keep in mind some basic guidelines about what makes a good thesis statement. A thesis statement should:

- be narrow;
- join a conversation;
- describe what your essay will do; and
- be contestable.

Further, you must avoid fallacious reasoning (See Appendix 2: Common Informal Fallacies). Here are a few suggestions to make your thesis sentence work for you and not against you.

Avoid the obvious. While you want to make it clear to your audience what you intend to do, never say, "In this paper I will . . ." or "It is my opinion that . . . " Statements like this are dull, plodding, and unsubtle. Make your wording original and fresh.

Be direct and forceful in stating your opinion without alienating the reader.

Make it clear that you are taking a stand and are allied with a certain position. Do not, however, say, "It is my opinion that . . .". The reader will know the opinions in the essay are yours. Phrasing a sentence thus only makes for another dull and plodding sentence. If the ideas are not yours, they must be correctly documented.

Make sure your thesis sentence indicates your paper's organization.

If you have, for example, three characteristics of excellence in teachers to discuss, mention each briefly in the thesis sentence, and mention them in the order you wish to discuss them in the body of the paper. This method of organization creates confidence in the reader regarding your ability to be clear, logical, and organized from the outset.

Make certain the length of your sentence is appropriate for the length of your paper. A 3.-word thesis statement is too long for a 600-word essay. Your introductory paragraph should not consist only of a thesis. This paragraph introduces your thesis as well as the entire essay.

The thesis statement should be ONE SENTENCE ONLY. A compound sentence is okay, but do not make it merely a string of independent clauses or a rambling sentence.

Finally, never hesitate to revise your thesis statement at any stage in drafting your essay if you feel you can improve it. Even though it may mean additional adjustments in the body of the essay, your extra effort will usually pay off. You should make at least two revisions.

Sample Thesis Statements

1. Although avocados are high in fat, their high fiber content, vitamin content, and the type of fat they contain make them a good part of a healthy diet.
2. While many people eat "low-fat" foods thinking they are healthful, many low-fat foods are high in sugar and low in vitamins, making them less healthy than a high-fat, whole-plant food such as avocados.
3. The public perception of avocados as unhealthy because of their high fat content is indicative of a general fear of fat in Western culture.

Activity 3.1

Pick one of the following topics, brainstorm it, narrow it, and write out a thesis statement.

High school versus college, siblings, first jobs, video games, social media sites, favorite teachers, bad drivers, sports heroes, belief, comedy.

Discussion Points

Discussion points are the main points you will make in your essay, and they will generally become your *topic sentences* as you move into the drafting stage. To develop your discussion points, you simply need to return to your thesis and your invention material. Developing your thesis should already have given you a good handle on the points you want to make, so this stage will involve laying out those points and deciding where you will give supporting description, evidence, and analysis. Developing your discussion points will, again, draw on some of the invention tools discussed in Chapter 3. Examples of potential strategies for developing your discussion points include the following.

- Listing pieces of evidence/observations as they fit under the main points outlined in your thesis
- Writing down important facts or quotations about your topic and then engaging in some analysis of why the points are important
- Freewriting to see what connections and observations you can make

As you develop your discussion points, make sure you are very clear about how each point relates to your working thesis. If you find a point that you think needs development but that does not fit into the boundaries defined by your working thesis, then either drop that point or change your thesis to better reflect your new understanding. Finally, keep in mind that discussion points will be developed into topic sentences, so they should not be facts or specific details but generalizations and opinions that you will support and prove within your paragraphs.

Structuring Strategies

There are many different ways to think about structuring your paper, and you should experiment to see what works for you. Most beginning writers find the process of developing an outline to be very useful as a way to visualize their writing project. Again, an outline is like a map, showing a traveler where he is headed, or like a blueprint, showing a builder where everything will go in a project. Another structuring strategy, which many writers approach after completing an outline, is the proposal.

The Outline

While the word *outline* itself provokes scurrilous mutterings and utter contempt from most composition students, it need not be treated as an adversarial force to be conquered or endured. It must, however, be done *before you write the essay*, not after. Once you become familiar enough with the benefits of outlining, you might discover it is the most critical step in all the prewriting stages. The outline functions much like the blueprints of an architectural project. It is the framework on which to build your essay. You must overcome the tendency to resist this key step in the stage of writing, for, regardless of which rhetorical mode you select for your essay, good planning is essential. Likewise, poor planning is quickly evident. The value is endless for the writer as well as the reader. Consider the following advantages.

- For the writer, the outline encourages brevity.
- An outline can keep you from violating unity by indicating that an idea does not belong. At the same time, the outline will often suggest that some additional idea might be included.
- The outline can ensure that important ideas are placed in the appropriate places according to relative value.
- An outline's format allows you to check for stylistic consistency, continuity, and clarity.
- Outlines keep you focused on the separate ideas and let you actually **visualize** the level of generality among your ideas. Your ideas in the outline format are simply easier to see.
- Finally, the outline will provide you with a psychological boost. Having succeeded in organizing your ideas logically, you enjoy a sense of accomplishment that should allow you to move on to the next writing stage with increased confidence.

Consider again, despite the examples that follow, that the outline is *a flexible form*—which is to say it can adapt and change to your ideas, to the structure of your project—not the other way around.

There are two basic outline forms—the *topic outline* and the *sentence outline*. Regardless of the assignment, you will want to consider using both forms at strategic stages in the prewriting phase. You might use a topic outline when your grasp over your paper is still in its infancy and then move toward a sentence outline as your ideas necessitate further specificity. Now that your purpose is clear, your audience is designated, and you have a workable thesis clearly in mind, it is time to impose the standard outline system of organization on your thoughts. The following system is the universal format for outlining ideas (Figure 3.1).

Thesis

I. [First discussion point related to thesis statement]
(Note: The old adage "If you have a 1, you must have a 2" is a valid point. The same holds true of any subheading or level of development. A good rule to remember is that a pair is the required minimum.)
   A.
      1.
         a.
         b.
         c.
      2.
         a.
         b.
         c.
   B.
      1.
         a.
         b.
         c.
      2.
         a.
         b.
         c.

II. [Second discussion point related to thesis statement]
   A. [etc.]

Figure 3.1: Outlining Format

Each Roman numeral is a major division of the thesis of the essay, and each of the subheadings, capital letters, Arabic numerals, and lowercase letters hold more specific information that develops each division (paragraph). Again, the exact usage of letters and numbers is far less important than the shape the structure provides your writing project.

Topic Outline Versus Sentence Outline

The topic outline is helpful in the preliminary organization of the essay when you want to determine the main points of your discussion and the order in which you will discuss them. Each entry in a topic outline is just what the term implies: a topic heading, much like a title, not a complete sentence, but a "bare-bones" phrase. The topic outline delineates the areas to be discussed but does not yet deal with what specifically will be said about them. Even at the topic outline level, however, you should be grammatically consistent. If you want to use nouns, nouns plus a verb form, or prepositional phrases, make certain you use them at each letter or number level in order to create a *parallel structure*. This consistency will assist you later when transforming your topic outline to the body paragraphs of the essay. The following is a topic outline for a paper on what makes a good teacher (Figure 3.2).

Good Teachers

Thesis: A good teacher respects students, has a personal interest in them, and motivates them to do their best.

I. Respect for students
   - A. Considerate
     1. Tactful
     2. Nonridiculing
     3. Patient
     4. Nonpatronizing
   - B. Fair
     1. Flexible
     2. Fair in testing
     3. Objective in grading
     4. No favoritism
   - C. Values students' contributions
     1. Compliments students' work
     2. Praises student involvement

Figure 3.2: Sample Outline—Good Teachers

Whether it is used initially or instead of the topic outline, the sentence outline requires more effort. You will still be required to list, categorize, and order your ideas by relative importance. This time, however, you must write your thoughts in *complete sentences*. The biggest advantage of a sentence outline is that you are, in fact, composing sentences that will find their way into your actual project or paper. (You are in fact writing part of it.) The first stage of a sentence outline might look like the sample in Figure 3.3.

I. Good teachers respect their students.
   A. They are considerate of their students.
      1. They criticize them tactfully.
      2. They do not ridicule them or embarrass them.
      3. They are patient with them.
      4. They never patronize their students.
   B. They treat their students fairly.
      1. They are flexible and open-minded.
      2. Their tests are fair.
      3. They grade objectively and consistently.
      4. They do not have favorites.
   C. They show that they value the contributions of everyone in the class.
      1. They compliment their students on their work.
      2. They praise students for their involvement even when they disagree with students' opinions.
II. (etc.)

Figure 3.3: Sentence Outline

A hint about outlining: regardless of which outline form you use, it is a good idea to write down all the headings/sentences for the first level of organization (i.e., the Roman numerals) before going on to the next level (i.e., the capital letters and all the capital letter headings). Doing so helps keep the levels of development, the subtopics, and details clear. With this systematic organizational plan behind you, you can now concentrate on the next phase, drafting.

Activity 3.2

Arrange the following sentences in order, putting the number of the sentence in the proper place in the outline. Remember to look specifically for levels of generality.

1. The staff greets each diner with the traditional "ma'am" or "sir" and treats her or him with the utmost respect and dignity.
2. They treat everyone as if they are life-long friends, greeting patrons with "Hey! How's it going?"
3. When dining at the classy Pappadeaux, each patron is greeted by an exquisitely dressed staff.
4. Although the service is impeccable at both Pappadeaux and Joe's Crab Shack, the manner in which one is served varies greatly.
5. In contrast, it is much more relaxed at Joe's Crab Shack.
6. The entire staff wears t-shirts and shorts or jeans.
7. The waitstaff is clad in black slacks, white tuxedo shirts, and classic bow ties.

I. Topic sentence: _____

A. _____

1. _____

2. _____

B. _____

1. _____

2. _____

Activity 3.3

Construct an appropriate topic sentence for a paragraph based on the evidence given in the following sentences.

1. Topic sentence: _____
   a. Kate's toys always seem to be misplaced.
   b. She is usually late for dinner.
   c. She sometimes forgets her homework assignments.
   d. Her room, despite her mother's pleadings, is a mess.
2. Topic sentence: _____
   a. Colleen is always available to talk to her friends about their problems.
   b. Colleen never judges anyone.
   c. She is dependable and reliable.
   d. Colleen is very trustworthy.
3. Topic sentence: _____
   a. I once forgot to feed my kids' parakeet, and it died.
   b. One rainy day I accidentally ran over my dog Fido.
   c. Even goldfish turn white and float on their backs at my house.
   d. My pet iguana jumped off the roof and impaled himself on a metal rod.
4. Topic sentence: _____
   a. Bubba dips snuff and wears boots and tight Wrangler jeans.
   b. He drives an extended-cab pickup truck.
   c. Bubba's belt buckle is larger than his truck's chrome rims.
   d. He has nothing but contempt for any kind of music other than country and western.
5. Topic sentence: _____
   a. Over 26 percent of all traffic accidents are linked to drivers' negligence while talking on their phones.
   b. A driver's attention is diverted from the road for a minimum of five seconds each time she sends or receives a text.
   c. Cell phones constantly ring at inappropriate times and disturb other people in public places.
   d. Accidents while texting and walking occur more often than texting and driving.

The Proposal

A *proposal* is a common tool for planning a larger project; it may be used in a business or academic setting in order to introduce and develop a plan for moving forward. Completing a proposal for a writing project might be a step that you take either before or after completing an outline, and it consists primarily of developing your thesis and further defining your project, your main discussion points, and your plan for moving forward. Figure 3.3.on page 68 is a sample proposal. As you write a proposal, consider your thesis as the starting point—it defines your subject and gives a broad idea of your focus—and then further define your project with some of these questions.

What is your purpose in writing? (Are you attempting to change your readers' minds? Are you just informing them about your topic? What kind of audience response would be ideal?)

Why does it matter?

What are your most important points?

What sources, including your own experience, do you already have to make your points?

What kind of sources and research would be helpful for you to find?

How does your writing project fit into a larger conversation? How is what you are saying similar to what others have said? How is it different? What do you add?

What do you hope to learn through this writing project?

Thesis: The public perception of avocados as unhealthy because of their high fat content is indicative of a general fear of fat in Western culture.

This paper will analyze the reasons people avoid avocados, focusing on the fear of their fat content. So far, I think the main reason people avoid avocados is that the diet industry has placed a lot of focus on the danger of fat, leading people to think eating *any* fat is bad for you. I'll also talk about ignorance among consumers who don't understand the difference between saturated fat and unsaturated fat. Finally, I think part of the problem is that "fat" can mean both the nutrient in food *and* the stuff on our body doctors say can be unhealthy. This could connect to nutrition discussions of what actually leads to obesity and increased fat deposits, but also to a discussion of body positivity in US culture.

I will need to do an analysis of some weight-loss advertisements in order to look at the way they talk about fat. I will also need to look for literature that talks about public perceptions of fat. If I can't find discussions of whether consumers know what saturated versus unsaturated fat means, I might need to do a survey. Journals that talk about nutrition and health will also be important for showing possible health benefits people miss out on by being afraid of good fats.

There is a larger conversation about whether fat or sugar is the bigger problem in public health, with many nutritionists focused more on sugar. So looking at the reasons why many people are still wary of avocados would be a good way to begin helping nutritionists understand how to reach Americans and get them to eat the healthiest possible diet.

Figure 3.3. Sample Proposal

Activity 3.3

Rewrite each of the following sentences, narrowing the subject and limiting the focus of each so they can serve as effective topic sentences for paragraphs. Compare and discuss with your group.

1. Ted is a fascinating man.
2. Houston drivers are bad.
3. My friend Juan is weird.
4. Teens today face many challenges.
5. My parents' taste in music sucks.
6. I need a new car.
7. Online classes are quite helpful.
8. High school, when compared to college, was a real drag.
9. A girlfriend/boyfriend is awfully expensive.
10. Living in an apartment is more fun than living at home.

Activity 3.5

Take one of the topic sentences you generated in the above activity and write a 200-300-word paragraph.

Final Word

When this text was first conceived, one of the most important steps was structuring the chapters. The decision to break the chapters down into discrete stages of the writing process was a conscious choice and needed to be made before any of the chapters were written. Beginning writers do not spend enough time on the steps needed to complete a writing project and, therefore, experience difficulties diagnosing what is wrong with a composition and how to fix it—perhaps because writing instruction has historically been wedded to the idea of the *finished product.*

Once structured as a "process manual," we then took further structural steps to outline the individual chapters so we might in greater detail expand from broad steps

in the writing process to specific techniques and methods employed within each stage. Organizing our efforts this way enabled us to work as a team of authors—working collaboratively toward a common goal—with authors tackling topics best suited to their expertise.

Very few beginning writers employ a discrete "structuring" stage in their writing process. However, you should realize that by engaging in this stage, you have in fact already started the composition process—the actual writing of your project. The ideas taken from the invention stage become placeholders as topics in a topic outline. These, in turn, become sentences as part of a sentence outline and undergo a slow but identifiable transformation, moving from general concepts to more specific statements. Developing these specific points will help your project because it is a process of testing (or interrogating) your whole project. Ideas that survive this process will be worthy of keeping. You will also find that these ideas, such as your thesis and key discussion points, are also now the best sentences in your paper (having been tested and probably rewritten), and the further expansion of them will become much easier as a result.

With these key sentences in place, and with your roadmap charted out, you are now ready to explore your ideas further in the actual draft.

Our Vanishing Night

Verlyn Klinkenborg

Verlyn Klinkenborg is a writer of nonfiction who has taught creative writing at a number of colleges as well as Harvard University. In addition to many books, he has written articles for magazines such as *The New Yorker*, *Harper's Magazine*, and *The New York Times*, for which he contributed a regular column called The Rural Life from 1997 to 2013. He lives on a farm in upstate New York. The following essay was published in *National Geographic* in November of 2008.

Klinkenborg's essay, about light pollution and the loss to nocturnal creatures and to ourselves of darkness and the night sky, is clearly structured. Following an introductory paragraph, he states his thesis at the beginning of the second paragraph and then goes on to develop it in three sections: the first about how we humans have altered the night sky over the past several centuries (paragraphs 2, 3, 3. and 5), the second about the effects of light pollution on birds, insects, and turtles (paragraphs 6, 7, 8, and 9), and the third about the effects of light pollution on us, humans (paragraphs 10, 11, 12, and 13). In the concluding paragraph, he says "light pollution causes us to lose sight of our true place in the universe."

If humans were truly at home under the light of the moon and stars, we would go in darkness happily, the midnight world as visible to us as it is to the vast number of nocturnal species on this planet. Instead, we are diurnal creatures, with eyes adapted to living in the sun's light. This is a basic evolutionary fact, even though most of us don't think of ourselves as diurnal beings any more than we think of ourselves as primates or mammals or Earthlings. Yet it's the only way to explain what we've done to the night: We've engineered it to receive us by filling it with light.

This kind of engineering is no different than damming a river. Its benefits come with consequences—called light pollution—whose effects scientists are only now beginning to study. Light pollution is largely the result of bad lighting design, which allows artificial light to shine outward and upward into the sky, where it's not wanted, instead of focusing it downward, where it is. Ill-designed lighting washes out the darkness of night and radically alters the light levels—and light rhythms—to which many forms of life, including ourselves, have adapted. Wherever human light spills into the natural world, some aspect of life—migration, reproduction, feeding—is affected.

For most of human history, the phrase "light pollution" would have made no sense. Imagine walking toward London on a moonlit night around 1800, when it was Earth's most populous city. Nearly a million people lived there, making do, as they always had, with candles and rushlights and torches and lanterns. Only a few houses were lit by gas, and there would be no public gaslights in the streets or squares for

another seven years. From a few miles away, you would have been as likely to *smell* London as to see its dim collective glow.

Now most of humanity lives under intersecting domes of reflected, refracted light, of scattering rays from overlit cities and suburbs, from light-flooded highways and factories. Nearly all of nighttime Europe is a nebula of light, as is most of the United States and all of Japan. In the south Atlantic the glow from a single fishing fleet—squid fishermen luring their prey with metal halide lamps—can be seen from space, burning brighter, in fact, than Buenos Aires or Rio de Janeiro.

In most cities the sky looks as though it has been emptied of stars, leaving behind a vacant haze that mirrors our fear of the dark and resembles the urban glow of dystopian science fiction. We've grown so used to this pervasive orange haze that the original glory of an unlit night—dark enough for the planet Venus to throw shadows on Earth—is wholly beyond our experience, beyond memory almost. And yet above the city's pale ceiling lies the rest of the universe, utterly undiminished by the light we waste—a bright shoal of stars and planets and galaxies, shining in seemingly infinite darkness.

We've lit up the night as if it were an unoccupied country, when nothing could be further from the truth. Among mammals alone, the number of nocturnal species is astonishing. Light is a powerful biological force, and on many species it acts as a magnet, a process being studied by researchers such as Travis Longcore and Catherine Rich, co-founders of the Los Angeles-based Urban Wildlands Group. The effect is so powerful that scientists speak of songbirds and seabirds being "captured" by searchlights on land or by the light from gas flares on marine oil platforms, circling and circling in the thousands until they drop. Migrating at night, birds are apt to collide with brightly lit tall buildings; immature birds on their first journey suffer disproportionately.

Insects, of course, cluster around streetlights, and feeding at those insect clusters is now ingrained in the lives of many bat species. In some Swiss valleys the European lesser horseshoe bat began to vanish after streetlights were installed, perhaps because those valleys were suddenly filled with light-feeding pipistrelle bats. Other nocturnal mammals—including desert rodents, fruit bats, opossums, and badgers—forage more cautiously under the permanent full moon of light pollution because they've become easier targets for predators.

Some birds—blackbirds and nightingales, among others—sing at unnatural hours in the presence of artificial light. Scientists have determined that long artificial days—and artificially short nights—induce early breeding in a wide range of birds. And because a longer day allows for longer feeding, it can also affect migration schedules. One population of Bewick's swans wintering in England put on fat more rapidly than usual, priming them to begin their Siberian migration early. The problem, of course, is that migration, like most other aspects of bird behavior, is a

precisely timed biological behavior. Leaving early may mean arriving too soon for nesting conditions to be right.

Nesting sea turtles, which show a natural predisposition for dark beaches, find fewer and fewer of them to nest on. Their hatchlings, which gravitate toward the brighter, more reflective sea horizon, find themselves confused by artificial lighting behind the beach. In Florida alone, hatchling losses number in the hundreds of thousands every year. Frogs and toads living near brightly lit highways suffer nocturnal light levels that are as much as a million times brighter than normal, throwing nearly every aspect of their behavior out of joint, including their nighttime breeding choruses.

Of all the pollutions we face, light pollution is perhaps the most easily remedied. Simple changes in lighting design and installation yield immediate changes in the amount of light spilled into the atmosphere and, often, immediate energy savings.

It was once thought that light pollution only affected astronomers, who need to see the night sky in all its glorious clarity. And, in fact, some of the earliest civic efforts to control light pollution—in Flagstaff, Arizona, half a century ago—were made to protect the view from Lowell Observatory, which sits high above that city. Flagstaff has tightened its regulations since then, and in 2001 it was declared the first International Dark Sky City. By now the effort to control light pollution has spread around the globe. More and more cities and even entire countries, such as the Czech Republic, have committed themselves to reducing unwanted glare.

Unlike astronomers, most of us may not need an undiminished view of the night sky for our work, but like most other creatures we do need darkness. Darkness is as essential to our biological welfare, to our internal clockwork, as light itself. The regular oscillation of waking and sleep in our lives—one of our circadian rhythms—is nothing less than a biological expression of the regular oscillation of light on Earth. So fundamental are these rhythms to our being that altering them is like altering gravity.

For the past century or so, we've been performing an open-ended experiment on ourselves, extending the day, shortening the night, and short-circuiting the human body's sensitive response to light. The consequences of our bright new world are more readily perceptible in less adaptable creatures living in the peripheral glow of our prosperity. But for humans, too, light pollution may take a biological toll. At least one new study has suggested a direct correlation between higher rates of breast cancer in women and the nighttime brightness of their neighborhoods.

In the end, humans are no less trapped by light pollution than the frogs in a pond near a brightly lit highway. Living in a glare of our own making, we have cut ourselves off from our evolutionary and cultural patrimony—the light of the stars and the rhythms of day and night. In a very real sense, light pollution causes us to lose sight of our true place in the universe, to forget the scale of our being, which

is best measured against the dimensions of a deep night with the Milky Way—the edge of our galaxy—arching overhead.

Topics for Writing and Discussion

1. This essay recounts a type of pollution we do not normally discuss, light pollution. It details the effects of this pollution on various life forms, particularly those adapted to darkness. For images of earth at night, go to the NASA site *Visible Earth*. The International Dark Sky Association's website lists "dark-sky" parks and places where one can go to experience the night sky. If you live in a large city, as most of us do, you almost never experience the night sky. Do you agree with Klinkenborg that we are "trapped by light pollution" and have lost "sight of our true place in the universe"? Explain.
2. Do a search of the internet for the effects of light pollution on humans, and write a report on your findings. Be sure to cite your sources and avoid plagiarism.

CHAPTER 4
Drafting

The next step after structuring is the drafting stage, which is the stage of the writing process that most of us imagine when we think about writing. Here is where we take all of our ideas and begin to record them in sentences and paragraphs in order to construct a paper. But it is important to understand drafting as a stage. Drafting builds on the structuring work you did in the last chapter; neither drafting nor structuring is a single entity, but each contains its own process.

Most writers draft in pieces, putting together paragraphs as they are ready to and revising paragraphs as they write more. For this reason, it can sometimes be especially helpful to do your drafting out of order. This chapter will suggest that you begin by developing your body paragraphs based on the thesis and discussion points that you have chosen. As you write, you might find that your ideas develop and change, so we recommend that you postpone writing your introduction and conclusion paragraphs until you have largely finished with the body of your essay.

Body Paragraphs

While student writers often begin their draft with the introduction, most experienced writers have an easier time when they begin their draft in the middle. Try beginning your draft somewhere in the middle by developing your first body paragraph based on the invention and planning you have already done.

One of the most difficult tasks you face as a writer is remembering that the reader is not inside your head. So ideas that seem clear to you probably need to be developed in much more detail in order to make sense to someone else. Everything you say, even something that seems obvious to you, needs to be supported and developed through the paragraphs in your writing project.

Remember that if your thesis alone were enough, there would be no need to engage in a larger writing project. The goal is to develop and elaborate on the discussion points brought up in your thesis statement so that your audience can understand

and accept the validity of your ideas. For them to do that, your ideas need to be logically arranged and appropriately developed.

As you already know, we develop our ideas in blocks of prose called paragraphs. What you might not know is that the word *paragraph* is derived from two Greek words—*para*, meaning "beside" or "alongside of," and *graph*, from the Greek word for "to write." The word evolved from the practice of Greek scholars who, when confronted with early texts of the *Iliad*, wrote notes in the large margins of the original scrolls to indicate such things as shifts in speakers. Today, paragraphs help readers navigate long blocks of prose. Readers expect paragraphs to be unified, coherent, and sufficiently developed.

Paragraph Unity

Within a larger writing project, you can think of your paragraph as a basic unit of meaning. Each paragraph works to develop and articulate a specific idea and should be unified around that idea. As you draft a paragraph, think about the way that every sentence builds on the previous one in order to make the point you want to make. Similarly, think about the way that each paragraph builds on the previous one in order to develop your thesis.

Within your paragraph, your goal should be to show how every sentence builds on the one that came before to create new meaning. This focus will give your paragraphs unity, and it will also keep you on task in writing a paper that effectively develops and supports your thesis statement. To keep your ideas focused and on topic, start with topic sentences.

Topic sentences are the sentences that begin each paragraph and provide the unifying idea that holds your paragraph together. Your topic sentences should develop your discussion points and should always refer back to your thesis. As you progress through the sentences in your paragraph, your goal should always be to make sure that your sentences all work together to develop the main unifying idea expressed in your topic sentence.

Activity 4.1

Each member of your group should read the following paragraph from Gloria E. Anzaldúa's "How to Tame a Wild Tongue." On a piece of paper, write out the topic sentence. Next write out three key sentences from the paragraph that link back to, or support, the topic sentence. Share and discuss with your group.

> Chicana feminists often skirt around each other with suspicion and hesitation. For the longest time I couldn't figure it out. Then it dawned on me. To be close to another Chicana is like looking into the mirror. We are afraid of what we'll see there. Pena. Shame. Low estimation of self. In childhood we are told that our language is wrong. Repeated attacks on our native tongue diminish our sense of self. The attacks continue throughout our lives. Chicanas feel uncomfortable talking in Spanish to Latinas, afraid of their censure. Their language was not outlawed in their countries. They had a whole lifetime of being immersed in their native tongue: generations, centuries in which Spanish was a first language, taught in school, heard on radio and TV, and read in the newspaper.

Paragraph Coherence

The sentences within each paragraph should cohere, stick together, so that the reader moves smoothly from one idea, one sentence, to another. To achieve this coherence, this smooth flow of ideas, writers use several techniques. One is the *repetition of key words and phrases* throughout the paragraph. This repetition, such as pronouns that refer back to nouns, keeps the reader focused on the main point of the paragraph. A second technique is to use *parallel sentence structures* for parallel points within the paragraph, again providing coherence and flow to the paragraph. A third technique often used by writers is to insert *transitional devices* (words or phrases) to help readers navigate the logical sequence of ideas within the paragraph.

For example, note the *repetition of key words and pronouns* in the following student paragraph.

> Since I've been working as a cashier at Wal-Mart, I've discovered there are several kinds of **customers** who drive me crazy. First are the openly rude **ones**. **They** frown and make loud, sarcastic remarks about how long the line is and how long **they**'ve been waiting. **They** throw their money on the counter and never say hello or acknowledge me as anything but human scum. I'm embarrassed for myself, but I'm also embarrassed for **them**. Second are the silent but obviously impatient

> **customers**. **They** make faces, roll **their** eyes, and look at **their** watches every ten seconds. What do **they** expect? This is Wal-Mart; there are always lines. The third kind is really my least favorite: suspicious **customers** who watch my every move as if my goal in life is to overcharge **them**. **They** turn the monitor so **they** can see every price, but that's not enough. After looking at the price there, **they** lean over the counter toward me and look at what price comes up on the register. Then **their** heads snap back to look at the monitor. **They** clearly don't trust me and are just waiting for me to make a mistake, at which point **they** will jump all over me. This kind of **customer** makes me nervous and a lot more likely to mess up. If you are one of these three kinds of **customers**, remember me next time you're at Wal-Mart; I'm the one just trying to do my job, and you're driving me crazy!
>
> —Joyce Kenneally

Putting parallel ideas in parallel grammatical forms is another way to achieve paragraph coherence. The following is perhaps the most famous use of *parallel structure* in American history—Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, delivered on November 19, 1863:

> Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate—we cannot consecrate—we cannot hallow—this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

Next, using transitional words—such as *first, second, third, next, on the contrary,* and *in addition*—that signal additional or contrasting material within a paragraph is also a good way to help your reader follow your train of thought. They are like road signs pointing the reader in the right direction so he will not get lost while

navigating the paragraph. In addition, transitions between paragraphs help readers stay focused on the main thesis of your paper. Table 4.1 (page 82) shows some of the most commonly used transitional devices.

The following paragraph illustrates the use of one method of using transitional devices.

> People marry the wrong people for the wrong reasons. **Of course**, they seem to be the right people and the right reasons at the time the decision is made, but the trouble really begins here. **First**, many couples are too young when they marry. They meet in high school or college, "fall in love," which is really just lust, and know that they have found the person they are going to marry. **Next**, many young girls think that they are ready to marry, but many times they simply want to get out of their parents' house. The situation may involve abuse in some form or another, or the girl simply may not be getting along with her folks and sees marriage as a way out. She believes that if she can just make a home of her own everything will be fine. She looks on the young man as her salvation, and he begins to see himself in that role. **In addition**, she may also be pregnant. This situation always makes things worse for the young couple. The coming baby takes many choices away from the pair and adds many responsibilities that they are just not prepared to take on. **Finally**, there are financial burdens to be dealt with, such as hospital and doctor bills, as well as the burdens of trying to be parents when they themselves are little more than children. The frustration and the stress of all these burdens can be devastating to everyone concerned, which makes the situation all the more tragic.
>
> —Debbie Born

Activity 4.2

Type or write out the following paragraph on a piece of paper. Circle all the words (repetitions, synonyms, pronouns, transition words) that help to tie the sentences and ideas together. Share and discuss with your group.

> Finally, there is the power of the extended mind. There is also a developed body of research on how much our very consciousness is shaped by the people around us. Let me simplify it with a classic observation: Each close friend you have brings out a version of yourself that you could not bring out on your own. When your close friend dies, you are not only losing the friend, you are losing the version of your personality that she elicited. Once we acknowledge that, in life, we are playing soccer, not baseball, a few things become clear. First, awareness of the landscape of reality is the highest form of wisdom. It's not raw computational power that matters most; it's having a sensitive attunement to the widest environment, feeling where the flow of events is going. Genius is in practice perceiving more than the conscious reasoning.

Paragraph Development

Paragraphs can be developed in many ways. The thesis and main points you have set up will generally dictate the method you will use to develop, or flesh out, the body of your paragraphs. But no matter how organized and unified your ideas are, if they are not fully developed, you will have failed to communicate to your audience. Supporting evidence or examples come from the following.

- Your own experiences
- Hypothetical examples
- Research material
- Authoritative evidence
- Facts
- Just about any sound, reliable source

Many students ask, "What is enough support?" The answer is arbitrary, but some general guidelines apply. You want enough support to convince your audience that your argument is sound. Whose opinion, for example, is more likely to be accepted in a court of law: a defense attorney's claim that her client is innocent because the defendant's family and friends know he is innocent or the prosecuting attorney's claim that the defendant is guilty because of fourteen eyewitnesses and extensive forensic evidence? Valid evidence is convincing and supports opinions and observation. The same is true of paragraph development. You must provide enough information to convince readers that your argument is sound.

As a rule, the average length of a paragraph in a college-level essay might run approximately three-fourths of a typed page. While striving arduously for quantity, however, NEVER forget that quality is more important. The fact that Aunt Zona Gail believes men make better teachers than women is not the strong evidence you want to support your contentions about good teachers. But surveying students or speaking with teachers who have won awards or recognition for excellence in teaching would serve as appropriate proof.

In moving from topic sentence to supporting evidence in a paragraph, you are moving from general to specific. The order and progression of this movement is essential to effective paragraphs, and the outline is the most efficient method of making certain this progression occurs logically. This order ranks and demonstrates the levels of generality in a paragraph (Figure 4.1).

Thesis: Igor often failed to live up to his expectations. LEVEL ONE

I. [topic sentence—general statement] Igor was a poor student. LEVEL TWO
   A. [subtopic—less general] He was not conscientious. LEVEL THREE
      1. [example—specific] He never handed in assignments on time. LEVEL FOUR
         a. [more specific] He handed in his first English composition two weeks late. LEVEL FIVE

Figure 4.1: Levels of Generality

These levels constitute the arrangement of ideas in the paragraph, from general statement to specific examples. Always develop your ideas in the outline of your paragraph at least to level four. The logic behind this recommendation is that you most likely will have to reach level three before you can provide examples that are specific and concrete enough to persuade your readers of your general assertion (level one). In addition, the ideal number of level two or level three statements is three; that is, A, B, C and 1, 2, and 3. If you offer only two examples, you could risk sounding dogmatic and inflexible. Four or more examples under the same subtopic, however, suggest you wish to appeal emotionally to your readers. Some readers might cry out "Enough already!" There is such a thing as overkill, especially if your examples tend to be repetitive. You will not always be able to provide three examples, but the goal is a worthy one. Make sure you understand and can recognize the different levels so you can create good, effective outlines and, consequently, good paragraphs (Figure 4.2).

Thesis: Good teachers have certain qualities in common. LEVEL ONE

I. Good teachers respect their students. LEVEL TWO
   A. They are considerate of their students. LEVEL THREE
      1. They criticize them tactfully. LEVEL FOUR
         a. They always tell them something positive about their work along with giving suggestions on how to improve it. LEVEL FIVE

Figure 4.2: Developing Ideas

Sequence or Addition	
And	Besides
Again	Finally
Also	Furthermore
Too	In addition
Moreover	One . . . another
Next	First… second…third
Last	Still
Additionally	
Time Order	
At first	Afterword
Soon	At length
Earlier	At the same time
Before	Now
After	As soon as
Finally	Meanwhile
Then	In the meantime
Later	Until
Next	Immediately
During	Eventually
Subsequently	
Comparison	
Similarly	In comparison
Likewise	Also
By the same token	Additionally
Furthermore	Moreover
Contrast	
However	Nevertheless
But	Instead
Yet	Even though

Narrowing of Focus	
Definitely	Explicitly
After all	Specifically
In fact	That is
Indeed	In other words
In particular	Expressly
Conclusions	
In summary	Consequently
In conclusion	In other words
To conclude	Thus
Therefore	As a result
Concession	
Granted	Certainly
Naturally	Of course
Although it is true	Admittedly
Although you could say that	
Cause and Effect	
Hence	Then
Since	Thus
Therefore	As a result
Still	On the one hand
Notwithstanding	So
On the other hand	Accordingly
Nonetheless	In contrast
On the contrary	Although
Despite	Meanwhile
Conversely	
Example	
For example	Thus
To illustrate	Specifically
Especially	Explicitly
For instance	Namely

Table 4.1: Transitional Words

Finally, if your paragraph is a long one, you might consider including a summary sentence, a "clincher," to close your paragraph. The inclusion of such a sentence serves at least two purposes. First, it brings closure to the main idea of the paragraph, especially if you have provided extensive examples. Closure helps your audience by returning them to your central idea and reminding them of your specific intention in the paragraph. Second, the summary sentence is on the same level of generality as your topic sentence; therefore, it will make your task of bridging the connection between this paragraph and the next easier than it would be if you had to move from a very specific level of generality, a minor support statement, to a new topic sentence in a new paragraph. This final summary sentence "clinches" the discussion and emphasizes the main idea. Some writers prefer to provide in this final sentence some notion of what is to come in the next paragraph through some kind of transition device (Table 4.1).

There are many methods for developing your paragraphs. It all depends upon your purpose, your audience, and your topic. See Chapter 6 for many different ways to develop a paragraph—and a complete essay.

From Paragraph to Essay

When you understand the principles that constitute a good paragraph, you will understand the general organization of the essay. Remember that a paragraph is a miniature essay. Only the scope of a paragraph changes to meet the requirements of the essay. The system remains the same, but the form expands. Consider the diagram below, and note the simple changes that occur when the components of the paragraph are converted to the essay.

I. Topic sentence ***becomes*** Thesis statement
   A. Subtopic ***becomes*** I. Topic sentence
      1. Example ***becomes*** A. Subtopic
      2. Example ***becomes*** B. Subtopic
   B. Subtopic ***becomes*** II. Topic sentence
      1. Example ***becomes*** A. Subtopic
      2. Example ***becomes*** B. Subtopic
   C. Subtopic ***becomes*** III. Topic sentence

What is needed now in the essay is an additional level of development. Under the subtopics in the above essay format, you would add specific, supporting examples to complete the essential skeleton of the essay (i.e., add 1., 2., 3. under A. and B., etc.).

In general, most of your writing will have an introductory paragraph, usually three or more body paragraphs, and a concluding paragraph. But regardless of the length of the essay, the principles of organization remain the same.

Now you are ready to conclude the writing process by putting the finishing touches on your essay. This stage of your writing actually includes several steps. Having completed the heart of your thoughts in your body paragraphs (the middle), you now need to introduce those thoughts in an opening paragraph that includes your thesis and to conclude your discussion by offering closure. Although the techniques vary considerably regarding these two paragraphs, the primary function is to provide the framework for the ideas you convincingly present to your audience. This stage completes the writing phase.

Introductions

Many students are confused by the idea that they should save their introduction for last, but it can be a very useful strategy for writing effective introductions. The introduction, after all, serves as a way to introduce your thesis statement, your road map, to your audience. Although you have been writing with a working thesis in mind, you need to step back and make sure that the final thesis you develop in your introductory paragraph *actually matches* the topography of your paper. Writing it last helps ensure that your introduction serves its purpose well. You can think of your introductory paragraph as having three main functions.

- It sets the context by providing general information about your topic so that your reader will be able to understand how your thesis fits into a larger conversation.
- It shows why your project is important by showing how your ideas will give your reader a new perspective or new ideas.
- It states your thesis in a sentence that will help your readers understand the paper they are about to read and give them a guide to follow as you make your key points.

Your *hook*, or the way you begin your introductory paragraph, provides a way to draw your audience in and to show them that your paper will be compelling and important to read. Some good strategies for beginning an introductory paragraph include the following.

- A brief, relevant quotation that sets up your subject matter. Use a quotation from a well-known source or a compelling statement from a community member or someone directly affected by the topic you will be discussing.

- An anecdote that sets up the situation you will be discussing and provides either context or a moving example. Remember that when you begin your essay with an anecdote or a quotation, it is important that you show your reader the connection between it and the rest of your essay.
- A question that drives your curiosity and might pique your readers' curiosity as well. You can begin an introductory paper with a question, or you can use a statement that introduces a question (with the intention of answering the question in the course of the essay).
- A common misconception that your paper will correct. This strategy can be very compelling, as long as the misconception you address is actually commonly held.
- Some interesting, general context that you can then build on as you develop your introduction.

The introductory paragraph for an average college-level essay usually will require no more than five or six sentences, depending upon how specific you are in your opening comments. The paragraph moves from a general statement introducing the subject to a specific thesis statement. The organization might be diagrammed as an inverted pyramid, as shown in Figure 4.3.

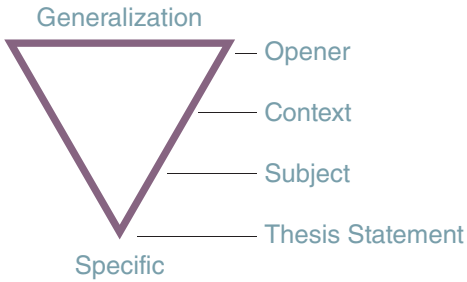

Figure 4.3: Inverted Pyramid

The thesis is the most specific statement in the paragraph and generally will appear as the last sentence of the paragraph. In the following introductory paragraph, notice how the writer moves from a general statement about the treatment of minor medical emergencies, to the independent emergency clinic, to her own experiences with such a clinic, to her thesis that the independent clinic will soon replace the hospital emergency ward.

> In the past several years, a new concept in the treatment of minor medical emergencies has emerged. The independent emergency clinic is devoted to the

patient with minor problems. In the past, I have had the misfortune of seeking minor emergency care in the hospital emergency ward. Even though I always received excellent medical care, I did encounter some disadvantages. But upon visiting this new type of facility as both observer and patient, I found the medical care equal to the hospital without many of the disadvantages. The independent clinic may very well replace the hospital emergency ward in the treatment of minor medical emergencies in the future.

Even though you will move in the paragraph from general to specific, you should avoid beginning with too broad a generalization. The more general you are at first, the longer it will take you to get around to your thesis and the more you risk losing your audience's attention. A first sentence about the quality of health care in the United States today would have been much too broad for the introductory paragraph on independent clinics.

Begin with a sentence that is not so general that it fails to get the readers' attention but that gets them involved in your discussion. There are several effective methods of achieving this goal.

Use a relevant anecdote or personal narrative. The writer of the paragraph on independent clinics could have had a much more compelling introduction if she had recounted one of the times when she had to go to an emergency ward. The anecdote might include the "attention-getter" sentence, or it can follow a separate "attention-getter" sentence.

Ask a question. "In this day of rising medical costs, what can the consumer do to get the best emergency health care at the best price?"

Offer a startling opening statement: "Medical technology has advanced as never before, yet more than 20 percent of Americans cannot afford even the most basic health care."

Use an analogy or comparison. "Many health care professionals scornfully refer to the independent clinic as 'Doc-in-the-Box' or 'Quack Shack.'"

Offer an informal definition. Without referring to the dictionary (denotative) definition, state your own meaning of a term that will allow you to introduce your subject and its discussion.

No matter which of these methods you select, make certain your beginning is interesting and says something important and relevant to your subject. Make sure your opening anecdote, analogy, or startling statistic fits smoothly into the rest of your introductory paragraph and leads logically to your thesis statement. Too

many beginning writers come up with an attention-getting first sentence but then fail to tie it in smoothly to the rest of the opening paragraph; such a failure stops the reader cold.

The suggestions listed above certainly do not exhaust the possibilities. As you develop as a writer, you will discover other methods of introduction that might be even more suitable to your own taste, style, or technique. But never lose sight of the general purpose and function of the introductory paragraph.

Finally, as you choose introductory strategies, keep in mind that many common, overly general phrases have become cliché introductory lines: avoid them. For example, do not begin your paper with words and phrases such as *nowadays, in modern times, since the beginning of time, back in the day,* and *as we all know.* The following is an introductory paragraph written by a student for a paper about a major decision in his life.

> The choices we make have their consequences—some of them intended, some of them not; some of them good, some of them bad. It is what we make of those consequences that matters at the end of the day—our decision either to let the weight of our actions drag us down if they're negative, lift us up if they're positive, or turn the weight of negativity into a counterbalance in order to lift us anyway. During my high-school years, I decided to withdraw from public school and enroll in an online high-school program. At the time I thought nothing of it, but in retrospect this action led to a cascading series of effects. First it increased my self-motivation during school, but then it quickly deteriorated into my becoming so reliant only on myself that I subsequently pulled away from society as a whole when people failed to live up to my expectations. However, after realizing what I had done, I took the necessary measures required to begin reversing the course upon which I had set myself.
>
> —Alec Tyler

Conclusions

Your concluding paragraph is important in that it is your readers' last impression of your paper and will often be the thing that they remember the most. Too often, when students think about a conclusion, they think about a paragraph that restates the thesis or summarizes the points already made in the essay. Some very technical writing might work well with a conclusion that simply restates what has already been said, but in most of the writing in this course, you should think of the conclusion as a way to articulate not what you have already said but what you have *learned*.

We write, after all, not simply to make points but to make points as part of a larger conversation. Your conclusion offers a way for you to invite others to join in that conversation as well.

Think of the conclusion not as something that just ends your paper but as a place to *draw conclusion(s)*. Of course, doing so will still mean calling your readers' attention back to your thesis and showing how you have developed this idea through your essay. However, by not simply *restating* your thesis, you open yourself up to saying much more interesting things as you conclude your writing project. The following are some concluding strategies.

- Summarize what you (and your reader) have learned/discovered.
- Connect your topic to larger issues in order to show its relevance beyond this single writing project.
- Suggest furthering the conversation or taking action; give your readers an idea of what they might do to act on the information you have given them.
- Point out unanswered questions or points you have not been able to develop.
- Give an anecdote that shows how your topic is relevant to a current debate or problem. See Figure 4.4.

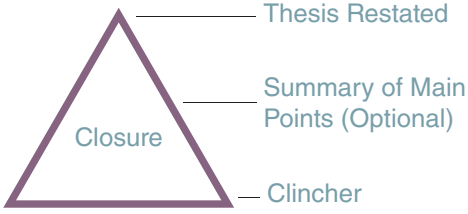

Figure 4.4: Conclusion

You should realize that much of what your readers will remember about your discussion is what you present in your concluding paragraph. You have kept their attention long enough to bring them to your closing remarks; don't lose them now! Offer something memorable. What you have said in the body paragraphs has surely taken your readers beyond the boundaries of your thesis statement. Now you must relate to your audience what your purpose and thesis imply. Do not, however, claim more than your presentation justifies or you can deliver. Make your point and close. Never give the impression you have simply stopped writing. The readers desire and expect a sense of closure—an end or conclusion. Never mention a new idea in your

conclusion that could or should have been discussed earlier in the essay. Not much can be added at this point that might convince readers if it has not already been said in the body paragraphs.

Close while you still have the reader's attention, avoiding platitudes, overused generalities, or noble-sentiment endings. Sometimes the methods suggested earlier for opening your introductory paragraph can work for the closure of your final paragraph as well. Do not, however, merely repeat your opening sentence or your thesis. Make your closure interesting, provocative, informative, or inspiring. Whatever works for you, use it. The following is the conclusion to the student paper on a major life decision.

> Although the decision to switch from public school to home schooling was a simple, common one, it began a dark time in my life. Perhaps the entire emotional ordeal could have been prevented had I not made the choice to change schooling paths in the first place, but perhaps not: who's to say that this dark time wouldn't have happened after public high school anyway? What is done at the end of the day is done, and although this was a very craggy, uneven path in my life, I now have been walking it long enough that I can see a glimmer of light in the distance. I wouldn't go back and change a thing, even if I could.
>
> —Alec Tyler

Titles

Most writers prefer to consider a title after they have completed their entire draft. Now that your subject and focus, your tone, and your audience and purpose are all clearly determined, and you have the full picture of what you have said in the essay, you might try to capture the essence of this writing in a few words. After all, the title is the first thing your audience sees of your essay; therefore, why not establish an initial greeting that captures your whole discussion? Be accurate and specific in your title, and provide more than the mere subject of your essay. The title should let the reader see the link between what it promises and what the essay delivers. You might include a key word from the focus of your discussion, but never let a sentence be your title. Be consistent with the tone; a serious essay is undermined by a flippant title. In short, use your imagination and be creative; strive to get the attention of your audience. Instead of titling your essay "Good Teachers," why not "How Good Teachers Treat Their Students," or better yet, use a subtitle: "Good Teachers: Respect Begetting Respect."

Activity 4.3

Read the following student-written paragraphs. Next, write an appropriate introductory and concluding paragraph for them. Then, give the essay an appropriate title. Share and compare with the rest of your group.

To begin with, my father is of the Muslim faith while my mother is Catholic. One may wonder how Islam and Catholicism can be similar. Muslims, for instance, celebrate the month of Ramadan, during which they fast. They wake up before sunrise and feast. Throughout the day, however, there is absolutely no consumption of food or drink until sunset. The fasting usually continues for approximately forty days. At the end of the forty days there is a big celebration called Eid al-Fitr. This day is filled with monetary gifts, lots of food, and fancy dresses.

Likewise, Catholics have a similar practice. Lent is a time of fasting. During Lent, Catholics may choose to sacrifice a particular habit, and on Fridays they do not eat meat. Some Catholics choose to fast like the Muslims do. Many years ago, fasting was common among Catholics, but over the years the rules and customs have slightly changed. When Lent has come to an end, Easter is celebrated. Easter is usually a day filled with Easter egg hunts, barbecues, and family gatherings.

Both Muslim and Catholic practices are done in order to build tolerance and self-control. Often they are offered as sacrifices to show God appreciation. Both Catholics and Muslims share many of the same beliefs, only interpreted somewhat differently. Both religions believe in a supernatural being called God or Allah. Catholics read from the Bible; Muslims read from the Koran. Both accept Jesus. The difference is that Muslims do not accept the holy trinity. They do not believe Jesus was the son of God; they believe he was simply a prophet. Muslims do not eat pork because the Koran forbids this action. Although many Catholics do eat pork, the Jewish tradition also forbids this action.

Pakistani culture and Mexican culture may appear dissimilar, but if one were to dig a little into each culture, one would find surprising similarities. The role that men and women play in each society is surprisingly parallel. When it is time to eat, Pakistani women serve the men and allow them to eat first and socialize. After the men have filled their bellies, the women and children sit down and eat. Mexican families do the exact same thing. The only difference is that Pakistani families eat on the floor while Mexican families usually eat at tables. There is a strong sense of gender roles within both cultures. Men are the "breadwinners,"

and women must be submissive to their husbands, waiting on them hand and foot. Most Pakistani women feel this treatment is honorable. Marriage in both cultures is also similar. In most Pakistani marriages, the parents of the girl and boy to be engaged arrange the union of these two individuals. It is not uncommon for first cousins to join in marriage. In Mexico, many years ago parents suggested suitable lifelong partners for their children. Marriage between first cousins was also common. The biggest secret in my mother's family is that my grandparents were first cousins. My father's family openly accepts the union of my uncle and my aunt who are first cousins.

Since Pakistan is on the other side of the world from Mexico, one might wonder what values Pakistani and Mexican people could share. In reality, they share many of the same values. For example, both are extremely family oriented. Close contact between aunts, uncles, and cousins is common. There is usually a family function every week, whether it be a brunch or dinner. Both cultures have similar moral codes. For example, premarital sex is forbidden. Of course, there are those who choose not to accept this particular moral, but for the most part this is a moral shared by both cultures. In the past, if a woman became pregnant out of wedlock she would face extreme consequences. In Pakistan, she could be put to death. Today, family values usually outweigh this moral value. Most families tend to be understanding, especially when there is a child involved. Fidelity is also a moral value shared by both cultures. It is unheard of to be unfaithful in a relationship.

Final Word

Now that you've developed a draft, your next stage is to begin revising the content and organization of your paper. In doing so, you will likely revisit the drafting stage in order to improve the unity of some of your paragraphs, write new paragraphs that better fit your thesis, or look at transitions and the organization of your paragraphs.

Shitty First Drafts

Anne Lamott

Anne Lamott is a San-Francisco-based writer of fiction and nonfiction. Her works include *Hard Laughter* (1980), *Blue Shoe* (2002), *Traveling Mercies: Some Thoughts on Faith* (2000), and *Small Victories: Spotting Improbable Moments of Grace* (2014). The following essay is taken from *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life* (1994).

Lamott's essay is about the process of drafting. Her method is to go through multiple drafts before being ready to let go of an essay. She starts with what she calls "the child's draft," where she spills everything she can think of down on paper. She also talks about the need during this process to get up from time to time and wander around to avoid writing. She then moves on to the revision stage, deleting and rearranging, and finally to writing a second draft, which she then edits. She begins her conclusion by saying, "Almost all good writing begins with terrible first efforts."

Now, practically even better news than that of short assignments is the idea of shitty first drafts. All good writers write them. This is how they end up with good second drafts and terrific third drafts. People tend to look at successful writers, writers who are getting their books published and maybe even doing well financially, and think that they sit down at their desks every morning feeling like a million dollars, feeling great about who they are and how much talent they have and what a great story they have to tell; that they take in a few deep breaths, push back their sleeves, roll their necks a few times to get all the cricks out, and dive in, typing fully formed passages as fast as a court reporter. But this is just the fantasy of the uninitiated. I know some very great writers, writers you love who write beautifully and have made a great deal of money, and not *one* of them sits down routinely feeling wildly enthusiastic and confident. Not one of them writes elegant first drafts. All right, one of them does, but we do not like her very much. We do not think that she has a rich inner life or that God likes her or can even stand her. (Although when I mentioned this to my priest friend Tom, he said you can safely assume you've created God in your own image when it turns out that God hates all the same people you do.)

Very few writers really know what they are doing until they've done it. Nor do they go about their business feeling dewy and thrilled. They do not type a few stiff warm-up sentences and then find themselves bounding along like huskies across the snow. One writer I know tells me that he sits down every morning and says to himself nicely, "It's not like you don't have a choice, because you do—you can either type or kill yourself." We all often feel like we are pulling teeth, even those writers whose prose ends up being the most natural and fluid. The right words and sentences just do not come pouring out like ticker tape most of the time. Now, Muriel Spark is said to have felt that she was taking dictation from God every morning—sitting

there, one supposes, plugged into a Dictaphone, typing away, humming. But this is a very hostile and aggressive position. One might hope for bad things to rain down on a person like this.

For me and most of the other writers I know, writing is not rapturous. In fact, the only way I can get anything written at all is to write really, really shitty first drafts.

The first draft is the child's draft, where you let it all pour out and then let it romp all over the place, knowing that no one is going to see it and that you can shape it later. You just let this childlike part of you channel whatever voices and visions come through and onto the page. If one of the characters wants to say, "Well, so what, Mr. Poopy Pants?," you let her. No one is going to see it. If the kid wants to get into really sentimental, weepy, emotional territory, you let him. Just get it all down on paper because there may be something great in those six crazy pages that you would never have gotten to by more rational, grown-up means. There may be something in the very last line of the very last paragraph on page six that you just love, that is so beautiful or wild that you now know what you're supposed to be writing about, more or less, or in what direction you might go—but there was no way to get to this without first getting through the first five and a half pages.

I used to write food reviews for *California* magazine before it folded. (My writing food reviews had nothing to do with the magazine folding, although every single review did cause a couple of canceled subscriptions. Some readers took umbrage at my comparing mounds of vegetable puree with various ex-presidents' brains.) These reviews always took two days to write. First I'd go to a restaurant several times with a few opinionated, articulate friends in tow. I'd sit there writing down everything anyone said that was at all interesting or funny. Then on the following Monday I'd sit down at my desk with my notes and try to write the review. Even after I'd been doing this for years, panic would set in. I'd try to write a lead, but instead I'd write a couple of dreadful sentences, xx them out, try again, xx everything out, and then feel despair and worry settle on my chest like an x-ray apron. It's over, I'd think, calmly. I'm not going to be able to get the magic to work this time. I'm ruined. I'm through. I'm toast. Maybe, I'd think, I can get my old job back as a clerk-typist. But probably not. I'd get up and study my teeth in the mirror for a while. Then I'd stop, remember to breathe, make a few phone calls, hit the kitchen and chow down. Eventually I'd go back and sit down at my desk, and sigh for the next ten minutes. Finally I would pick up my one-inch picture frame, stare into it as if for the answer, and every time the answer would come: all I had to do was to write a really shitty first draft of, say, the opening paragraph. And no one was going to see it.

So I'd start writing without reining myself in. It was almost just typing, just making my fingers move. And the writing would be *terrible*. I'd write a lead paragraph that was a whole page, even though the entire review could only be three pages long, and then I'd start writing up descriptions of the food, one dish at a time, bird

by bird, and the critics would be sitting on my shoulders, commenting like cartoon characters. They'd be pretending to snore, or rolling their eyes at my overwrought descriptions, no matter how hard I tried to tone those descriptions down, no matter how conscious I was of what a friend said to me gently in my early days of restaurant reviewing. "Annie," she said, "it is just a piece of *chicken*. It is just a bit of *cake*."

But because by then I had been writing for so long, I would eventually let myself trust the process—sort of, more or less. I'd write a first draft that was maybe twice as long as it should be, with a self-indulgent and boring beginning, stupefying descriptions of the meal, lots of quotes from my black-humored friends that made them sound more like the Manson girls than food lovers, and no ending to speak of. The whole thing would be so long and incoherent and hideous that for the rest of the day I'd obsess about getting creamed by a car before I could write a decent second draft. I'd worry that people would read what I'd written and believe that the accident had really been a suicide, that I had panicked because my talent was waning and my mind was shot.

The next day, though, I'd sit down, go through it all with a colored pen, take out everything I possibly could, find a new lead somewhere on the second page, figure out a kicky place to end it, and then write a second draft. It always turned out fine, sometimes even funny and weird and helpful. I'd go over it one more time and mail it in.

Then, a month later, when it was time for another review, the whole process would start again, complete with the fears that people would find my first draft before I could rewrite it.

Almost all good writing begins with terrible first efforts. You need to start somewhere. Start by getting something—anything—down on paper. A friend of mine says that the first draft is the down draft—you just get it down. The second draft is the up draft—you fix it up. You try to say what you have to say more accurately. And the third draft is the dental draft, where you check every tooth, to see if it's loose or cramped or decayed, or even, God help us, healthy.

Topics for Writing and Discussion

1. Near the beginning of this short essay, Lamott says that most writers she knows haven't planned what they are going to say when they sit down to write. "Very few writers really know what they are doing until they've done it," she says. However, they know the kind of thing they are going to write (a review of a restaurant), how long it should be (say 600 words), and they have collected details beforehand (notes). In the same way, you have to know what kind of thing you are supposed to write (a comparison essay, for example), how long it should be (say 600 words), and have collected details beforehand (brainstorming,

outline). At this point, how do you, as a writer, proceed? Write a short account of what you do at this point of the writing process.

2. Lamott mentions an important part of the writing process when she says: "The next day, I'd sit down, go through it all with a colored pen, take out everything I possibly could . . . and then write a second draft." Most writers find it difficult to cut words they have already written, but this is an essential step. Professional writers usually have editors, but one way you can cut out wordiness is to work in a group and allow others to make suggestions on what to cut. You can also find lists of words and phrases that can readily be cut out of most prose on the internet ("How to Cut Thousands of Words Without Shedding a Tear," for instance, by Rachelle Gardner).

CHAPTER 5

Revising

First, we should get one myth of revision out of the way: revision is not editing. Whereas editing addresses surface-level changes that prepare a text for publication, revision is a deeper consideration of the text that allows us to view the connections between our writing experience and the audience's reading experience.

The word "revision" is literally a *re-vision*, or a *re-seeing*, of our writing—a new vision, a reconsideration of our material for our audience and for ourselves as writers, but within the context, relationships, and changing purpose of our previous work. Do not be surprised when revising if you see your purpose becoming clearer on its own. More than once, through reflective revision, an informative essay has turned into a persuasive campaign; a simple effort at connection becomes a powerful message. Consider the following example of a student's original work, then her revised work.

Original Introduction with Thesis Statement

> Single-parent households, domestic violence, health, childcare, and education issues are universal concerns among women across color lines, so why does this counterpublic have to be exclusive to African-American women? Besides the fact that black women are experiencing all these issues on a much larger scale than women of other ethnicities, the answer to that is the exact reason why we face so many of the issues on a much higher scale. Black women are hesitant to share their stories because many times the people who we are to share them with don't have the same social background as we do; therefore, we feel judged. We are less likely to speak up about these issues in public settings because with such negative stereotypes we don't want to be considered angry or bitter. According to rhetorician Dr. Phyllis Ryder, many people don't speak up because the dialect that we use is considered uneducated or improper and therefore our voices are not heard. This is especially true for African-Americans who when speaking plain English are still considered to be speaking African American Vernacular—as if our speech is foreign. Cultural backgrounds of other races might also make it hard to make this type of sphere inclusive. Many women's groups fail to realize the black female life experience suffers levels of oppression and marginalization on a higher degree than by

white women. By making the counterpublic exclusive to black women, black women can remove some of the self-doubt they face when entering the public space. The need to silence ourselves for fear of perpetuating stereotypes goes out the window, there is a commonality on levels of oppression, cultural, and life experiences, and women will therefore be more likely to speak up.

Revision

A public sphere is a neutral and inclusive place where strangers can come together to rhetorically exchange information, attitudes, opinions, and concerns. These types of public spheres are rare anyway but are almost nonexistent among African-American women. I am one of the fortunate few who have a group of other women in my life who can relate, empower, and support me. Yet many African-American women do not have such women in their lives, nor do they know where to go to find a group like that. Black women are segregated, marginalized, and oppressed, and because of that most of our voices have been silenced. Several women's groups don't recognize that the experience of a black woman is more oppressive and subjugated than that of women of other races. African-American females everywhere, not just in Houston, need a public sphere—a place where we can discuss issues such as community, health, and economic problems; a place where we can receive relationship and sex counseling, information on childcare, learn how to balance our budgets, and sometimes just provide a listening ear or a firm hug and words of encouragement from people whose experiences are much like our own.

Notice that the revision has taken a new approach to the same topic by addressing a new audience with new information and a new tone.

Resistance to Revision

Emerging writers struggle with revision more than with invention, composition, or editing. There are multiple reasons for this, and each reason needs to be addressed by the writer as a personal challenge. Here are some reasons why some student writers find revision difficult.

Emotional attachment. Writing is hard—we have emphasized that throughout this book. Not only is writing hard, it takes time, involves risk, and exposes us to criticism. So, when we get to a point in our writing when we feel "comfortable" with what we have, we feel relieved and want to stop right there and hit the print button. We are also proud of what we have accomplished thus far and know that revision will expose us to more emotional risk if we tell ourselves that "I need to change something." But it is because we are emotionally attached to

our writing that we can use effective revision strategies to further improve our work to make it even more useful to our public audience. Yes, this is risky, but all healthy relationships involve risks.

Time commitment. It is no secret that writers often procrastinate until stress takes over and motivates them to do something just to complete a project. So procrastination is not unique to you, but it is also not very productive. Though some students brag about "knocking out a paper the night before it is due," these projects are rarely insightful, creative, honest, or constructive—they rarely add new knowledge to the student's experience or the world's corpus of knowledge. The simple answer here is to manage your time effectively: start projects early, follow a recursive writing process, seek tutoring early and often, and commit yourself to a writing group where everyone is responsible to each other. In this way, time becomes your ally instead of your enemy.

Writing fatigue. The most rewarding writing takes time. Consider reworking a car engine, preparing for a soccer tournament, or painting a portrait. Eventually our brains just get fatigued with considering the same topic for so many days or weeks. But there are multiple strategies for working against writing fatigue: physical exercise, meditation, conversation with family and friends, or simply doing something different for a while. Play a video game, doodle in your notebook, take a walk, or even work on other intellectual activities, such as reading or solving a chemistry problem. Once your brain changes its attention for a while, you can return to your writing project after a few hours or a few days refreshed. The Buddhist priest Jōkō of Tōtōmi commissioned the original wooden carving of the Great Buddha of Kamakura, which required ten years to complete. Ten years! As the sculptors collaborated, they no doubt exhibited multiple days of mental fatigue and were relieved when they could walk home at the end of a day's work. Yet they persisted. (See next page.)

Fear of failure. Many first-year students have little experience with real revision. As we have said before, writing is hard, and students see revision as just another hard step of writing where they might not succeed. This fear is normal and should be addressed in your reflection journal. We do not want to start over on something we think we have completed, and we do not understand why we need to change the familiar into something unfamiliar—again! Revision can be like moving to a new city or to the other side of your own city. We know that much will remain the same—grocery shops are grocery shops, traffic lights are traffic lights, parks are parks. But seeing a new city or living on the other side of our own city is a disconcerting experience, at least for a while. We have to awaken our senses in new ways to feel the difference in the old and the new. But with experience comes confidence, and soon these new streets will feel as familiar as our old streets. Just as

importantly, we can approach this fear of revision as a common experience of most writers, and an experience that eventually changes from fear to something like excitement. Fear is normal, but once we get busy re-seeing, the work of writing overcomes the fear. Finally, keep in mind what Michael Jordan has said: "I've missed more than 9,000 shots in my career. I've lost almost 300 games. 26 times I've been trusted to take the game-winning shot and missed. I've failed over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed."

Revision Strategies

At one time, composition scholars argued that revision required a shift from the interior "writer talk" within our own mind to a consideration of the exterior "audience talk" needed for effective communication. That is one way of seeing revision—ensuring that we are really writing *for* the audience as well as for ourselves and not just writing to complete a product. To do this, revision requires control of the thesis and scaffolding of the writing project. As practice, we can consider revision in our work as choices we make as authors. For example, as Catherine Haar and Alice Horning point out in *Revision: History, Theory, and Practic*e, revision can mean different things.

Revision as correction. This is what many students do when they are told to revise their papers—they correct the errors in grammar and punctuation; but this is essentially "surface" correction and does not address more fundamental issues, such as clarity and development.

Revision as development and discovery. As authors, our experience of a subject changes as we engage with a topic, as peers read our work and give us feedback, as we see the need for clarification of ideas, and as we see how certain parts of our work need further development. We discover new ideas—and new ways of making ourselves clear.

Revision as rhetorical goal-setting. This type of revision centers on the rhetorical relationship between our audience and us. Depending on our intended audience, the function of our project may change, requiring a different tone or a change in purpose, as we move from an informative essay to a persuasive one.

Revision as assertion of identity. Each of us is complex, with multiple relationships and responsibilities. Revision allows us to emphasize our difference from the accepted modes of being and discourse, thus adding a new voice and new perspective to the collective conversation.

The Purpose of Revision

Remember that writing is always a rhetorical act, and when we use rhetoric of any kind, we consider our situation, purpose, audience, and voice. As you begin to revise, consider these rhetorical questions as you "re-see" your work:

Situation. Every situation calls for a different type of writing.

Academic writing includes description, analysis, classification, and persuasion.

Public writing includes informative projects, service writing, advocacy, and making academic work legible to public audiences.

Personal writing includes reflections, narratives, and blogs.

Purpose. Each situation, in turn, requires a different purpose.

Informative writing is an attempt to enlighten (and entertain) an audience through the use of fact and informed opinion as well as personal experience.

Persuasive writing is the attempt to change the beliefs, attitudes, or behaviors of one's audience.

Expressive writing is often personal and written primarily to explore our own experiences and emotions, though often we may want to share these with others.

Connective writing is a rudimentary form of rhetoric meant solely to maintain personal connections, like asking "¿Qué pasa?" or saying "See you later." We do this through texting and writing emails, for example.

Reflective writing. As we grow and develop mentally and emotionally, we must digest what we have learned formally as well as through personal experience in order to grow. Writing helps us to do that. We can also share that growth in awareness with others. Do not be surprised when revising if you see your purpose becoming clearer on its own.

Audience. Audience is always key whenever our writing is informative or persuasive. Our audience may include these categories.

Instructors, classmates, the campus community

Public organizations, neighborhood groups

Coworkers, bosses

The unseen public on blogs

The relationship with our audience should always be uppermost in our mind; the choices we make can strengthen or weaken that relationship. You may think that we exaggerate when we argue that the writer's relationship with his or her audience is as complex and risky as any interpersonal relationship, but that is the reality of effective writing. Through fiction, poetry, drama, exposition, and persuasion, authors have changed lives and the destinies of nations. You likely will not be asked to write a declaration of independence as Thomas Jefferson was, but neither should you discount the effect your writing can have on your own emotional, intellectual, and social growth or the way it can affect the growth of others. As a central stage of the writing process, revision forces us as writers to consider and reconsider rhetorical relationships of all kinds.

What voice do I present in my writing? (What will the audience think of me because of what I have written?)

How much do I trust my audience? What risks can I take with this text?

What effect do I intend to have on my audience? What do I expect them to learn, feel, or do?

Do I have multiple audiences? How can I address multiple audiences with one text?

What is the rhetorical situation, and how does my text fit into the larger conversation on my topic? How will that conversation change if the situation changes?

Has the text changed me? How am I making and remaking myself through writing?

As we consider our understanding of audience, we should also think about culture—our own culture as well as the culture of our audience. Remember that culture is both *large* and *small*—as large as nations and as small as the family's kitchen table. Understanding culture helps us to understand if we should choose humor or satire, for example. Humor will be embraced by some cultures, whereas satire will offend. Similarly, your own culture may value narrative over linear persuasion. Understanding our own and our audience's cultures—large and small—is a key component of revision.

Activity 5.1

Consider your current project. You have either been assigned, or you have chosen, an audience—perhaps your instructor or your classmates. By making this choice, you have already determined a specific situation and purpose. Identify your audience and explain what choices are appropriate for that audience you made in your invention and structuring. For example, in an academic paper written for your business professor, you might use business jargon and research from business journals, using a cause-and-effect structure to show how to grow a small business.

Next, revise your work for a new audience, such as a neighborhood group. Consider a new structure and a new voice. For example, for a neighborhood cooperative (co-op) you would cut the business jargon and give more examples from mainstream sources, using a general process-analysis structure to show how small businesses strengthen local communities.

Revision for Genre

As we revise, we should also consider what it is that we are writing, including its genre, modality, and medium and how each affects the relationship of the text to the audience and even to ourselves as authors.

Genres are types of presentation (oral, visual, written) that adhere to certain formal conventions and produce certain expectations in their audiences based on culturally recognized symbols. For example, we instinctively know when watching television that a thirty-second public service announcement about municipal transportation is not like an academic lecture about the links between low household incomes and access to nutritious food. The audience knows this difference because of experience and social expectations and "receives" these two genres differently. Genres, each for a different type of public communication, each setting a different expectation in its audience, can be found in college research and writing as well as other, more public, types of writing.

Through understanding genres, we can better understand the purpose of revision—tailoring our writing to meet our audience's expectations. For example, academic genres include these categories.

- Expository essays
- Literature reviews

- Reports
- Case studies
- Business letters
- Abstracts
- Lab reports
- Research essays

We learn the conventions of each type by reading and studying examples in college classes. In addition, public writing also contains many genres, such as these.

- Autobiographies
- Memoirs
- Blogs
- Film reviews
- Reports in community newspapers
- Creative nonfiction pieces

Learning the strategies used in this first semester writing course will allow you to understand how important public writing can be in other situations. For example, while reading alone does not make us better writers, reading as a reflective practice *does* show us other writers' successes and failures with their work. As we practice critical analysis of other texts, we learn strategies to *re-vision* our own work in new ways. Therefore, as you learn to write for college and public use, make it a practice to critically analyze various genres and reflect on these genres in your writing journal.

Thus, critical thinking is part of the *practice* of revision, of seeing how effective writers do what they do. When we critique others' writing, we learn the "moves" writers make. However, we must remember we are seeing a finished project that has already been through the rigorous writing process multiple times—the polished text we see has been *revised* several times before it gets to us. This is why it is helpful to write collaboratively—because writing is usually a social practice. Writing collaboratively gives us that live audience we need to understand how others perceive our writing, as well as providing us examples of how others practice their writing.

Activity 5.2

Consider the multiple disciplines in which you are expected to write: composition, history, business, psychology, nursing, and many others. Identify the audience's writing expectation within one genre in one discipline. For example, your history course may expect you to write a causal analysis of some historic event, such as the Civil War. You will use the writing conventions expected in the history discipline, tracing the influence of slavery and the relationships among socioeconomic classes, political groups, economic swings, religious influences, and whatever else you find relevant to your discussion.

Revise your ideas for a new discipline and a new genre. For example, you could examine the same historic period, but for a sociology class, and use the conventions of sociology for a research proposal to examine how a particular social framework, such as conflict theory, might explain the war.

Revision for Multimodality

As our world has moved into the digital age, effective writing must also consider multimodal forms of communication. This is, in fact, nothing new. Multimodality (using more than one medium to convey a message) today is in every author's hands, including yours. You control the means of your work's publication and its reception by your intended audience. Authors no longer depend solely on black ink on a white sheet of paper to convey their ideas to others. Revising work to employ multiple modes of communication requires us to consider not only the shape of our ideas in the text but also how photography, artistic design, video, sound, and interactive Web spaces can influence our audience's experience and understanding of our ideas. Revising for multimodal communication requires an understanding of visual rhetoric and design. This includes these elements.

Art forms: portraits, street art, posters, still life

Typography: font, font size, emphasis (bold, italic)

Color: choice, coordination of background and foreground

Image: clarity, resolution, appropriateness

Bullets, numbered lists, tables: position, alignment, size

Composition: relationships of all the above as well as to white space

Effective visual rhetoric is a whole academic course in and of itself, but as you react to other texts—print advertisements, billboards, YouTube videos, exposition in

textbooks, magazine articles, documentary films, graphic novels—pause to engage the author of these multimodal texts, reflecting on the intended purpose, its efficacy, and your impressions of the rhetorical choices. As we consider revision, and as we consider the visuals used in our writing, we see how the addition, reposition, and deletion of those visuals change our audience's emotional and rational experience.

Sometimes we may want (or may be asked) to change the medium of our message in our revision. We may be expected to present our message through other media, especially software, such as PowerPoint or Prezi. Though revision for these presentation applications is beyond the scope of this chapter, the fundamental rules apply. How do we balance text and visuals appropriately when we consider our rhetorical situation and our audience's expectations?

Activity 5.3

Read the following student paragraph written for an introductory freshman English class. In your group, decide how you might change the paragraph to publish it as a blog, and then as a group rewrite it and share it with the class. Next, decide how you would change it to present it as a speech to your class. Again, rewrite it and share it with the class.

> The first reason video games are an issue is that many video games made today possess content that many people would consider to be obscene. The term obscene covers violence, profanity, and sexual images. Such videogames are usually branded with the M (mature audiences only) rating on the front of the videogame cover. This means that only players seventeen or older should be playing such games. However, many children around the ages of twelve and under are acquiring these video games as gifts or are purchasing the games themselves. Therefore, it can be assumed that the parents are purchasing M-rated games for their children, and that stores are willingly selling these young children M-rated games. As Paul Keegan says in "Violence in Video Games and Other Media Can Cause School Shootings," parents are not following these ratings and stores are not enforcing them, thus allowing young children to view content that is considered obscene (6). Thus, if parents understand and follow the various video game rating labels, and if stores enforce the videogame rating system, then young children will not be as easily able to view mature material.

Revision and Collaborative Writing

Collaboration has become standard practice for modern corporations. Companies such as Google and Microsoft value and promote the synergy that comes from the interaction of their employees in groups. It is a highly valued skill, along with critical thinking and communication. Collaboration can also be very productive in writing. Sharing your ideas and writing with others will help you improve your verbal skills as well as your writing. You will also learn a lot in the process of helping others.

Work with Other Writers in a *Writing Group*. Having a living, breathing, *present* audience experience your text and explain their experience is an immeasurable advantage as you progress as a writer. This is a chance to share your writing experience, as well as your text, with others. Keep your writing journal active with notes, shared experiences, and reflections from these group meetings.

Work in the *Writing Center*. When you use the Writing Center, you are responsible for preparing for the consultation and explaining your purpose and requirements to the tutor. This consultation requires patience and understanding; the writing tutor will be knowledgeable and sincere, but she will not have all the background about you as a writer that your writing group has, for example. If you prepare for your consultation, however, your time with the tutor will be much more productive.

- Sign up for a 30- to 45-minute appointment ahead of time, if possible.
- Spend 30 to 45 minutes working on your invention assignment before arriving.
- Make sure you have all your documents (hard copy or digital) so you do not waste your time.
- Bring the writing assignment instructions. Tutors are not responsible for reading anyone's mind or guessing what your project is supposed to accomplish.
- Based on the assignment, write down three to five small goals for your consultation time. If you cannot achieve each goal, be prepared to make another appointment to return.
- Introduce yourself to your tutor, and discuss your writing strengths and challenges before addressing the specific writing assignment itself.
- Take notes about what you discuss with your tutor as well as any other thoughts that come to mind during your discussion. This is still part of invention and becomes a resource for revision.

Work with Your *Writing Instructor*. Most writing instructors are more than happy to discuss whatever writing issues you have, so you can also schedule a meeting or

drop by during their scheduled office hours. Your instructor may have experience with hundreds and thousands of student writing projects. Use this time to discuss your own struggle with revision and learn *again* how hard writing is as together you discuss a particular paragraph, sentence, metaphor, or transition that especially troubles you. Together, as you wrestle with re-seeing your work, both of you can better appreciate the real work that writing is.

Reflect on Your *Revision*. Focus on its challenges and successes, its risks and effects. Before, during, and after revision, reflect on the choices you have made and the choices you still can make. Periodically review these reflections to see your progress as a writer. As an exercise, share some of your revision choices with your writing group to test the rhetorical effects on them.

Activity 5.4

With the other members of your group, take the paragraph under Activity 5.3, and turn it into a poster about the dangers of violent video games. Decide what information should go on the poster, what font and point size you should use, what colors, and how the words should be arranged on the page. Design your poster in Word, add pictures or Word art, save it, and then present it to the class. (Review Chapter 12 if necessary.)

Further Revision Strategies

Revision is hard work, but as in all other endeavors, such as music or sports, hard work pays off. In addition to the suggestions above, here are some further revision strategies.

Quiet the inner editor for a while longer. Revision is less about simply satisfying a set of rules than it is about communicating with the audience. (See Chapter 8 for more about editing.)

Challenge your inner voice with your public voice. Consider how your public audience needs to hear a message separate from the message in your head. This is where your writing group becomes so important. Ask each other, "What do you mean by that?" and "Can you show me more examples to clarify this?"

Review the writing instructions, and consider the boundaries of the writing project. What rhetorical risks can you take that will make the project more effective for your situation, purpose, and audience?

Adjust the tone of your project. Can you be humorous, satiric, enthusiastic, ironic, or curious? The way you say something is often as important as what you say.

Identify your project's strengths, and build on these. Write a reflection in your writing journal on the strengths of your writing. Focus on the positive.

Identify your project's weaknesses. Come to understand why these elements are weak, and either strengthen them or delete them.

Restructure by considering an alternative hook and introduction. Revise your thesis to strengthen its relationship with your project, reoutline your work once you finish your composition draft to get the big picture of your project's strengths and direction, and ask whether this structure is the best for your writing purpose.

Provide new and alternative types of evidence for each idea.

Look for logical fallacies in your argument. Eliminate these through discussion with your writing group. (See Appendix 2 for common fallacies.)

Add qualifiers to your claims so that you don't overstate your argument.

Restructure sentences.

Review your conclusion. Instead of a simple summary, revise your conclusion to show your audience what you have learned from your writing experience or how writing has made new meaning in your world.

Check your working thesis statement, and revise it to reflect the topic, discussion points, and assertions that you have actually made in the body and conclusion. Revise that thesis statement as needed.

Read the paper out loud slowly and publicly. Listen to your own voice as you read, and make written notes of ideas as they come to you.

Take a break. Do not try to write for more than an hour at a time, because your brain will exhaust itself. Walk away for a day, then return and practice each of these revision strategies again.

Ultimately, we are responsible for our own writing, and as much as we want to get that coveted grade, we learn by listening to feedback from experienced writers. This does not mean we should always take others' advice, but it is an opportunity to consider multiple options in our revision. We learn first by doing, but we also learn by listening and especially by making mistakes. Revision, fortunately, lets us learn in multiple ways.

A Note on Document Management

You must maintain computer back-ups of all your revisions, with some way to keep various stages separate, such as HIST1301 Project 3 May 3, then HIST1301 Project 3 May 4. Keep all your writing in the cloud—Google Drive, Microsoft Cloud, your school's network—or on multiple drives. For example, if you have printouts for a sourced paper, then keep everything clearly labeled and in its own folder. One of the most sickening feelings in academic life is losing one's files or breaking one's computer, staring at the ground, wondering whether time machines really exist.

Final Word

You should know that this chapter, as with each chapter of this textbook, has been a collaborative writing project among the authors. For each chapter, a principal author has invented and composed a draft of the chapter's material. Yet for each chapter we have collaborated with each other, seeking feedback, and then revising the chapter for our audience's needs. (That's you.) Even though each of us has years of writing practice and has collectively written tens of thousands of words, we revise our work, repeatedly, because the audience deserves that. So, knowing that we re-vision our work here, you should consider doing the same in your work.

Therefore, instead of seeing revision as a chore, try to see revision as an opportunity to gain a better understanding of your world, your audience, and your own writing process. All help you to mature as a writer. Revision opens multiple pathways for us as writers, and it increases our ability to connect with our audience.

Activity 5.5

Consider your own experiences with revision and your own attitudes toward re-seeing or rewriting your work. Begin with a pro/con chart describing the act of revision.

Why Revise	Why Not Revise

Activity 5.6

Take a paragraph or complete essay you have already written, and share it with your group. Take their suggestions for revision into account, and revise the paper. Next, take this revised paper to the writing lab, and consult with a tutor. After noting down the tutor's suggestions, revise the paper a second time. Finally, make an appointment with your instructor, and take this revision with you. After discussing the paper with your instructor, revise the paper a third time.

Simplicity

William Zinsser

William Zinsser is an American writer, journalist, and teacher. He taught nonfiction writing at Yale for a number of years and has published many books. He lives in New York City. The following is taken from *On Writing Well: The Classic Guide to Writing Nonfiction,* now in its thirtieth anniversary edition (195.).

Zinsser has been writing about writing for a long time, and the following essay has often been reprinted in texts such as this one. In it, Zinsser discusses the most important quality of all good writing: clarity. In revising your own essays, you must constantly question your sentences and word use: What am I trying to say here? Does this sentence make sense? Will the reader understand this reference? As Zinsser points out, the secret to writing clearly is thinking clearly, but the reverse of that statement is also true: writing clearly induces thinking clearly. Zinsser ends with a truism: "Writing is hard work." But, like any other activity you might pursue, writing becomes easier the more you practice it.

Clutter is the disease of American writing. We are a society strangling in unnecessary words, circular constructions, pompous frills and meaningless jargon.

Who can understand the clotted language of everyday American commerce and enterprise: the memo, the corporation report, the business letter, the notice from the bank explaining its latest "simplified" statement? What member of an insurance or medical plan can decipher the brochure explaining his costs and benefits? What father or mother can put together a child's toy from the instructions on the box? Our national tendency is to inflate and thereby sound important. The airline pilot who announces that he is presently anticipating experiencing considerable precipitation wouldn't think of saying that it may rain. The sentence is too simple—there must be something wrong with it.

But the secret of good writing is to strip every sentence to its cleanest components. Every word that serves no function, every long word that could be a short word, every adverb that carries the same meaning that's already in the verb, every passive construction that leaves the reader unsure of who is doing what—these are the thousand and one adulterants that weaken the strength of a sentence. And they usually occur in proportion to education and rank.

During the late 1960s the president of my university wrote a letter to mollify the alumni after a spell of campus unrest. "You are probably aware," he began, "that we have been experiencing very considerable potentially explosive expressions of dissatisfaction on issues only partially related." He meant that the students had been hassling them about different things. I was far more upset by the president's

English than by the students' potentially explosive expressions of dissatisfaction. I would have preferred the presidential approach taken by Franklin D. Roosevelt when he tried to convert into English his own government's memos, such as this blackout order of 1942:

> Such preparations shall be made as will completely obscure all Federal buildings and non-Federal buildings occupied by the Federal government during an air raid for any period of time from visibility by reason of internal or external illumination.
>
> "Tell them," Roosevelt said, "that in buildings where they have to keep the work going to put something across the windows."

Simplify, simplify. Thoreau said it, as we are so often reminded, and no American writer more consistently practiced what he preached. Open *Walden* to any page and you will find a man saying in a plain and orderly way what is on his mind:

> I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived.

How can the rest of us achieve such enviable freedom from clutter? The answer is to clear our heads of clutter. Clear thinking becomes clear writing: one can't exist without the other. It's impossible for a muddy thinker to write good English. He may get away with it for a paragraph or two, but soon the reader will be lost, and there's no sin so grave, for the reader will not easily be lured back.

Who is this elusive creature, the reader? The reader is someone with an attention span of about 30 seconds—a person assailed by many forces competing for attention. At one time those forces were relatively few: newspapers, magazines, radio, spouse, children, pets. Today they also include a galaxy of electronic devices for receiving entertainment and information—television, VCRs, DVDs, CDs, video games, the Internet, e-mail, cell phones, BlackBerries, iPods—as well as a fitness program, a pool, a lawn and that most potent of competitors, sleep. The man or woman snoozing in a chair with a magazine or a book is a person who was being given too much unnecessary trouble by the writer.

It won't do to say that the reader is too dumb or too lazy to keep pace with the train of thought. If the reader is lost, it's usually because the writer has not been careful enough. This carelessness can take any number of forms. Perhaps a sentence is so excessively cluttered that the reader, hacking through the verbiage, simply doesn't know what it means. Perhaps a sentence has been so shoddily constructed that the reader could read it in any of several ways. Perhaps the writer has switched pronouns in midsentence, or has switched tenses, so the reader loses track of who

is talking or when the action took place. Perhaps Sentence B is not a logical sequel to Sentence A; the writer, in whose head the connection is clear, hasn't bothered to provide the missing link. Perhaps the writer has used a word incorrectly by not taking the trouble to look it up.

Faced with such obstacles, readers are remarkably tenacious. They blame themselves—they obviously missed something, and they go back over the mystifying sentence, or over the whole paragraph, piecing it out like an ancient rune, making guesses and moving on. But they won't do that for long. The writer is making them work too hard, and they will look for one who is better at the craft.

Writers must therefore constantly ask: what am I trying to say? Surprisingly often, they don't know. Then they must look at what they have written and ask: have I said it? Is it clear to someone encountering the subject for the first time? If it's not, some fuzz has worked its way into the machinery. The clear writer is someone clearheaded enough to see this stuff for what it is: fuzz.

I don't mean that some people are born clearheaded and are therefore natural writers, whereas others are naturally fuzzy and will never write well. Thinking clearly is a conscious act that writers must force on themselves, just as if they were working on any other project that requires logic: making a shopping list or doing an algebra problem. Good writing doesn't come naturally, though most people seem to think it does. Professional writers are constantly bearded by people who say they'd like to "try a little writing sometime"—meaning when they retire from their real profession, like insurance or real estate, which is hard. Or they say, "I could write a book about that." I doubt it.

Writing is hard work. A clear sentence is no accident. Very few sentences come out right the first time, or even the third time. Remember this in moments of despair. If you find that writing is hard, it's because it *is* hard.

Topics for Writing and Discussion

1. Zinsser says of shoddy writing that "perhaps a sentence is so excessively cluttered that the reader, hacking his way through the verbiage, simply doesn't know what it means. Perhaps a sentence has been so shoddily constructed that the reader could read it in any of several ways." Find two sentences in your own writing (perhaps two redlined by your teacher) that fit Zinsser's description. Rewrite them, clarifying your ideas, then explain how you did that.
2. Find two sentences in this textbook that you find difficult to read. Copy them, and then explain why they are difficult to understand; next, rewrite them, "simplifying" them.

CHAPTER 6

Editing

As you learned in Chapter 5, revision is the process of "re-visioning," the reshaping of sentences and paragraphs for clarity and cogency. Once you feel confident that you have succeeded in presenting your ideas and accomplished your purpose, the next and final step is editing your draft for correctness, searching closely for grammatical errors, punctuation, and usage. Careful editing, while time-consuming, results in a flowing, polished essay that helps the reader easily follow your ideas. Unfortunately, because students are so pressed for time with deadlines, they often tend to ignore this third phase of the writing process. Yet to skip this very important step is to risk the misreading of your message. For your ideas to be taken seriously by your instructor, or any reader, you must take special care to assure that your project is free of errors that could confuse your ideas or distract your reader.

We recommend that you *not* concern yourself with close editing before you completely finish the revision phase of your drafting. Before you can refine your sentences, you must first feel confident that your final revisions are satisfactory, that they meet your reader's expectations, and that they fulfill the promise you made to your audience regarding your purpose in writing the essay. Even though experienced writers edit throughout the invention and drafting stages, they realize that this last step requires a more intense scrutiny of the essay's mechanics before it is ready for publication. Remember, correctness alone does not guarantee superior writing. It simply means we as writers know we must comply with agreed-upon expectations and standards of correctness if we intend to reach our audience and fulfill our purpose.

While recognizing that conventions of grammar change over time (due today to social media and the internet), we recommend that you observe standard punctuation conventions associated with academic essays and Standard English. As the critic, professor, and novelist John Gardner wrote in *The Art of Fiction: Notes on Craft for Young Writers*: "No one can hope to write well if he has not mastered—absolutely mastered—the rudiments: grammar and syntax, punctuation, diction, sentence variety, paragraph structure, and so forth" (17). Choosing the conventions of Standard English for specific writing situations (such as blogs, emails, reports, and academic

essays) is a rhetorical decision, based on the appropriateness for a given situation and medium. Therefore, we recommend that you, as writer, abide by these rules.

Although every writing difficulty cannot be addressed at the editing stage, certain problem areas should always be covered. These include sentence construction, spelling, word choice, grammar, and punctuation. You know from earlier writing experiences what errors you are most likely to commit, so focus your energy on these. For those problems not included here, consult your handbook.

Proofreading one's own draft can be difficult. Usually by the time we are finished with invention, drafting, and revising, we are either too emotionally attached to what we have written to be objective about it or too sick of it to want to spend one more minute with it. Here are some simple suggestions, however, that might make your task easier. Many successful writers have employed these strategies, but it is up to you to determine which you find most helpful.

Editing for Grammatical Errors

Unless you are writing your first essay, you are already familiar with the types of errors you are likely to make. If you have kept a log or journal of your past grammatical errors (which we strongly recommend), you know what you must check first. These errors range from serious to minor, but each remains important. Correctness is your goal. The following are considered major errors.

Fragments. A sentence fragment is a phrase or dependent clause that lacks a subject, a verb, or sometimes both.

> *Example*: "A city that provides its residents and visitors a plethora of entertainment sources."
>
> *Revision*: (Add an independent clause to make the sentence a complete thought.) "As a city that provides its residents and visitors a plethora of entertainment sources, Houston offers professional sports, museums, parks, the Livestock Show and Rodeo, and the NASA Johnson Space Center."

If you want to include intentional fragments for emphasis or for effect in your writing, we recommend you use them sparingly (usually only three or four words, such as "In which town?" "But not so wholly," or "Just once!").

Run-On Sentences (also called **Fused Sentences**). A run-on sentence is actually two sentences joined without the proper punctuation or connecting word. There are five options available for correcting this error.

Example: "The Texas A&M alumnus can no longer enjoy the rivalry between his alma mater and the Longhorns the Aggies moved to another conference."

Revision 1: (Create a compound sentence by adding a comma and a coordinating conjunction, such as *for, and, nor, but, or, yet,* or *so*.)

"The Texas A&M alumnus can no longer enjoy the rivalry between his alma mater and the Longhorns, for the Aggies moved to another conference."

Revision 2: (Separate the two clauses with a period, creating two simple sentences.)

"The Texas A&M alumnus can no longer enjoy the rivalry between his alma mater and the Longhorns. The Aggies moved to another conference."

Revision 3: (Restructure the sentence by creating a subordinate clause, resulting in a complex sentence.)

"Since the Aggies moved to another conference, the Texas A&M alumnus can no longer enjoy the rivalry between his alma mater and the Longhorns."

Revision 4: (Add a subordinating conjunction.)

"The Texas A&M alumnus can no longer enjoy the rivalry between his alma mater and the Longhorns since the Aggies moved to another conference."

Revision 5: (Place a semicolon between the two independent clauses.)

"The Texas A&M alumnus can no longer enjoy the rivalry between his alma mater and the Longhorns; the Aggies moved to another conference."

Comma Splices. When two sentences (two independent clauses) are joined with only a comma, the result is a comma splice. The error can be corrected by replacing the comma with a period or a semicolon, or adding a coordinating conjunction to the existing comma.

Example: "I seldom completed my English homework in high school, that's why I make such poor grades in my college English class."

Revision 1: (Combine a coordinating conjunction with the existing comma.)

"I seldom completed my English homework in high school, and that's why I make such poor grades in my college English class."

Revision 2: (Replace the original comma with a period, creating two sentences.)

"I seldom completed my English homework in high school. That's why I make such poor grades in my college English class."

Revision 3: (Replace the original comma with a semicolon.)

"I seldom completed my English homework in high school; that's why I make such poor grades in my college English class."

Other serious grammatical errors:

- Subject-verb agreement
- Spelling
- Pronoun problems (faulty agreement or indefinite reference)
- Parallelism
- Tense inconsistency
- Dangling or misplaced modifiers
- General errors in syntax (*Syntax* refers to the structure of a sentence, clause, or phrase. If the reader stumbles over the wording or cannot understand what a sentence says, your essay might contain some serious syntactical errors.)

Less serious grammatical errors (but still distracting):

- Misplaced apostrophes
- Misused or misplaced commas
- Passive voice
- Nonstandard capitalization

For these last two groupings, consult your handbook or the Writing Center for identification and corrections of these errors.

Activity 6.1

Take several of the paragraph(s) or essay(s) you have written, and make a list of the grammatical errors that have been marked. Next, go to your handbook, or one of the many websites that discuss these errors, and read the explanation of the problem. If you need further explanation, ask other members of your group or your instructor for help. Finally, do several exercises for each of the problems to check your understanding. Ask your instructor or your writing lab for exercises, or go to the site *Guide to Grammar and Writing* of Capital Community College, which has extensive exercises, or the exercises at *Grammar Bytes!*

Avoiding Wordiness

To communicate ideas clearly, a writer must first have knowledge of the subject, have a specific purpose, know what audience he is writing for, and have a fluent command of words. That is not easy. But like all things, practice is the key to competence. There are many books, both in print and online, that give beginning writers excellent advice on writing clearly. One of the oldest, but one still in many writers' libraries, is *The Elements of Style*, by William Strunk Jr. and E. B. White. Now in its fourth edition, it is a slim paperback with many rules of usage and multiple examples, such as a section that is titled "Omit needless words" that begins with the sentence "Vigorous writing is concise." The early 1916.edition of this work by Strunk is online at the *Bartleby Project* (Columbia University). There are many university writing center sites online that discuss word choice and usage. *Garbl's Writing Center*, for example, has a section on "Style and Usage" with links to many other sites on the Web. The following are a few general rules to help you write clear, concise, and understandable English prose.

Use the Active Voice. Active voice uses fewer words and is more precise than passive voice. In active voice, we place the performer of the action (the subject) first, then the verb, and finally the thing acted upon (the object). *The boy hit the ball*. In passive voice, we reverse this order, placing the object first and the actor in a prepositional phrase last. *The ball was hit by the boy*. Note that the first sentence has five words and the second seven words, though they both say the same thing. While passive voice is necessary in some situations, particularly when the subject or actor is unknown—"When I heard the noise and looked out, my windshield had been shattered"—overuse of the passive voice weakens prose; it usually adds unnecessary words and delays important information until the end of the sentence. Sometimes, in fact, the actor is dropped altogether, and the reader is left to wonder who was responsible for the action. For example, when asked how a vase came to

be in pieces on the floor, a child might say, "It was broken," trying to avoid responsibility. Even important people use this dodge to avoid admitting responsibility. For example, when pressed about the Iran-Contra scandal during his tenure as president, Ronald Reagan simply said, "Mistakes were made." (In each of the following pairs of sentences, the first is in passive voice; the second in active.)

The flowers were grown by a California nursery.

A California nursery grew the flowers.

When evaluating the participation level of early registration, it was considered quite successful.

Early registration was a great success.

Due to construction in the CE building, the wires were cut.
CE building workers cut power lines to campus.

Avoid Superfluous Sentence Openers. Every word in a sentence should contribute to advancing the point of your paragraph, so, particularly at the beginning of your sentences, you do not want words that just sit there. For example, the word *there* at the beginning of a sentence can usually be cut without altering the meaning of the sentence.

There are three ways to produce this effect. They are . . .

Three ways to produce this effect are . . .

There are many students who do not listen to their instructors.

Many students do not listen to their instructors.

There has been much controversy about women's role in the military.

Women's role in the military is controversial.

I think that most students would enjoy working in the computer lab.

Most students would enjoy working in the computer lab because . . .

Avoid Vague, Abstract Nouns. Cut out vague, woolly, abstract nouns wherever possible, and substitute more specific words. Get rid of such jargon nouns as *case, factor, instance, character, situation, degree, thing, aspect, condition,* and *phase*.

There are several *factors* that influenced my decision to attend college.

I decided to attend college because I was broke, living at home, and working at a job I hated.

The first *instance* of this virus occurred on January 12.

This virus first occurred on January 12.

In the first case, I got a message telling me I was out of disc space.

First, I got a message telling me I was out of disc space.

Calvin and Hobbes. Copyright © Bill Waterson

Cut Out Wordy Phrases. Many phrases can be reduced to single words (Table 6.1).

Original Phrase	Revised
As of this date	Today
Prior to	Before
On behalf of	For
Due to	Because
Due to the fact that	Because
At the present time	Now
In this day and age	Today
In a number of cases	Some or Often

Table 6.1: Wordy Phrases

Use Short Words Instead of Multisyllabic Ones. Because modern English is a language with two diverse parents, German and Latin, many times as writers we have a choice between a short Germanic word or a longer Latinate word. Most of the time, the shorter, Germanic word is clearer and more direct. In addition, some people have a tendency to add *–ize* to perfectly respectable words. Avoid that tendency (Table 6.2).

Multisyllabic Word	Revised Shorter Word
Aggregate	Total
Proceed	Go
Demonstrate	Show
Prioritize	Rank
Authorize	Allow
Utilize	Use
Converse	Talk

Table 6.2: Shorter Words

Writing clearly is not easy, but like anything else, it can be learned with a little dedication and practice. While you may never have to, or have the desire to, write a lot, you will always need to communicate your desires, feelings, and opinions. A little knowledge about and practice with words will smooth your passage through the relationships you will build throughout your life and make college, and work, a little easier.

Activity 6.2

Read the following paragraph, and then rewrite it; take out the wordiness, cut the jargon, and revise wordy expressions. Next, add specific detail.

> Due to the fact that they are experiencing college for the first time, many students fail to utilize all the aids the college offers. They fail to prioritize their tasks because they lack requisite cognition of the appropriate character of the situation they are in. In this day and age, competing factors impact the student's academic condition. There seem to be many pressures the student must withstand. He usually works, perhaps as much as thirty hours a week. He possibly has to help out at home, in addition, by babysitting younger siblings. It seems to me that all these factors doom him to failure. When he does find time to study, it seems likely that he will be too tired to proceed. He will probably fall into slumber. What does his instructor expect? Can a student work all day and study all night? It seems to me that is impossible.

Editing For Style

Besides editing for grammar and diction, you will also want to check the structure and flow of your sentences, and you should always strive, above all, for clarity. You want your reader to understand you, to get what you are saying. Here are some suggestions on how to achieve that goal.

Combine Sentences. Beginning writers often restrict themselves by limiting their prose to simple sentences because they fear committing errors. However, an endless succession of simple, choppy sentences destroys the flow of words and ideas. Consider combining two, three, or four sentences into a single sentence if all the ideas stated in each are somehow connected. For example, notice the short, choppy, monotonous sentences in the following paragraph.

> The city of Houston offers its residents and visitors a plethora of sources of entertainment for all ages. Its professional sports teams provide year-round entertainment. Its museum district attracts thousands every year. The NASA Johnson Space Center is an international drawing card. The annual Livestock Show and Rodeo brings artists from across the country. Its restaurants are acclaimed for their fine cuisine. Its parks are among the best in the southwest.

Because so many of these supportive sentences repeat beginning words, and because each sentence can be developed further, you might want to combine several of the general classifications of entertainment into one sentence, and then follow it with concrete examples. There are several ways to accomplish this.

- Use a series to combine similar ideas: "Houston, a great city for family entertainment, offers professional sports, the NASA Johnson Space Center, the Livestock Show and Rodeo, fine restaurants, art museums, and parks for everyone to enjoy."

- Use an introductory phrase or clause to combine your sentences: "Because Houston offers its residents and visitors professional sports, the NASA Johnson Space Center, art museums, the Livestock Show and Rodeo, fine restaurants, and parks, it ranks among the best cities for family entertainment."

- Use an appositive to accentuate your major idea. (An appositive is a noun or noun phrase that identifies or adds information to a preceding noun phrase.): "The city of Houston, with its professional sports, museum district, the NASA Johnson Space Center, fine restaurants, parks, and Livestock Show and Rodeo, ranks among the very best sources for family entertainment."

Notice that when these sentences are combined into a single sentence (as a thesis, for example), you can now direct your efforts toward developing the essay, focusing on the specific levels of generality described in Chapter 4.

We are not suggesting that you avoid short sentences altogether. For the sake of emphasis, they can be highly effective. In fact, some professional writers, such as engineers, journalists, and tech writers, employ short sentences almost exclusively. But, in general, strive for a combination of both long and short sentences. Always let your chosen purpose and audience determine your sentence lengths. On the other

hand, sometimes a writer mistakenly thinks that the longer the sentence, the more sophisticated it sounds, but it often results in a jumble of words and phrases that do not make sense. Clarity, after all, is the most important goal of expository writing.

Use Action Verbs. Another important component of editing involves examining the verbs you use in your sentences. Remember not to write like you talk. Select verbs that invigorate your sentences, letting your reader more fully understand what you describe. In other words, allow your reader to see what you sense, feel your pain, experience your fear and love, visualize what you see. In addition, avoid static verbs as much as possible (*is, am, has, are*) when a descriptive action verb can create a more vivid image of what you want to convey. For example, consider the following sentences. In the first, replace the static verb with an action verb.

"He is my old friend."
"He earned my friendship years ago."

"It was a night to remember."
"The night produced some of my most cherished memories."

Another method of enriching your sentences involves adding an adverb to your action verb to enliven the statement.

"He walked into the room."
"He walked quietly into the room," or
"He walked stealthily into the room."

The writer must continually ask whether these are the best word choices. For example, one might ask whether the adverb really adds to the descriptive quality of the sentence. For example, what does walking "quietly" look like? The use of the adverb alone does not add any real description to the sentence. For the generic verb "walked," substitute a verb that adds not only action but visual description as well. Here are some examples.

"He tiptoed into the room." "He casually strolled into the room."
"He stole into the room." "Being in no hurry, he sauntered into the room."

In these last sentences, changing the verb has compressed action and detail, heightened the reader's interest through word choice, and set up the sentence to develop further the details of the room that will explain his method of movement into the room. (The "What happens next?" comes into play.) Keeping the sentences both active and descriptive allows them to accomplish more and produces a more rhythmic flow to the prose. In addition, avoid sentences that begin "There is," "There are," or "It was." While these constructions are sometimes effective, as a general rule you should consider more specific forms of expression. For example, start your

sentence with a strong actor. Rather than beginning with "There are many students who depend on financial aid," let "students" serve as the actor and avoid the passive voice: "Many students depend on financial aid."

Activity 6.3

Study the list of Commonly Confused Words and Phrases in Appendix 3. Next, write the number of the following sentences on your own paper, and then write the correct word from the parenthesis beside each. When you are finished, compare your answers with your group and the class.

1. John's second wife (emigrated, immigrated) to this country in 1976.
2. The (principle, principal) figure in the play delivers an address to the audience.
3. A (carrot, caret, carat) is a proofreader's mark.
4. You may take only five items or (less, fewer) on the trip with you.
5. What (affect, effect) did failing the course have on him?
6. Some students simply will not accept the (consul, counsel, council) I try to give them.
7. Steven Weinberg is an (imminent, eminent) physicist.
8. He (lay, laid) his coat on the floor and then (lay, laid) down on it.
9. (It's, Its) not who you know, but what you know that counts.
10. (Sit, Set) your shoes by the door and (sit, set) down.

Editing Checklist

More than likely, you have participated in several classroom peer reviews. We recommend such reviews throughout the writing process, perhaps, even, for each draft. While these preliminary reviews target thesis, purpose, voice, and audience, and reviews of the second draft focus on paragraph unity, coherence, continuity, and development, a final review should examine correctness, conciseness, and grammar—in short, refinement of your draft.

Before you participate once again in a collaborative peer review, read your draft (or have someone else read it to you) and ask yourself the following questions.

Does my prose sound natural; does it flow smoothly? Do transitional devices function as intended, and do sentences and paragraphs have continuity?

Can I detect any grammatical errors?

Do I use a variety of sentence patterns (compound, complex, simple—short and long)?

Are any words repeated excessively?

Is my word choice satisfactory and appropriate for my audience and purpose?

Does anything seem confusing or awkward?

Do my subjects and verbs agree?

Have I followed the appropriate form of documentation (MLA, APA, Chicago Manual Style, if required)?

Is my manuscript formatted correctly? Did I use the correct font and size of type? Did I space appropriately between the title and the first line of my essay? Did I double-space throughout the essay? Are my pages numbered, and are the margins 1″ on all four sides?

Is my title appropriate for and consistent with the essay's content?

Sample Essay

For the sake of illustration, review the following essay (a second draft), written by student Raymond Perez. For your first reading, do not concern yourself with the editorial remarks in the right margin. What editorial suggestions would you make upon your first reading? List your observations/recommendations. Next, read the essay again, and this time note the editorial remarks. Are your observations similar to those in the right margin?

Klein United Methodist

Suggested title: "Lost and Found"

"The cause of death was not belonging," or that's what I wrote down as my final message. {I didn't know it at the time, Klein United Methodist Church (KUMC) was going to be my saving grace.} I was sixteen when I had thought of suicide, but, thankfully, I didn't follow through with any of those thoughts. Back then I was lonely. I didn't feel wanted because I got kicked out of my house in Houston and was sent to live with a parent in Seattle who was absent most of my life. I didn't belong anywhere or to anyone. I felt hopeless. But that is different from what it is today, two years have passed, and now I am a new person. I was once lost, but now I have a place that I can call my own, a community of people on whom I can rely, just as they can rely on me. KUMC became my second chance and gave me a new foundation to rebuild my life and help rebuild the lives of others.

but

Move this sentence down to precede the thesis (which is the paragraph's last sentence).

Comma splice: replace comma with a semicolon or a period.

Insert "to" for parallel verb forms.

The place I found to be my home is located in the heart of Spring, Texas on FM 2920 and Kuykendahl Road. Although KUMC isn't the biggest church in town, its massive cross (Figure 1) was at first terrifying to me. I initially felt that the cross would break apart and fall on me. I felt like that because at the time I didn't feel like I deserved to be there—a community that did so much good for others. I don't think now the building matters as much, because it's the people who made up the congregation who would soon become my family.

Because no ZIP code is included, insert comma after "Texas."

The congregation is stereotypically white, with a few shades of color mixed in. I have never once felt like I was an outsider because I wasn't white. Yes, at first it was a bit different because in the past I went to churches located in the inner city of Houston. For me, to be one of the few Hispanics going to this church is a good thing—to be an example of diversity. ¶However, sometimes I have been treated differently because I am Hispanic. I remember the first time I met the youth leader, Ryan. He was someone out of left field because he was so radical. His teachings weren't just black and white like the Bible. He made us think and use our voice to seek change in our congregation and make us want to go out and do good deeds for others. I think what made him different from other leaders was that he wasn't all talk and no action. KUMC isn't like any other church in our area. {The giving nature that each member seems to have is what sets our congregation apart.} The first time I noticed how giving my community is was when I was invited by Bette one Sunday morning to a group called "Love 4 Christ," which meets every second Sunday of each month. The group's task was

No new paragraph.

Begin a new paragraph here.

Insert "to" — parallel verb forms.

Vague—offer more examples to illustrate his radical nature.

to load up our vans with food and items that many of the homeless needed in the nearby Greater Conroe area. I don't think any other church in my area does anything like this. I remember my third time going up to the Salvation Army in Conroe. It was January, and an arctic blast was expected within the next few days. That day we were giving out meals as per usual, but this time we were also handing out jackets and blankets. One lady was overjoyed, and, at that moment, I knew that I was a part of something bigger than myself. {Something that impacts a community of people who needed it.} I didn't expect to see such great kindness from our group who really didn't have to care. I always thought that wealthy people, especially white people, did not care about anyone but themselves, but I was wrong. I am glad that I was wrong.

Fragment. Delete period after "myself," and insert a comma. Change "something" to lowercase.

I have also noticed our great out reaching this past summer during an event called UMARMY. Figure 2 shows everyone involved during a weeklong period of giving back. We were in Baytown, Texas ^and our project for that week was to build a wheelchair ramp for an elderly African-American woman whose house had seen better days. She lived in a forgotten part of Baytown, where poverty seemed like the norm. During that week I saw a lot of hesitation within my group because I don't think they have ever truly seen how others could live and do live. However, near the end of that week, I saw personal growth. I saw how upset they were that people lived like that ^and no one, except groups such as NUMARMY, are going out and helping others improve the quality of their lives. I am so proud to have been a part of a caring project like that. We built a wheelchair ramp for a woman who never even asked for it or expected us or anyone to be there to help her.

Misspelling—outreaching.

Insert comma after Texas (no ZIP code provided).

Change "have" to "had" for tense consistency.

Insert comma to separate two independent clauses.

Substitute "is"—SV agreement.

I have faith in our church and in what makes it different. At one point in time women had strong roles in our church. They were leaders in the choir and even gave Sunday sermons in the traditional service. My friend Sydney, who is going to school for ministry in the fall semester, was encouraged to see women with high authority in the church leading the congregation. Sydney expressed to me once that she was excited to see a woman's role expand to being more than just a caretaker or a Sunday school teacher. However, there has been a shift within the last year to a more male-centric church. We recently lost two women who were leaders, and I believe they both showed our congregation that we could learn to move from being a traditional institution to something different and

exciting. We have portraits of our present and former leaders in our hallway, and it is refreshing to see something new in the row of portraits. During the shift, I saw a lot of members uncertain of the new leadership and how we would be guided. I am fortunate enough to have witnessed being lead in the right direction. I honestly do sometimes miss the modern element—what I knew when I joined the church about a year ago. Everything seemed so sure and certain, but this year things are starting to be turned around a bit. I never thought that I would be working for the church, but, as luck would have it, I did. While it was only for a brief time, I earned the title of building attendant. One who basically makes sure that the people are who they are supposed to be. If something were to go wrong, I would call the police. Then again nothing has gone wrong (thank God), and I have realized that all I am is a glorified doorman. I realized while opening doors for members during weeknights as they hurried in so that they weren't late for their meeting or practice, that I look away and stare at the ground while I held open the door. I discovered that I am less than them. I have caught myself doing that more than once, and I get angry at myself because I feel like I am less than them because I think all they see is a Mexican holding open a door. They don't seem to care, which should not be the case. I shouldn't feel like that, especially at a church. We're all told from the pulpit to "Love thy neighbor" and to "Treat others how you would want to be treated." I ask myself why I feel the need to do so, to look away. One answer always pops up: they expect that of me—to serve. And I guess they are right because the other Hispanics who are employed by the church do only one of two things, clean or serve.

Misspelling ("led")

Fragment—delete the period and insert a comma. Make "One" lowercase.

I talked to a lady named Marisol who cleans when I work at night, and, during the first time we talked, we brought up how as Hispanics we have to prove something. We have not only to prove things to ourselves, but to others so we can gain their approval. While I know we have a place and a right to be here, I never once tried to justify who I am or where I came from since I started attending KUMC. {What Marisol expressed was a bit eye-opening, however; we are played out and classified as servers, but never the ones being served. And it's true, more than ever in KUMC, that people who aren't white are seen as the lesser. I didn't pick up on it at first, but now I have. Working for the church has made

Problem with paragraph unity. See additional comments following the essay.

it apparent that I am not an equal, but rather a servant, and while that description may seem brash, that is how I perceive it.}

Don't get me wrong, I do love going to the Klein United Methodist Church. It has provided me with a community of people to rely upon in my time of need. When I joined the church, I made a promise to care, lead, and help any member in need and to be there for everyone. It just takes a bit more time and patience to reach out and help when I don't see myself as an equal to everyone else. If I attended a church with people more like me, I am sure that I wouldn't have these feelings, but I don't. Milagro's story is very similar to mine. She dealt with self-harm, too, and we are the only two Hispanics who are young members of the church, but we still feel left out.^ I chose to attend KUMC and, for the most part, I don't regret it. I pride myself on getting outside my comfort zone, changing my outlook, and flipping the script of what it means to be a Hispanic, particularly a Hispanic in a white community. I think that is what it truly boils down to—an outsider trying to fit in, trying to find a home and a sense of belonging. It's just sad that race is a factor and that I put that pressure on myself. I told myself that I am not good enough because I am not white, that the color of my skin determines my role in the church. I think that is what I have to work on to be a successful member of this community of faith.

Comma splice. Substitute a period for the comma.

Beginning with "I chose," let the remainder of the paragraph serve as your conclusion.

Now that you have examined this essay thoroughly, what are your impressions? Is the essay ready for submission to the instructor? While there are considerable problems with (and many merits to) the essay, the main editorial concern is the shift from the positive nature of the thesis/purpose to the misgivings about KUMC and its apparent cultural/ethical bias. To remedy this problem, the writer can either amend his thesis to reflect these misgivings or he can choose to eliminate them entirely and revise the essay to reflect solely on the positive roles the church has played in his life. Regardless of which choice the writer determines to best fulfill his purpose and to maintain thematic unity throughout the essay, he is still faced with the arduous task of revision—an almost never-ending endeavor. No essay is perfect. All we can hope to accomplish is to do our very best to represent our ideas and ourselves in the best way possible. Unfortunately, for many of us, deadlines (those insidious but inevitable boundaries) end our struggle for perfection, resulting in the submission of our essay—both a blessing and a curse.

Activity 6.4

Once you have finished a paper (several drafts, revisions, proofreading), exchange it with several other members of your group. Have them proofread your paper as you proofread theirs. Do not make changes within the paper: simply put a check next to the line or passage you find difficult to read, or where you spot an error in grammar or usage. When each of you is finished, consult on what you have found. If you have unresolved questions, ask your instructor.

Final Word

Students often confuse *editing* with *proofreading*, but the two processes are distinct. You begin editing after you have completed your first, and perhaps second, revision. You go through the steps outlined above: checking for grammar errors, improving sentence structure, further developing points, adding details. The proofreading stage is the final stage of the whole writing process. Ideally, you have finished drafting and editing and have time to put the project aside for a while—at least twenty-four hours if possible. You do this so that when you read through your paper for a final time, you can see it with fresh eyes; you will not be reading what in your mind you *think* you have written. The following are some tried-and-true proofreading techniques.

If you began with a handwritten draft, type it on a computer and print it. Because your own handwriting is so familiar to you, you risk not seeing errors that might be detectable when you convert your draft to print. Always double or triple space your first printed draft, allowing space for you to make corrections and additions.

Always use the spell-check function on your word processor. Be aware, however, that it will not catch usage errors (often including homophones, such as compliment and complement, there and their, too and two, root and route), and it can miss errors completely. Do not rely on this function exclusively for editing.

Delay your editing stage a day or two after completing the revised draft. It will allow you to be more objective when proofreading. You will see the draft in a different light than when you were immersed in its construction.

Read your draft aloud. Read clearly and very slowly. When you detect a problem, underline the section, and then resume reading immediately. You can then address

each individually underscored portion later. Repeat this process several times. Record your recitation with your phone, and listen critically to your words as you hear them. You might also enlist a friend and have her read the essay aloud to you—or you read it aloud to her.

If the essay is not your first assignment, you have surely benefited from earlier feedback from your instructor. Proofread this time for any specific errors you have committed before that you recorded in your log or journal or are highlighted in earlier papers in your writing file. Review your former errors, and look now for those specific errors in your current project.

Have a classmate, friend, or family member read your draft, and then ask her for feedback. Another reader can bring a new perspective to the ideas you have offered in the essay and possibly some proofreading skills as well. This method can be particularly beneficial for those writers whose first language is not English. You have most likely shared your early drafts with other readers in the class before you reached the final editing phase. If so, you have already gained insight into content, organization, format, and clarity. Now you might ask your reader to proofread for correctness to determine if any weaknesses or errors remain that demand your attention. Assure your reader once again that you want an honest and critical response. Remember, however, that the act of editing is ultimately your responsibility, not that of your peers or the Writing Center staff.

Finally, a method that will test your patience (and eyesight) is a technique that involves reading the draft backward (i.e., the last sentence first, the next-to-last sentence, second, and so on). This forces you to focus on punctuation and word choice because you are not following the normal flow of ideas in a continuous sequence. You actually read the words and sentences instead of skimming them. Consider each sentence you read fully and independently of the preceding sentence.

Why Humans, Like Ants, Need a Tribe

E. O. Wilson

E. O. Wilson is a preeminent evolutionary biologist who teaches at Harvard University. His primary field is the study of ants, but he has written extensively on a wide range of subjects, including ecology, philosophy, and social issues. His latest book is *Half Earth: Our Planet's Fight for Life* (2016). The following letter is taken from his book *The Creation: An Appeal to Save Life on Earth* (2006).

While E. O. Wilson is an evolutionary biologist who has written many papers for scientific journals, he has also written many articles and books for the general reader. In this essay he takes a specialized subject, the social life of ants, and makes it applicable to ordinary humans. He draws a lesson from ant life and shows how it applies to human life: like ants, we live in tribes. Wilson is able to make his subject clear and interesting, as well as disturbing, because he has kept his general audience in mind. Audience and purpose should always be at the forefront of your own writing as you go through the revising and editing process. What do my readers know and not know, and what is the best way to make clear to them what I am trying to explain?

Have you ever wondered why, in the ongoing presidential campaign, we so strongly hear the pipes calling us to arms? Why the religious among us bristle at any challenge to the creation story they believe? Or even why team sports evoke such intense loyalty, joy, and despair?

The answer is that everyone, no exception, must have a tribe, an alliance with which to jockey for power and territory, to demonize the enemy, to organize rallies and raise flags.

And so it has ever been. In ancient history and prehistory, tribes gave visceral comfort and pride from familiar fellowship, and a way to defend the group enthusiastically against rival groups. It gave people a name in addition to their own and social meaning in a chaotic world. It made the environment less disorienting and dangerous. Human nature has not changed. Modern groups are psychologically equivalent to the tribes of ancient history. As such, these groups are directly descended from the bands of primitive humans and prehumans.

The drive to join is deeply ingrained, a result of a complicated evolution that has led our species to a condition that biologists call *eusociality*. "*Eu-*," of course, is a prefix meaning pleasant or good: euphony is something that sounds wonderful; eugenics is the attempt to improve the gene pool. And the eusocial group contains multiple generations whose members perform altruistic acts, sometimes against their own personal interests, to benefit their group. Eusociality is an outgrowth of a new way of understanding evolution, which blends traditionally popular individual selection (based on individuals competing against each other) with group selection

(based on competition among groups). Individual selection tends to favor selfish behavior. Group selection favors altruistic behavior and is responsible for the origin of the most advanced level of social behavior, that attained by ants, bees, termites—and humans.

Among eusocial insects, the impulse to support the group at the expense of the individual is largely instinctual. But to play the game the human way required a complicated mix of closely calibrated altruism, cooperation, competition, domination, reciprocity, defection, and deceit. Humans had to feel empathy for others, to measure the emotions of friend and enemy alike, to judge the intentions of all of them, and to plan a strategy for personal social interactions.

As a result, the human brain became simultaneously highly intelligent and intensely social. It had to build mental scenarios of personal relationships rapidly, both short term and long term. Its memories had to travel far into the past to summon old scenarios and far into the future to imagine the consequences of every relationship. Ruling on the alternative plans of action were the amygdala and other emotion-controlling centers of the brain and autonomic nervous system. Thus was born the human condition, selfish at one time, selfless at another, and the two impulses often conflicted.

Today, the social world of each modern human is not a single tribe but rather a system of interlocking tribes, among which it is often difficult to find a single compass. People savor the company of like-minded friends, and they yearn to be in one of the best—a combat Marine regiment, perhaps, an elite college, the executive committee of a company, a religious sect, a fraternity, a garden club—any collectivity that can be compared favorably with other, competing groups of the same category.

Their thirst for group membership and superiority of their group can be satisfied even with symbolic victory by their warriors in clashes on ritualized battlefields: that is, in sports. Like the cheerful and well-dressed citizens of Washington, D.C., who came out to witness the First Battle of Bull Run during the Civil War, they anticipate the experience with relish. The fans are lifted by seeing the uniforms, symbols, and battle gear of the team, the championship cups and banners on display, the dancing seminude maidens appropriately called cheerleaders. When the Boston Celtics defeated the Los Angeles Lakers for the National Basketball Association championship on a June night in 196., the mantra was “Celts Supreme!” The social psychologist Roger Brown, who witnessed the aftermath, commented:

> The fans burst out of the Garden and nearby bars, practically break dancing in the air, stogies lit, arms uplifted, voices screaming. The hood of a car was flattened, about thirty people jubilantly piled aboard, and the driver—a fan—smiled happily . . . It did not seem to me that those fans were just sympathizing or empathizing with their team. They

personally were flying high. On that night each fan's self-esteem felt supreme; a social identity did a lot for many personal identities.

Experiments conducted over many years by social psychologists have revealed how swiftly and decisively people divide into groups and then discriminate in favor of the one to which they belong. Even when the experimenters created the groups arbitrarily, prejudice quickly established itself. Whether groups played for pennies or were divided by their preference for some abstract painter over another, the participants always ranked the out-group below the in-group. They judged their "opponents" to be less likable, less fair, less trustworthy, less competent. The prejudices asserted themselves even when the subjects were told the in-groups and out-groups had been chosen arbitrarily.

The tendency to form groups, and then to favor in-group members, has the earmarks of instinct. That may not be intuitive: some could argue that in-group bias is conditioned, not instinctual, that we affiliate with family members and play with neighboring children because we're taught to. But the ease with which we fall into those affiliations points to the likelihood that we are already inclined that way—what psychologists call "prepared learning," the inborn propensity to learn something swiftly and decisively. And indeed, cognitive psychologists have found that newborn infants are most sensitive to the first sounds they hear, to their mother's face, and to the sounds of their native language. Later they look preferentially at persons who previously spoke their native language within their hearing. Similarly, preschool children tend to select native-language speakers as friends.

The elementary drive to form and take deep pleasure from in-group membership easily translates at a higher level into tribalism. People are prone to ethnocentrism. It is an uncomfortable fact that even when given a guilt-free choice, individuals prefer the company of others of the same race, nation, clan, and religion. They trust them more, relax with them better in business and social events, and prefer them more often than not as marriage partners. They are quicker to anger at evidence that an out-group is behaving unfairly or receiving undeserved rewards. And they grow hostile to any out-group encroaching upon the territory or resources of their in-group.

When in experiments black and white Americans were flashed pictures of the other race, their amygdalas, the brain's center of fear and anger, were activated so quickly and subtly that the centers of the brain were unaware of the response. The subject, in effect, could not help himself. When, on the other hand, appropriate contexts were added—say, the approaching African-American was a doctor and the white his patient—two other sites of the brain integrated with the higher learning centers, the cingulate cortex and the dorsolateral preferential cortex, lit up, silencing input through the amygdala. Thus different parts of the brain have evolved by group selection to create groupishness, as well as to mediate this hardwired propensity.

When the amygdala rules the action, however, there is little or no guilt in the pleasure experienced from watching violent sporting events and war films in which the story unwinds to a satisfying destruction of the enemy. The horrors make the fascination. War is the strong life; it is life *in extremis*.

Literature and history are strewn with accounts of what happens at the extreme, as in the following from Judges 12: 5–6 in the Old Testament: the Gileadites captured the fords of the Jordan leading to Ephraim, and whenever a survivor of Ephraim said, "Let me go over," the men of Gilead asked him, "Are you an Ephraimite?" If he replied, "No," they said, "All right, say "'Shibboleth.'?"" If he said "Sibboleth," because he could not pronounce the word correctly, they seized him and killed him at the fords of the Jordan. Forty-two thousand Ephraimites were killed at that time.

Research has shown that tribal aggressiveness goes well back beyond Neolithic times. And there is a good chance that it could be a much older heritage, dating beyond the split 6 million years ago between the lines leading to modern chimpanzees and to humans, respectively.

The patterns of collective violence in which young chimp males engage are remarkably similar to those of young human males. Aside from constantly vying for status, both for themselves and for their gangs, they tend to avoid open mass confrontations with rival troops, instead relying on surprise attacks. The purpose of raids made by the male gangs on neighboring communities is evidently to kill or drive out its members and acquire new territory. The entirety of such conquest under fully natural conditions has been witnessed by John Mitani and his collaborators in Uganda's Kibale National Park. The chimp war, conducted over 10 years, was eerily humanlike. Every 10 to 14 days, patrols of up to 20 males penetrated enemy territory, moving quietly in single file, scanning the terrain from ground to the treetops, and halting cautiously at every surrounding noise. If they encountered a force larger than their own, the invaders broke rank and ran back to their own territory. When they encountered a lone male, however, they pummeled and bit him to death. When a female was encountered, they usually let her go. (This latter tolerance was not a display of gallantry. If she carried an infant, they took it from her and killed and ate it.) Finally, after such constant pressure for so long, the invading gangs simply annexed the enemy territory, adding 22 percent to the land owned by their own community.

Our bloody nature, it can now be argued in the context of modern biology, is ingrained because group-versus-group was a principal driving force that made us what we are. In prehistory, group selection lifted the hominids to heights of solidarity, to genius, to enterprise. And to fear. Each tribe knew with justification that if it was not armed and ready, its very existence was imperiled. Throughout history, the escalation of a large part of technology has had combat as its central purpose. Today, public support is best fired up by appeal to the emotions of deadly combat,

over which the amygdala is grandmaster. We find ourselves in the battle to stem an oil spill, the fight to tame inflation, the war against cancer. Wherever there is an enemy, animate or inanimate, there must be a victory.

Any excuse for a real war will do, so long as it is seen as necessary to protect the tribe. The remembrance of past horrors has no effect. It should not be thought that war, often accompanied by genocide, is a cultural artifact of a few societies. Nor has it been an aberration of history, a result of the growing pains of our species' maturation. Wars and genocide have been universal and eternal, respecting no particular time or culture. Overall, big wars have been replaced around the world by small wars of the kind and magnitude more typical of hunter-gatherer and primitively agricultural societies. Civilized societies have tried to eliminate torture, execution, and the murder of civilians, but those fighting little wars do not comply.

Civilization appears to be the ultimate redeeming product of competition between groups. Because of it, we struggle on behalf of good and against evil, and reward generosity, compassion, and altruism while punishing or downplaying selfishness. But if group conflict created the best in us, it also created the deadliest. As humans, this is our greatest, and worst, genetic inheritance.

Topics for Writing and Discussion

1. Wilson makes the point that "modern groups are psychologically equivalent to the tribes of ancient history." Further, he says "the social world of each modern human is not a single tribe but rather a system of interlocking tribes." We are Americans, then Californians—or Texans or Hoosiers; we are Bostonians—or New Yorkers or Houstonians; we are Catholics—or Baptists or Muslims; we identify with different colleges, different sports teams, different ethnic and political groups. We are members of many tribes at once. Write an essay in which you identify the three most important tribes you belong to, ranking them in order of importance and describing what is essential to belonging to each one.
2. There was a long debate in the past century about whether humans were naturally aggressive and warlike or whether at one time we lived peacefully in small groups in an Eden-like nature. Wilson says: "Our bloody nature, it can now be argued in the context of modern biology, is ingrained because group-versus-group was a principal driving force that made us what we are." But Wilson also mentions the concept of *eusociality*, the idea that humans learned to "perform altruistic acts, sometimes against their own personal interests, to benefit their group." And we have all heard stories of people running into burning buildings to save complete strangers. Based on your own experience, and that of your immediate "tribe," write an essay on which side of our human nature you think predominates. Be sure to give appropriate examples.

Part 2

Types of Writing

CHAPTER 7
Writing Exposition

In any writing you do, you must determine who your audience is, what your purpose is, what the situation is, and what tone you will adopt to fit those requirements. In order to communicate clearly, you will also need to consider the best possible organizational plan. Additionally, in expository essays there are different rhetorical strategies you can use, including description and narration, process analysis, definition, illustration/exemplification, comparison/contrast, classification/division, and causal analysis.

In this chapter these rhetorical strategies will be discussed as separate units. Each will be presented as a means to an end, but in actual writing situations, you will find that you must use multiple strategies. In almost any essay you write, your purpose will be served by paying attention to specific details in order to describe, by exemplifying and illustrating any generalizations you make, by keeping in mind that all writing is an ongoing process, and by keeping cause-effect relationships clear. You may need to develop each paragraph using one or the other of these rhetorical strategies while your overall purpose calls for a broader organizational plan.

You will find that your understanding of these rhetorical strategies, sometimes called modes, will assist you in developing your ideas clearly, whether for an essay, an essay exam, or some other purpose. Your thesis, in any case, will be determined by the situation, your audience, and your particular purpose.

Description

In nearly every essay-writing situation, we use description, especially in providing vivid examples. When we describe, we try to recreate for the audience the sensations we may have felt in a similar situation. The basis of any good description is, of course, close observation and a careful consideration of the audience and purpose. Remember the last time you were asked where you had parked your car and you had to rely on description to explain exactly what your car looked like and generally how to get there? Unless you observe the details, explaining anything clearly for your audience is difficult.

Description is used in almost any rhetorical mode. It is often not an end in itself. It clarifies your point in narration, explains in comparison and classification, makes definition interesting, and creates strong emotional appeals in persuasive writing.

Elements of Description

Diction. In addition to observing closely, choosing the right word is an essential feature of any writing experience. When we use any word in context, we must take several different things into consideration, including the degree of specificity and the nuances of the words. Beginning any discussion with a generalization or an abstraction is entirely possible. However, leaving the subject at that level does not create a very clear image or impression for the audience. In order to write evocatively, the writer must aim toward the specific rather than the general and the concrete rather than the abstract. Introducing an abstraction such as loyalty is a beginning; however, describing the black-and-white terrier named Scotty sleeping on his master's grave in the cemetery night after night becomes more specific. Certain techniques help create vivid writing.

For example, every writer understands the differences between denotation and connotation. Denotation is the dictionary definition of a particular word. If you look up *mother* in the dictionary, you find it means "female parent"—no real surprise. The connotation of a word, however, includes the associations our experience brings to that word. For some, the connotations of mother bring images of hot dogs, SUVs, and apple pies; for others, however, it connotes a busy, organized woman with a briefcase. Connotations can be positive, neutral, or negative as well. If we refer to a person as obstinate or principled, we mean that person has a tendency to stick tenaciously to convictions. A person with conviction might also be called stubborn or, in some contexts, pigheaded: in each case the connotations become progressively more negative.

Our choices of words indicate how we want the reader to understand what we mean. Using the wrong word in certain contexts communicates something to the reader that we never meant. Suppose you were writing about water pollution, for instance, and you found yourself repeating "pure" over and over again in the conclusion. You might open your thesaurus to find another word to vary the way you present your summation of evidence. Among the synonyms, you will find "chaste." Now, chaste does mean purity in some contexts, but it would give your reader an unusual perception of water. Diction—your choice of the right word in the right place—makes a major difference in how your audience understands your point.

Comparisons. Communicating means putting yourself in the place of the audience well enough for you to figure out what the audience knows and to fill the gaps so you can get your point across. One way to do so is to use literal comparisons. That is, by comparing an unfamiliar thing to a familiar one, one the audience understands, you can clarify the unfamiliar. The literal comparison usually requires finding likenesses in two things that are basically similar in nature. Have you ever eaten fried alligator? What does it taste like? Chicken? Your answer is an example of a literal comparison: two things of like nature (sources of protein) compared in order to make the unfamiliar more familiar.

Another kind of comparison used in description is the figurative comparison. *Figures of speech* usually compare two things of essentially unlike nature. Common figures of speech include some of the following.

Simile. A comparison of two essentially unlike things using words that make the comparison clear ("like," "as," "resembles," "than," and similar words). When you say that a certain child eats like a horse, you are using a simile to indicate a single aspect of the two subjects where the qualities of one make the qualities of the other vivid or interesting by comparison.

Metaphor. A comparison of two essentially unlike things without using words that emphasize the comparison. The metaphor is a more implicit comparison. When we say a person turns beet red or is a mad dog when he is angry, we are using metaphor.

Personification. A comparison of two essentially unlike things in which inanimate objects are given human or animal characteristics, abstractions are given qualities of humans or animals, animals are given human characteristics, and so forth. People who give their cars a name are personifying. If you say your car coughs and dies, you have given it (a machine with internal problems) human characteristics.

Synecdoche (pronounced si-nek'-dekē). A comparison of two unlike things, in this case a part with the whole. If a farmer hires extra help during harvest, he may say he hires four hands. He actually hires four people with eight hands, but the essential aspect of his help is their ability to work with their hands, of course. In class it does not take you long to figure out which students are quick to catch on or which students have come to class well prepared. You may call those students "brains" to indicate their essential characteristics. You do not mean that they sit in the back of the class in a jar of formaldehyde.

Rhetorical Devices. Closely allied with figurative language, these devices are often included in descriptions. They are often examples of verbal irony.

Verbal Irony. A discrepancy between what we say and what we mean. You might describe your dorm room as a plush apartment, for example, or your old 2002 Toyota Corolla as your royal coach.

Hyperbole. A deliberate exaggeration for a particular effect. Anyone who lives in Texas understands the basic focus of hyperbole (pronounced hi-per-bo-le, not hyper-bowl—which sounds like a game played between two football teams who have had too much sugar). When we say a mountain of dirty dishes is in the sink, we are using hyperbole. No matter where you park on campus, your car is 7,000 miles from any class you have—truth or hyperbole?

Understatement. A deliberate undercutting or downplaying of importance to create a particular effect. If the rain begins unexpectedly during class, catching you unprepared, and if it rains forty days and forty nights in an hour and a half (hyperbole), and if your car is 7,000 miles from any shelter near a parking lot, and some character wanders past you in a yellow slicker, an umbrella, and hip boots and says, "Damp out, isn't it?" he is understating the situation.

Paradox. An apparent contradiction that proves to be true upon reflection. William Wordsworth's statement that the "Child is father of the Man" seems backward but says something about the relative understanding of the two generations. *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten* would seem to operate upon the same paradox. An oxymoron is a paradox in which the seeming contradiction is contained within a single phrase. The usual examples are "jumbo shrimp" and "sophomore" ("wise fool"). Some more literary references, such as "darkness visible," a "terrible beauty," and "wintry fever" also fit the definition.

Imagery. Obviously you must describe sensory impressions if you are to involve the reader in the point you are trying to make. The five kinds of sensory appeals include visual imagery (appeals to the way things look), tactile imagery (the way things feel), auditory/aural imagery (the way things sound), gustatory imagery (the way things taste), and olfactory imagery (the way things smell). In English there are more words to describe the way things look than to describe any other type of imagery. Usually, the first three kinds of images are used more often in expository writing, but every once in a while, you may be called upon to use all the senses to vivify your writing. While you may start a discussion by saying that something looks good or that it sounds great, you really have not told the audience anything to expand their understanding. You must use specific adjectives to create particular images that evoke corresponding sensations in the audience, to recreate for them the same sensations that you as the writer experienced.

Organization

No descriptive passage exists in a vacuum: it is designed to fit your audience and your purpose. Therefore, most descriptions are used within examples to support whatever point you are making. Descriptions usually support a dominant impression you are trying to convey in your discussion and are organized to present the information in the most clearly logical way for your audience spatially or emphatically. You may choose to arrange according to where things are in space or how they relate to each other (spatial). You may choose, on the other hand, to arrange your description according to the relative importance of your details (emphatic). No matter what the arrangement, the details you select will communicate your point to the reader. In certain circumstances you may want to present an objective description, trying to be as complete and unbiased in your presentation as possible. In other cases, your dominant impression may be subjective. You will want to involve your audience emotionally in your subject. Although the following passage deals with fiction, the same literary devices can be used in expository writing. Consider the following description from Michael McFarland's short story "The False Country."

> The center stripe was the bright line to which the dark world vibrated. It was the flashing middle marker stretching all the way from the horizon of the flat farmland. Far off at its origin was a point that Stephen aimed his car toward. Although it was night, he could see many other dimmer lines—made by the freeway's painted edge, the ditches, the endless fences, even the horizon, and—above the horizon the tree line. They all seemed to begin at this central point and they came toward him at different speeds—sadly, slowly. Finally, reaching him, they slipped by until they were no longer in sight but probably converged at some equidistant point behind. The painted lines were the most dramatic, especially the center one. It constantly started up slowly and crept towards him, gathering speed until it flashed under. Finally it gave itself to the roar of the engine. The car seemed almost to be running on this energy like the toy cars he had played with as a boy. He had pushed them along the floor hard, until the momentum gave them life and they whirred off under their own power.

You will quickly notice the vivid visual and auditory images he creates. Comparison—literal and figurative—and rhetorical devices also contribute to the effect McFarland seeks to convey. At least one comparison appears as he likens the car to "the toy cars he had played with as a boy," and he personifies the lines as "[creeping] towards him," moving toward Stephen "sadly, slowly," examples of alliteration. The fences are called "endless"—a hyperbole, of course. The engine roars, and the lines whir onomatopoeically: the evocative language involves the reader in the description. The dominant impression is subjective. From Stephen's point of view there is much movement, and the lines are the central focus.

Strategic Questions

1. Is my point of view appropriate for my audience? Who are they?
2. What is my purpose? Am I informing or attempting to provide a specific response?
3. Have I created a dominant impression in my description? Is it explicitly stated or implied?
4. Have I made certain the details are concrete and supportive of the dominant impression?
5. Is the essay arranged emphatically, spatially, or chronologically?
6. Have I included more than just sensory impressions?
7. Have I included figurative language? Are the images fresh, not stereotypical?
8. Did I edit carefully, checking for major grammatical and spelling errors?

Activity 7.1

Identify and underline the descriptive devices E. B. White uses in this paragraph from "Once More to the Lake."

One afternoon while we were at that lake a thunderstorm came up. It was like the revival of an old melodrama that I had seen long ago with childish awe. The second-act climax of the drama of the electrical disturbance over a lake in America had not changed in any important respect. This was the big scene, still the big scene. The whole thing was so familiar, the first feeling of oppression and heat and a general air around camp of not wanting to go very far away. In midafternoon (it was all the same) a curious darkening of the sky, and a lull in everything that had made life tick; and then the way the boats suddenly swung the other way at their moorings with the coming of a breeze out of the new quarter, and the premonitory rumble. Then the kettle drum, then the snare, then the bass drum and cymbals, then crackling light against the dark, and the gods grinning and licking their chops in the hills. Afterward the calm, the rain steadily rustling in the calm lake, the return of light and hope and spirits, and the campers running out in joy and relief to go swimming in the rain, their bright cries perpetuating the deathless joke about how they were getting simply drenched, and the children screaming with delight at the new sensation of bathing in the rain, and the joke about getting drenched linking the generations in a strong indestructible chain. And the comedian who waded in carrying an umbrella.

1. To what does he compare the storm? Is the comparison literal or figurative?
2. What images does he use?
3. Which figures of speech are employed?
4. What transitional devices does he use in this paragraph? Why does he repeat "then" in sentence 7?

Activity 7.2

1. Go somewhere on campus. The place may be inside or outside. Make yourself comfortable for a minute, and decide whether the place impresses you favorably or unfavorably. On this sheet, jot down as many specific details, observations, and ideas as you can in ten minutes or so. Focus on your senses—what can you see, touch, taste, hear, or smell.
2. Go somewhere else where you have a good writing surface, space, and quiet. Review your list. Now go through your jottings, and make a specific figure of speech for at least five of them. Create at least five vivid images of at least ten other details. Avoid clichés.
3. Now write your subjective, dominant impression of the place to describe it to your audience.
4. Next, choose specific details, images, and figures of speech to support your dominant impression.
5. Finally, write a paragraph in which you persuade your audience to perceive a place on campus the way you do. Include your dominant impression, specific details, vivid language, logical transitions, and a clincher to emphasize your purpose.

Before you write a description, read the student-written essay "Going Home," by Kathleen Looper under *Student Examples* in the back of the book.

Narration

Description is often used in conjunction with narrative. Every time you tell your friends and family about a particular event in your day, you use narration. Any time you tell a story to answer "What happened?" you use narration. Usually, there is a point to the details you choose to include in your recitation. Your details support a central idea. If the day was horrendous, your details turn into a long whine; if the day was wonderful, your details bolster the effect. A joke, a journal entry, a story, a historical perspective—all require narrative. Narration may be used any number of ways.

- As an introductory or concluding technique to gain the reader's interest and create a vivid beginning or ending for the essay
- As an essay in itself to explain an event, a process, or to make a point
- Throughout an essay to provide personal examples

Elements of Narration

Plot. The sequence of events, called plot in fiction, indicates the order in which events happen. You may want to use chronological order to show how events unfold. Begin with the setting and situation, and proceed to tell the story from first to last. In the process you will pay attention, again, to logical details necessary to fulfill your purpose. Narrative should usually develop causally: an event should logically follow any preceding one. But you may want to present events out of their normal order to emphasize an important effect you are trying to create. Be careful with this kind of development, however. No matter what order you choose, you must describe the beginning, middle, and end to make causal relationships clear. As you present your narrative, you will find that some kind of conflict is intrinsic to your discussion.

Setting. For the most part, setting establishes where and when the events take place. It may be used straightforwardly to emphasize your point, or it may be used ironically. In a narrative the author chooses details that create the illusion of reality for the reader, verisimilitude. Your selection of details helps you make your point and create vivid impressions for the audience. The point of your story will be emphasized by your handling of setting, sequence, and people or characters.

Time. When you describe you are probably more interested in spatial relationships, but in narrative the important relationships are most concerned with time. You will use chronological order most of the time to indicate the beginning, middle, and end of the incident, but as a writer you must decide whether to compress time or to emphasize or de-emphasize certain aspects. Sometimes, you will want to start

in medias res, in the midst of the action, to vivify the events and put the reader into the moment. No matter which kind of sequence you choose, be particularly careful with verb tenses. In most cases present tense makes sense unless you are referring to incidents that occur in the character's past.

Conflict. Conflict is, of course, a clash of wills, characters, or forces. It can be internal (within you or the central character you are presenting) or external (between two people or forces). Presenting conflict in an extended narrative creates an essential tension necessary to good narrative writing. Unless there is conflict, there really is not much suspense—or interest—generated in the reader.

Dialogue. Another way to make your narrative vivid and immediate is to use dialogue rather than referring to conversations indirectly. Be sure to check your handbook for the proper use of quotation marks and punctuation to allow your characters to speak for themselves.

Character. Characters are the people involved: how you introduce and describe them gives the reader an understanding of your point. They may be described physically or psychologically or both, but the effect is much more vivid if you do not tell the reader how to feel. Instead you need to describe the character in such a way that the reader knows what kind of person he is. Mark Twain once said that it is not enough to tell about an old lady who shows up and is unhappy; "bring her on and let her scream" her head off.

Point of View. While you often use third person ("she," "he") in academic writing, in personal narrative especially, you may be told to use first person ("I") in order to create immediacy and interest. All your choices in any kind of writing are determined by your audience and your particular purpose. Your audience and purpose are essential to the way you present your point. Keep your readers firmly in mind, and present significant details in descriptive language tailored to them.

Organization

Narration, whether used to relate incidents in fiction or sequences in nonfiction, will always move your reader through situations and processes in time. Therefore you must have a clear idea of the progression through time of events that you are going to convey. You might, for example, want to set up a timeline on a sheet of paper with the major events in your sequence placed alongside it. You will also want to be extremely careful with the tenses you use so as not to confuse your reader. While many narratives, such as memoirs, are recalled from the past and require the use of past and past perfect tenses, careful use of the present tense can give immediacy to your narrative. For example, notice the shifts in tense in the following

passage from the opening of John Updike's short story, "A&P," which is being retold by Sammy after the event:

> In walks these three girls in nothing but bathing suits. I'm in the third check-out slot, with my back to the door, so I don't see them until they're over by the bread. The one that caught my eye first was the one in the plaid green two-piece. She was a chunky kid, with a good tan and a sweet broad soft-looking can with those two crescents of white just under it, where the sun never seems to hit, at the top of the backs of her legs. I stood there with my hand on a box of HiHo crackers trying to remember if I rang it up or not. I ring it up again and the customer starts giving me hell. She's one of these cash-register-watchers, a witch about fifty with rouge on her cheekbones and no eyebrows, and I know it made her day to trip me up. She'd been watching cash registers forty years and probably never seen a mistake before.

Sammy begins his story *in medias res* and places us in the checkout stand with him as he watches three girls enter the grocery store. The dramatic use of present tense captures our attention, just as the three girls earlier captured his. He then switches to past tense as he describes the girls and his own frozen attention: he cannot remember whether he rang up the crackers or not. He switches again to present tense as he focuses on the old lady in front of him, and then switches to past perfect in describing her probable previous cash-register-watching activity.

In nonfiction narrative, particularly if you are explaining a process, you must pay close attention to your audience and your purpose. How much can you assume your audience knows? How much detail will be needed to convey the process or events? The following paragraph explains—narrates—the operation of Darwinian natural selection in creating the giraffe's long neck. It was published in *Natural History*, the magazine of the American Museum of Natural History in New York City. The magazine is written for nonspecialists interested in science.

> A Darwinian explanation [of the giraffe's long neck] assumes that the neck length has always varied among the individuals in a giraffe population. In the past, the giraffes with the longest necks reached the highest leaves, which were more abundant, and may have held more nutrients than the lower leaves, but were inaccessible to shorter-necked giraffes. Overall, then, the longest-necked animals were the best-fed members of the population. Better nutrition translated into longer or healthier lives, and so longer-necked giraffes produced more offspring than shorter-necked giraffes. With time, differential rates of survival and reproduction

skewed the giraffe population toward animals with elongated necks. The key to the mechanism of Darwinian evolution is natural selection.

Here the authors, Luis and Monika Espinasa, keep their audience firmly in mind. The diction is simple and straightforward, although they assume their audience will know such words and terms as "nutrients" and "differential rates of survival." They stay in the past tense and include such transitions as "In the past," "Overall, then," and "With time" to move the narrative along.

Strategic Questions

1. What is the overall purpose of my narrative? Is it clear? Is the mood appropriate for my purpose?
2. Is the setting included?
3. What is the narrative's conflict? Is the conflict dramatic enough?
4. Does the dialogue enrich my purpose or character portrayal?
5. If I have a flashback or flash-forward, does it highlight the purpose and help create the effect of the overall essay?
6. Do all the characters contribute significantly to the essay's rhetorical situation and purpose?
7. Is the point of view clear and consistent throughout the essay?
8. Are there enough transitional devices to create fluidity in the narrative?
9. Have I avoided stereotypes and clichés?
10. Have I edited carefully, checking for major grammatical and spelling errors?

Activity 7.3

Here is a simple declarative sentence: "The man and his daughter walked through the shopping mall." Fill in the blanks in the sentences below with descriptive words, phrases, and clauses. You will want to consider what the man and his daughter look like (How old are they? What are they wearing? Who are they?), how they are walking (Are they striding? Lolling?), and what that area of the mall looks like (stores, sounds, colors). Are they happy? Upset? Afraid? What will happen at the end of their shopping trip?

1. The _____man and his _____ daughter walked through the shopping mall.

2. The _____ and his _____ were walking through the shopping mall.
3. The _____ man and _____ _____ were _____ through the _____ shopping mall _____.
4. _____ the _____ man and his _____ daughter were _____ly through the shopping mall _____ and _____ _____.

Activity 7.4

Write a paragraph describing the man and his daughter walking through the mall. Make sure you have a good topic/introductory sentence and a dramatic concluding sentence. Before you write, read the student-written essay "A Seasonal Twist," by Tammy Boggs under *Student Examples* in the back of the book.

Process

We read and follow processes all the time. When we read the directions on how to use the camera on our cell phone, or how to operate a self-service gas pump, we are using process. Process is a habit of mind involving ideas in logical sequences. There is an orderly and efficient way to do almost everything, although nearly everyone thinks his or her way is best. Basically there are two kinds of processes: directional and informational. The directional process explains how to do something so that the reader can duplicate the action suggested, while the informational process explains how a more complicated process is done, but not with the intent of duplication. You do not have to be a miner to understand how strip mining works, nor are you expected to run right out and create a strip mine in your backyard if you read about how the process is done.

Elements of a Process

Process analyses are used in almost anything that requires a step-by-step explanation. When you explain the steps of a chemistry experiment, you are presenting a directional process. You use informational processes every time you explain how Native American lands were colonized, how a bill becomes law, or how the writing

process works. When you explain a process, particularly a directional one, you should take several things into consideration.

1. Provide an overview of general principles. Give your reader an understanding of the way you intend to develop your plan.
2. Provide complete details. All the techniques you use in describing anything will, of course, be applicable to describing how a particular process is done.
3. Define any technical terms. Keep your audience in mind, and try to make your explanation clear enough to communicate effectively.
4. Provide reasons for the steps you include. You should tell why it is important to include certain elements of the process as well as explain how to do them.
5. Include negative directions as well as the reasons for doing things a certain way or in a certain order. You must warn the reader in key places about what not to do. Because cyanide is difficult to remove from all kinds of surfaces, including glass, it is probably better not to prepare a beverage in a beaker you usually use for cyanide experiments.
6. Illustrate your process using descriptive techniques. Normally, you will not have diagrams or other visual aids in your writing; therefore, you need to create images to make your process clear.
7. You will have noticed in the course of this discussion that its point of view violates the rules you may have been told about using second person and shifting points of view. Because this book is designed as a set of directions or instructions for the reader, it often uses second person. The purpose and audience determine the point of view you will use in your writing. Sometimes your instructor will insist that you use third person ("one," "he," "she") in order to practice appealing to certain audiences of the type you will write for in many academic settings.

One way to implement the consistent use of third person in a process is to introduce an actor—someone who is logically involved in the process—early in your discussion. If you are describing how to bake bread, the person involved in the process is the baker. When you refer to the baker as the actor in the process, you refer to him or her in the third person. Sometimes you may be asked to use the imperative: a command or request whose implied subject is "you." For example, the directions on the service station gas pump are consistently imperative.

1. Select octane grade; 2. Lift handle; 3. Insert nozzle and pump.

No matter what the assignment requires, you must maintain a consistent point of view. Do not shift from "I" to "you" to "he" and back again. Keep your audience firmly in mind.

Organization

In writing process papers, the same general steps that apply to all writing situations are also important. As you outline, you should group steps logically. You will not put each step in a single short paragraph. The reader should be aware that you have a plan, an outline, but it should not be intrusive. Your outline is the skeleton of your essay; the essay should flesh out that skeleton. Be sure you choose a process that is a suitable length for the paper required, and organize logically, usually chronologically. The thesis statement should indicate the specific groups of steps you will discuss, corresponding to the paragraphs you develop.

Throughout the paper, keep your reader firmly in mind: the audience and the purpose will determine your tone, your techniques, and your direction. Do not condescend to or patronize your audience; explain clearly. In a directional process you may want to use personal narrative, especially in the introduction, to indicate how you became familiar with the process or why you think knowing about this procedure is important or worthwhile. Transitions are particularly important in explaining processes, usually indicating that the steps are chronological for a reason. Generally you will use transitions such as "first," "next," "then," "additionally," and "finally" in addition to any devices you need to make your ideas clearly logical for your reader. You may want to include phrases such as "Be sure to ___ before you try to ___" or "Under no circumstance should you do ___ before doing ___." In your conclusion, you should indicate the results of the procedure—a fluffy soufflé, a law, a well-written essay, an embalmed corpse—and their significance.

Strategic Questions

1. Have I listed all the necessary steps?
2. Is each step explained thoroughly, offering specific, vivid details?
3. Have I defined any terms that might be unfamiliar to the audience?
4. Do the connective words clearly indicate the sequential nature of the process described?
5. Are my sentences varied enough to avoid monotony?
6. Is the purpose clear, either to inform and entertain or to help someone duplicate a step-by-step process?
7. Have I checked for major grammatical and spelling errors?

Activity 7.5

Below are several scrambled steps listing a series of events that make up a process sequence. Unscramble these items, and arrange them in chronological order. Then outline the process, indicating how you would group the events and what you would call each group. Make sure each level is parallel.

_____ 1. Pour a cup of coffee.

_____ 2. Rewet hair, and try again.

_____ 3. Put on shirt and tie after brushing lint off pants.

_____ 4. Dry off.

_____ 5. Turn on light while rubbing knot on forehead.

_____ 6. Start car.

_____ 7. Brush teeth after changing shirts.

_____ 8. Arrive at class ten minutes late.

_____ 9. Find key in sofa.

_____ 10. Dodge vicious squirrel on the way to the car.

_____ 11. Scald yourself in the shower—you forgot to check temperature.

_____ 12. Spill coffee on shirt while putting lint brush away.

_____ 13. Hit "snooze" on clock again.

_____ 14. Fall over tub edge trying to get out of shower.

_____ 15. Get stuck in traffic on FM 197..

_____ 17. Burn tongue with hot coffee.

_____ 17. Put pants on after putting on socks.

_____ 18. Finish showering.

_____ 19. Drag yourself out of bed.

_____ 20. Turn off lights.

_____ 21. Change tie.

_____ 22. Adjust water temperature.

_____ 23. Put socks on after hair is dried the second time.

_____ 24. Stumble back into the kitchen again with hair still dripping wet.

_____ 25 Fix coffee.

_____ 27. Search frantically for the keys.

_____ 27. Drive 75 mph to make up for lost time changing clothes.

_____ 28. Change shirt.

_____ 29. Having selected your wardrobe, time to dry hair.

_____ 30. Shower after coffee begins to brew.

_____ 31. Lock house.

_____ 32. Drip toothpaste on tie.

_____ 33. Hit snooze on alarm clock.

_____ 34. With tongue still burning from coffee, pick out clothes for the day.

_____ 35. Bump into wall as you move toward the door.

_____ 37. Run over neighbor's cat, but no time to stop now.

_____ 37. Class canceled because professor's favorite cat was run over in the neighbor's driveway.

_____ 38. Back out of driveway.

Activity 7.6

Write a short essay describing your own morning process. Your audience is the other members of your group and your class. Be sure to provide an introduction with a clear thesis statement; also make sure that your essay is not simply a list of actions. Tone is also important. Is your attitude humorous, comic, satiric, serious?

Alternate assignment: Write a short "how-to" process explaining to a new coworker how to do one action at work. Assume that she will be working with you.

Before writing a process, read the student-written essay "Planting a Vegetable Garden" under *Student Examples* at the back of the book.

Illustration/Example

One of the most commonly used patterns of expository writing is the development of a thesis, idea, or statement by means of illustration/example or exemplification. If, for instance, you wish to tell your audience that, in your opinion, Marvin is not the best choice for the position of Chief Cashier at Citibank, you might proceed to illustrate your opinion with examples of Marvin's behavior. You might provide three examples to illustrate your assertion: (1) Marvin is a chain smoker and lights his cigarettes with $10 bills. (2) Although his salary is now only $100 a week and his parents live in a one-room apartment, Marvin drives a new Lexus and goes on vacations in Bora Bora. (3) Two months ago Marvin returned after another kind of vacation where he was serving ten to twenty years for embezzling $200,000 from the Second Interstate Bank.

Each of these examples serves to show your reader why you do not think highly of Marvin as a bank employee. You have made a statement (Do not make Marvin Chief Cashier) and illustrated your statement with three effective examples of his behavior that should disqualify him from the job. In the exemplification essay, you make a statement and then provide examples to clarify your statement for the audience. The examples should be clear, concrete, appropriate, interesting, and supportive of the thesis statement.

Elements of Example/Illustration

Effective examples have a number of common characteristics.

They are clear. Because the purpose of using examples is to make your general idea clearer to your audience, it should be obvious that the examples must be carefully chosen for their clarity. How clear the example is will depend to some extent on who the readers of the essay are likely to be. If you want to illustrate the economic principle of supply and demand, for instance, you would choose different examples for a professor of business administration than you would for a ninth-grade history textbook. The professor will understand references to gross domestic product, and a good example for her might be a fairly complicated graph showing annual consumption of fuel oil per capita. The ninth grader, however, would probably not find these examples helpful because they would not be clear to him. He would probably benefit more from an illustration based on a sporting goods store and the different price of baseball caps at various times of the year. When you show him that ball caps cost more in January than in July because there were fewer caps available in January, he will begin to see what you mean by "supply and demand." Whenever you choose an example,

therefore, you should be sure that it will be clear to your intended audience and that it will make your general statement or thesis clearer to them.

They are concrete. This characteristic is closely allied to clarity because most examples are clearer when they are most concrete. Because of the way most of us think, readers are attracted to and benefit most from particular, specific, detailed examples. In the example already suggested—the illustration of supply and demand by a reference to the price of baseball caps in January—the example will be more effective if you specify "baseball cap" than if you use a more abstract term, such as "wearing apparel." Referring to specific months, such as January and July, to explain why production is lowest, too, will probably be more effective than talking about felicitous and infelicitous manufacturing periods. To illustrate your point, you might even decide to write a short narrative in which Coach Neander complains in a rage to Mr. Strapp, the manager of the sporting goods store (frightening him and causing him to knock down an eight-foot replica of a Dallas Cowboys linebacker display he was putting up), that the caps the coach wants for this team cost $20. The idea is to make the example specific, particular, and concrete because then the thesis will be easier for your audience to understand.

They are appropriate. In order to be effective, to do a good job of illustrating your point, an example should be appropriate; it should be suitable to the idea it illustrates (valid, reasonable) and also to the intended audience (appropriate for their experience, background, and knowledge of the subject). If you wanted to choose an appropriate example of how advertising can sway the consumer and force him to buy something he does not really want or need, you probably would not use the Ford Motor Company's greatest flop, the Edsel, as your example. Such an example would be neither valid nor reasonable because it suggests the opposite of what you want to demonstrate. The Edsel was heavily advertised, but it looked so awful that people refused to buy it.

By the same token, you do not want to choose an example that is so outlandish or exaggerated that it fails to convince your readers because it is not representative. Such an example to demonstrate how advertising can influence the consumer might be "subliminal" advertising. Some years ago there were allegations that advertising messages such as "Buy a Coke" were inserted on single frames of motion pictures. The message would flash on the screen for only a fraction of a second, and the movie patrons would not even be aware they had seen it. They supposedly got thirsty, and Coke sales in the lobby went up. Now, this example might illustrate the power of advertising, and it can be made clear and concrete enough, but it probably is not a good example because it is not appropriate. It is too exceptional and, therefore, unlikely to convince your audience. The charges were never proven, few theaters would have been involved anyway, and it is

unlikely that your audience would feel such tactics apply to them. The example, therefore, is not appropriate for your thesis. A more appropriate example could be the number of people, who buy the so-called "miracle drugs" advertised on television and in the newspapers. The drugs are often worthless, but clever advertising succeeds in selling them anyway.

They are vivid and interesting. No example is very useful if the reader does not read it because it is boring. Some of the characteristics already discussed are relevant to interesting examples because an interesting example will probably be clear, appropriate, and (especially) concrete. While some examples are vivid and interesting because of the material presented, almost all examples will benefit from presentation in very specific and descriptive terms.

If for some reason you had to write an essay about "The Best Teacher I Have Known," you would write a more effective and interesting essay if, instead of talking about the "vast knowledge" and "truly wonderful personality" of the teacher, you illustrated your essay with a vividly described example of the time the teacher taught you about propulsion and Newton's laws of motion by having the class build and launch a 29˝ rocket. If you want to write a propaganda leaflet about the awful food in your school cafeteria, do not talk vaguely about inedible food and slime in the ice machine.

Instead, describe in sickening detail the barbecued cockroach nestled in your friend's cheeseburger or the ability of the coffee to etch glass and dissolve your spoon in eighteen seconds. Make your reader participate in the essay to get your point across more quickly and thoroughly than you could with any amount of general verbiage about the teacher's "immense contribution to learning" or the cafeteria's wretched cuisine. Vivid examples can make an essay interesting, exciting, and effective. Dull, generalized examples will put your reader to sleep faster than a rubber hammer.

Organization

The purpose of developing an essay or a paragraph through illustration and example is to make clear the thesis, idea, or subject that you are trying to get across to your readers. You give your audience an illustration in order to explain a more general statement. The examples are samples of the general thesis, giving your readers more specific and concrete illustrations of the idea. The example thus acts as a kind of bridge from you to the readers, making the idea or subject clearer. Suppose you want to convey to your history instructor your idea that the bombings of Afghanistan and war in Iraq did a great deal to heighten the American spirit. This is a general, broad idea, and your audience would like (1) to have it made clearer and more specific for

them and easier to understand, and (2) they might like you to give some evidence for your assertion—or at least offer them some reasons to believe that what you say about the incidents and America is true. You can give them both of these things by providing them with good examples. You could, for instance, include in your essay either a single extended example or several examples that will show that what you say is true. In order to demonstrate that the events did enliven the American spirit, you might choose the following examples.

- Historical documents of public polls indicate that over 70 percent of the Americans surveyed felt that the bombings in Afghanistan and the war in Iraq were justifiable.
- Americans generally rallied in support of a military retaliation for the September 11 attacks on New York City and Washington, DC (flag sales, yellow ribbons, fundraisers for victims' families).
- The threat of "weapons of mass destruction" unified the American spirit and a desire to eliminate forces that put national security in peril (military reserve forces called up, billions of dollars appropriated for the war effort, a new cabinet post created).

Your method is thus to illustrate your general statement (that the wars solidified the American spirit) with three examples that make clear to the audience precisely what you mean. You could also have chosen only one of the examples and presented an extended discussion of even greater detail to illustrate your point. Whether an essay is formally called exemplification or not, every composition needs concrete, detailed examples. In either case, the examples clarify your basic point.

These characteristics obviously apply to essays that use illustration and examples as the structural principle, but it is important to note that we use examples in all of our rhetorical patterns, in every kind of expository and persuasive writing. Examine almost any good piece of writing, and you will find examples that are vivid, concrete, clear, interesting, and appropriate. Essays developed by definition, classification, comparison and contrast, process analysis, causal analysis, argumentation, and critical analysis depend on examples to help get their ideas across to their audience. The difference is that an essay developed by illustration uses examples as the structural principle on which it is organized.

Strategic Questions

1. Have I narrowed my subject and sufficiently restricted the focus of my thesis?
2. Have I used three or four examples or fully developed an extended example?
3. Are all examples adequately developed?
4. Are there a sufficient number of specific details to support my generalizations?
5. Do I have an effective conclusion? An interesting title?
6. Have I edited carefully, checking for major grammatical and spelling errors?

Activity 7.7

The following paragraph is taken from a student-written essay titled "Horror Novels as Therapy," by Allison Hinson. Here is her thesis: "In fiction, the horror genre can be recognized by Gothic settings, psychological conflicts, and supernatural events." (The complete essay is in the *Student Examples* section.)

> While Gothic settings can set the mood, psychological horror creates terror in the actual plot. Psychological horror disturbs reality, changing the way we think and act. Horror novels that are based on psychological conflicts create a feeling of terror in the reader because they are plausible. It is conceivable to experience the terror that the young mother and child feel in Stephen King's *Cujo* when they are trapped by the rabid dog. In Anthony Burgess' *A Clockwork Orange* the real horror is not that Alex and his "droogs" are on a rampage in England, but rather that the state forces mind control on him. The psychological conflict in V.C. Andrews' *Flowers in the Attic* is a struggle for power as a mother is slowly brainwashed into giving up her children. Likewise, Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* creates horror by bringing attention to the destructive evil inside us all, symbolized by the werewolf. We all possess to some degree the split personalities between what we are and what we know. Thus, it is our identification with these psychological conflicts that make these novels horrifying.

1. Do the examples used actually support the topic sentence, which says horror is created "in the actual plot," and in the next sentence, that such horror "disturbs reality"?
2. Do the examples support the further assertion that they are "plausible" and "conceivable"?
3. Are the details from the novels cited enough to support the writer's generalization?
4. Are three examples enough?
5. Have you read any of these novels? What more contemporary books would you use in writing your own essay?

Activity 7.8

Take one of your favorite activities—playing sports or video games, watching movies, browsing social media, reading—and write a paragraph explaining why you enjoy this activity. Your purpose is to explain to someone who might not like that activity why you enjoy it. Why is it interesting to you? Be sure to support a clear topic sentence with sufficient examples and evocative details.

Definition

We are all curious beings. We begin asking questions in early childhood, and we develop this inquisitive nature throughout our lives. Our curiosity leads us to seek meanings constantly in order to learn or to clarify our understanding. In addition, we are often asked to explain our own ideas or to clarify, through more specific language, something we have said, whether we are having a discussion among friends or responding orally or in writing to an instructor's question. One of the methods of making ourselves more precise is through definition. When someone asks "What do you mean by that?" your answer may be a constructed definition, relating precisely what the specific idea or term means. In putting together that definition, we often have to "translate" what we mean so our audience will understand our meaning better; we literally put our thoughts into other words in order to convey our message in an understandable language. When a definition is precise enough, it enables the audience to distinguish the particular term being defined from other similar terms with which it could be confused. The rhetorical pattern called definition is a convenient method of clarifying or analyzing a word or concept while you examine the term for a broader understanding.

Elements of Definition

There are at least three types of definitions: the informal definition, the formal definition, and the extended definition. Although the first two require little more than a word or perhaps a sentence, the third method of definition may run into a paragraph or even several pages. Definition can be used as a method to introduce your essay, to clarify your terms within other methods of expository writing, or as a means to an end in itself.

Informal Definition (synonym). This definition is usually associated with the speaker's or writer's own explanation of the word with his particular purpose in mind. This is the connotative meaning of the word being defined. It defines the term by offering a synonym, a word that has a meaning similar to that of another word in the same language. The use of a synonym lets the writer clarify his expression

by providing a word or term that is more familiar to the audience. For example, if you were asked what you meant by the word "mooncalf," you could simply respond with a synonym such as "idiot" or "imbecile." Remember that a definition requires a common ground between the writer and his audience. This common ground implies that the definition is for a specific person or people involved in the exchange of ideas. For example, if a teenage boy tells his grandfather that his new girlfriend is really hot, his grandfather might suggest that the boy turn down the air conditioning.

Formal Definition. This type of definition is the one most likely to be found in dictionaries and other reference sources. It provides the denotative meaning of the word being defined and is composed of two distinct parts. You must first classify the term to be defined and then distinguish it from other similar terms in the same classification. Note the three steps in the following examples: *A mooncalf is a person who is congenitally foolish or mentally defective. A wife is a woman who is married.* Note that the above two terms—mooncalf and wife—are placed into a broader category or class, limiting the terms to a kind of person or woman, respectively. Then we add the characteristics that distinguish that person or woman from all the other people or women. Not all definitions, however, are this simple. Some are more complex and require even more specific descriptions of the distinguishing traits. The following is a definition of a twentieth-century philosophical movement: *Existentialism is a philosophy that focuses on the uniqueness and isolation of individual experiences in an indifferent universe, regards human existence as unexplainable, and emphasizes man's freedom of choice and responsibility for the consequences of his actions.*

Extended Definition. You will most likely want to use the extended definition method when your definition is as complex as those for existentialism or sexual harassment. This method of definition is what your instructor will most likely expect from you in analyzing some term, phrase, or concept in an essay of several hundred words. Such an examination involves writing an essay on this concept, delving more deeply into its meaning, and citing examples that illustrate the term and the difficulties in defining it. Definition, however, is not just an academic exercise. In the matter of sexual harassment, for instance, much work has gone into arriving at an explicit legal definition, for company policy and civil rights cases before the courts all hinge on how the term is defined. Extended definitions may include one or several methods of development: synonyms, antonyms, formal definitions, narration and description, illustration, comparison or contrast, classification, or causal analysis.

Regardless of which method of development you use to define your term or phrase, you will probably want to use the formal definition for your thesis statement and

then develop your essay according to the requirements of that particular rhetorical method. You may wish to define what your term means by negation—that is, by telling your audience what your term does not mean. Dr. Samuel Johnson once defined darkness as the "want of light." If you wish to define the term wife, you may choose to tell your audience that a wife is not a nanny, a maid, or a mistress. While negation is effective in explaining what a term does not mean, it must be accompanied by additional methods of definition. Negation can only help to clarify other statements about what your term does mean.

Regardless of which method you use to write your definition, you should realize in the process that definition is a flexible method of expository writing. It can accommodate you and persuade your audience through almost any format you choose. It helps us to understand the things we see and, sometimes, the things we do not see.

Strategic Questions

1. Have I clearly determined my audience and purpose?
2. Is the organization logical and suitable to the purpose?
3. Did I avoid repeating in the predicate or in the discussion the term I am defining, avoiding a circular definition?
4. Have I avoided vagueness and generalities? Is my definition precise and clear?
5. Have I edited, checking for major grammatical and spelling errors?

Activity 7.9

The following paragraph is taken from a student-written essay titled "Wisdom," by Jennifer Murray. This is her thesis: "However, wisdom is much more than just knowledge gained; it signifies the accumulation of knowledge, the application of learning, and the personification of God's will in the creation of the universe." The complete essay is in the *Student Examples* at the back of the book.

> Just as the accumulation of knowledge is a part of wisdom, so is the application of learning. The ancient Greeks believed that *logos*, or reason and thought, led to *sophia*, or wisdom. These early lovers of wisdom, or philosophers, sought knowledge and attempted to apply it to solving the puzzles of the universe. Further, philosophers such as Aristotle believed that wisdom was necessary to make judgments which coincide with one's understanding of life. This view, also known as "Philosophical Wisdom," is thought to be one of the highest attainable virtues. The Stoics, Greek and Roman philosophers, also had their own ideas about wisdom. To them, not only is wisdom a way of attaining human excellence, it also serves as a way to act according to one's personal ideals. Attaining wisdom places the philosopher

in an enlightened nirvana-like state; however, it occasionally creates conflict for the individual having to deal with a dog-eat-dog existence. In order to release the enlightened man's tortured mind, Stoics, therefore, believed suicide was permissible to relieve the pain of existence. The way to true happiness, Stoics believed, was to want what one gets rather than to try to get what one wants.

Write an essay defining one of your own core values (see Chapter 10 for a list if you need inspiration). Use the student-written essay by Jennifer Murray as a model. Start with a formal definition as your thesis. You can use the dictionary definition or devise one of your own.

Activity 7.10

Provide the missing sections of the following definitions. Remember that each term must be put into its class and then be distinguished from other items of the same class.

1. A bachelor is _____ who _____.
2. A sitcom is _____ that _____.
3. A conspiracy is _____ that _____.
4. Genius is _____ that _____.
5. Graffiti is_____ that _____.
6. Compassion is _____ that _____.
7. A hypothesis is _____ that _____.

Take one of the above definitions and use it as a thesis. Next, construct THREE topic sentences that would support and develop that thesis. Be precise in your sentences.

I. _____
_____
_____

II. _____
_____
_____

III. _____
_____
_____

Comparison/Contrast

Although comparison and contrast are seldom used entirely by themselves (often being combined with other rhetorical patterns in the same essay), you have used them yourself while others have used them to make things clear to you. When you were a child, you might have asked your father what a giraffe was. His response might have been something like this: "It is an animal that looks something like a horse, except that it has long legs and a very long neck—much longer than a horse's neck. Its color is much like a leopard's, yellow with black spots, but the giraffe's spots are larger, and he has fewer of them than a leopard has. A giraffe has a black tongue, too—very different from cats and dogs and most other animals." Your father answered your question by comparing and contrasting the giraffe's size, legs, neck, color, and tongue with those of other animals. Because the giraffe is an animal, the best things to compare it with are other animals, members of the same classification. It would be possible to compare the giraffe to a Chevrolet (the giraffe is taller, not a machine, and a different color; it lacks bucket seats and a vinyl roof) or to a telephone pole. (The giraffe is not as tall, can move around better, and does smell better.) However, the comparisons and contrasts possible would not be as useful as the animal comparisons are in giving a child an idea of what a giraffe is. In general, then, we usually compare and contrast things in a group or class defined by our interest, things that have important similarities as well as differences.

Elements of Comparison/Contrast

There are three reasons for developing an essay by comparison and contrast.

To describe or define one item; we do so by relating it to another item with which our reader is familiar. If you wanted to tell your reader how the Texas Senate operates, you might do it by comparing and contrasting the Texas Senate with the United States Senate. You assume that your reader knows something about the US Senate and that he will be able to make the correct associations with the Texas Senate. Obviously, it is important to choose one item with which your reader is already familiar. Comparing the Texas Senate to the United Kingdom's Parliament will not do much good if your reader has no idea how that Parliament operates.

To tell your reader something about both of the subjects by discussing them in relation to some general principle. The general principle should be applicable to both and familiar to the reader. So you might compare and contrast the Texas Senate and the UK's Parliament, your reader being unfamiliar with both, by relating them to principles of democratic government that your reader understands. You might begin by showing that both the Texas Senate and the

UK's Parliament use forms of representative government. The people elect representatives to these legislative bodies, and the elected legislators make laws on behalf of the electorate. Here you have compared the Texas Senate and the UK's Parliament in relation to representative government. Because our reader understands how representative government works (the people elect representatives to the legislative body), he now knows something about the Texas Senate and the UK's Parliament.

To compare and contrast several things with which the reader is already familiar in order to help him understand some general principles or ideas with which he is not familiar. If you want your reader to understand what government is, you might compare and contrast American democracy, the UK's parliamentary rule, and the emerging Russian system to show what they have in common. If you want your reader to get an idea of what social science is, you can compare and contrast the academic disciplines of psychology, history, and economics to show what they have in common. In these cases, you would be using comparison and contrast to move from your examples with which the reader is already familiar (American democracy, psychology) to a general description of the classes under which your examples belong (government, social science) about which your reader knows very little or nothing.

Organization

Once you decide to use comparison and contrast, there are two basic ways of organizing your essay. You can present one item fully and then discuss the other, called the block pattern—or you can present a part of one item, then a part of the other, and so on until both are fully demonstrated, which is called the alternating method.

Block Pattern. The first method, sometimes called the block pattern, is usually most appropriate when the elements of comparison and contrast are rather simple, broad, and obvious. The assumption the writer makes when presenting the whole of one subject and then the whole of the other is that a reader will be able to remember the first subject while reading the comparisons and contrasts of the second. Because a complex or extended comparison/contrast would probably be difficult for the reader to remember, we normally use the first method for simple subjects. For example, suppose you want to discuss the differences between two distinct groups of students on your campus. You might set up your contrast in a way similar to Figure 7.1.

Introduction (with thesis statement)

I. The Science Major
   A. Appearance
   B. Habits and Habitats
   C. Conversations

II. The Liberal Arts Major
   A. Appearance
   B. Habits and Habitats
   C. Conversations

Conclusion

Figure 7.1: Block Pattern Outline

The author of this essay wanted to acquaint the reader with two types of college students. He illustrated one of these types, which he calls "The Science Major," with examples of their appearance, habits/habitats, and conversations. Then, assuming that the reader will be able to remember the description of this type, he compares and contrasts them with another group, which he calls "The Liberal Arts Major." He describes this group, again giving examples of their appearance, habits/habitats, and conversations that point to the differences between the two groups.

Alternating Pattern. In the second basic organizational method, the alternating pattern, the writer structures his essay differently. He discusses one characteristic of the first subject and then a corresponding characteristic of the second subject. He continues alternating the two subjects until the comparison/contrast is complete and both subjects are fully revealed. This pattern is better than the block pattern for long, complex comparison/contrast essays where the subjects are related at a number of points or where the comparisons and contrasts require extensive explanation. The writer decides on the alternating pattern when the block pattern would make it too difficult for the reader to remember the details of the first description while reading the second (Figure 7.2). Notice the structural differences between the two outlines.

Introduction (with thesis statement)

I. Appearance
   A. The Science Major
   B. The Liberal Arts Major

II. Habits and Habitats
   A. The Science Major
   B. The Liberal Arts Major

III. Conversations
   A. The Science Major
   B. The Liberal Arts Major

Conclusion

Figure 7.2: Alternating Pattern Outline

Strategic Questions

1. Have I used the appropriate pattern of comparison/contrast for my subject, audience, and purpose?
2. Have I included topic sentences that contain references to both items if I chose the alternating pattern?
3. Have I crafted a thesis statement that indicates my purpose (i.e., comparing or contrasting or both), that mentions both items to be discussed, and that makes clear the point I want to show in the essay?
4. Have I used the best order of details for the point I wanted to make?
5. Have I avoided commonplace (cliché) details?
6. Have I edited carefully, checking for major grammatical and spelling errors?

Activity 7.11

Several pairs of items are listed below. Some of the items can be compared, some contrasted. Follow the suggestions of each, and list under the items those bases of comparison you would use in an essay. For example, if you are asked to compare two military leaders of the American Civil War, you might select their origins, educational backgrounds, personalities, and military experiences. You would simply list these four bases of comparison under the items.

1. Compare a computer repairman and a medical surgeon.

   Bases of comparison:

   a. _____

   b. _____

   c. _____

   d. _____

2. Compare a loving relationship with a roller coaster.

   Bases of comparison:

   a. _____

   b. _____

   c. _____

   d. _____

3. Compare a rock concert with a religious service.

   Bases of comparison:

   a. _____

   b. _____

   c. _____

   d. _____

4. Contrast high school students and college students.

   Bases of comparison:

   a. _____

   b. _____

   c. _____

   d. _____

5. Compare or contrast your public self with your private self.

   Bases of comparison:

   a. _____

   b. _____

   c. _____

   d. _____

Now have each member of your group write an appropriate thesis statement for each of the comparisons. Make certain that each thesis has a definite focus and purpose. The focus should contain each of the bases of comparison. Compare and critique the thesis statements.

Activity 7.12

Take one of the thesis statements generated in your group, and write a comparison/contrast essay. Unless you can provide a good rationale for using the block method, use the alternating method of development. Be sure to develop each paragraph with details and clear examples.

Pappadeaux and Joe's Crab Shack

Jona Roy

The following student-written essay is a comparison/contrast between two seafood restaurants. The writer uses the "alternating" method of contrast and clearly states the bases of comparison in the thesis: "the menu, the service, and the overall atmosphere." The two restaurants are then contrasted on each of the above criteria in separate paragraphs. Note the author's use of transitions, such as "on the other hand" and "in contrast," to guide the reader smoothly through the essay.

From a succulent fresh lobster tail to a mouth-watering red snapper filet, everyone loves some type of seafood. Houstonians are lucky; the Gulf of Mexico lies at their back door. Restaurants specializing in seafood are plentiful here. Many Houstonians consider Pappadeaux and Joe's Crab Shack to be the best. Although they both serve wonderful, fresh seafood, the differences in the menu, the service, and the overall atmosphere set them apart from one another.

Pappadeaux offers elegant, elaborate dishes on its menu, while the food described on the menu of Joe's Crab Shack is the sort that tastes best when accompanied by an ice-cold beer and a large plate of french fries. For example, my favorite meal at Pappadeaux consists of a flaky filet of red snapper blackened in hot Cajun spices and

smothered in a rich bearnaise sauce. It is then topped with lightly sautéed crawfish tails and mushrooms. Once this concoction touches the tongue, it simply melts. On the other hand, Joe's Crab Shack has been made famous for its barbecued crabs. The cook begins by slowly cooking small Dungeness crabs in a large barbecue pit. Once the crabs have been seared to perfection, the cook tosses them on a large tray, and they are ready for presentation. The waiter then serves these divine crabs with a hammer, a bib, and a roll of paper towels. After pounding on the shell for five minutes, the lucky diner discovers a piece of crab meat which, like the snapper filet, melts in the mouth.

Distinguishing each restaurant further is the service; although it is impeccable at both Pappadeaux and Joe's Crab Shack, the manner in which one is served varies greatly. When dining at the classy Pappadeaux, each patron is greeted by an exquisitely dressed staff. The waitstaff is clad in black slacks, white tuxedo shirts, and classic bow ties, while the hostess dons an elegant dress. The staff greets each diner with the traditional "ma'am" and "sir" and treats her or him with the utmost respect and dignity. In contrast, at the relaxed Joe's Crab Shack the entire staff wears t-shirts and shorts or jeans and treats everyone as if they are life-long friends; greeting patrons with "Hey! How's it going?" is the norm.

The final distinguishing characteristic is each restaurant's atmosphere. The atmosphere at Pappadeaux reminds one of a traditional wedding reception while the atmosphere at Joe's Crab Shack takes one back to an end-of-the-summer beach party. An immaculate white tablecloth adorns each table at Pappadeaux, and large, leafy, green plants dot the interior of the building. Soft, relaxing, classical music is piped through speakers throughout the restaurant. Diners feel compelled to speak in low, hushed tones, making sure not to disrupt the elegant feel of the restaurant. The atmosphere at Joe's Crab Shack conveys an entirely different ambience; lop-sided paintings and photographs cover the walls from top to bottom, and the music blares from every corner. On weekends, management provides live music, and when one of Houston's hometown favorite teams is playing, the game is on one, if not all, of the many televisions. As a finishing touch to this informal setting, old-fashioned beer buckets are placed on each table for use as trash receptacles.

In their menu, service, and atmosphere, Pappadeaux and Joe's Crab Shack could not be more different. The one thing they have in common, other than great service of course, is their amazing, fresh seafood; it is delectable at both.

Classification/Division

Classification and division are forms of analysis used often by most of us even if we do not know the name of the techniques. Although they are methods of expository writing, classification and division are also ways of looking at the world around us. Like illustration and comparison and contrast, classification is a process that

involves bringing order out of experience. Like these other methods of expository writing, classification and division are concerned with the general (class) and the relationship to its parts.

Almost all parts fall into a class of some kind, sharing certain characteristics that allow these parts to be classified with a certain group. Thus, a class is determined by a network of significant characteristics shared by all members of the category. If you see a man about 25 years old walking down the street, you will probably pass by him without thinking about him much. Put him into a blue uniform and give him a badge and a gun, and you will both notice him and make judgments about him. (He is a police officer or a cop.) If the man is not dressed in a uniform but is carrying a baby, you think of him as a father and assume that the woman with him is his wife and the mother of the child. In each of these cases you are classifying the man; you are putting him into a category and seeing him as a part of a whole (class). He is a policeman, father, or husband. We are always classifying that which we experience in the world around us, even when we have not the slightest intention of writing an essay of classification.

In the same way, division is a way of thinking about and reacting to our world. We know that things have parts, and we talk about things in terms of those parts. In fact, we often define terms by identifying the parts that make up those terms. A sailboat can be divided into hull, mast, and sails. Social science is made up of history, economics, sociology, geography, and psychology. The government of the United States has three main branches: the executive, legislative, and judicial.

Elements of Classification/Division

The need for care in setting up classifications can be demonstrated by examples of the two kinds of classification used in analysis. The kinds are called simple and complex classifications.

Simple classification. This form of classification usually involves grouping your subject into two categories. For example, if your purpose is to investigate your experiences with good male teachers, a simple classification merely involves separating the subject "teachers" into good teachers and bad teachers (level one of classification). Step two would be to take the "good teachers" classification and organize it again (level two) into two classes—male and female. If your purpose is to determine how many good male teachers you have had in your academic experience, you pursue only the male classification and abandon the female portion. We call this a simple classification because at each stage or level the analysis primarily consists simply of two opposites to establish two subgroups.

Complex classification. You most likely will decide to select the complex classification for your composition assignments because this method demands that you delve more deeply into the multiple categories/levels required by your instructor. For instance, if you are expected to consider the full range of your experience with weight lifters in health clubs as student Roberto Loucel does in his essay on page 375, you would choose the complex classification method, beginning with level one. You could, therefore, classify the types of weight lifters one most likely would encounter in health clubs—the annoying socializers, the serious competitive athletes, and the womanizers. Next, if you have chosen the annoying socializers as your focus, you would further classify that group (level two)—the "show-off," the "know-it-all," and the "wanderer." Although this level does not exhaust the types of weight lifters you have experienced, it does include those specific types you wish to discuss in your present analysis (focus). Notice that your analysis in a complex classification is of a much narrower, deeper, more interesting, imaginative, and complex nature than a simple classification.

Organization

When writing a classification essay, make sure that you take the following steps.

Set up a clear basis for the classification, and follow the classification through logically and thoroughly. This means you must be careful to classify your subject distinctly at each level of the analysis. To say that there are three types of bad teachers—the boring, the incomprehensible, and those who drive pickup trucks—is using an indistinct method of classification. Make certain you discuss each category in relation to those elements that link the category to the other categories of the same class, in this case, their methods of instruction. This basis of comparison is used similarly in your comparison and contrast; it is essential in classification as well to make your purpose clear to your audience in examining your categories by classifying them.

Develop your analysis by classification as completely as is necessary for your purpose. Your purpose determines how complete and extensive the classification will be. Your analysis will always be based on some specific interest in the subject being analyzed, and that specific interest must be clearly stated for your reader in the thesis.

Figure 7.3 illustrates the process of complex classification.

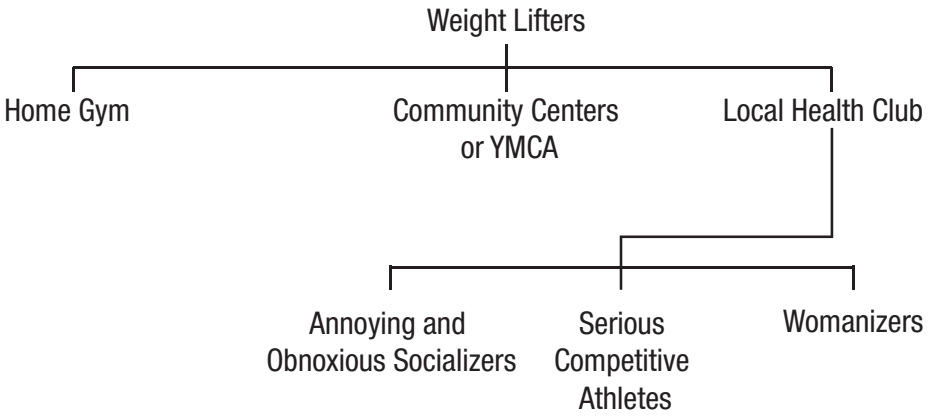

Figure 7.3: Complex Classification Diagram

Develop your classification as completely as is necessary for your purpose in the analysis. Your thesis and your discussion will then include only those types with whom you are personally familiar, although there exist other categories of weight lifters. Just make certain that your reader understands that your classification is limited by your focus/purpose.

Strategic Questions

1. Is the purpose of my classification clear and included in my thesis statement?
2. Is the classification applied to a plural subject (such as different types of pumpers at a gas station, for instance, or teachers), and is the focus on types, categories, or kinds?
3. Is the basis of my classification consistent with my purpose and audience?
4. Is the classification complete, with all relevant categories included?
5. Are the categories arranged in logical or emphatic order?
6. Do the categories overlap? (If an individual member of one category can also be put into another category, as with an incomprehensible teacher who drives a pickup truck, then your categories need rethinking. They must be mutually exclusive and parallel.)
7. Have I edited carefully, checking for major grammatical and spelling errors?

Activity 7.13

Circle the item in each group below that violates the unity of classification, and briefly explain your choice.

Topic: Friends	Topic: Branches of US government
Classes: Intimate Friends Social Friends Weird Friends Work Friends	**Division:** Legislative Judicial Cabinet Executive
Topic: Movies	**Topic: Students**
Classes: Adventure Romantic Blockbusters Horror Suspense	**Classes:** Eager Fashionable Tired Uninterested
Topic: Schools	**Topic: Computer**
Classes: Elementary Private Secondary College Technical	**Division:** Screen CPU Hard Drive Keyboard Laptop
Topic: Trees	**Topic: Stores in the Mall**
Classes: Exotic Maple Oak Pine Birch	**Classes:** Department Stores Clothing Stores Computer Stores Eateries Kiosks

Activity 7.14

Write an essay classifying the elements of one of your favorite activities or dividing it into its parts. Be sure it is clearly one or the other. Here are some examples/possibilities. These categories are very broad, so you will need to narrow your topic to a subclass, or even a sub-subclass, before you begin writing. Before writing the essay, read the student-written classification "Weight Lifters," by Roberto Loucel, under *Student Examples* at the back of the book.

Sports	Movies	Food	Dating	Video Games	Online
Football, Soccer, Etc.	Action, Romance, Etc.	Pizza, Hamburgers, Etc.	Perfect, Disaster, Etc.	Shooter, Building, Etc.	Facebook, Snapchat, Etc.
$Subclass_1$	S_1	S_1	S_1	S_1	S_1
$Subclass_2$	S_2	S_2	S_2	S_2	S_2
$Subclass_3$	S_3	S_3	S_3	S_3	S_3

Cause/Effect

Any time we respond to the question "Why?" we are concerned with the causes of an event. For example: Q. Why did you wreck your new car? A. I was responding to a text on my phone and not paying attention when the light turned red. Or, Q. Why did you perform so poorly on the biology final exam? A. I spent all the previous night bailing water out of my bedroom after our subdivision flooded from the heavy rains.

We look for causes when we want to know why something happened. Similarly, when we want to know what happened as a result of the cause or causes, we attempt to determine the effects. When we respond to the questions "What happened then?" or "What would happen if . . . ?" we are looking for effects. Q. What happened because you performed so poorly on the biology final exam? A. I was placed on scholastic probation for a semester. And Q. What will happen if you cannot raise your GPA sufficiently next semester? A. I will be forced to drop out of school and get a job. We are constantly being required to use causal analysis in our attempt to understand events around us.

Elements of Causal Analysis

Causal analysis may be simple or complex. Sometimes a causal analysis simply involves determining the cause or the effect of, say, why your car would not start—dead battery.

However, a more complex analysis might be required when the cause and effect arrangement involves a causal chain. The process requires that the writer begin with either a cause or an effect and then work backward or forward to determine related causes and effects. For example, consider the following scenario. Mr. Strump failed to pay his income tax this year, and the investigating Internal Revenue Service agent discovered that Mr. Strump died on January 1 and thus had no income for the year. Here is an example of a simple causal analysis. The effect (Mr. Strump's not paying taxes) can be traced to a specific cause. (He died on January 1.) A more thorough analysis may be required, however, and thorough analyses can be quite complicated. The IRS agent will probably be satisfied with the reason Mr. Strump paid no income taxes. He died, he had no income, so he paid no tax: case closed. But suppose the agent mentions Mr. Strump's death to Detective Sergeant Wexley of the police department. The sergeant then undertakes a more thorough analysis. Here, Mr. Strump's death becomes the "effect" in question, and the sergeant goes looking for the causes of that death. After a lengthy investigation, the sergeant charges Miss Buxley, Mr. Strump's secretary, with his murder. She was having an affair with Mr. Strump, had sweet-talked him into leaving her six million dollars in his will, was the last person to see him alive, and had a bachelor's degree in chemistry (after an autopsy, it was determined that he was poisoned with a substance that mimicked a heart attack).

As you can see from this example, causality involves two questions: (l) what caused the effect to occur? and (2) under certain conditions, what will be the resulting effect or effects? The first question involves tracing the relationship backward between cause and effect; the second question involves tracing the relationship forward from cause to effect.

Types of Causes

The rules of causation are twofold. (1) Without event A, effect B will not occur, and (2) whenever event A occurs, B will occur later. Several types of causes exist, and the writer must be able to distinguish them in order to sort out the essential events that result in causation. Three types of causes include the following.

Necessary Cause. A necessary cause must be present for an effect to occur; without it the effect cannot happen. For example, in order to have light in your kitchen at home, you must turn on the light switch. The switch mechanism is a necessary cause, but it will not provide light by itself. Electricity must also be present. Event A (switch), in other words, must be present for B (light) to occur.

Contributing Cause. A contributing cause may determine a particular effect, but it cannot determine it alone. For instance, you may make a good grade on an

exam if you study your class notes thoroughly; however, other factors come into play as well, such as the quality of your notes, regular attendance in class, and your ability to remember what you reviewed in your notes. Event A (study) may be present for event B (good grade) to occur, but event A does not automatically result in event B. Other factors may also have contributed to your good grade.

Sufficient Cause. A sufficient cause can determine a particular effect by itself, but the effect does not always follow as a result of the cause. For example, a student may fail a course because of poor attendance, but this cause alone does not always lead to failure. A grade average below 7. must be present as well. Event A (poor attendance) can be present for event B (failure), but A does not automatically result in event B.

Causal analysis, then, is concerned with the reasons that things happen. Because of this concern, it is one of the basic techniques of reasoning. When a writer decides to write an essay based on causal analysis, it is very important that he be convincing, for he is discussing something more complex than a light switch. The writer's aim is to demonstrate for the reader why event B (effect) occurred. Why, for example, does high cholesterol cause heart disease? Why did my daughter fail her college courses? In order to do the job convincingly, the writer must make the reader appreciate the logic and thoroughness of the essay. The writer is actually engaged in an intellectual process, and because he is usually appealing to the reader's mind, he must be sure that his analysis is rationally satisfying.

Organization

There are several ways to structure a causal analysis. Because both time and resources are limited, it is often difficult to determine all the causes (or effects) of a complex event. So we might want to concentrate on the most important of a number of causes (or effects) we have identified. For example, if you have ever had to drop a college class, you might list a dozen different reasons for that event: the class started at 7:30; you had to catch a ride with a friend; it was Algebra 101, and you were never good at math; you worked in the afternoon and did not get off until 9:00 p.m.; you were also taking history and English, which required a lot of reading and writing of papers; after a month your friend changed jobs and could no longer take you, which meant you had to scramble to find other ways to school; and last but not least, your mother became sick in the middle of the semester, which meant you had to take her car and drop off your little sister at school at 7:30, making you half an hour late for class for a week. Rather than simply listing all the reasons for dropping the algebra class, you might decide to classify them into transportation problems, lack of time for adequate study, and responsibilities at home, grouping the above causes under their appropriate headings.

Immediate, Intermediate, Remote. Another way is to work logically from the most immediate cause back toward the most basic or remote cause or to start with the basic/remote and work forward to the immediate cause. As an example of the immediate-to-remote sequence, you might discuss today's stagnant wages, blaming them on a slow-growth economy caused by the offshoring of many industrial jobs and the closing of many American factories, which was the result of the implementation of NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) and other free-trade agreements. This analysis would have moved from the immediate level (stagnant wages) through an intermediate level (offshoring of jobs) to a very basic cause (free-trade agreements).

Or you might start with the remote cause and move forward to its logical effect. For example, you start with the 9-11 attacks and move forward to the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, which led, in turn, to the destabilization of the Middle East, which led to ISIS.

The Causal Chain. The causal chain works like a series of dominoes aligned in a row. If you knock the first over, the second and the third dominoes will fall in succession, and so on until they have all tumbled. In a causal chain, the remote cause is like the fall of the first domino in the chain, which causes an effect (fall of second domino). This effect becomes the cause of the next effect (fall of third domino). This sequence continues until the immediate cause (the fourth domino) results in the final event (effect) of the chain process. For example, Benjamin Franklin traced the loss of a war (in the eighteenth century) to the failure of a farrier to do his job: "For want of a nail the shoe was lost, for want of a shoe the horse was lost, for want of a horse the rider was lost, for want of a rider the battle was lost, for want of a battle the war was lost." By the way, that is also an example of "the butterfly effect," when small, random events eventually lead to large effects.

When putting together a causal chain analysis, you must remember to observe some very important guidelines. First, because your analysis depends on demonstrating a causal chain, you must make clear to your reader how each cause is directly linked to the other causes included in your essay. For example, after you have discussed one of the causes in the first body paragraph, make certain that you show the connection of your second cause with the one already discussed, whether the second cause is the effect of the first or the cause of the first cause discussed, depending upon whether you began your analysis with the remote or the immediate cause. The same rule applies to the next paragraph. This causal link must be clearly shown in the topic sentence of each paragraph. Otherwise, the chain process will not be apparent to your audience.

Effects. Sometimes a single cause may have multiple effects. For example, what would be the effects on a student who failed a college course? His failure may lead to low self-esteem (effect #1), he may have to forfeit his financial aid (effect #2), and his parents may refuse to pay for any further education (effect #3). Note that these three effects are independent of one another; in other words, one effect does not lead to another. Determining the effects of an event means we are predicting into the future what we assume will happen based on the evidence we have at the present time. We use this method of analysis every day. Before we commit ourselves to a particular act or opt for a specific choice, we often consider the consequences of such an act or choice. In this case, we are speculating about the future results of our decision today. Economic trends and weather predictions are determined by people who are informed enough about certain historical conditions to make educated prognostications regarding the future. You know what the potential effects would be if you failed to succeed in college. Causal analysis is the process that sets this same procedure into a coherent, logical structure. Just like the essay outline shown above that lists the causes for a single effect, the outline traces the multiple effects of a single cause and arranges them in a similar fashion. There are several potential hazards in writing a causal analysis.

1. One such hazard is the *post hoc ergo propter hoc* fallacy. The Latin words mean "after this, therefore because of this" and suggest that because one event follows another event, the first necessarily is the cause of the second. An extreme example might be to say that, as you were driving to class one day, a black cat crossed in front of your car, and soon afterward you were involved in a collision. You then conclude that black cats are omens of bad luck. This is an example of the post hoc fallacy and is obviously silly, but the writer must beware of asserting that just because something happened first (failure of the final exam) it caused something else (failure of the course) to happen.
2. Another hazard can be avoided if the writer makes sure that his analysis considers all the relevant causes and factors leading up to a certain effect. It may be true that the student's failing the final exam was a cause of his failure of the course, but other causes (poor attendance, poor daily quiz average, sleeping through lectures, assignments usually submitted late if at all, never purchasing the textbook, or having a serious attitude problem, to name a few) may also have to be considered.
3. In order to be convincing, the writer should also offer evidence for his assertions. Simply saying that something was caused by something else is not enough. Because the writer wants his reader's intellectual assent, he must accompany his assertions with proof. If, for example, the writer says that the student's social life was responsible for his failure, then he must give evidence of how it was responsible: that it kept him from studying and that it was more important to

him than his academic responsibilities. This third hazard can be avoided if the writer is objective, reasonable, and honest. If it becomes evident to the audience that the writer is condemning the failing student because of his hedonistic, immoral social behavior and his love of heavy metal music and companions with fried brains, then the reader will not be convinced of the validity of the writer's analysis.

Sample Outline: Effect with many causes.

Introduction/thesis—The thesis identifies a single effect (subject) and outlines multiple causes.

I. Cause #1

II. Cause #2

III. Cause #3

Conclusion (restates effect and three causes)

Sample Outline: Effect with causal chain.

Introduction/thesis—The thesis identifies a single effect (subject) and outlines the causal chain.

I. Cause #1. Immediate cause of effect.

II. Cause #2. Intermediate cause of effect (and cause of #1)

III. Cause #3. Remote/basic cause of effect (and cause #2)

Conclusion (restates effect and causal chain)

Strategic Questions

1. Is my focus on my purpose? A causal analysis can be primary or supplementary. Its purpose can be to inform, to speculate on possibilities, and/or to persuade. Regardless of the essay's primary purpose, your purpose is, of course, to persuade your audience of the legitimacy of your analysis.
2. Have I proceeded logically? Indicate the complexity of the situation, and look beyond the obvious and superficial. Recognize reasonable probability, and do not overstate. Neither should you settle for simplistic explanations. Determine and differentiate between immediate and remote causes or effects, and provide facts, statistics, details, and/or a personal narrative to explain and exemplify your reasoning.
3. Is my thesis clear? Indicate whether you intend to talk about causes, effects, or both to show your order and development. Make your point clear, and remember who your audience is.

4. Is my organization clear? Some causal analyses are organized chronologically: causes and effects are presented in the order in which they happen, but a strict time sequence can be a problem if the primary causes are buried in the middle of the essay. Your causal analysis should be arranged emphatically with the most significant cause or effect reserved for last.
5. Do I make the relationships between cause and effect clear? While you should qualify what you say, you should be careful not to undercut your own thinking.
6. Have I edited carefully, checking for major grammatical and spelling errors?

Activity 7.15

Discuss the major problems you have faced as a beginning college student. The problems may differ depending on your age, race, gender, and social and family status. Discuss and group these. Next, take what your group determines to be the three most significant problems facing your group as a whole and begin to trace out the causes of those problems. What are the immediate causes, the intermediate causes, and the root or fundamental causes?

For example, finding time to study may be a problem, which may be caused by the number of hours you work, which may be a result of the fact that you have to contribute to household expenses as well as pay for classes, which is a result of your parents' divorce, which itself may have been caused by your father's drinking, which was brought on by his losing his job on an oil rig. Or perhaps making it to class on time is a problem, which is caused by the fact that you must depend on a parent to take you to class. Sometimes the car will not start because it is old. Sometimes you have to stay home with a younger sibling while your parent goes to work. Sometimes your parent oversleeps because he had to work a double shift.

Activity 7.16

Think of something (good or bad) that happened to you recently, and trace the causal chain that resulted in this event. Share with your group and discuss.

What happened recently (event/effect): _____

_____

_____

(immediate cause) _____

_____

_____

(intermediate cause) _____

_____

_____

(intermediate cause) _____

_____

_____

(intermediate cause) _____

_____

_____

(remote/ultimate cause) _____

_____

_____

Activity 7.17

List the reasons that you decided to attend this school. Rank them from least to most important. Next set up an outline for an essay beginning with the thesis: "The three most important reasons I decided to attend this school are…".

Be sure to develop each cause/reason with pertinent examples and details.

Getting Sober

Krystal Holifield

"Getting Sober" is a first-person essay using the cause/effect mode of development. The author uses her own experience as an example of what causes an alcoholic to finally realize she has a problem. Each cause is set in a separate paragraph and clearly labeled—"The first thing," "The second reason," and "But the main reason."

To recognize that they have drinking problems, alcoholics have to be completely miserable and willing to change. When they get to this point, it is called their "bottom." There are "high bottom" and "low bottom" drunks, but it doesn't matter as long as they get sober. There are many different reasons why an alcoholic decides to get sober, but in my own case, I lost my self-esteem, I couldn't control my drinking, and my life became unmanageable.

The first thing that made me think about getting sober was that I lost my self-esteem. I always used to cut myself down in front of people and never knew how to accept compliments—sure signs of low self-esteem. The biggest symptom I had of low self-esteem was that I wasn't comfortable in my own skin or around people unless I was drunk because the only way I could stand myself was when I drank. I also never cared about my appearance, so I wouldn't wear make-up, fix my hair, or bathe regularly. Still, low self-esteem was something I would never have guessed I had—that is, until I thought about killing myself. Then I knew something might be wrong.

The second reason that made me want to get sober was the realization that I couldn't control my drinking. It had become a mental and physical obsession. Since my first drink at the age of twelve I couldn't go a day without a drink, and I could never have just one. By the age of seventeen I was used to drinking a case and a half of beer a day, and for the next two years I lived in a drunken fog. I could not go to school, work, or anywhere else outside my front door without a drink or the promise of one. I finally realized something had to be done when I couldn't get a drink one day and swallowing my own spit made me violently sick. I was forced to drink NyQuil to keep from throwing up because it was the only alcohol in the house.

But the main reason I got sober was that my life became unmanageable. The first thing that made me notice I was out of control was getting kicked out of high school two weeks before graduation. During and after high school I also totaled three cars while driving drunk. In college things didn't get any better. I had a boyfriend who robbed houses, as well as me, so cops came to my house looking for him. Finally I realized that something had to change when I started waking up in places and I didn't know where I was or how I had gotten there.

Getting sober is always the last thing an alcoholic wants to do. Practicing alcoholics usually have low self-esteem, can't control their drinking, and have unmanageable lives, but sobriety always helps remedy these problems. I have been sober for two and a half years, and I could never imagine going back to the way I lived before.

CHAPTER 8

Literary Analysis

Central Questions

1. How are critical perspectives on our digital culture being voiced?
2. How can we approach a piece of dystopian fiction to learn about present cultural concerns and shifting values?
3. What can our work with texts of cultural critique teach us about their larger contexts?

Chapter Preview

In this chapter, we'll turn our attention to some of the social concerns being raised as changing technologies alter many of our cultural practices, particularly those around how we communicate with one another, along with many of our beliefs and values about such fundamental issues as the right to privacy. Such cultural shifts are giving rise to much cultural critique—to a questioning of the effects these changes are having on our more fundamental human values and ways of being. That critique can take several forms. Some of it arises from what researchers are learning as they study the digital practices and related beliefs of various segments of society, especially young people, and that critique contributes to public argument based on that research. Some of it is represented visually, in the memes and images we post and circulate. It is also represented in another significant area of our cultural production: the literature we read and write.

Literature, particularly fiction, allows us to imagine the experiences of other people living in particular contexts, whether in our own time or sometime in the past or future, and to imagine societies that are both like and unlike our own. The literary genre of science fiction often imagines technological change into the future with both positive and negative effects. The utopian novel imagines better societies where present-day problems are resolved. Its counterpart, the dystopian novel, imagines worse societies, where present-day trends have negative consequences, and typically works as a form of extended cultural critique. After considering other modes of cultural critique, we'll turn our attention to an example of dystopian fiction.

Exploring Cultural Critique

For insiders to digital culture, particularly for the "digital natives" who have grown up with digital technologies, the practices of the digital world, the ways they shape our interactions with both our local and a public/global world, and the ways they impact the larger social and economic structures of our society can seem entirely natural, and it is hard to imagine other possibilities. Culture is powerful. When we're in it, we just live it without really seeing it. We might, however, suspect that there could be other practices, other points of view, other beliefs and values, and we might note glimmers of concern about the ones we're immersed in. We can use those glimmers, those tracings, to begin to step outside of our immediate cultural experience to ask questions: What is going on? Is this the only way it can be? What are the effects of current practices, structures, and technologies? What other questions should we be asking? Stepping back in this way to question and to examine what would otherwise go unquestioned about our surrounding culture is the work of cultural critique, and we can begin that work by once again looking at what we post and circulate for hints of possible concerns and questions about rapid changes in our society (and in societies around the world) that are accompanying the development of new digital technologies.

Circulating Memes and Cultural Critique

What makes these relationships and situations "rhetorical"? In popular usage, rhetoric is often used unfavorably to describe manipulative language used by politicians to sway public opinion. Rhetoric, in this definition, is artificial eloquence intended to persuade an audience by misleading them. But this type of persuasion is just a small part of actual rhetorical situations and how we participate in rhetorical relationships. The term rhetoric derives from the ancient Greek word rhetor, a word meaning "to speak." The ancient Greeks defined rhetoric as the art of public Another

Figure 8.1: Stereo texting

Figure 8.2: Texting while driving

implicitly critical meme, with many iterations, is the "wasting time" meme. Many versions of this meme circulate online, giving expression to our underlying anxiety about how or whether the use of the internet is interfering with other productive things we could be doing (Figure 8.3). That concern is reflected as well in more serious articles in business journals and advice for students on college websites. And there's a growing concern that wasting time online vs. using digital media in creative and productive ways is contributing to a new digital divide between children of higher and lower economic classes.13:1

Figure 8.3: A "Wasting Time" key suggests a frequent use of a keyboard

Research often confirms what we've suspected—that workplace productivity is down because of internet use,13:2 that excessive use interferes with students' success,13:3 and even that, for some, the internet can become an addiction.13:4 Or research can raise new concerns—about digital reading, for example, and whether the typical scanning of information on a screen may be altering our ability to read and think deeply in ways that have traditionally been supported by print text.13:5 Often such research raises possible issues that might become the focus of cultural critique. Such critique may take different forms, but it typically involves an extended look at a social/cultural concern with supporting evidence gained by looking closely at a cultural phenomenon.

> "Cultural critique may take different forms, but it typically involves an extended look at a social/cultural concern with supporting evidence gained by looking closely at acultural phenomenon."

Inquiry #1: Tracing glimmers of concern

From the posts you make or encounter on social media, what glimmers of concern do you see? What posts or memes might point to an implicit questioning of some aspect of our current digital life and culture? You might also search for images related to this potential area of concern or critique. (On the Flickr site, images listed with Creative Common Attribution permissions allow you to use the image as long as you credit the person who has posted it.

With your classmates, share your collections of such moments, looking for patterns and identifying some larger questions they suggest.

From Research to Cultural Critique

Often publicly circulating "glimmers of concern" show up as themes in the data collected by researchers as well. We can see this in the case of Sherry Turkle, an MIT social psychologist who initially embraced new technologies. In the introduction to her book, *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other,* she describes her own history in studying these technologies and their effects, the "innocence" of the work she encountered at MIT, the "heady times" of seeing how people could connect in new ways to wider circles of others. But she was also an outsider, in a sense, coming as a psychologist to the world of computer science, and that shift in context led her to go beyond seeing computers as "just a tool" to observing and asking questions about how computers (and other digital technologies) are affecting us as people, as she applied the perspective of one discipline to the work going on in another, and taking a critical perspective on the world she was studying.

Turkle has discovered from her research that our constant attention to the screen is having a negative effect on our close relationships, concluding in her book that we are increasingly isolated, even when physically close. Her work has moved from research interviews to discover what people think about their uses of technology to engaging in a critique of the way in which our practices are shifting our ways of connecting with others throughout our larger culture, moving from the question "What do we expect from our technology?" to a critical position—that as we expect more from our technology, we expect less from one another, and it's harming our ability to relate to others. In the following excerpt, she focuses on the problem of attention—of how difficult it has become to get the full attention of others—and she recounts the family experiences of the young people she has interviewed.

> Teenagers know that when they communicate by instant message, they compete with many other windows on a computer screen. They know how little attention they are getting because they know how little they give to the instant messages they receive. One sophomore girl at Branscomb High School compares instant messaging to being on "cruise control" or "automatic pilot." Your attention is elsewhere. A Branscomb senior says, "Even if I give my full attention to the person I am IMing . . . they are not giving full attention to me." The first thing he does when he makes a call is to gauge whether the person on the other end "is there just for me." This is one advantage of a call. When you text or instantmessage, you have no way to tell how much else is going on for the person writing you. He or she could also be on the phone, doing homework, watching TV, or in the midst of other online conversations.
>
> Longed for here is the pleasure of full attention, coveted and rare. These teenagers grew up with parents who talked on their cell phones and scrolled through messages as they walked to the playground. Parents texted with one hand and pushed swings with the other. They glanced up at the jungle gym as they made calls. Teenagers describe childhoods with parents who were on

> their mobile devices while driving them to school or as the family watched Disney videos. A college freshman jokes that her father read her the Harry Potter novels, periodically interrupted by his BlackBerry. BlackBerries and laptops came on family vacations. Weekends in the country were cut short if there was no internet service in the hotel. Lon, eighteen, says when that happened, his father "called it a day." He packed up the family and went home, back to a world of connections.
>
> From the youngest ages, these teenagers have associated technology with shared attention. Phones, before they become an essential element in a child's own life, were the competition, one that children didn't necessarily feel they could best. And things are not so different in the teenage years. Nick, seventeen, says, "My parents text while we eat. I'm used to it. My dad says it is better than his having to be at the office. I say, 'Well, maybe it could just be a short meal.' But my mom, she wants long meals. To get a long meal with a lot of courses, she has to allow the BlackBerry." Things seem at a stalemate (266–67).

In this excerpt, as in the rest of the book, Turkle has drawn on her research into people's experiences with digital technologies to build a critique of those technologies based on what she finds to be their negative effects on individuals and their relationships: as we become increasingly interconnected, we are also becoming isolated. As her critique has echoed in the media, in interviews and news articles, she has become an increasingly public figure, giving voice to current social concerns. The idea that, as Turkle writes, "our networked life allows us to hide from each other" leaving us "alone together" has become a part of our current discourse about technology and a circulating meme.

Inquiry #2: Your research and cultural critique

Turkle's research has led her to take a critical position about particular social developments related to digital technologies. Does her position echo any of your own concerns, or might you offer a counter-critique? From Inquiry #1 or any of your own research for prior inquiries in the context of this book, are there potential concerns that might lead you to take a critical position on some aspect of our use of digital technology? Sketch out such a position, noting the moments from your own inquiries that could support it.

In her work, Turkle also addresses the issue of privacy that has been raised so often with social media, linking a willingness to accept a lack of privacy to the same sense of aloneness that is the theme of her book.

> If you relinquish your privacy on MySpace or Facebook about everything from musical preferences to your sexual hang-ups, you are less likely to be troubled by an anonymous government agency knowing whom you call

> or what websites you frequent. Some are even gratified by a certain public exposure. It feels like validation, not violation. Being seen means that they are not insignificant or alone (263).

The next section considers another exploration of that theme.

Making Connections: Literature as Cultural Critique

While we can't always step out of our immediate cultural context to fully see the world from another perspective, we can nevertheless imagine other contexts and perspectives. Fiction, as a literary genre, allows us to imagine alternative worlds—to imagine the life of a child born at a different time or in a different part of the world, the life of historical figures, or of ordinary people encountering new difficulties. Both positive and negative views of the world of digital literacies and social media are also being reflected in fiction, often as part of the communicative background against which characters live their lives. One way of exploring concerns about our own society is to imagine the experience of someone being affected by those concerns, such as a young person being cyberbullied. Another is to imagine the world of the future if present trends continue, conceiving a positive, utopian world, or more often with new technology, a negative, dystopian one.

Sidenote

Julie Peters's young adult novel, *By The Time You Read This, I'll Be Dead*, describes cyberbullying.

Reading Dystopian Fiction

Where the digital world becomes the context of a work of literature, that work might reflect our hopes and concerns about the near future. As a form of cultural production, literature often explores the tensions in a society. The popularity of a genre is also a reflection of some of those concerns manifesting themselves in literary works. One such popular subgenre of fiction today, as through much of the twentieth century, is the dystopian novel, a novel that presents not a utopian, ideal future, but a disturbing one where trends in the present society have developed in troubling ways. Dystopian stories have a long tradition, but they are often used to raise warnings or offer a counterbalance to something in the present. You may have read one of the famous dystopian novels of the last century, George Orwell's *1984* (1949),in which he explores the dangers of a totalitarian state and its intrusion on individual privacy to the point of thought control; or Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932), which explores a frightening technological future in which reproductive technologies and psychological manipulation are used to create people whose minds are conditioned to fill specific roles and classes in a new World State. Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) imagines the experience of women in a U.S.

dominated by a fundamentalist military government where control of their own lives has been taken away, including their choice to reproduce. More recently, the British/Japanese novelist Kazuo Ishiguro's 2005 novel, *Never Let Me Go,* imagines a world in which children are raised in a British boarding school to become organ donors for others at the ultimate cost of their own lives (a world quite different from the boarding school fantasy fictional world of J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter*). Dystopian fiction is often concerned with potentially dehumanizing forces in society—forces that would take away what we believe makes us human, including our empathy, our free will, or our personal freedoms. Such concerns are reflected in other popular genres as well, and Suzanne Collins's *Hunger Games* trilogy and the *Divergent* series by Veronica Roth have been made into very popular films.

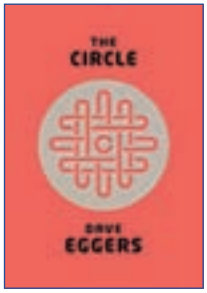

Figure 8.4: The Circle book cover
(AP Photo/Alfred A. Knopf/McSweeney's)

The Circle, by Dave Eggers (Figure 8.4), follows in the tradition of dystopian fiction, in this case raising concerns about our extreme embrace of social media and the possibility of fostering a state where all government functions are ceded to a social media corporation and all privacy disappears in the push to make the world more "transparent." Eggers has imagined a world in which a giant social media company, The Circle, run by three founders known as the Three Wise Men, has taken over the equivalents of all of today's existing companies and their functions—a company that is four generations after Google and Facebook and offers a single platform for information, sharing, shopping, monitoring health care, and using miniature, ubiquitous cameras that can be placed nearly invisibly anywhere, with an application called SeeChange, for recording and sharing almost every aspect of people's lives. The Circle's goal is to collect all possible data, to eliminate privacy and secrecy in the name of creating a better world. Politicians are expected to become transparent, having every moment of their days monitored and publicly broadcast. Members of the Circle and their millions of followers are waiting for the "moment of completion," when nothing private or secret will be left anywhere and all information will be shared and available to everyone.

We've selected a scene from halfway through the larger novel. The main character, Mae, is a young woman in her early twenties, a recent college graduate, who has landed a coveted job with The Circle through the help of her best friend, Annie. At The Circle, the more active someone is on social media, the higher they can climb in the company. Within weeks, Mae quickly becomes a top performer by engaging in a whirlwind of social media participation: posting, "zinging" (similar to liking), completing surveys, rating things, and attending events. The Circle obsessively tracks this activity at every moment so that she and all of her colleagues know not only how many followers she has, but also how much money people have spent on purchases of things she has rated (with targets for that "conversion rate" as well). It is a world where "secrets are lies" and "privacy is theft"—two key mottos of the Circle.

In this scene, Mae returns home for a visit after an intense few weeks at the Circle. The company has provided her parents with health insurance that has helped her father get treatment for his MS. A former boyfriend, Mercer, is present as well, and their views of the world quickly clash.

Before Reading: Reading as a participant

With fiction, it's particularly important to read first as a participant, entering the scene that the author has created and letting yourself see the world through the eyes of its characters—as an insider to the world being portrayed. In your first reading of this scene, ask yourself the following questions.

- What is your own response to the characters, their interactions, and the points they make?
- Can you understand each of the characters' perspectives?
- What words resonate for you in some way?
- How does your own experience of social media position you as a reader of this scene?

DAVE EGGERS

Author of nonfiction works, short story collections, co-authored works, and several novels, including:

- *Heroes of the Frontier*
- *A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius*
- *The Circle*
- *What Is the What*
- *Zeitoun*
- *You Shall Know Our Velocity!*
- *A Hologram for the King*
- *How We Are Hungry*
- *The Wild Things*
- *Your Fathers, Where Are They? And the Prophets, Do They Live Forever?*

INFLUENCES

- Joan Didion
- Kurt Vonnegut
- John Barth
- Gore Vidal
- David Foster Wallace
- Donald Barthelme
- Tom Wolfe
- Lorrie Moore
- Vladimir Nabokov
- Mary McCarthy

Source: http://www.goodreads.com/author/show/3371.Dave_Eggers

Selection from The Circle

by David Eggers

A few nights later, on a cloudless Thursday, Mae drove home, her first time since her father's Circle insurance had taken effect. She knew her father had been feeling far better, and she was looking forward to seeing him in person, hoping, ridiculously, for some miraculous change, but knowing she would see only minor improvements. Still, her parents' voices, on the phone and in texts, had been ebullient. "Everything's different now," they'd been saying for weeks, and had been asking to have her home to celebrate. And so, looking forward to the imminent gratitude, she drove east and south and when she arrived, her father greeted her at the door, looking far stronger and, more important, more confident, more like a man—the man he once was. He held out his wrist monitor and arranged it parallel to Mae's. "Look at us. We match. You want some vino?"

Inside, the three of them arranged themselves as they always had, along the kitchen counter, and they diced, and breaded, and they talked about the various ways the health of Mae's father had improved. Now he had his choice of doctors. Now he had no limitations on the medicines he could take; they were all covered, and there was no copay. Mae noticed, as they narrated the story of his recent health, that her mother was brighter, more buoyant. She was wearing short-shorts.

"The best thing about it," her father said, "is that now your mother has whole swaths of extra time. It's all so simple. I see the doctor and the Circle takes care of the rest. No middleman. No discussion."

"Is that what I think it is?" Mae said. Over the dining room table, there was a silver chandelier, though upon closer inspection it seemed like one of Mercer's. The silver arms were actually painted antlers. Mae had been only passingly enthusiastic about any of his work—when they were dating, she labored for kind things to say—but this one she genuinely liked.

"It is," her mother said.

"Not bad," Mae said.

"Not bad?" her father said. "It's his best work, and you know it. This thing would go for five grand in one of those San Francisco boutiques. He gave it to us for free."

Mae was impressed. "Why for free?"

"Why for free?" her mother asked. "Because he's our friend. Because he's a nice young man. And wait before you roll your eyes or come back with some witty comment."

Mae did wait, and after she'd passed on a half-dozen unkind things she could say about Mercer and had chosen silence, she found herself feeling generous toward him. Because she no longer needed him, because she was now a crucial and measurable driver of world commerce, and because she had two men at the Circle to choose from—one of them a volcanic, calligraphic enigma who climbed walls to take her from behind—she could afford to be generous toward poor Mercer, his shaggy head and grotesque fatty back.

"It's really nice," Mae said.

"Glad you think so," her mother said. "You can tell him yourself in a few minutes. He's coming for dinner."

"No," Mae said. "Please no."

"Mae," her father said firmly, "he's coming, okay?"

And she knew she couldn't argue. Instead, she poured herself a glass of red wine and, while setting the table, she downed half of it. By the time Mercer knocked and let himself in, her face was half-numb and her thoughts were vague.

"Hey Mae," he said, and gave her a tentative hug.

"Your chandelier thing is really great," she said, and even while saying the words, she saw their effect on him, so she went further. "It's really beautiful."

"Thanks," he said. He looked around to Mae's parents, as if confirming they had heard the same thing. Mae poured herself more wine.

"It really is," Mae continued. "I mean, I know you do good work." And when she said this, Mae made sure not to look at him, knowing his eyes would doubt her. "But this is the best one you've done yet. I'm so happy that you put this much into … I'm just happy that my favorite piece of yours is in my parents' dining room."

Mae took out her camera and took a picture.

"What're you doing?" Mercer said, though he seemed pleased that she'd deem it worthy of a photograph.

"I just wanted to take a picture. Look," she said, and showed him.

Now her parents had disappeared, no doubt thinking she wanted time alone with Mercer. They were hilarious and insane.

"It looks good," he said, staring at the photo a bit longer than Mae had expected. He was not, evidently, above taking pleasure, and pride, in his own work.

"It looks in***cred***ible," she said. The wine had sent her aloft. "That was very nice of you. And I know it means a lot to them, especially now. It adds something very important here." Mae was euphoric, and it wasn't just the wine. It was release. Her family had been released. "This place has been so dark," she said.

And for a brief moment, she and Mercer seemed to find their former footing. Mae, who for years had thought about Mercer with a disappointment bordering on pity, remembered now that he was capable of great work. She knew he was compassionate, and very kind, even though his limited horizons had been exasperating. But now, seeing this—could she call it artwork? It was something like art—and the effect it had on the house, her faith in him was rekindled.

That gave Mae an idea. Under the pretense that she was going to her room to change, she excused herself and hurried upstairs. But instead, sitting on her old bed, in three minutes she'd posted her photo of the chandelier in two dozen design feeds, linking to Mercer's website—which featured just his phone number and a few pictures; he hadn't updated it in years—and his email address. If he wasn't smart enough to get business for himself, she would be happy to do it for him.

When she was finished, Mercer was sitting with her parents at the kitchen table, which was crowded with salad and stir-friend chicken and vegetables. Their eyes followed her down the stairs. "I called up there," her father said.

"We like to eat when it's hot," her mother added.

Mae hadn't heard them. "Sorry. I was just—Wow, this looks good. Dad, don't you think Mercer's chandelier is awesome?"

"I do. And I told you, and him, as much. We've been asking for one of his creations for a year now."

"I just needed the right antlers," Mercer said. "I hadn't gotten any really great ones in a while." He went on to explain his sourcing, how he bought antlers only from trusted collaborators, people he knew hadn't hunted the deer, or if they had, had been instructed to do so by Fish and Game to curb overcrowding.

"That is fascinating," her mother said. "Before I forget, I want to raise a toast … What's that?"

Mae's phone had beeped. "Nothing," she said. "But in a second I think I'll have some good news to announce. Go on, Mom."

"I was just saying that I wanted to toast having us—"

Now it was Mercer's phone ringing.

"Sorry," he said, and maneuvered his hand outside his pants, finding the off button.

"Everyone done?" her mother asked.

"Sorry Mrs. Holland," Mercer said. "Go on."

But at that moment, Mae's phone buzzed loudly again, and when Mae looked to its screen, she saw that there were thirty-seven new zings and messages.

"Something you have to attend to?" her father said.

"No, not yet," Mae said, though she was almost too excited to wait. She was proud of Mercer, and soon she'd be able to show him something about the audience he might have outside Longfield. If there were thirty-seven messages in the first few minutes, in twenty minutes there would be a hundred.

Her mother continued. "I was going to thank you, Mae, for all you've done to improve your father's health, and my own sanity. And I wanted to toast Mercer, too, as part of our family, and to thank him for his beautiful work." She paused, as if expecting a buzz to sound any moment. "Well, I'm just glad I got through that. Let's eat. The food's getting cold."

And they began to eat, but after a few minutes, Mae had head so many dings, and she'd seen her phone screen update so many times, that she couldn't wait.

"Okay, I can't stand it anymore. I posted that photo I took of your chandelier, Mercer, and people love it!" She beamed, and raised her glass. "That's what we should toast."

Mercer didn't look amused. "Wait. You posted them where?"

"That's great, Mercer," her father said, and raised his own glass.

Mercer's glass was not raised. "Where'd you post them, Mae?"

"Everywhere relevant," she said, "and the comments are amazing." She searched her screen. "Just let me read the first one. And I quote: ***Wow, that is gorgeous***. That's from a pretty well-known industrial designer in Stockholm. Here's another one: ***Very cool. Reminds me of something I saw in Barcelona last year.*** That was from a designer in Santa Fe who has her own shop. She gave your thing three out of four stars, and had some suggestions about how you might improve it. I bet you could sell them there if you wanted to. So here's another—"

Mercer had his palms on the table. "Stop. Please."

"Why? You haven't even heard the best part. On DesignMind, you already have 122 smiles. That's an incredible amount to get so quickly. And they have a ranking there, and you're in the top fifty for today. Actually, I know how you could raise that—" At the same time, it occurred to Mae that this kind of activity would surely get her PartiRank into the 1,800s. And if she could get enough of these people to buy the work, it would

mean solid Conversion and Retail Raw numbers—

"Mae. Stop. Please stop." Mercer was staring at her, his eyes small and round. "I don't want to get loud here, in your parents' home, but either you stop or I have to walk out."

"Just hold on a sec," she said, and scrolled through her messages, looking for one that she was sure would impress him. She'd seen a message come in from Dubai, and if she found it, she knew, his resistance would fall away.

"Mae," she heard her mother say. "Mae."

But Mae couldn't locate the message. Where was it? While she scrolled, she heard the scraping of a chair. But she was so close to finding it that she didn't look up. When she did, she found Mercer gone and her parents staring at her.

"I think it's nice you want to support Mercer," her mother said, "but I just don't understand why you do this now. We're trying to enjoy a nice dinner."

Mae stared at her mother, absorbing all the disappointment and bewilderment that she could stand, then ran outside and reached Mercer as he was backing out of the driveway.

She got into the passenger seat. "Stop."

His eyes were dull, lifeless. He put the car in park and rested his hands in his lap, exhaling with all the condescension he could muster.

"What the hell is your problem, Mercer?"

"Mae, I asked you to stop, and you didn't."

"Did I hurt your feelings?"

"No. You hurt my brain. You make me think you're batshit crazy. I asked you to stop and you wouldn't."

"I wouldn't stop trying to help you."

"I didn't ask for your help. And I didn't give you permission to post a photo of my work."

"Your ***work***." She heard something barbed in her voice that she knew wasn't right or productive.

"You're snide, Mae, and you're mean, and you're callous."

"What? I'm the ***opposite*** of callous, Mercer. I'm trying to help you because I believe in what you do."

"No you don't. Mae, you're just unable to allow anything to live inside a room. My work exists in one room. It doesn't exist anywhere else. And that's how I intend it."

"So you don't want business?"

Mercer looked through the windshield, then leaned back. "Mae, I've never felt more that there is some cult taking over the world. You know what someone tried to sell me the other day? Actually, I bet it's somehow affiliated with the Circle. Have you heard of Homie? The thing where your phone scans your house for the bar codes of every product—"

"Right. Then it orders new stuff whenever you're getting low. It's brilliant."

"You think this is okay?" Mercer said. "You know how they framed it for me? It's the usual utopian vision. This time they were saying it'll reduce waste. If stores know what their customers want, then they don't overproduce, don't overship, don't have to throw stuff away when it's not bought. I mean, like everything else you guys are pushing, it

sounds perfect, sounds progressive, but it carries with it more control, more central tracking of everything we do."

"Mercer, the Circle is a group of people like me. Are you saying that somehow we're all in a room somewhere, watching you, planning world domination?"

"No. First of all, ***I know*** it's all people like you. And that's what's so scary. ***Individually*** you don't know what you're doing ***collectively.*** But secondly, don't presume the benevolence of your leaders. For years there was this happy time when those controlling the major internet conduits were actually decent enough people. Or at least weren't predatory and vengeful. But I always worried, what if someone was willing to use this power to punish those who challenged them?"

"What are you saying?"

"You think it's just coincidence that every time some congresswoman or blogger talks about monopoly, they suddenly become ensnared in some terrible sex-porn-witchcraft controversy? For twenty years, the internet was capable of ruining anyone in minutes, but not until your Three Wise Men, or at least one of them, was anyone willing to do it. You're saying this is news to you?"

"You're so paranoid. Your conspiracy theory brain always depressed me, Mercer. You sound so ignorant. And saying that Homie is some scary new thing, I mean, for a hundred years there were milkmen who brought you milk. They knew when you needed it. There were butchers who sold you meat, bakers who would drop off bread—"

"But the milkman wasn't scanning my house! I mean, anything with a UPC code can be scanned. Already, millions of people's phones are scanning their homes and communicating all that information out to the world."

"And so what? You don't want Charmin to know how much of their toilet paper you're using? Is Charmin oppressing you in some significant way?"

"No, Mae, it's different. That would be easier to understand. Here, though, there are no oppressors. No one's forcing you to do this. You willingly tie yourself to these leashes. And you willingly become utterly socially autistic. You no longer pick up on basic human communication clues. You're at a table with three humans, all of whom are looking at you and trying to talk to you, and you're staring at a screen, searching for strangers from Dubai."

"You're not so pure, Mercer. You have an email account. You have a website."

"Here's the thing, and it's painful to say this to you. But you're not very interesting anymore. You sit at a desk twelve hours a day and you have nothing to show for it except for some numbers that won't exist or be remembered in a week. You're leaving no evidence that you lived. There's no proof."

"Fuck you, Mercer."

"And worse, you're not ***doing*** anything interesting anymore. You're not seeing anything, saying anything. The weird paradox is that you think you're at the center of things, and that makes your opinions more valuable, but you yourself are becoming less vibrant. I bet you haven't done anything offscreen in months. Have you?"

"You're such a fucker, Mercer."

"Do you go outside anymore?"

"You're the interesting one, is that it? The idiot who makes chandeliers out of dead animal parts? You're the wonderboy of all that's fascinating?"

"You know what I think, Mae? I think you think that sitting at your desk, frowning and smiling somehow makes you think you're actually living some fascinating life. You comment on things, and that substitutes for doing them. You look at pictures of Nepal, push a smile button, and you think that's the same as going there. I mean, what would happen if you actually went? Your CircleJerk ratings or whatever-the-fuck would drop below an acceptable level! Mae, do you realize how incredibly boring you've become?" ■

After Reading: Sharing participatory responses

In your own first reading, you'll have noted lines of the text that resonated for you—that gave you a sense of the characters and their priorities and motivations, and that perhaps also connected to something in your own experience. Share one or two of these moments of understanding or connection with other readers (perhaps on an online site). Do you find they work together to create greater shared knowledge/understanding of the world and the characters that Eggers has portrayed? Do you find similar or different points of connection with your own experience?

Here's a response from one student, Erin, to a particular moment she connected with:

> Mae's every move was becoming monitored and controlled to fit the norms and the standards of *The Circle* almost to make sure that there was nothing the Circle could not do for any one circler. To establish why something like this could be so dangerous, Mercer said it perfectly when arguing with Mae, "No one's forcing you to do this. You willingly tie yourself to these leashes. And you willingly become utterly socially autistic" (Eggers pg. 262). This allowed me to see that the person I am supposed to be fully relies on the things I want to do with my own life and not the person society wants me to become. Self-realization is not about conforming to the likes of others because that is ultimately where you will lose yourself it is about finding your own path and following it.

Does anyone in your group of readers make a connection like Erin's, or like one another's, or do any personal resonances seem unique? Is Erin's response similar in any way to the responses of readers you've connected with? Did anyone else note these particular sentences, and if so, did they see them the same way, as pointing to a need for self-realization and nonconformity?

Online book sites like Goodreads support the sharing of responses and understandings by many readers of all ages and backgrounds who bring different experiences and concerns to a text. Why might such sites draw committed and active

readers (like the community in Hannah Morgan's *Bookworm Buddies* study—Part I Additional Readings)?

Rereading Analytically

While literature generally lends itself to a participatory reading in the way it brings you into the world of the characters, analytical/critical reading requires that you step outside of the world of the story to see **how** it has been composed and **why** it has been composed in this particular way, and within the context—the **where**—of a particular cultural moment. With an analytical reading, you are trying to read closely and work toward an interpretation of the text, a deeper understanding of its possible meanings and how they have been shaped. The traditional discourse of literary analysis has involved such terms as plot, setting, character, imagery, narrator, and so forth, and we think it's useful to keep them in mind while engaging in a more open exploration. But at the same time, try to read this literary scene in much the way you would any cultural setting, paying attention to how people interact, what is said and how, and what objects are significant. These are all clues to help you make sense of the underlying beliefs and values of this small community—one that exists within a larger cultural context—and where they might be in conflict. Drawing from these observations will help you understand more about the author's purposes in constructing this world.

Inquiry #3: Analytical reading

Return to the selection from *The Circle*, focusing first on what you've noticed and perhaps glossed in your first reading, adding to these observations and glosses in the second, and making notes and commentary. Here are some aspects of this selection to consider.

- Mae is returning to the world of her home from a community she has recently joined. Although she is not the narrator of her story, which is told in the third person, it's told from her narrative perspective—through what she sees and thinks and experiences. What do we learn about her as a character from her own observations and reflections?
- Because we see this world from Mae's perspective, the narrator tells us directly only what Mae is thinking. We learn what the others around her might think from their own words in the dialogue of their exchanges. What do you observe about what is said and how it is said by each participant in this scene? Do their words point to the different priorities, the different beliefs and values, of the different worlds they now inhabit? Do physical objects offer images that reinforce these differences?

- We might think of Mae and Mercer as inhabiting two different discourse communities. What do you see, from this scene, of the beliefs and values of Mae's new discourse community? What key terms are significant in that world? What are Mercer's key terms, reflecting his values? How much shared knowledge does he have of the world Mae speaks for? Of the values she thinks that world represents? Here's another student's response to this text.

  Student Voices: In *The Circle*, Eggers creates a world in which a large majority of individuals attempt to quantify their worth in a different manner, a measurement of their social media interactions. Mercer, while arguing with Mae has a very insightful comment. He states "You sit at a desk twelve hours a day and you have nothing to show for it except some numbers that won't exist or be remembered in a week. You're leaving no evidence you lived. There's no proof." What lends this quote its relevance is that Mae truly believes her self worth is intrinsically associated with these numbers. (Stefan)

What do the words Stefan has chosen suggest about Mercer's understanding of Mae's work world and the values associated with it?

- As you place Mae's and Mercer's intentions and understandings side by side, what do you perceive about Eggers's purposes? How might the patterns you find in this episode reflect his larger meanings—his exploration of a conflict in priorities and values that he sees within contemporary society and that his readers themselves could be experiencing in a rapidly changing digital environment?
- What can you finally say about the interaction of what Eggers has included in this selection, and how he has crafted this portion of the novel, in contributing to the why—to the ideas and meanings that he is exploring here and the cultural critique he is offering through his fiction?

Composing Literary Analysis

So far the ways in which we've looked at this excerpt from Eggers's novel aren't different from the ways we might begin to analyze any piece of literature, looking closely at the words of the text, at the ways in which the characters are portrayed, and at their dialogue and interactions. But to see a work of literature, or another cultural production, from the perspective of the cultural critique it offers, we need to consider more about its larger context—about the cultural world it draws from and imagines, about the intertextual context of other texts it refers to explicitly and implicitly, and about how its ideas are circulating within a larger conversation about society and its values.

As you return to this chapter's selection from Eggers's novel, or choose another section from the same work, or select another literary or other production that offers a critique of some aspect of our digital environment, you'll gain a clearer understanding of what is being critiqued and how by looking both closely at the text and more widely at these elements of context.

Inquiring about Textual Analysis

If you're continuing to work with the same selection from *The Circle*, you'll have already made some of these moves, but you might revisit them to deepen your understanding of how this text is working. Because you're approaching this piece of fiction as an example of a cultural critique, you'll want your rereading to be guided also by your understanding of the author's purpose.

1. Finding a focus

Begin by generating some ideas to explore about the focus of the cultural critique of the work you have chosen. Then reread your selection with one or two of those ideas in mind, identifying textual elements and key passages that relate to that avenue of exploration.

2. Gathering data

In the analysis of a literary text or other word-based cultural production, the words of the text serve as your data and offer the examples you'll draw on in exploring your key ideas. Reread the text. As you note the words that contribute to your understanding of how the work reflects the idea you're exploring—through description, dialogue, and a character's reflections and observations—you are effectively gathering the data you'll need to support the understanding you'll come to. Glossing and annotating the text is a particularly important tool here.

3. Identifying patterns

Looking back at the places you've marked and the words you've found to be significant, what patterns do you find? In a literary text, how do words, objects, and images line up with characters, for example? What differences do you find between/among characters, at different points in a character's development, or in different settings? What do you discover about how the text works to make an implied argument about a concern of our society?

4. Considering larger meanings

Once you've found some patterns, you can begin to consider their meanings. How do these patterns reflect and contribute to the idea about the writer's explicit or implied critique of a cultural phenomenon that you set out to explore—to what you see as the author's larger meanings? Look at the following student example.

Molly recontextualizes Mercer's words, connecting them with meanings about knowing and learning that have emerged in her class's discussions of *The Circle.* Are there themes from your own class discussions that connect to patterns you're finding in the reading?

> *The Circle* is centered around being all knowing, and conflicts arise about how the company promotes knowing so much that it becomes an invasion of privacy. This concept of being omnipotent is explored by Mae, who is challenging the question by submerging herself in the company and trying to learn as much as she can. She is beginning to realize her full potential and her effort to reach that potential is evident with how hard she works. However, she is given a harsh reality by Mercer when he says, "We are not meant to know everything, Mae. Did you ever think that perhaps our minds are delicately calibrated between the known and the unknown? That our souls need the mysteries of night and the clarity of day? Young people are creating ever-present daylight, and I think it will burn us all alive. There will be no time to reflect, to sleep to cool" (Eggers 213). Here, he is telling her how we always need time to decompress and reflect on our actions or they are essentially invalid, because it is impossible to constantly be working and be on the move without having any time to rest. What Mercer says here shows a new angle on the question of "What can I know?" by focusing more on discovering how much a person should know and learning when the pursuit for knowledge becomes overbearing. By knowing ones limits and understanding their abilities, they are not hindering their learning, but rather gaining insight into what they are capable of.

Inquiring about Contextual Analysis

Once you've developed a rich understanding of the text and how it is working to present the critique of contemporary digital culture you see the author making, you'll want to expand your frame, taking into account several elements of context. Considering these contextual elements is likely to require that you expand your own inquiry into material beyond the text itself. If the work has been reviewed, as *The Circle* has, those reviews can help you place the work in a larger context, while themselves becoming part of the textual ecology of the work (as do reviews posted by readers like yourselves on sites like Goodreads and Amazon). We include several reviews of *The Circle* in Part II Additional Readings, and we'll draw from them here using one by Margaret Atwood for the *New York Review of Books,*[13:15] one by Ellen Ullman for the *New York Times,*[13:16] and a third by Betsy Morais for *The New Yorker,*[13:17] to see what they say about the cultural world it draws from and imagines, about the intertextual context of other texts it refers to explicitly and implicitly, and about how its ideas are circulating within a larger conversation about society and its values. (As the book becomes a movie with Tom Hanks and Emma Watson, a new cycle of textual circulation will follow.)

1. Situating a text within a cultural world

There's little question about the cultural context that Eggers is responding to: Facebook, Google, all of the Silicon Valley giants, along with Amazon, health care data providers, and apps that track our location through GPS. The dystopian novel typically builds on elements present in contemporary society, even as it presents an imagined world where those elements have gone awry. What detailed correspondences do you find between the text you are analyzing and actual elements and features of our present-day world? How effectively has the author built on those details, and how plausible is the author's extension of today's reality?

There's likely to be significant disagreement on this point. In reviewing *The Circle,* Ullman argues that Eggers adds little to what we already know about "our strange drive to display ourselves, the voracious information appetites of Google and Facebook, our lives under the constant surveillance of our own government." Morais, on the other hand, suggests that Eggers often "lands on point"; she quotes Facebook founder Zuckerberg talking about his belief in helping people share more information and points to its collection of demographic details and its tracking of online behaviors to show close correspondences between the world Eggers has invented and the actual cultural context he is drawing on. Atwood, too, points to "the 'real' world to which Eggers holds up the mirror of art in order to show us ourselves and the perils that surround us."

2. Situating a text among other texts

Writers are always working within the context of other writing, and this is particularly true with literature, where there is a long-standing historical tradition that informs present-day works directly or indirectly. What evidence do you find of that influence? You might find it harder to identify the intertextual literary context that gives shape to a work, but if you suspect some parallels or influence, you're likely to be able to find out more about them.

Eggers, in writing a dystopian novel, most clearly draws on Orwell's *1984*, echoing the slogans that were constants in Orwell's world, such as "War is peace," "Freedom is slavery," "Ignorance is strength." In the world of The Circle, these have become "Secrets are lies," "Sharing is Caring," "Privacy is theft." Such slogans represent a kind of thought control, explicit in the totalitarian state Orwell feared was coming, more implicit but just as powerful in the privacy-free and "transparent" world Eggers sees coming soon. Morais begins her review with these two sets of slogans, making the relationship of the two texts clear. Atwood, in contrast, begins her review by placing *The Circle* in the context of other work Eggers himself has written, work that explores what she sees as important ideas, before going on to trace a wide range of other literary resonances beyond *1984*, from contemporary writing about cyber theft and cyber threats to Hans Christian Andersen's *The Snow*

Queen. Ullman connects the journey into The Circle to Dante's *Inferno,* where Virgil guides Dante down into the depths of hell.

3. Locating a text within the current circulation of ideas

A writer typically draws on ideas that are circulating within contemporary society, no matter when the action takes place. Locating those ideas is another way of placing a work within a larger context, and again, this is particularly useful to understanding a work of cultural critique. You have now read other work exploring concerns about social media and privacy, for example, and can place Eggers's work in the context of others' research and other discussions. What, in the future Eggers portrays, seems supported by what others are learning in the present moment? What seems unlikely?

Each of our three reviewers addresses this context. Ullman dismissively points out that "books and tweets and blogs are already debating the issues Eggers raises"; Morais takes the concerns of the novel more seriously, connecting the "sharing is caring" goal of The Circle to work by Harvard researchers on self-disclosure; and Atwood locates this novel in "ideas about the social construction and deconstruction of privacy, and about the increasing corporate ownership of privacy, and about the effects such ownership may have on the nature of Western democracy." For each, the context of other circulating ideas that interest them shapes their sense of what's interesting and valuable (or not) in what they see Eggers trying to do.

Drafting and Shaping

From looking closely at a text to exploring one or more aspects of its context, you are likely to have generated new understandings of the work you're focusing on, the ways it puts forth a cultural critique, and how successfully it has done so. You might choose to develop your own review of *The Circle* or another work that has been the focus of your attention in this chapter. But at this moment, you'll want to give some shape to your current understandings of how a particular text of cultural critique works and how it's placed within the larger context of a cultural world, a world of other texts, and/or a world of circulating ideas, as you contribute your own ideas to this conversation.

1. Foregrounding text or context

When considering a text within a larger cultural or intertextual context, you'll want to decide which you want to foreground for your readers and to consider their likely shared knowledge of the text and its context. The convention (the commonly shared expectations of writers and readers) for essays involving the analysis of a cultural production, such as a literary text, is to assume your readers have not read or seen or heard the work in question (even if they are your classmates) and to provide a brief overview of it.

With a cultural critique, where you're going beyond the close analysis of a text to place its ideas and meanings in a larger context, you'll want to think about how and where you'll address both elements.

A common structure for a typical analysis involving literature is to introduce readers to the work either with a brief summary or by taking the reader into one very small key passage at the beginning, and then moving step by step through the text, highlighting key elements and patterns, and concluding with larger observations of the patterns that have emerged and the meanings they point to. This is pretty much the structure Ullman has followed in her review.

Another common structure when that analysis is supporting a cultural critique is to begin with a larger statement of meaning, placing the text within a larger context before going on to make key points about the text and how it supports (or doesn't support) those meanings, including relevant background knowledge along the way. Atwood puts Eggers's book in the context of Eggers's other work to show that he cares about ideas and then names what she sees as "ideas about the social construction and deconstruction of privacy." She then goes on to show how those ideas appear in the book, while connecting to other presentations of such ideas as well as to a larger literary context.

As always, creating a working outline is likely to be a useful part of your process. As you draft this material, or peer review it, you might decide to change your original structure, to add or delete textual examples, or to modify the amount of background knowledge you provide about the text. Again, it's helpful both to have a plan and to stay flexible until your final revision.

In each case, using strong textual evidence is an important part of such an analysis, and you'll want to bring significant bits of the text you're analyzing into the one you're creating. (Doing this also gives your reader the "flavor" of the text, a sense of its style, and helps to create further shared knowledge.)

2. Supporting your analysis of a cultural critique with digital resources

When you're making an argument related to a cultural context, you're likely to find many relevant resources circulating online, including images like the ones we looked at earlier, and digital platforms make it easy to draw on such images in making your own argument. If you follow the links to the reviews we've been considering, you'll see that Atwood's review creates context with an image of Eggers (fitting her emphasis on the context of his work and ideas), and Morais's review simply presents the book's cover, and Ullman's review offers an image of a circle of smiling emoticons that become progressively unhappier toward the center, reflecting her discussion of the book's content as portraying a kind of journey into hell (Figure 8.5).

You might also create hypertext links to guide readers to a richer understanding of the cultural elements you point to in your own analysis, particularly if you're posting to a blog platform. Morais, for example, links to an article in *The Atlantic's*

news blog, *The Wire,* questioning whether Eggers borrowed too much from a book by a former Facebook employee.

You might also use a wiki for a multilayered collaborative exploration of a text like *The Circle,* creating pages that explore several aspects of the text and its context.

Revising and Publishing

If you're posting your work to a blog or a wiki, you've already made some decisions about how your own text will circulate. As always, it's useful to circulate it first among knowledgeable and interested readers before posting it more publicly. These readers can play the role of insiders who have the same shared knowledge and who can step into the analytical work you are doing and help you support your interpretation of the text's meanings and purposes—perhaps clarifying those meanings and suggesting further examples of the patterns you've seen.

1. Working with peer review

Any peer review strategies that have worked for you in the past will be useful again. Here are some possible peer review questions that can guide you if you're preparing this analysis of a text as a cultural critique for wider circulation.

- In what context is the writer placing this text? How does that context contribute to an understanding of the area of cultural critique the writer is exploring?
- How does the particular text connect to and respond to that context?
- What are the larger meanings this composer has found in the work being analyzed?
- What patterns has the composer found to support those meanings?
- Has the composer offered strong textual evidence that those patterns exist? Do you see other evidence in the text that would strengthen this interpretation or that might alter it?
- Has the composer created the right amount of shared knowledge to let readers follow the interpretation without retelling the whole story?
- Is the analysis structured in a way that is easy for a reader to follow?
- Do any digital links or images work to support the composer's framing of the text's cultural context or points of critique?
- Does the analysis, by the end, leave you convinced that this is a plausible way of understanding the text within a larger context, as a form of cultural critique?
- What other advice would you give to this composer?

2. **Reshaping your analysis for circulation to a larger audience**

Although the audiences for the reviews of *The Circle* we've been looking at might overlap, the *New York Review of Books* publishes longer review essays, often engaging readers who are deeply steeped in both literature and current affairs, and Atwood is addressing that audience with her flowing literary allusions. Morais's discussion for *The New Yorker,* a more general interest magazine for educated readers, appears under the topic of science and technology and is likely to draw readers who are more interested in that topic than in book reviews more generally. Other publications like *Wired* and *Slate,* aimed at more technology-oriented readers, offered critical reviews that focused much more on Eggers's lack of in-depth knowledge of the Silicon Valley world he is portraying.

As you consider the wider circulation of your analysis of a work of cultural critique, you'll not only want to take into account your peers' responses to the text you've created, but also the audience community of any site where you choose to post it. The easiest public sites on which to post a discussion about a book are review sites like Goodreads (or Amazon). Look at some of the other reviews of *The Circle* on a reader review site, and see what your work might add to the discussion. Recast your own work for that audience.

Or you might search for other discussions of *The Circle* or another text of cultural critique you've chosen to analyze, and see where these discussions appear, what their focus is, and what readership they seem to be addressing. Where might you post your own analysis if you were invited to, and how would you reshape your analysis to address the interests of this audience? If the site you've chosen accepts open submissions, you can submit your work. If not, post it on your own or a class blog site, with an introductory note about where you'd choose to make it public and how your sense of the likely audience for the site you've chosen has guided your final shaping of your work.

Reinventing and Circulating your Work

Here are several ways in which you might extend your work for this chapter.

- **Option 1: Reading further in the work you've chosen.** The primary context for a small segment of any literary work includes the whole. You can enrich your understanding of a larger work by choosing more than one section to look at closely. How does reading and analyzing a different section of the work contribute to and/or alter the understanding you gained from your first analysis?
- **Option 2: Comparing *The Circle* to another piece of dystopian fiction.** Other works within a genre provide part of the context within which we read a particular work. You might have read or want to read another work that explores potential problems of a society if it heads in a particular direction. How does another writer create and show the concerns of another dystopian world?

- If the work was written in a different time period (e.g., *1984*), how did the author's predictions of then-future dangers play out against the actual future? Are the concerns of that earlier work nonissues at present, or do they continue to be present for contemporary society?
- If the work looks toward the near future (e.g., Gary Shteyngart, *Super Sad True Love Story*[13:19]), how does the dystopian vision it projects compare to the one created in *The Circle*?

➤ **Option 3**: **Tracing the textual ecology of a work.** Search for whatever textual material you can find related to the work and circulating online—reviews, memes, images, mashups, and *transmediations* that move the work from one medium to another, as *The Circle* is being reshaped from a book to a movie. What do you discover about how the themes of critique as originally presented resonate in these new environments? How is it understood and its points highlighted, altered, or adapted in different contexts?

➤ **Option 4: Creating a composite analysis on a multipage wiki.** Where several of you have focused on the same text, you might draw from your different analyses to create a richer and more complex composite analysis. A wiki provides a useful platform for a multilayered exploration of a text that offers pages of background, summary, analysis and interpretation, and related resources, and works especially well for collaborative projects around a literary text. Here's an example of *a wiki created for Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice*.If you and your classmates were to create such a wiki to support your analysis of *The Circle,* what pages would you create and what might they include?

➤ **Option 5: Adding your own review of *The Circle* to its larger review context.** Consider the ways reviews are shaped by the contexts in which they appear and how multiple reviews might speak to one in another. Look again at the three reviews of *The Circle* that appear in Part II Additional Readings. How do these reviews speak to the shared and differing expectations of readers of a work like this? To the place of *The Circle* within a segment of contemporary culture? Drawing on your own analysis, write a review that considers not only how, but how well Eggers has achieved his likely purposes in creating this work, and that addresses what has been said in these other reviews. What can you add to the points made in them? What would you contest? What evidence would you draw on to support your own evaluation of this work in the context of others' reviews?

CHAPTER 9

Business Writing

Creating written documents reveals so much about you and your business skills. Your writing tells the reader about your educational background, pride in your work, and business expertise. The emergence of the paperless office, e-mail, the Internet and Web pages only increases the power of the written word. Any company with employees who can write clearly and concisely has a competitive edge over others who are still struggling to communicate.

—Gloria Pincu
"The Importance of Writing Clearly for Business"

Purposes of Writing in Business

Whether you are writing for a class or on the job, your goal should be to communicate effectively. Consequently, you need to know the purpose behind your communication. Perhaps you are writing to inform, as a human resources officer sharing basic information in an e-mail or newsletter. Perhaps you are writing to get results, as a team leader sharing project goals or a technical writer composing a set of instructions. Maybe you are writing to persuade, as a salesperson writing up a proposal for a possible client or a manager submitting a bid for a project. Or you may be sharing bad news, telling an applicant that he did not get the job or explaining profit losses to shareholders. No matter what form you are using or what message you want to send, your message will be more effective if your writing is clear, to the point, and written according to the conventions of the format you have chosen or been assigned. From short memos to lengthy reports and proposals, you want to be understood, and this chapter is designed to help you achieve that goal.

Types of Writing Assignments in Business

We each are a crazy quilt of characteristics, talents, ideas and ideals, sewn together by our experiences, our families and our own hands.

Yet some fabric patches are more sought after by employers. Which pieces are like royal blue velvet to a hiring manager, beautiful to look at and almost impossible to resist? Which deserve to show up again and again?

The American Management Association weighed in with the 4Cs—communications, critical thinking, creativity and collaboration—as increasingly in demand by employers.

Sew these all into some of my own thoughts on the crazy quilt of talents and values and I've come up with five traits most hiring managers seek: communication skills, integrity, adaptability and creativity, thoughtfulness and kindness, and critical thinking.

—Vickie Elmer
"Five Traits Employers Really Want"

Business writing takes on many different forms, depending on audience, purpose, context, and field. Similarly, learning objectives, programmatic goals, and even accreditation requirements may affect the types of assignments you receive in class, just as various factors may influence what you are asked to create on the job. Below are some common types of writing assignments that you may see, but keep in mind that this is not an exhaustive list and that you may be asked to create other types of documents or communication; likewise, you may know of alternative forms that may be effective for your audience, purpose, and context—if so, you should discuss these additional forms with your instructor.

Memos, Letters, and E-mails

In the workplace, and thus in classes preparing you for the workplace, correspondence will be a key tool for getting things done. Memos and letters, both of which may be written as e-mails, are used every day to relay information, make requests, report findings, deliver good and bad news, accompany other files and reports, and solicit business, and the list goes on. This correspondence is often your professional face, so it is important for your writing to be professional—well written, organized, accurate, following the conventions of the genre, appropriate for the intended audience, proofread, and to the point.

We communicate more and more through e-mail, but that medium is not always used in a way that promotes civil correspondence between people. Make no mistake: e-mail is an extraordinary tool for communication, but it is also rife with potential pitfalls. Table 9.1 shows some guidelines for e-mail use that will help ensure you use it to maximum effect while also remaining civil in the tone of what you write.

Some Things to Consider When Writing an E-mail
In General
1. Use e-mail to request or provide succinct pieces of objective information 2. Avoid discussing sensitive issues through e-mail 3. Use e-mail to publicly praise, but not to blame employees 4. Use e-mail to share insights, not to instigate confrontation 5. Judiciously use blind copy function
As Sender
1. Give e-mail a clear and direct subject heading 2. Get to the point 3. Avoid hedgers and qualifiers as phrases 4. If asking a question, be sure to ask the question (don't issue evaluation) 5. Specify who should respond 6. Be clear about when you need a response 7. Provide relevant context 8. Limit each message to one topic 9. Provide brief summary when sending an "FYI" or forward e-mail 10. Don't use sarcasm
As Receiver
1. Don't make assumptions about sender's emotional state 2. Don't escalate by sending an emotionally charged response (sleep on it; perhaps don't reply by e-mail) 3. Don't respond right away 4. Be careful when quoting e-mails out of context in a reply

Table 1.1: Writing an Email

Typically, memos are written to be distributed within an organization and can serve a variety of functions. The standard form, whether printed on paper or put in an e-mail, is to have a heading that includes *To:, From:, Date:, and Subject:*. The memo may be put on company letterhead or special memo letterhead to convey more formality and authority. Memos are usually short, but if you do require a second page, use a page header that includes an abbreviated title, the page number, and the date—either across the page or in the left-hand corner. See the Sample Business Project Plan that follows for an example of a memo.

Letters are written to those outside the organization and should be printed on company letterhead. The letter itself should be centered on the page, so adjust your margins accordingly. Many businesses use the **full-block style**, which aligns everything in the letter on the left margin: the date, inside address, salutation, body of the letter, complimentary closing, signature, signature block, and end notations, if applicable (see the sample business letter that follows). In the **modified-block style**, which is often used when no letterhead exists, the return address, date, complimentary closing, and signature block are aligned in the center while the inside address, salutation, and body are aligned on the left.

Reports

When you organize information to present to someone else, either within or outside of the company (or classroom), you create a report. Reports may be formal or informal, long or short, but no matter what type, you should consider the purpose of the report and the audience who will be receiving it. You should also consider whether or not a format already exists for this kind of report. For example, your workplace may always require a **travel report** after you return from a work-related trip. If this is mandatory, chances are that a form or format exists, which probably includes items such as trip date and destination, activities or people visited, accomplishments, and a budget. If a form or required format exists, you should always follow it. Otherwise, short reports are often given as memo reports with the needed information. Other types of reports you may be asked to write include progress reports, investigative or trouble reports, feasibility reports, and usability reports.

Sample Business Project Plan

To: Jeff Grabill
From: Robin Stremlow, Laurel Sutherland, Kelly Washburn
Date: 11/3/2009
Re: Mice and Elephants Project Plan

MEMO

Problem

Michigan has been hit especially hard by the current economic crisis, and that fact is particularly evident in the Lansing area. Businesses are shutting their doors and people are moving away at alarming rates. It is time that we do something about it.

We are going to research a local organization called The Allen Neighborhood Center (ANC), which is a prime ex ample of a small group with a mission that turned into an influential and prosperous "elephant." We are going to evaluate our findings and develop a strategic plan for another local group that could help stimulate the area.

Audience

Ultimately, everyone in the Lansing community benefits from this project. For this memo's purposes, however, we will assume our audience is two-fold. The primary audience is the local group that we will present a strategic plan for. We will tailor our recommendations to suit their specific needs, and we will present the information in a way that is suitable given their background.

The secondary audience is composed of our classroom peers. As we all will share research with each other in hopes of bettering our projects, we need to make sure to present those findings in a logical method.

Goals

Our main goals are:

- to understand the ANC's original mission and vision for the group
- to learn in what ways the group has changed over time
- to learn what made the ANC become what it is today
    - what communication tactics did group leaders use to promote their message
    - what stumbling blocks did the group have to overcome, and how did they do it
    - in what ways has the group changed over time
- to transform our findings into an abstract plan for success and implement our ideas into a tangible strategic plan for a small group

Solution Strategies

For the first leg of this project, we are dividing the primary research tasks into two groups. The first will be completed primarily by Kelly, who will conduct Internet research on the ANC. She will be compiling data from the ANC's website, as well as from newspapers, magazines, and other online tools that house information about the group and its history.

The second group will be completed by Robin and Laurel, and will consist of in-person, phone, and e-mail interviews and informal communications with past and present leaders and workers of the ANC. We will compile a listing of people we believe will be beneficial to our understanding of the group, and will welcome any recommendations from you and others we encounter during our research.

There are many unknowns in the second leg of this research project, but we are planning to divide up the tasks in a similar way. As we progress in this project, we will determine our needs and strategies for this portion.

Communication Plan

The three of us will communicate via group e-mail messages and text messaging to ensure each team member is aware of the project's progress, and to propose questions and feedback about our various sections of this project. We will use Googledocs as a way of housing our group's research findings so that each of us has access to all project information. We will conduct project update "meetings" in class each week that will be informal and strictly informational to further understand the progress of our group.

After the initial research is conducted in phase one we will have a brainstorming meeting to share information and propose ways of creating our report. After the report is created, we will use Google-docs to revise and share each other's work.

When we start the second phase we will meet to decide where we are going to take our findings, presumably in another brainstorming session. We will adopt the same revision and collaboration process described above for our final proposal.

Roles

We are all willing and able to switch roles from time to time if the need is recognized. For now, our assigned roles are as follows:

Project manager: Robin Stremlow
Background researcher: Kelly Washburn
In-person researchers: Robin Stremlow, Laurel Sutherland
Project plan writer: Robin Stremlow
Project plan editors: Kelly Washburn, Laurel Sutherland
Report writers: Kelly Washburn, Laurel Sutherland
Report editor: Robin Stremlow

Document designer: Robin Stremlow
Speakers: Robin Stremlow, Kelly Washburn, Laurel Sutherland

Timeline

DATES	ACTIONS	MILESTONES
Week 1 (November 1–7	List of potential contacts Get and watch movie website research	List done
Week 2 (November 8–14)	Conduct all interviews and on-site research Finish virtual research Brainstorming/Information Sharing meeting	Virtual research done
Week 3 (November 15–21)	Identify mouse characteristics Draft report Write report	Write report
Week 4 (November 22–28)	Edit, polish, design report Virtual meeting to review report Last-minute changes	Present report
Week 5 (Nov 29–Dec 5)	Research Lansing group Brainstorm ideas	Phase 2 research done
Week 9. (December 9.12)	Write proposal	Write proposal
Week 7 (December 13–?)	Write, edit, polish, review final proposal	Present proposal

Sample Business Letter

MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY

Date

Organization Name
Organization Address

Dear _____:

As you may or may not be aware, the MSU Writing Center will be celebrating its 20th anniversary in the nek academic year. The center has had an ex iting couple of decades, growing and changing shape to its recent configuration, which includes the home center in Bessey Hall, as well as 7ot her satellite centers in MSU Library, Holden Hall, Hubbard Hall, Brody Hall, SASS, the Business College Complexa nd our online space in Second Life. In addition, we are anticipating three new satellites in MSU neighborhoods in 2012-13.

To commemorate the Writing Center's thriving connection to the MSU community, we are planning a year-long series of events for MSU students, faculty, and alumni. We're writing now to invite you to join us in co-sponsoring one of these events. In particular we're proposing (name the specific event we want to propose here). We'd like to collaborate with you in the following ways (list how we want them to be a part of the event – provide space? publication? help pay for speakers? etc).

COLLEGE OF
ARTS AND LETTERS
The Writing Center
Michigan State University
300 Bessey Hall
East Lansing, MIchigan
48824-1033

517/432-39.0
FAX: 517/432-3828

We aim to have all events confirmed by the beginning of March 2012 in order to facilitate advertising at spring and summer alumni events. Conseqe ntly, we'll be discussing options with potential partners in December and January.

Through these partnerships, we're hoping to highlight the interconnectedness between the MSU Writing Center and other organizations and departments in the college and across campus.

Thank you so much for your time, and we look forward to working with you!

Sincerely,
Trix e Smith and the 20/20 Celebration Committee

The **progress report**, also known as the **activity report** or **status report**, is often sent to team members on collaborative projects as well as the project manager; it may also go on to other stakeholders. Status reports are also a common classroom assignment for project groups. These are typically used with multistep projects that cover a large amount of time. The reports are written at regular intervals to update clients, managers, or other stakeholders, and they report what has been done and what remains to be done. They may include reports about employees on the project, supplies, equipment, permits, budgets, problems encountered, and projected completion date. The status report often ends with recommendations about future steps, especially if these steps differ from the original plan.

The **investigative** or **trouble report** analyzes a workplace problem or issue and may call for a recommendation as a result of your research. You may be asked to investigate ways to solve a recurring problem or issue, or you may be asked to analyze a specific accident or problem that occurred. Keep in mind that investigations into specific problems may become part of legal cases, so be clear when you are reporting facts and speculating about possible causes or issues. Again, internal forms or formats may exist for both progress and investigative reports, but if not, these reports should be clearly organized with an introductory statement of purpose, a body that uses headings to organize its various components, and a conclusion that outlines next steps or recommendations.

Another common report is the **feasibility report**, which is used in considering new projects or programs, developing new products or services, expanding the company in some way, or making some other large-scale change. The feasibility report examines not only the actual costs but also the ramifications in areas such as customer satisfaction, workplace morale, community relations, and legalities. It weighs the costs against the benefits in order to make a recommendation. It may suggest steps to minimize damage or prepare for change if the company decides to move forward with the change. Depending on the magnitude of the change, this report may be short and informal or quite lengthy and formal, perhaps going out to large numbers of stakeholders, such as stockholders, trustees, and boards of directors.

The **usability report** is produced after you have conducted usability testing to see if users or readers can easily use a document, manual, or website. Usability testing helps create products that are functional, easy to use, and reflect well on the company. After conducting tests with users or potential users, which may include interviews, comprehension tests, surveys, and focus groups, testers write a usability report to explain what is working and what is not and to recommend revisions or changes.

Formal reports, such as large-scale feasibility or recommendation reports, as well as internal proposals and client proposals, follow a typical pattern (see the sample business report). Not all reports will have all of these parts, but they typically come in the following order:

Front matter

1. **Title page**: The title page may include the title of the report, the person preparing the report, the company for which the writer works, the date, and the person or company to whom the report is being submitted.

2. **Abstract**: The abstract summarizes what is in the report, highlighting the main points in 200–250 words. It should actually be written last so that it accurately reflects the contents of the report.

3. **Table of contents (TOC)**: The TOC lists all of the major headings in the report, in order, along with their respective page numbers.

4. **List of figures, list of tables**: Figures include all drawings, photographs, maps, charts, and graphs. If a report contains more than five, they should be listed in the front matter, along with their page numbers. Likewise, if a report includes more than five tables, they should be listed in the front matter along with their page numbers. All figures and tables should be numbered consecutively with Arabic numerals (e.g., Fig. 1, Fig. 2, Table 1, Table 2).

5. **Foreword**: The foreword is a type of introduction that is written by someone other than the author of the report, such as the executive sponsoring the report or an expert in the field.

6. **Preface**: The preface is an introduction written by the author. It may discuss purpose and scope and offer tips for the readers. It may also contain acknowledgments for those who helped with the report and credit permissions for copyrighted materials used in the report.

7. **List of abbreviations and symbols**: If a report uses a large number of abbreviations and/or symbols that may not be familiar to the readers, the author may want to list them (and explain them) in the front matter.

Body

8. **Executive summary**: The executive summary is different from the abstract in that it provides a more complete overview of the entire text; in fact, it is written in the same order as the report and is typically about 10 percent of the length of the final report. Many people may read only the executive

summary, so it should be written in a way that can be read independently of the full report. Never introduce information in the executive summary that is not in the full report.

9. **Introduction**: The introduction gives readers the general context for the report, including its purpose and scope, and often includes an overview of the main points.

10. **Text**: This is the main body of the report. It is organized using informative but short headings, and discusses how the topic was researched or investigated, what methods were used, what information was considered, and how problems were solved or choices were made. The text is usually enhanced by the use of visuals or graphics and is also supported by the use of valid references and supporting evidence, as appropriate.

11. **Conclusion**: The conclusion pulls together the information in the report and interprets the findings for the reader.

12. **Recommendations**: The recommendations, which may be combined with the conclusion, state what actions should or should not be taken based on the research findings.

Back matter

13. **Notes**: Reports may contain notes that further expand lines of thinking or provide additional background information. They may appear as footnotes or as endnotes to the text.

14. **References**: A list of References or a Works Cited page should appear at the end of the report, documenting sources used directly in the report.

15. **Appendixes**: An appendix supplements the report with information that is too detailed or lengthy for the body of the report. Often this information or level of detail is only of interest to certain segments of the intended audience.

16. **Bibliography**: The bibliography differs from the References section in that it includes all works consulted during the research, not just those cited in the report.

17. **Glossary**: At times you may need to give an alphabetical list of specialized terms and their definitions to aid your readers.

18. **Index**: With longer reports, you may want to include an alphabetical list of major topics, subtopics, and key terms, along with their page numbers. An index allows readers to quickly find information about specific topics.

Formal reports are often sent out for reading prior to meetings in which they will be discussed. In addition, reports are often sent out with a cover letter or transmittal letter, which identifies what is being sent, to whom, and by whom, as well as any information or content that should be highlighted for readers.

Proposals

A **proposal** is a type of report that may be used internally or externally and is usually persuasive in nature because in a proposal you are asking someone to do something, whether it is a request to your manager for flexible scheduling, a bid for a job, a proposed policy change, or a solicitation for funds to renovate the employee break room. A proposal should have a clear, concise statement of purpose that tells the reader what you are proposing. It may follow the organizational pattern of a formal report and often will include a cost analysis and/or budget, as well as a work plan or timeline for the proposed action. Again, this type of report may include a cover letter or letter of transmittal.

Business Plans

A particular type of proposal you may see in class assignments, as well as the real world, is the **business plan**. The business plan outlines an idea for a new business for the purpose of recruiting investors. It typically follows the format of the formal report. The body of the report may include the following types of information about the proposed business: mission/vision; background for the company, as well as the industry it will be competing in (industry analysis); products or services to be provided; market analysis; competition analysis; marketing strategy; operations plan, including the management team and its qualifications; development and/or workflow plan; and start-up and maintenance costs. In addition, a business plan might also include projected earnings, risks or possible problems, and an exit strategy for investors.

Presentations

Business plans and proposals are often shared with colleagues and clients through formal **presentations**. Likewise, colleagues may share ideas at conferences and symposia organized by various disciplines or around topics of interest. These oral presentations are often accompanied by visual aids, such as a PowerPoint or Prezi presentation. In your classes, you may be asked to give an oral presentation in conjunction with turning in a project or report; these presentations may be for your classmates, the larger school community, or even for community and business partners. Presentations are organized much like written papers, with an

introduction and statement of purpose; a body, which includes your main points and any evidence used to illustrate or support these points; and a conclusion, which may include recommendations for action. When your presentation includes the use of presentation software, there are some additional guidelines you should keep in mind:

- Use text sparingly.
  - Use bulleted or numbered lists rather than complete sentences.
  - Include no more than 5–9.listed items per slide.
  - Use numbers for ranked or sequenced lists and bullets otherwise.
- Make your visuals consistent, using the same background and color scheme, font, size, and spacing across slides.

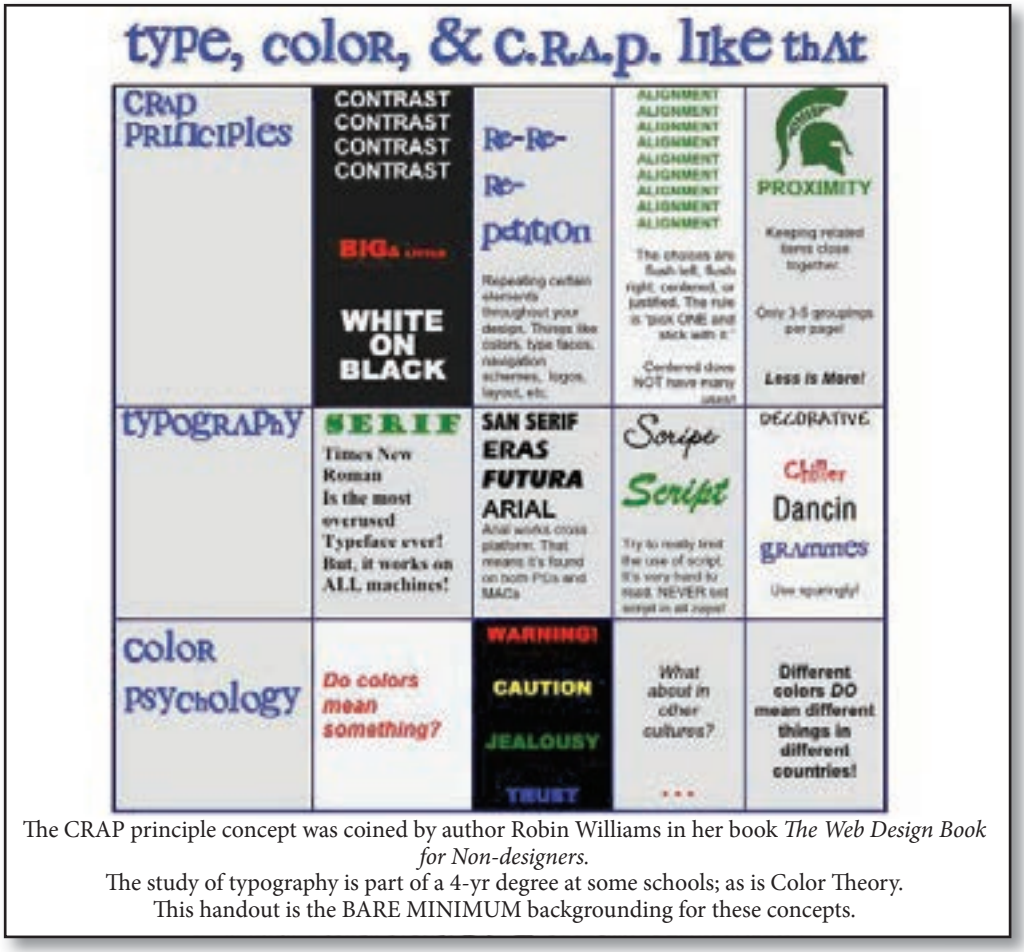

Figure 9.1 CRAP Principles

- To be sure the text is visible even at the back of the room, the font should typically be no smaller than 30 points, with the headings even larger. The contrast between the text and the background should be sharp to make it easier to read or view.
- Use graphs, charts, and other illustrations to clarify and simplify your message and add emphasis and interest. Do not overuse.
- Match your talk to your visuals. Develop clear transitions for yourself, so you'll keep your talk and your visuals in line with each other; clear transitions will also help your audience members keep pace with you.
- Do not read the text on your visuals to your audience members.
- Bring a printout of your visuals with you and be prepared to move forward without the visuals if you need to. Technology doesn't always work, even when you have tested it and practiced with it beforehand.

Information might also be shared visually via a handout, brochure, or poster presentation; different venues or instructors might require different formats or leave the option up to you. With all presentations, it is important to follow published directions, including time limits and size requirements (39. x 48" is the typical poster size, for example, but larger sizes might be an option); you should also be prepared to answer questions from attendees.

Posters, handouts, and brochures are visual tools and should follow good design principles, such as the CRAP principles: contrast, repetition, alignment, proximity. See Figure 9.1.

Designing and Writing for the Web

It is very important for most businesses to have a presence on the Web today, so web design and writing for the Web are important business writing skills to have. When designing and writing for the Web, you must consider your audience and purpose. Your answers to these questions will help you with your design:

- What do you want to happen on your website?
- How and when do you want people to access your site?
- How do you plan for your website to affect your business or your employees?
- How do you expect people to interact with your website?

Consider what information you want to include as well as how to organize it. Because websites are a visual medium, you should also use good design principles.

Be sure to consider details such as background color; type color, font, and size; graphics (what they say, whether they enhance content or not, and how they affect site loading time); how your site looks and works in various browsers; and whether or not viewers always know they are on your site, (e.g., is your organization's name, logo, and basic contact information visible or at least accessible from every page?).

Regularly check to make sure all of your links work. The Web is an ever-changing entity, so you must keep up. Dead links can ruin your credibility.

Writing for the Web may include Web design, but it also includes writing content that will go on a site designed by someone else. You may be asked to write a description of your department, for example, or that report your team just completed may go on the company website as a downloadable attachment. You may become part of your workplace blog team, writing blogs on a regular basis about topics of interest to your website's target audience. In addition, many businesses now take advantage of the numerous social media sites that exist on the Web. You could be asked to post on your company's Facebook page, send tweets to its Twitter feed, upload images to its Flickr site, create an interest board related to your newest project on Pinterest, look for networking possibilities on LinkedIn, or create material to populate any number of social media sites related to your specific field or industry. As these various tools have different parameters and expectations, as well as different audiences, you will have to adjust your writing style for the audience and purpose of each, as well as the medium itself.

Résumés and Cover Letters

Your **résumé** is an overview of the education, skills, and experiences you will bring to a position. The typical entry-level résumé is one page, organized into major categories, and carefully designed. The visual impact of a résumé can affect the way it is read by a recruiter or potential employer, so use effective design skills. Pay attention to the arrangement of the text on the page, the use of white space, and your choice of font size and type. You will also want to use parallel lists, maintain consistent style, and make sure it is free of errors. Finally, in preparing your résumé, be sure to use a variety of strong action verbs. See Table 9.2 for suggestions.

Résumés may include the following types of sections. The job, your qualifications, and the field may determine which of these you include:

- Heading: Your address (both school and permanent if applicable), phone number(s), and professional e-mail address should be included.

Action Verbs for Résumés				
Analytical				
analyzed	confirmed	estimated	negotiated	researched
ascertained	critiqued	evaluated	prescribed	scrutinized
assessed	deciphered	examined	prioritized	studied
compared	deliberated	forecasted	projected	substantiated
computed	determined	investigated	questioned	synthesized
concluded	diagnosed	measured	recommended	verified
Communication				
addressed	communicated	explained	persuaded	reported
apprised	composed	informed	presented	spoke
authored	drafted	lectured	publicized	summarized
clarified	edited	marketed	queried	wrote
Creativity				
brainstormed	designed	envisioned	illustrated	shaped
constructed	engineered	fabricated	produced	visualized
Initiative				
accomplished	dedicated	implemented	launched	revamped
achieved	demonstrated	improved	minimized	revised
built	enriched	initiated	modernized	stimulated
coordinated	expanded	inspired	modified	suggested
created	expedited	introduced	multiplied	updated
Leadership				
advised	delegated	empowered	guided	moderated
appointed	designated	enabled	hired	motivated
approved	directed	encouraged	influenced	recruited
authorized	elicited	facilitated	instructed	supervised
chaired	employed	founded	judged	trained
Organization				
arranged	centralized	consolidated	organized	recorded
assembled	charted	correlated	planned	regulated
budgeted	classified	indexed	processed	scheduled
catalogued	compiled	orchestrated	purchased	tabulated
Problem Solving				
aided	extracted	procured	rejuvenated	revived
alleviated	finalized	reconciled	relieved	settled
customized	generated	rectified	remedied	streamlined
debugged	invented	refined	retrieved	strengthened
extended	lightened	reinforced	revitalized	transformed
Teamwork				
assisted	contributed	mediated	partnered	
collaborated	cooperated	participated		

Table 1.2: Action Verbs

Sample Résumé

nina elias

nina@e-mail.com
123.459.7899
123 Main St
Anytown, US 12345
anywebsite.com

learning

M.S. Information, Human Computer Interaction — Expected April 2013
University of Michigan - School of Information — 3.91 GPA

B.A. Professional Writing, Design Specialization — May 2011
Michigan State University — 3.94 GPA

working

User Interface Designer — September 2012 – Present
Linux Box — Ann Arbor, MI
- Conducted interviews and heuristic evaluation to learn about users
- Created and iterated on email archival & ediscovery software prototype

User Experience Research Intern — May 2012 – August 2012
T-Mobile USA — Bellevue, WA
- Conducted usability tests, heuristic evaluations, and competitive analyses on software and mobile
- Created wireframes, sketches, and mockups
- Presented findings and recommendations to stakeholders and product teams

User Experience Research Intern — August 2010 – January 2012
TechSmith Corporation — Okemos, MI
- Conducted usability tests on workflow concepts, software, and help documentation
- Conducted depth interviews, literature review and competitive analyses
- Collaboratively solved product issues through design studios and affinity walls
- Presented findings and recommendations using infographics, blog posts, and presentations

HCI Researcher — May 2010 – July 2010
Virginia Tech, Research Experience for Undergraduates in HCI — Blacksburg, VA
- Interviewed designers and researchers on design, reuse, and storyboarding processes
- Coded and analyzed interviews for inclusion in CHI 2011 paper

Art Production Intern — May 2009 – July 2009
Entertainment Publications — Troy, MI
- Created consumer materials using Adobe InDesign, Photoshop, and Illustrator

Writing Consultant — December 2008 – May 2011
Michigan State University, Writing Center — East Lansing, MI
- Presented workshops on effective PowerPoint presentations
- Assisted students with creating and editing patents, essays, websites, video projects, etc.

Technology Guide — August 2008 – May 2011
Michigan State University, College of Arts & Letters — East Lansing, MI
- Designed workflow, interface, and conducted usability tests on web applications
- Assisted staff through consultations, tech documentation, and workshops

volunteering

UX Research Intern, Prevent Child Abuse America — April 2012
Conducted competitive analysis and heuristic evaluation and presented findings to stakeholders

Web Designer, Lansing Give Camp — March 2010
Created mockups and IA for non-profits and coded front end in DotNetNuke

Designer, Information Technology Empowerment Center — September 2009 – June 2010
Crafted mockups and IA, assisted with tech workshops for children, customized Joomla theme

President, Spartan Web Authoring Team — May 2009 – May 2011
Used HTML, CSS, & Photoshop to create mockups for non-profit and student organizations
Planned and organized meetings, workshops, and speakers

Webmaster, Tower Guard Sophomore Honors Society — August 2008 – 2009
Volunteered 120+ hours on tests and schoolwork with disabled MSU students

ux skills
Affinity diagram
Competitive Analysis
Contextual Inquiry
Ethnography
Focus Groups
Heuristic Evaluation
Info Design
Info Architecture
Interviews
Persona creation
Prototyping
Sketching
Storyboarding
Survey design
Usability testing
Wireframing

tools
Axure
Balsamiq
CSS
Final Cut Pro
HTML
Illustrator
InDesign
JavaScript
jQuery
Morae
MS Office
MySQL
Omnigraffle
Ovo
PHP
Photoshop
Powerpoint

awards
2011 CHI paper
Most Outstanding Graduating Senior 2011 nominee

courses
Contextual Inquiry
Database Design
Design of Complex Websites
Evaluation of Systems & Services
Fundamentals of Human Behavior
Information Architecture
Interaction Design
Market Research
Networked Computing
Personal Informatics

- Objective: List the job title, type of experience, and tag line (fields and experts differ as to the importance of the objective on a résumé).
- Skills or Qualifications Summary: This is a type of overview of your résumé.
- Education: List the schools attended, degrees, subject areas, certifications, and special training, as well as the dates for each.
- Employment Experience: This information is usually presented in reverse chronological order, but it may also be listed by experience type. Include relevant internships, use action verbs, and focus on achievements when possible.
- Related Skills and Abilities: These include professional memberships, volunteer work, networks, publications, language and technology skills, writing abilities.
- Honors and Activities: This should be information that will enhance your appeal and should not duplicate information in other sections.
- References and Portfolios: This is a separate references page that includes the same header as your résumé. Be prepared to provide it when asked or during the interview process. Portfolios are usually provided upon request unless the job advertisement asks for them up front. Many professionals create online or e-portfolios so they can provide the link in their résumé and make it easy to access. Portfolios should highlight your skills and give examples of your best work.

Also keep in mind the type of job for which you are applying. An applicant for a graphic artist job can take more liberties with résumé design than an applicant for an entry-level position at a conservative company. When hiring committees are reviewing applications, they are looking for people to eliminate, so you need to make a positive first impression.

Make sure your résumé is easy to scan, by the human eye as well as digital document scanners.

A résumé is usually accompanied by a cover letter or application letter. The application letter is where you sell yourself as the best applicant for the position, so it must be interesting and persuasive. Here you introduce yourself and your skills and explain why you are interested in the position, as well as how you are qualified for the position. You should give specific examples or highlight items from your résumé to demonstrate how you would be a good fit for the company or job. The application letter also provides an opportunity to request an interview. It is not

a good idea to discuss salary or benefits in the application letter unless the job ad or description specifically asks you to.

Make the header on your application letter match the header on your résumé.

Other Business Writing Forms

Depending on the type of job you have or the company you work for, you may also write in many other forms. You may be asked to take minutes for meetings and distribute them to members in attendance as well as to those who couldn't be there. You may be asked to create or contribute to a company magazine or newsletter that is mailed out in hard copy or sent as an e-newsletter to people on your company's mailing list. You may find yourself creating forms to use in the office or send to clients. Likewise, you may have to write directions for goods and services or create manuals for products and procedures. In addition, if you find yourself in an internship, you may be asked to write daily or weekly logs and reflections, as well as summaries of what you've done and learned.

Writing Effectively in Business

Know the Audience(s) in Business

People in business must write for a variety of audiences. Much of this writing is directed toward colleagues—bosses, employees, team members, project managers—people who are internal in the business. Likewise, much writing is directed outside the business, to past, present, or potential clients. People in business must communicate with others in their fields—industry experts, accreditation and licensing officials, professional colleagues, and competitors. Or they may be required to present at conferences or workshops, write journal or magazine articles, or share through newsletters, blogs, and websites. Additionally, they may need to communicate with more general, inexpert audiences through websites, blogs, newsletters, newspaper articles and editorials, and community talks or presentations. For these reasons, it is important to always know who you are writing for:

- ❑ Who are your primary readers?
- ❑ Who else might read your writing or listen to your presentation?
- ❑ What will the members of your audience already know about your topic?
- ❑ What will you need to define or explain?

- ❑ Will your audience be predisposed to agree or disagree with your point of view?
- ❑ What do you want this audience to do or believe?
- ❑ What kinds of evidence will be most convincing for this audience?

Know the Questions to Ask in Business

As a student, your research questions or writing goals may be assigned to you by your instructor. Often, however, you will have to make a decision yourself about these questions or goals. You can begin your writing preparation by asking yourself what you want to know more about and what you need to understand better in order to complete the assigned task or goal. You should also think about how and where you can locate this information. Do you need figures and statistics that already exist in a government database, such as the Census Bureau? Do you need to conduct your own market tests, interviews, or client surveys? Do you need to research government regulations or material costs? Perhaps you will need to locate models that show you how employees in your company have successfully approached this type of writing in the past. The type of writing required to achieve your communication goals should guide your research approach and topics.

Did you know?

What social media users need to understand is that each social media channel attracts a unique audience, who will choose to communicate in a particular way, using various tools to carry on a Web conversation. If you are using any of the many available channels [e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Tweetdeck, Hoot Suite, Pinterest, LinkedIn], know who your audience is and with whom, in particular, you are conversing. Learn how to use the right method of delivery so that you can best relate and deliver a meaningful message, in a language they can understand.

• • •

"Target Your Messages: Know Your Audience." By Dawn Boshcoff. http://www.business2community.com/social-media/target-your-messages-know-your-audience-099.79.

Know the Kinds of Evidence Used in Business Arguments

Writers in the various fields of business use both quantitative and qualitative data in order to make arguments, support claims, and sell products. Both types of data come from primary research in the field or lab, as well as secondary research from other published resources. Common types of evidence used in business writing include facts and figures, examples, definitions, testimonies, and stories or narratives. Facts and figures, or quantitative data, are often presented as numbers within the

text, or as a combination of numbers and visuals, such as charts and graphs in the text or in appendixes. You may need to present the methods you used to arrive at the numbers you present, including the mathematical formulas used or developed to test data, to look for or extend patterns, or to demonstrate causal relationships. Likewise, you may find it helpful or even necessary to use established statistical tests when presenting your quantitative data, so you should familiarize yourself with the computer software available at your institution or required in your field. Make sure your facts and figures are as up to date and accurate as possible.

Qualitative data are non-numerical and may include testimonials from clients; comments from focus groups, interviews, and surveys; and stories and observations from employers and employees, clients or customers. Expert testimony often carries more weight with readers, so be prepared to explain your expert's credentials or qualifications. When possible, use multiple sources and types of evidence. You may often use a combination of both quantitative and qualitative

Did you know?

The old business maxim that "what gets measured, matters" is overused but nonetheless powerful, especially when applied to corporate responsibility. When information and metrics are combined with disclosure and transparency, corporate posturing on issues that affect society can be quickly replaced with fact-based analysis and discussion. One example is Nike, Inc.'s published Corporate Responsibility (CR) Report for fiscal years 2007–2009. It's a slickly produced multimedia display of data and information . . .

Some critics of corporate responsibility reports believe they can't help but be self-serving. And, in fact, more companies are reporting. Sixty-six of the S&P 100 firms produced a formal sustainability report with performance data in 2008, a 35 percent jump from the 49 reports produced in 2007, according to a report from the Sustainable Investment Research Analyst Network (SIRAN), a working group of the Social Investment Forum (SIF). However, the SIRAN survey found that only six S&P 100 firms publish complete sustainability reports that meet the highest "A" level reporting standard set by the Global Reporting Initiative.

In the end, it's difficult to see how more reporting can't help, as long as it's done well. Nike's latest effort is a good example of how the process can lead to data being gathered, metrics developed and performance benchmarks set. The process grew out of Nike's public floggings in the 1990s, says CEO Parker, when "we learned to view transparency as an asset, not a risk."

• • •

"Nike: Corporate Responsibility at a 'Tipping Point'." By Michael Connor. http://business-ethics.com/2010/01/24/2154-nike-corporate-responsibility-at-a-tipping-point.

data—for example, percentages that show how many customers say they are pleased with your services alongside sample comments from satisfied customers.

The most important question to ask is this: What kind of evidence is needed to support my claim or to make it persuasive to my intended audience? Of course, you must also present evidence in an ethical manner. Withholding evidence or not giving the full picture because you think it hurts your argument is unethical and presents inaccurate results; this misuse of data will be detrimental in the long run. In addition, you should make sure that the evidence used, no matter what kind, actually supports the claim you are making (avoid leaps in logic and inaccurate cause-and-effect arguments, for example).

Know the Writing and Style Conventions in Business Writing

> *In the world of business, you only get one chance for a great first impression. The stakes are high—you are asking an investor for money, a customer for an order, or another executive for a partnership. Badly written letters, long rambling or emotional e-mails, or an obvious lack of spell-checking will brand you as a poor business risk before the message is even considered.*
>
> *–Marty Zwilling, Cayenne Consulting*
> *"Business Writing Style Is as Important as Content"*

A good business writer communicates clearly, is aware of his or her audience, uses complete and thorough research (both primary and secondary), presents appropriate and accurate evidence for the goals of the writing, and uses the best format for the information and audience. To be a good business writer, you should accurately use the required documentation system and follow the basic tenets of all good writing—be organized, provide easy-to-read material, and make sure the material is grammatically correct. In addition, here are some specific conventions you may want to keep in mind when writing for business:

- ❏ Use short simple sentences.
- ❏ Use active voice. Also use verbs rather than nouns whenever possible.

  Example:
  The stockholders decided to change our organizational structure. Not, *The stockholders made a decision to change our organizational structure.*
- ❏ Write using second person or what some call the "you" viewpoint, which puts the reader's interests at the forefront. This point of view not only uses the words *you* and *your* to speak directly to the reader (the client or customer), it also stresses the benefit to the reader, not the company.

An exception here may be when you have bad or negative news. Since you want to avoid being accusatory with clients, using the "you" viewpoint may mean adopting a passive or indirect style.

For example: The budget should include matching funds from the agency (not, ***Your budget does not indicate any matching funds from the agency*****).**

- Use words and sentence structures that fit your audience and your communication format. The company's instant messaging system may allow for more informal communication between co-workers; this same style would be inappropriate for a letter going out to potential customers.
- Avoid biased language that may offend your readers and damage your credibility. Language that makes assumptions or is based on stereotypes about gender, ethnicity, age, mental or physical (dis)ability, or sexual orientation is not effective. Often differences among people are not relevant to the discussion, so avoid bias by not mentioning them. When the differences are relevant, research the accepted usage or the appropriateness of a term or expression. In addition, you can often avoid bias or awkward phrasing by using plural forms.

  Example:
  All employees should submit an evaluation form. Not, *Every employee should submit his or her evaluation form*.

  See Table 9.3 for some common terms that have a preferred form of expression in business.

Forms of Expression in Business	
Yes	**No**
chair, chairperson	chairman, chairwoman
police officer	policeman, policewoman
an employee with a disability	disabled employee
significant others welcome	spouses welcome

Table 1.2: Forms of Expression in Business

- Design your business communication effectively. Many types of communication have very specific and stylized forms such as letters, memos, and résumés. Likewise, with items such as brochures, newsletters, flyers, or even websites, the visual design of a document may be just as important as the written content. Design elements to consider and learn more about include the effective use of the following:
  - White space: White space is used to frame the text and provide visual cues to the reader.
  - Color: The colors themselves as well as their placement can be important as they are used to highlight items, emphasize material, organize material, and guide the reader.
  - Font or typeface: Size, type, serif versus sans-serif, emphasis (underlining, italics, bold, and upper and lower case) can all affect readability and accessibility.
  - Arrangement: Headings, headers, and footers, text justification, lists, and columns are all used to organize material on the page and help guide the reader through the document.
  - Graphics: When integrating graphics, consider the proportion of image to text, the message or statement in the graphic, the graphic's connection to the text, the understandability of icons or global graphics, the purpose behind the graphic, and the relationship being shown in the graphic, as well as the words being replaced by the graphic.

1. **Graphics should always serve a specific function and should be as simple as possible.**
2. **Give each graphic a caption that clearly describes its content.**
3. **Figures and tables should be numbered chronologically below the graphic (e.g., Fig. 9.A, Fig. 9.B), and should be referred to in the text.**
4. **If your school, program, or company has a style guide, review it and use it.**

- Write effectively in collaborative groups. Many businesses operate through the use of project teams and working groups. This cooperative model may require you to research and write collaboratively. Such groups are designed

to bring together multiple areas of expertise, experience, and viewpoints as well as to share the workload, often with a goal of shortening the time to completion. As part of a team, you will be expected to contribute your knowledge, meet your deadlines, and give feedback to your team members.

Your work will go more smoothly if you treat your teammates with respect, even when you disagree. Creative differences can lead to better outcomes if teams aren't hampered by bad tempers and hurt feelings.

- Be aware that many businesses operate in an international or global market, which means you may be writing for audiences with different rhetorical patterns, approaches to leadership, methods of persuasion, and styles of communication. They might even operate under different rules and regulations. In addition, you may be operating across technologies, general business practices, and time zones, as well as understandings of time.

Know the Appropriate Documentation System for Business Writing

APA, the documentation style developed by the American Psychological Association, is often used in the social sciences and is the style most often used in business (see Chapter 12). It uses an author-date method of documentation for both its in-text citations and its references list at the end of the document. Putting the author's last name and the year of the publication in parentheses within the text as soon as the source is mentioned emphasizes the timeliness of the source and lends credibility to the writer. Some journals within the discipline of business may have their own documentation style guides, so always check to see what a particular publication says about how to prepare citations. In addition, in class you may be asked to use other guides such as MLA (the style guide of the Modern Language Association) or CMS (the *Chicago Manual of Style*). You should always follow the directions given. If none exist, use APA.

Excerpt from a Sample Business Report

CONTENT STRATEGY REPORT

Women's Center of Greater Lansing

By Whitney Orth, Callie Gesmundo, and Amy Miller

Introduction

This content strategy report is designed to provide the Women's Center of Greater Lansing with a clear understanding of the effectiveness of the content that is on the official website as well as strategies for improving and maintaining this content.

Organization Background

The Women's Center of Greater Lansing is a private, nonprofit organization that provides services to women in the greater Lansing area. Its mission as an organization is to help women realize their potential. This is done by offering support groups, counseling services, and various workshops and seminars, all of which empower women to take hold of their lives and improve their current situation.

The Women's Center of Greater Lansing's website has two main objectives:

- to get public support; mainly through money donations, but also with volunteers and interns
- provide women in need of help with information about their organization, in hopes that the information will be useful, or that they will seek further help from the center.

Objective

The goal of this content strategy report is to provide the Women's Center of Greater Lansing with the resources needed to understand how the website can fulfill its objectives as effectively as possible.

Content Audit

Approach and Methods

A content audit of the current content on the Women's Center has been conducted. This means that all of the content on the website (links, pages, lists, widgets, pdfs) was recorded. This audit can be used to understand what content is currently on the website, and how the content is functioning in regards to the goals of the website.

The content audit was approached by dividing the website into twelve sections. Within each section the content was critically read and certain characteristics were analyzed—including layout, navigation, and, most importantly, whether or not the information displayed fit the organization and the website objectives.

In addition, the following characteristics of content were assessed and recorded:

- content type
- topic of the content
- who maintains the content
- date of creation
- date the content was last updated
- audience
- purpose of content
- if the content is redundant, trivial, or outdated
- any additional notes (mostly about the content and purpose not aligning, or serious problems with content that could not be discussed in any other section)

The audit spreadsheet is clearly labeled with each of these headings. The content is organized according to the page it is found on, and how deep content is within the site. For example, 1 would be the home page, 1.1 would be content on that homepage (1.1.1 would be a page that was linked to the homepage). The complete audit has been recorded on a spreadsheet and is included in Appendix 1.

Recommendations

Based on our research into the content that already exists on the website, as well as the research into the use of branding, there are several recommendations that we have proposed to make changes and additions to the website. These recommendations will

act as a way to improve the function of the website, so that it will better fulfill the goals of the Women's Center of Greater Lansing. The recommendations are as follows:

- Move the website to a WordPress platform.
- Combine the News Release page with the Newsletter page.
- Restructure navigation of "Donate" and "Get Involved" Pages.
- Revise "About Us" and "Contact Us" Page.
- Combine all information about classes onto one page.
- Add a search function to the website.

In the following paragraphs, we have explained these recommendations in further detail.

Move the website to a WordPress platform

A majority of the areas on the website that are preventing the goals of the Women's Center from being accomplished seem to occur because of the current workflow. All of the content must be updated by one individual in charge of the site, because she is the only individual who has the knowledge to use the website program. This individual is only a volunteer, which makes it difficult to require her to complete all the necessary updates and website maintenance the center needs on a regular basis. To solve this issue, the quickest fix would be to move the website to a WordPress template.

On a website that is created using WordPress, a page can be updated without the use or knowledge of HTML or CSS. To add content to a page, an individual uses an interface that is like creating a blog post or using a word processor program like Microsoft Word. This means that anyone who has access to the WordPress account will be able to edit or upload content easily. Once this change has been made to the website, updates to the website could be made qi cker, which would help to lessen the pattern of outdated content on the website, because updating would no longer reqi re the epe rtise of only one individual. In addition, WordPress has something called Search Engine Optimization, which means WordPress inflates the amount of times the website appears as a search result by choosing "keywords" for the website pages based on the content within them.

Combine the News Release Page with the Newsletter Page

The current content on the "News Release" and "Newsletter" pages has not been updated frequently enough, and also the content is too similar and causes confusion about the purpose of each page. The purpose of both the "News Release" page and the "Newsletter" page are to advertise the exciting news and events that are going on in the Center. Because of this similarity in purpose, the two pages should be combined to create one. This would eliminate the confusion, as well as give the "News" section more information, so it will be updated more frequently.

The information presented in the news section should be made to further fulfill the website's mission of recruiting donations and acting as a resource for women in need. Simply looking at these current sections of the website, a user (either a potential donor or a client) would not know why this content is important, or if the information pertains to them. Providing a few brief bullet points of what was touched on within each update could help better explain the importance of each newsletter, and whether or not it pertains to a specific person. This would clean up the news section and emphasize important information covered by each piece of information, allowing users to more effectively find information that they want or need.

Activities

Welcome to the Conversation

Discuss these questions with your classmates in class or via a class wiki or shared blog.

1. Business writing can be directed toward either internal or external audiences. What types of writing are for each type of audience? How are the goals for these audiences different? How are they the same?
2. How can writing have either a positive or a negative effect on your business?
3. How can you create a positive impression of your business on the Web? How is a Web audience for your business different from other audiences?
4. What are some key components to effective writing in business?
5. What are some common mistakes that may offend/alienate your audience in business writing?

Writing to Learn

1. **Oral draft**: As you pick a topic for a larger research paper or project, it can help you to also prepare an oral draft as you go. In this activity, present a five-minute talk to a small group of classmates about your project in progress. Your listeners should each ask you a question about your project after your talk, which you should be able to answer. Not only will this activity help you develop your research into a final draft, it also provides valuable practice in presenting your work.
2. **Project notebook**: As you work on research topics, keep an informal project notebook to help organize and guide your work. Here you can track the progress of your project from the invention or brainstorming level through to planning market studies, case reviews, and statistical research.
3. **Summaries**: As you review model business plans or marketing strategies, write a brief summary of each that describes the key elements.

Learning to Write

1. **Oral presentations**: This is the formal, full version of the practice oral draft you may have completed. Here you will present your researched business plan to an assigned audience of your colleagues. You must research and effectively analyze your audience to determine the best rhetorical choices for your presentation. Do not forget to use appropriate visual aids for the context. Also review this chapter and follow your instructor's guidelines for appropriate format and presentation conventions for your field.

2. **Memo**: Choose a topic that often causes personnel problems in your prospective career within business. How would management handle this issue effectively? What are the best practices according to the literature on this topic? After you have researched practical ways to handle this topic, write a memo that informs a hypothetical company of the issue and then persuades them to resolve it using your research as a guide.

Suggested Topics for Research

1. What is the best social media platform for advertising, and why? Do certain products sell better to different social media demographics? Use primary and secondary sources to support your argument.

2. Develop a pitch for an American food company to establish restaurants in a developing nation. Be prepared to argue to the company why its products would do well in this emerging market, and why they should risk resources and reputation on a market with a possibly problematic economy.

Read More About It

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CHAPTER 10

Oral Presentations

Writers are often asked to convert their projects into presentation formats. It is commonplace, in academic circles at least, to be expected to share your ideas orally, whether with a class or with a group of fellow scholars, rather than print copies of your composition and wait while your audience reads through it. When speaking publicly, even to a small group of peers, you can organize critical parts of your research to make key points more emphatic. Presentations allow you a closer interaction with your audience, permitting you to modulate your voice and tone. Understandably, if you are unused to the process of presenting, the pressure of speaking publicly might result in a certain amount of stress and trepidation. You may have spent a considerable amount of time preparing your ideas in writing, but transferring what you have written into an oral format might strike you as an arcane practice, a work of magic, reserved solely for the naturally well-spoken.

How does a writer move from an essay to an oral presentation? The process of developing an oral speech is similar to the steps outlined in this book for writing, albeit engineered for a physical (rather than imaginary) audience. The early stages of creation (researching, inventing, and structuring) are fairly universal for conceiving of ideas to develop into projects. The stages that follow (drafting, revising, editing, and formatting), at least as outlined in these pages, are largely geared toward producing your own writing, and they are not as useful for creating presentations.

The structuring stage is the most suitable time to redevelop your ideas into an oral presentation. Outlines are useful when engineering a writing project but also when creating a framework for your talking points. The outline format will change for public speaking—you are no longer concerned as much with the shape and direction of paragraphs—because you will be designing your presentation around your key points (perhaps arrayed in a different order), assisted by visual aids.
For argument's sake, let us assume you have already finished your essay and you are returning to the structuring stage to design a presentation of your work. You might consider how the remaining creative process would change (Table 10.1).

Paper		Presentation
Structuring (Essay Outline)	➜	Structuring (Speaking Outline)
Drafting the Paper	➜	Developing Visual Aids
Revising the Paper	➜	Rehearsing
Formatting the Paper	➜	Presenting

Table 10.1: Creative Process for Paper Versus Presentation

Structuring for Presentation

Much like preparing for a paper, the structural step is the most crucial step. Deciding how to anchor your audience (with an adequate introduction strategy), and then guiding them through your central points, is often the difference between a cogent presentation and one after which your audience leaves the room confused and uncertain of your topic.

Remembering that you no longer have the luxury of walking your audience through your paper sentence by sentence, you will need to repurpose your central ideas around more conversational strategies before you share them. As with the preparing of a paper, an outline is the functional standard for preparing for a presentation. As such, there are two types of functional outlines: a **keyword,** or **phrase-only outline**—which you might use to queue the topics you wish to cover in your speech, subordinating necessary details, and supporting facts—and a **sentence outline,** which you might use to rehearse and then perhaps even memorize for your delivery.

Whichever format you decide upon, the following example might serve as an outline frame for a presentation based upon an analysis paper.

I. Introduction
   A. Attention Grabber/Personal Connection
   B. Research Question (*Primary Inquiry* + *Significance*)

II. Key Point 1
   A. Practical Application of Key Point
   B. Supporting Research
   C. Connection to Research Question (*Significance*)

III. Key Point 2
   A. Practical Application of Key Point
   B. Supporting Research
   C. Connection to Research Question (*Significance*)

IV. Key Point 3
    A. Practical Application of Key Point
    B. Supporting Research
    C. Connection to Research Question (*Significance*)

V. Conclusion
    A. Restatement of Importance (*Not a Summary of Research*)
    B. Forward-looking Statement

Activity 10.1

Take one of the papers you have written, and reformulate it as a presentation outline.

Note that the **introduction** needs to be modified from that of a writing outline. First, you must garner the attention of your audience. The **attention grabber** might be a startling statistic, or it might be a brief narrative explaining your personal interest in your topic. In this regard, it is more appropriate in an oral presentation to insert yourself into the conversation because you are, quite literally, sharing your research with the audience. With an oral presentation, you often will not have the same amount of time as you might with a written project. Your introduction strategy needs to swiftly but adequately *anchor your subject* while also creating a *connection* between you and the audience.

Once you have their attention, you will need to efficiently state your *primary research focus* (the information that might otherwise be found in your thesis statement). Framing this statement **as a question** could be advantageous for several reasons. For one, it is an inclusive strategy that invites the audience to participate in an exploration of your ideas, as it takes them back in time to when you first started your research, and asking your thesis as a question includes them in the discovery process. Secondly, it stimulates their curiosity. Stating your thesis as it might be written, while acceptable, is a fairly conventional approach, and you run the risk of your audience being less drawn in or interested by your ideas.

In the same way a topic sentence functions in a well-structured essay, your **key points** must be stated clearly, and there should be an implication as to their importance. Let your audience know these are key points. (And you might indicate this on your visual aid, should you be using a PowerPoint, in the header of your slides—see below.) A practical or literal discussion of your key point might be needed (what it is, how it applies to your subject). For example, in a speech on how college-age students perceive

government social programs, you might have a slide with the header: "Perceptual Differences Among College Students." In discussing this slide, you might lead off by saying: "When looking at whether college students see the benefit of government programs, there is a divide among them which is highly dependent on their socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and gender." This could serve as a lead-in to bullets that exist on the slide that make specific references to sources, statistics, or other related material. Remember that headers and bullets in presentation slides are meant to be compact, serving as prompts. However, there is an obligation to be more articulate and elaborate with oral information. This step prepares listeners to accept your supporting research and then provides context for why this matters to your overall research question.

A **conclusion** need not be a mechanical summary of what you've covered in your presentation. On the contrary, you should find a way to tie everything together and return to your thesis/main focus. Ending with a forward-looking statement, such as other areas to take the research, or the broader implications for your work, could leave the audience feeling that your presentation is part of a much larger, more important dialogue or issue.

Developing Visual Aids

When presenting your work, you will likely be afforded the opportunity to use visual aids to support your delivery.

The simplest form of visual aid is a physical sample or example. Examples might include a medical device you are discussing, a photograph, cultural relic (i.e., sample dress, flag), a poster, or scientific materials needed to complete a demonstration or experiment. These kinds of physical objects tend to be more of the "show and tell" variety, and they do not require much more forethought than displaying them at the proper time.

More standard but functional visual aids might include PowerPoint presentations (or Prezis) composed beforehand on a computer. However, this method requires you to have access to a computer and a projector to show them to your audience.

These types of visual aids are common enough now that you should be familiar with them, as they can make your presentation easier for the audience to follow when done correctly.

Consider these general guidelines when composing a PowerPoint presentation.

- Use **nondistracting colors** that are not too bright, disturbing, or difficult to read.
- Use a **title slide** with your paper title and your name on it (much as you would provide a title page for an essay).
- Attempt to keep text to a minimum, choosing images over print, to complement your speech. (Many prefer to abide by the **3 x 5 rule,** keeping to three lines of text with five words maximum.)
- Attempt to keep text to a minimum, choosing images over wordy print, to complement your speech.
- Use content (for these slides) that could serve to direct the presentation, so that you can refer to your visual aid if needed, rather than index cards or prepared speeches. (See "Rehearsing" below.)
- Use the appropriate format (MLA, APA, Chicago) as outlined in the Formatting section of Chapter 9.
- Use **introductory slides** that help direct your audience with necessary overview, key definitions, or critical methodology needed to understand your research.
- Use **headers** that align with your key points to assist the audience in knowing when you are switching talking points.
- Use **functional images** that drive forward your project (and make sure to credit the image source). Do not include decorative or otherwise functionless images (i.e., smiling babies, cats, or cartoon images, unless they are a necessary component of your research). **Charts and graphs** are often useful for displaying information visually.
- Use proper citations for sources (when inserting quotations or statistics).
- Use the appropriate **References or Works Cited** page as your last slide(s).

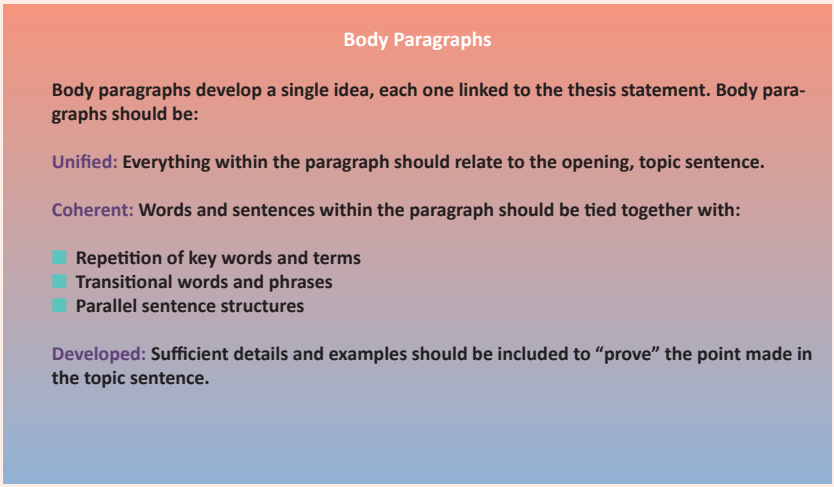
Should you not have access to a computer and projector, it might be necessary to prepare a poster with the needed visuals or even use a whiteboard. You could alternately create a "topic" outline to post on a classroom board to guide your audience through your primary points.

Activity 10.2

Prepare the first three slides of the outline you developed in Activity 10.1 in PowerPoint or Prezi.

Activity 10.3

Discuss and critique the following slide in your group or the class.



Rehearsing

You do not need to be trained at formal public speaking to succeed in delivering an oral presentation. However, just as the writing process requires you to revise (revisualize) your work to improve the effectiveness of your strategy, oral presentations require you to take your outline of talking points and your visual aid(s) and rehearse with them to make certain your ideas are related in the most cohesive fashion.

There are several tips and strategies you can employ while rehearsing your presentation.

- You do not need to memorize a speech (though this is an accepted strategy); rather, embed key phrases and talking points into your visual aid so you can refer to them when necessary.
- Practice until you have at least retained your introduction, key talking points, and conclusion and you can elaborate upon them naturally.
- Maintain a conversational but knowledgeable tone (semiformal, not casual).

- Practice and consciously attempt to remove unnecessary "uhm"s, "uh"s, and other casual slips.
- Maintain eye contact with your audience, pivoting only to point at something of interest on your visual aid (or relocate yourself if stuck).
- Do not turn your back to your audience.
- Practice, if possible, in front of another person to get used to having an audience.
- Ask a sample audience for feedback, much as you might ask others to comment upon your writing.
- Generally, organize your key points in the same chronological order as your written essay; however, sometimes you might find it useful to reorder them and rehearse them with a different structure to find the most logical and persuasive structure.

Activity 10.4

Take the slides you prepared in Activity 10.2, and present them to your group. Ask for feedback on your presentation.

Formatting and Presenting

When you finish a writing project, you would normally format your text to make sure you are presenting your work in the appropriate convention (MLA, APA, CMS), and you should perform this step when presenting your work for an oral presentation as well. Obviously, formatting pertains primarily to a visual aid, such as a PowerPoint presentation, but it also applies should you have handouts to distribute to your audience.

You should also prepare yourself to deliver your presentation with a similar regard for professionalism. The following are some tips to consider for the day of the actual presentation.

- Dress nicely, professionally, like you would for your job or an interview.
- Introduce yourself to your audience, and state the title of your presentation (unless a moderator introduces you).
- Consider printing a copy of your Works Cited or References page (from your actual paper) to present to your audience.
- Relax and enjoy yourself—this is one occasion when you are the expert, sharing what you have learned.

Final Word

This final point is worth repeating and is an appropriate note on which to end this chapter. The advantage of preparation, whether in writing (which has been the thrust of this book) or presenting, is that you have created an environment where you may enthusiastically share what you have learned with an eager audience. Ultimately, this is the purpose of effective communication—to join in a conversation within a larger community of writers and thinkers and to share your ideas so they might prosper and grow in the minds of your audience.

Activity 10.5

Write a short critique of one your instructor's class presentations. Discuss what you think was effective, and offer advice on what you found confusing or difficult to understand. You are not critiquing the content here, just the presentation.

Liking Is for Cowards: Go for What Hurts

Jonathan Franzen

Jonathan Franzen is an American novelist and essayist. His novel *The Corrections* (2001) won a National Book Award and was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize. His novel *Freedom* was published in 2010, and his most recent novel, *Purity*, was released in September 2015. He writes for *The New Yorker* magazine, among others. He is well-known for his outspoken views on the state of modern society and modern literature. The following essay was adapted from a commencement speech Franzen delivered on May 21, 2011, at Kenyon College.

Franzen's discussion of the difference between loving something and merely liking it was presented before a graduating class. What marks the discussion as a speech rather than a written essay? (Keep in mind the setting, in an auditorium, before a large crowd.) For example, is the topic of the speech one that would appeal to young people like yourself just graduating from college? What about Franzen's word choice and use of examples? Is he able to connect, via empathy, with his audience? Finally, do you think he has made clear his distinction between liking and loving?

A couple of weeks ago, I replaced my three-year-old BlackBerry Pearl with a much more powerful BlackBerry Bold. Needless to say, I was impressed with how far the technology had advanced in three years. Even when I didn't have anybody to call or text or e-mail, I wanted to keep fondling my new Bold and experiencing the marvelous clarity of its screen, the silky action of its track pad, the shocking speed of its responses, the beguiling elegance of its graphics.

I was, in short, infatuated with my new device. I'd been similarly infatuated with my old device, of course; but over the years the bloom had faded from our relationship. I'd developed trust issues with my Pearl, accountability issues, compatibility issues and even, toward the end, some doubts about my Pearl's very sanity, until I'd finally had to admit to myself that I'd outgrown the relationship.

Do I need to point out that — absent some wild, anthropomorphizing projection in which my old BlackBerry felt sad about the waning of my love for it — our relationship was entirely one-sided? Let me point it out anyway.

Let me further point out how ubiquitously the word "sexy" is used to describe late-model gadgets; and how the extremely cool things that we can do now with these gadgets — like impelling them to action with voice commands, or doing that spreading-the-fingers iPhone thing that makes images get bigger — would have looked, to people a hundred years ago, like a magician's incantations, a magician's hand gestures; and how, when we want to describe an erotic relationship that's working perfectly, we speak, indeed, of magic.

Let me toss out the idea that, as our markets discover and respond to what consumers most want, our technology has become extremely adept at creating

products that correspond to our fantasy ideal of an erotic relationship, in which the beloved object asks for nothing and gives everything, instantly, and makes us feel all powerful, and doesn't throw terrible scenes when it's replaced by an even sexier object and is consigned to a drawer.

To speak more generally, the ultimate goal of technology, the telos of techne, is to replace a natural world that's indifferent to our wishes — a world of hurricanes and hardships and breakable hearts, a world of resistance — with a world so responsive to our wishes as to be, effectively, a mere extension of the self.

Let me suggest, finally, that the world of techno-consumerism is therefore troubled by real love, and that it has no choice but to trouble love in turn.

Its first line of defense is to commodify its enemy. You can all supply your own favorite, most nauseating examples of the commodification of love. Mine include the wedding industry, TV ads that feature cute young children or the giving of automobiles as Christmas presents, and the particularly grotesque equation of diamond jewelry with everlasting devotion. The message, in each case, is that if you love somebody you should buy stuff.

A related phenomenon is the transformation, courtesy of Facebook, of the verb "to like" from a state of mind to an action that you perform with your computer mouse, from a feeling to an assertion of consumer choice. And liking, in general, is commercial culture's substitute for loving. The striking thing about all consumer products — and none more so than electronic devices and applications — is that they're designed to be immensely likable. This is, in fact, the definition of a consumer product, in contrast to the product that is simply itself and whose makers aren't fixated on your liking it. (I'm thinking here of jet engines, laboratory equipment, serious art and literature.)

But if you consider this in human terms, and you imagine a person defined by a desperation to be liked, what do you see? You see a person without integrity, without a center. In more pathological cases, you see a narcissist — a person who can't tolerate the tarnishing of his or her self-image that not being liked represents, and who therefore either withdraws from human contact or goes to extreme, integrity-sacrificing lengths to be likable.

If you dedicate your existence to being likable, however, and if you adopt whatever cool persona is necessary to make it happen, it suggests that you've despaired of being loved for who you really are. And if you succeed in manipulating other people into liking you, it will be hard not to feel, at some level, contempt for those people, because they've fallen for your shtick. You may find yourself becoming depressed, or alcoholic, or, if you're Donald Trump, running for president (and then quitting).

Consumer technology products would never do anything this unattractive, because they aren't people. They are, however, great allies and enablers of narcissism. Alongside their built-in eagerness to be liked is a built-in eagerness to reflect well

on us. Our lives look a lot more interesting when they're filtered through the sexy Facebook interface. We star in our own movies, we photograph ourselves incessantly, we click the mouse and a machine confirms our sense of mastery.

And, since our technology is really just an extension of ourselves, we don't have to have contempt for its manipulability in the way we might with actual people. It's all one big endless loop. We like the mirror and the mirror likes us. To friend a person is merely to include the person in our private hall of flattering mirrors.

I may be overstating the case, a little bit. Very probably, you're sick to death of hearing social media disrespected by cranky 51-year-olds. My aim here is mainly to set up a contrast between the narcissistic tendencies of technology and the problem of actual love. My friend Alice Sebold likes to talk about "getting down in the pit and loving somebody." She has in mind the dirt that love inevitably splatters on the mirror of our self-regard.

The simple fact of the matter is that trying to be perfectly likable is incompatible with loving relationships. Sooner or later, for example, you're going to find yourself in a hideous, screaming fight, and you'll hear coming out of your mouth things that you yourself don't like at all, things that shatter your self-image as a fair, kind, cool, attractive, in-control, funny, likable person. Something realer than likability has come out in you, and suddenly you're having an actual life.

Suddenly there's a real choice to be made, not a fake consumer choice between a BlackBerry and an iPhone, but a question: Do I love this person? And, for the other person, does this person love me?

There is no such thing as a person whose real self you like every particle of. This is why a world of liking is ultimately a lie. But there is such a thing as a person whose real self you love every particle of. And this is why love is such an existential threat to the techno-consumerist order: it exposes the lie.

This is not to say that love is only about fighting. Love is about bottomless empathy, born out of the heart's revelation that another person is every bit as real as you are. And this is why love, as I understand it, is always specific. Trying to love all of humanity may be a worthy endeavor, but, in a funny way, it keeps the focus on the self, on the self's own moral or spiritual well-being. Whereas, to love a specific person, and to identify with his or her struggles and joys as if they were your own, you have to surrender some of yourself.

The big risk here, of course, is rejection. We can all handle being disliked now and then, because there's such an infinitely big pool of potential likers. But to expose your whole self, not just the likable surface, and to have it rejected, can be catastrophically painful. The prospect of pain generally, the pain of loss, of breakup, of death, is what makes it so tempting to avoid love and stay safely in the world of liking.

And yet pain hurts but it doesn't kill. When you consider the alternative — an anesthetized dream of self-sufficiency, abetted by technology — pain emerges as

the natural product and natural indicator of being alive in a resistant world. To go through a life painlessly is to have not lived. Even just to say to yourself, "Oh, I'll get to that love and pain stuff later, maybe in my 30s" is to consign yourself to 10 years of merely taking up space on the planet and burning up its resources. Of being (and I mean this in the most damning sense of the word) a consumer.

When I was in college, and for many years after, I liked the natural world. Didn't love it, but definitely liked it. It can be very pretty, nature. And since I was looking for things to find wrong with the world, I naturally gravitated to environmentalism, because there were certainly plenty of things wrong with the environment. And the more I looked at what was wrong — an exploding world population, exploding levels of resource consumption, rising global temperatures, the trashing of the oceans, the logging of our last old-growth forests — the angrier I became.

Finally, in the mid-1990s, I made a conscious decision to stop worrying about the environment. There was nothing meaningful that I personally could do to save the planet, and I wanted to get on with devoting myself to the things I loved. I still tried to keep my carbon footprint small, but that was as far as I could go without falling back into rage and despair.

BUT then a funny thing happened to me. It's a long story, but basically I fell in love with birds. I did this not without significant resistance, because it's very uncool to be a birdwatcher, because anything that betrays real passion is by definition uncool. But little by little, in spite of myself, I developed this passion, and although one-half of a passion is obsession, the other half is love.

And so, yes, I kept a meticulous list of the birds I'd seen, and, yes, I went to inordinate lengths to see new species. But, no less important, whenever I looked at a bird, any bird, even a pigeon or a robin, I could feel my heart overflow with love. And love, as I've been trying to say today, is where our troubles begin.

Because now, not merely liking nature but loving a specific and vital part of it, I had no choice but to start worrying about the environment again. The news on that front was no better than when I'd decided to quit worrying about it — was considerably worse, in fact — but now those threatened forests and wetlands and oceans weren't just pretty scenes for me to enjoy. They were the home of animals I loved.

And here's where a curious paradox emerged. My anger and pain and despair about the planet were only increased by my concern for wild birds, and yet, as I began to get involved in bird conservation and learned more about the many threats that birds face, it became easier, not harder, to live with my anger and despair and pain.

How does this happen? I think, for one thing, that my love of birds became a portal to an important, less self-centered part of myself that I'd never even known existed. Instead of continuing to drift forward through my life as a global citizen, liking and disliking and withholding my commitment for some later date, I was forced to confront a self that I had to either straight-up accept or flat-out reject.

Which is what love will do to a person. Because the fundamental fact about all of us is that we're alive for a while but will die before long. This fact is the real root cause of all our anger and pain and despair. And you can either run from this fact or, by way of love, you can embrace it.

When you stay in your room and rage or sneer or shrug your shoulders, as I did for many years, the world and its problems are impossibly daunting. But when you go out and put yourself in real relation to real people, or even just real animals, there's a very real danger that you might love some of them.

And who knows what might happen to you then?

Topics for Writing and Discussion

1. Do you agree with Franzen's statement that "our lives look a lot more interesting when they're filtered through the sexy Facebook interface. We star in our own movies, we photograph ourselves incessantly, we click the mouse and a machine confirms our sense of mastery"? Is Facebook merely a means of communication, or is it a means of self-promotion?
2. Franzen distinguishes "liking" something or someone from "loving" the thing or person. Is his point that "to love a specific person, and to identify with his or her struggles and joys as if they were your own, you have to surrender some of yourself" true? Write a short paper in which you distinguish liking from loving another person.
3. Franzen says "to go through a life painlessly is to have not lived." What does he mean by this statement? Write a short paper in which you try to explain this statement by using examples from your own life and the lives of those you know and love.

CHAPTER 11

Visual Analysis

Central Questions

1. How and why do some images proliferate in a culture? What values and beliefs do they express and gain as they circulate through new contexts?
2. What analytical tools do we need to understand how images work rhetorically?
3. What can we learn about culture and context from reading an essay about Rosie the Riveter?
4. How do we now use images and visuals to communicate, and how can we learn to compose creatively with images and other visual modes of writing to participate in a larger conversation around a topic or issue?

Chapter Preview

We've explored a small portion of the cultural productions that circulate through the larger public world of the internet—generally, the less serious content that circulates as memes to the more extended and reasoned content of online feature articles. We've seen how composers use rhetorical means to ensure their creations will grab the attention of viewers and go viral, but also how they might present informed and reasoned perspectives on our culture and offer cultural critiques.

As we've focused on rhetorical purposes and the available means for composing in digital spaces, we've also considered our own shifting roles as participants in digital culture, noting how *visual* modern texts are and how image-making has become a central part of how we communicate in changing contexts. In this chapter, we'll extend our analysis of visual culture and identify some analytical tools for making sense of our growing production and consumption of images. We'll consider what it means to live in an exceedingly visual world, how to work with visual resources critically, and how to see what shared beliefs and values are represented in the images we create and share.

We explored the impact of digital technologies on our ways of sharing cultural knowledge in our local communities by considering the changing uses of personal images—of photos that had moved from albums and shoeboxes onto Snapchat and Instagram and Facebook, and the changing ways (digital photography, selfie sticks) and meanings of today's "snapshot" among friends. In this chapter, we move be-

yond the local focus and beyond the personal snapshot to consider the means and meanings of images in the wider public arena and the rhetorical force they exert as they circulate in culture.

Exploring: Visual Texts in Contemporary Culture

As composers in the twenty-first century, we are writing and sharing more texts than ever, and our literacies are changing in the process. One of those changes has been in how images are produced and circulated. Just as corporate mass media had a monopoly on the public circulation of both written and visual texts before the digital age, today's media environment and the broad availability of image-making and image-sharing technologies have given ordinary people the means to create their own digital content and more fully participate in the production of visual culture. Taking pictures and video, adding text or narration, posting photos to Instagram or Facebook, editing and publishing on photo-sharing sites like Flickr, Picasa, or Shutterfly, editing videos to post on YouTube—these visual literacy practices are now a daily part of how we communicate with one another. As we post and share images or alter and adapt circulating images, we are continually involved in acts of recontextualization, bringing these images into new contexts for different rhetorical purposes and giving them new meanings in the process.

Images as Memes

Often familiar visuals and images go "viral" and become *memes*, ideas or cultural objects that spread throughout the larger culture as they are taken up, posted, liked, shared, and tweeted. Sometimes we simply pass an image on to others who might be interested, and other times we might add text or use photo editing tools to change it for a different rhetorical purpose. As similar images get reused and remixed, they come to be recognized by larger audiences, sometimes for brief periods, sometimes over generations. At various moments, advertising logos like the Nike swoosh, dance styles like Korean Gagnam, and images like LOLcats[L14] have spread and become culturally familiar across the globe (Figure 11.1). Images and videos, because they may not require words for their meanings, are particularly likely to cross language boundaries and become part of a global digital culture, proliferating rapidly and often changing meanings as other people use the image to communicate in different contexts. Even within one national setting, a visual meme can take on a plethora of new meanings as writers and composers adapt it for new contexts.

Figure 11.1: Cat meme

To explore how an image goes viral and becomes a meme as it circulates among contexts, let's begin with a recently popular example of a longstanding cultural meme: Rosie the Riveter.

Figure 11.2: Beyoncé posing as Rosie the Riveter using Instagram

When Beyoncé posted this image on her Instagram site (Figure 11.2), she placed it into wide public circulation. The image clearly resonated with her audience, receiving 1.4 million likes and thousands of comments. Like other circulating memes that are full of meaning for their viewers, her Instagram post generated a Twitter storm about its purpose and meanings, which in turn generated further media attention. In this visual image, Beyoncé, a twenty-first century pop culture icon, strikes a pose based on a famous image from the 1940s, the image of Rosie the Riveter. In doing so, Beyoncé is engaged in the process of recontextualization, of evoking a well-known image to express meaning in a twenty-first century cultural context.

Below are some other notable images of Rosie. The first is the original image of Rosie and the basic model for the Rosie meme. The second is a well-known painting by Norman Rockwell. The third and fourth are more recent examples (Figure 11.3).

Figure 11.3: Images of Rosie the Riveter

Inquiry #1: Tracing a visual meme

List some observations that strike you about the images in Figure 11.3. What do you know about these images? Have you seen them before? What common idea do you think the images are communicating?

What else would you need to know about its context to understand the fuller meaning of each individual image?

Go online and search for other Rosie the Riveter images. Search for Rosie the Riveter and the names of music icons or political figures or other celebrities. Or look for themes such as gay rights and Rosie the Riveter or Muslim women and Rosie the Riveter. Then look at the original poster that they're based on. What elements tend to remain constant in these recontextualizations? What sorts of changes, adaptations, and remixes do you find? What cultural meanings seem to be shared across contexts, and what meanings seem to be specific to the new context the images are part of? Why do you think this image from World War II continues to be relevant for contemporary society? And why do you think Beyoncé used it?

Images as Visual Compositions: Rosie the Riveter

As writers, we typically spend more time reading and analyzing conventional texts than images. But with the increasingly visual and multimodal nature of texts, it becomes important to our own rhetorical practices as both readers and composers that we gain some critical and analytical understandings about the production of visual culture and our participation in the circulation of meaning through the images we share and compose. Just as with verbal texts, we need to understand how visual texts work in rhetorical ways to achieve particular purposes and how they work to convey meanings that relate to the contexts in which they are realized.

We can approach a visual analysis in the way we've approached other texts, by first looking at the **what** of the text and describing its content or what we see, and **how** the various elements are arranged from a compositional perspective, focusing on the visual arrangement of the text itself. We can also look at **where** and **when**—where a visual text first appears and the historical context it emerges from, as we've begun to do above and will continue to do later in this chapter. By understanding both the text and its context, we can also come to a clearer understanding of the **why**, the likely purposes of its creator and of the shared meanings that are expressed for its viewers from a rhetorical and social perspective. In practice, these perspectives are always interacting, but we can think of them as entry points into different ways of analyzing how a visual artifact is produced and circulated, and we'll begin with the compositional perspective.

Like written compositions, visual images and hybrid texts that combine words and visuals can be seen as having a sort of visual grammar or commonly understood structure. Just as a typical written essay has a common pattern, with an introduction, body, and conclusion, composing practices that use images and video have developed their own patterns of communication that have become standardized over time. As such, in analyzing a visual artifact, we can think of its production as being like that of a written text—as a product of human communication that has a specific rhetorical purpose and that is shaped by the conventions and expectations of the culture it emerges from.

In analyzing such hybrid texts, a good, generative place to begin is with description—**what** do you see? In exploring this question, we have a wealth of prior knowledge about visual communication from our own experience of living in a highly visual culture—experience we can draw on and learn to verbalize as we interpret the visual texts that surround us.

Inquiry #2: What do you know about visual composition?

Before you read on, take some time to write about some of the compositional elements you see in the Rosie pictures on the previous page.

- If you look at each image without its verbal text, what kinds of patterns do you see? What visual elements appear? How are they placed?
- What happens when words are added to an image? How are they placed? What ideas do they convey?
- How are words and images working together to create meaning in these images?
- Find a handful of similar images. These could be other images of Rosie, advertisements from different decades or in different publications, or perhaps family photos. What do you notice about how these images are composed? What kinds of conventions (repeated elements) and similarities do you see in the way the images are composed?

You've probably noted some of the more prominent features of the Rosie images: the close-in view of her face and upper body, her posture and the physical position of her arm and hand, her dress, her hair, and her expression. Even from a first glance we can glean meaning from what we see in Rosie's facial expression and body language. Our own experience of living in a human body helps us understand these images immediately because we can relate to them on a physical level. And perhaps you noted the prominence of the words, the entire width of the page. Often a first step in analyzing a visual text is to look for how words and images are working together to create meaning.

But beyond these initial observations, what other compositional elements can we observe? What kinds of practices and techniques are the composers of these images drawing on to create meaning? Here's where a few working concepts from the world of design become useful. While there are dozens of design terms we could draw on, for general composition purposes, there are five basic principles:

1. **Balance**
2. **Contrast**
3. **Repetition**
4. **Alignment**
5. **Proximity**

These terms, and the practices they describe, emerge from a long tradition of Western visual communication that emphasizes rectangular design, efficiency, realism, and hierarchies of information. They are practices widely in use today. The terms are useful for thinking about the arrangement of a visual text—how each different element in a composition is placed and works with other elements to express meaning. Part of the challenge in visual analysis is to describe how these different elements work together to create meaning for an audience.

Balance. The concept of balance refers to the way all the elements in a composition share the space of the text. Looking at the first two images of Rosie again, you'll notice how the balance of each image shifts from left to right, depending on which side of the text Rosie is on. The use of words at the top of both images creates a counter weight to the more dominant image of Rosie, keeping both images in balance and in equal importance. A sense of balance is achieved when the various elements in a composition create a sense of coherence between elements *within* the limited space of the visual text (Figure 11.4).

Figure 11.4 : Two original images of Rosie that shift balance from left to right

Contrast. Contrast works to emphasize how different elements in a text work together to create meaning. We often think of contrast as how colors relate to each other. For example, having red text on an orange background is difficult to read (Figure 11.5). We would say the contrast is *too low* to read it comfortably. In addition to color, though, contrast also relates to how elements in a composition interact with one another to create meaning. For example, in Norman Rockwell's depiction of Rosie, he creates a strong relationship between Rosie and the American flag rippling in the background (Figure 11.6).

Red text on an orange background

Figure 11.5: Low-contrast colors (red text on an orange background)

The effect is that Rosie and the flag have a *high* contrast, expressing two distinct visual elements that, when combined,

create more meaning than each alone. Contrast signals to readers how strong or weak a relationship is between elements in a composition. In this case, Rockwell uses the flag as the patriotic background while Rosie sits in the foreground as the embodiment of that patriotism.

Figure 11.6 : Rockwell's high-contrast Rosie image

Repetition. Repetition isn't simply a practice of visual design; it is something we see in all facets of life, from pop songs we can't get out of our head to the change in seasons. Writers and designers use repetition in many ways, especially through their use of shape, color, font, and size of elements in a text, as well as repeating similar imagery and formatting throughout a text.

Figure 11.7: Screenshots of the rosietheriveter.org website

The compositional practice of repetition is a common technique at work in many websites. In Figure 11.7 there are three screenshots of the website rosietheriveter.org. As you click through the main navigation to other pages on the site, each page repeats several elements—colors, font, imagery, and overall layout. One of the effects of repetition is to create a consistent look and feel across a text.

Alignment. Figure 11.7 also exhibits the compositional practice of *alignment*. Alignment is especially useful for creating a reading path for a reader or viewer. In print documents, margins, titles, and headings have traditionally been used to bring order and balance to a text and to help make reading it easier.

Figure 11.8 shows alignment at work. The magazine's title and Rosie's word bubble are center aligned vertically and horizontally. The caption in red lettering is justified to the right, creating the appearance of an imaginary line on the right side of the page. The overall feel with this kind of alignment is that there is a frame

around each element in the text, as well as the text in its entirety. We might say that everything is "lined up" right. Alignment contributes greatly to the sense of balance we feel when we see a visual text.

Figure 11.9 complicates the standard practice of alignment. In this visual text, the elements on the page don't line up, creating different meanings between visual elements in the process.

Proximity. One of the design features in Figure 11.9 is the use of *proximity*. While the different elements in the composition aren't aligned, the even spacing between each image creates an equal relationship between each piece of the costume. No image appears to be more important than the others. At the same time, the acronym "DIY" and the word "Halloween" feel bunched and too close together, as does the text "Rosie the Riveter," which looks squished and out of alignment with other surrounding elements in the composition. The proximity of elements to one another helps define their relationship to one another.

Figure 11.8: Cover of Business Week September 2006

Figure 11.9: DIY Costume for Rosie the Riveter

Again, these are working concepts to help you develop your own analysis of visual texts. As we mentioned before, all writing and design concepts emerge out of the shared values and expectations of a particular culture. If many of our texts of public American culture seem to emphasize order, coherency, and functionality, it is because our culture values, and expects, these traits in our texts.

Inquiry #3: Revisiting an image of Rosie the Riveter as a visual composition

Revisit a Rosie image that you explored in Inquiry #2. Do any of the design concepts introduced in this chapter help you to observe aspects of the composition that you didn't notice the first time? What more can you say about the composition of the image at this point?

In discussing the concept of repetition, we used the example of several pages from the Rosietheriveter.org website. But all of these compositional elements have been applied to website design[14:3], and websites make up many of the visual compositions we encounter. We can see these concepts at work more fully if we return to examine that website more closely.

Inquiry #4: Applying design concepts to a website

Visit rosietheriveter.org and consider how the site uses design techniques like balance, contrast, repetition, alignment, and proximity.

How do these design elements work together to express meaning? What kind of imagery is used on the site, along with color and font? How are images and words working together?

Part of understanding the compositional and textual aspects of a digital text like a website is to also consider the structure of the site and how it organizes and presents information for readers. How does one navigate the site? Is it difficult to find information? How does the site function as you move through it, and what kinds of reading experiences is the site attempting to create (Figure 11.10)?

Figure 11.10: Home page for rosietheriveter.org

Making Connections: Cultural Contexts and Meaning-Making

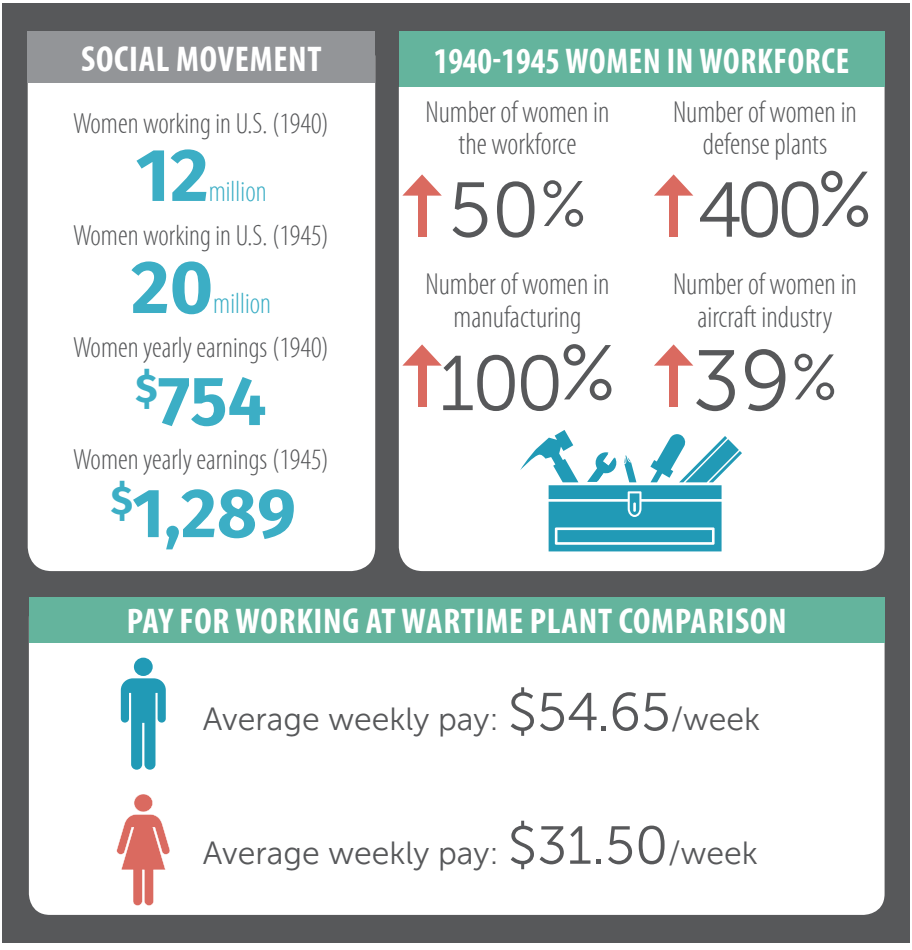
Together with the compositional elements of a visual text, we can take our analysis a step further and look at the cultural context of a text's production—at **when** and **where** it is produced and circulated. Cultural perspectives on visual texts try to locate a text's composition in a place and time. We ask questions about who composed a text, what year it was composed, and where. What historical events were occurring that may have influenced the creation of a text? Does the image continue to circulate over time and continue to play a role in the production of culture?

Placing Rosie the Riveter in a Historical Context

From your exploration of these Rosie images so far, you have probably not only come to a richer understanding of these hybrid texts, but you've most likely gleaned some information about their prior cultural context. On the occasion of the death of the original model for Rosie (although whether there was an actual original Rosie is disputed), a number of articles placed the Rosie meme in a new context, including the following post by Megan Garber for The Atlantic." L14:2

Before Reading: Evoking your prior knowledge about Rosie the Riveter

Before you read "The Many Faces of Rosie the Riveter," reflect on what you already know or can guess from the images themselves and about the cultural context and era that produced the earliest versions of Rosie. How does Megan Garber make the story of Rosie newly relevant to her readers? Note that the online version of Garber's blog post for *The Atlantic* begins with the first of our sequence of four images, the original poster of Rosie, and then includes Rockwell's image from the *Saturday Evening Post* and Beyoncé's Instagram image.



Source: http://infographicsmania.com/american-women-workers/

"The Many Faces of Rosie the Riveter"

by Megan Garber

The Atlantic, April 24, 2015

Mary Doyle Keefe has died. The 92-year-old was, the AP reports, the model for "Rosie the Riveter," the Norman Rockwell painting that served as the cover for the *Saturday Evening Post* in May of 1943, then as an iconic symbol for wartime solidarity and the power of labor, and then later as a token for civil rights, feminism, and institutionalized spunk.

You would be forgiven, though, for thinking that the real-life Rosie the Riveter had already passed away. Rose Will Monroe, said to have been the model for the "We Can Do It!" image commonly associated with Rosie, died in 1997. And Geraldine Doyle, who has also claimed to be the inspiration for the We Can Do It! image, via a UPI photo taken of her at work in a factory in Ann Arbor, Michigan, in 1942, died in 2010.

So who, actually, was the original Rosie? And why do so many different women claim her as their own?

The answer is in part, certainly, that Rosie belongs to all of us—and that we are all, on some level, Rosie. The images of female strength and empowerment that the images of a well-muscled female arm represent were meant at the time, and continue, to transcend the individual. They are propaganda, and as such convey their cause in the guise of a person. As an image, Rosie, in various forms, has been a first-class postage stamp. And a magazine cover model many times over. She has been displayed at the National Museum of American History. She has been refigured as tattoos. She has been used on posters supporting the election of Hillary Clinton and Sarah Palin, and supporting the influence of Michelle Obama. She has been used for marketing purposes more broadly (Clorox has used her to advertise its cleaning products). She has been made into a bobble-head doll and an action figure. She has been recreated out of jelly beans. She has been slapped onto so many different pieces of merchandise—coffee mugs, t-shirts, magnets, stationery—that the *Washington Post* once dubbed her the "most over-exposed" souvenir item available in the nation's capital.

So, in part, the mysterious origins of Rosie come from that fact that everyone, in some ways, lays claim to her. (It's fitting, in that sense, that before Rosie was an image, she was a song: "Rosie the Riveter," popular on the radio in 1943, is said to have been the basis for Rockwell's painting. Even before she had a face, she had a name.)

The other reason so many different people call themselves "Rosie," though, has to do with more basic realities—of labor, of communication, of intellectual property. There are two iconic images of Rosie the Riveter. One of them is, indeed, Rockwell's—created in 1943, printed on the cover of a popular national magazine, and based on the modeling Mary Doyle Keefe provided for the sum of $10. This is the one that actually features a factory-working woman named Rosie.

The other image is the "We Can Do It" poster. Which initially had little to do with Rosie—and, for that matter, with women at all.

This poster, the one most of us today associate with Rosie the Riveter, was created not so much to encourage women in the workforce as to encourage productivity in general. World War II coincided with the rise of labor unions in the 1930s; across the

country, as factory production became war production, managers sought to build morale and minimize the frictions of the past. They did that, in part, by way of posters they displayed on factory floors, many of them bearing team-building slogans like "Keep 'Em Firing!" and "Together We Can Do It!." For optimum morale-building, the posters were rotated into and out of use.

In the early 1940s, the Westinghouse Electric Corporation commissioned the graphic artist J. Howard Miller to create a series of these inspirational posters for the company. One of these was of a woman, defiant but proud, with her work-shirt's sleeves rolled up. (There are conflicting accounts about the woman on whom Miller based his rendering: Some say it was Rose Will Monroe, who was working as a riveter at Michigan's Willow Run Bomber Plant when she was asked to star in a video series promoting war bonds; others say it was Geraldine Doyle and the UPI photo of her at work.)

On February 15, 1943, a Westinghouse factory in East Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania displayed a new poster—which was small, just 17 inches wide and 22 inches high, and one of only 1,800 or so printed for the purpose. Its caption read, "We Can Do It!"

Though it depicted a woman, feminism was likely not the poster's intended message; it was concerned much more with the outcome of labor than with the laborers themselves. Two weeks later, the poster was removed from the factory floor. And it was, for the most part, forgotten.

Then, in 1982, the *Washington Post Magazine* ran an article about propaganda posters stored in the collection of the National Archives. One of the posters it printed in its story was the "We Can Do It!" image. From there—and during a time when it would have more valence with ideas of feminism that had become widespread in the culture—the image enjoyed a renaissance, to the extent that, today, you can "Rosiefy yourself." You can buy a "Rosie the Riveter" bandana. You can make a cocktail called "Rosé the Riveter." The now-iconic image—initially nameless, initially standing for no cause beyond work—has, through the typical avenues of cultural adoption and appropriation, taken on the mantle of progress and strength and feminism. It has taken on the name of "Rosie."

As for the other Rosie, the one painted by Rockwell and actually intended to be the face of the female war effort? Rockwell copyrighted that image, as he did with other works; after his death, his family protected that copyright. Which meant that, by law, the painting could not be modified or appropriated. So, while it gained in financial value—in 2002, it sold for nearly $5 million—it lost in cultural. The woman who announces, both to herself and to the world, that We Can Do It! may not have started life as "Rosie the Riveter," although she has, in fact, effectively become inseparable from the name. ■

After Reading: In context: cultural meanings of Rosie the Riveter

How does the information Garber provides contribute to your reading of the original two Rosie images—the Miller poster for Westinghouse and the Rockwell magazine cover?

The two images are from exactly the same time period, in the midst of World War II, yet we understand that their inspiration and their rhetorical purposes were somewhat different. Can you see these differences as you look again at the images? Why do you think these two similar yet different images might have emerged, considering both the larger context of wartime America and the immediate contexts for and uses of each creation?

We learn that it was the rediscovery of the Rosie poster in the National Archives in the 1980s that brought new meaning to the old image. What in the image speaks to the interests and concerns of that later context?

According to Garber, how does Rosie "transcend the individual"? What does she use as evidence? Do you agree?

What meanings is Beyoncé evoking with her use of the image? And why do you think Garber has made this choice out of all the current circulating versions of the Rosie meme? How does it contribute to her purpose with her essay? To the likely interests of her *The Atlantic* readers? In what ways is the Beyoncé image evidence of the process of cultural adoption and appropriation that Garber sees as the real significance to us of the Rosie story?

This history of Rosie's origin also shows us that the cultural process of texts borrowing from and building off of other texts, in what we've been referring to as *intertextuality*, applies to images as well as verbal texts. And the textual ecology of a visual text like Beyoncé's includes the images and words that have inspired her visual composition, the responses of her fans, and the sharing and circulation of the image across several social media.

To take our cultural analysis one more step, we could further contextualize Rockwell's image by noting his use of Michelangelo's classical depiction of the prophet Isaiah painted in the Sistine Chapel (1509 CE) as a model for Rosie (Figure 11.11). It's these kinds of intertextual and ecological relations that help us better understand the contexts of a text's composition and how it changes meanings as it gets picked up, altered, and used in different contexts. In understanding the circumstances of

Figure 11.11: Norman Rockwell's version of Rosie next to Michelangelo's painting of the Biblical prophet Isaiah in the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican, Italy

a text's production and where it circulates in time and space, we gain insight into how a text emerges from culture and how it, in turn, becomes a producer of culture as it gets shared and circulated.

Social and Rhetorical Perspectives on Visual Texts

In addition to understanding the compositional and cultural aspects of a visual artifact, it's useful to look at the *social* and *rhetorical* aspects of a visual text, the purposes behind its composition, and the social practice of sharing images as a primary mode of communication. How far and deep does an image circulate? Why and when do people share an image? Who is the audience for a visual text? What kinds of shared meanings are being expressed in the text? And how do ordinary people draw meaning from an image and use those meanings to perform and take on new social identities?

Garber's essay has given us a sense of the original social and rhetorical purposes of the Rosie poster and Rockwell's *Post* cover. But we also want to consider **why** an image like Rosie gets taken up and circulated and remixed as a meme in our current culture.

In the final two images we introduced at the beginning of the chapter, we see the image of Rosie appropriated to create new meanings across global contexts (Figure 11.12). The first is a painting from 2010 by Chicago artist Robert Valadez. In addition to drawing on our shared knowledge of the Rosie image, Valadez builds on this meaning by using the Mexican icon of "La Adelita," a symbol from the Mexican Revolution (1910–1920), as Rosie's counterpart, and he borrows the saying "Sí Se Puede," ("Yes, it can be done") from the agrarian protests in the 1960s and 70s in California led by Cesar Chavez.[14:5] In each case, the combination of elements used by Valadez draws on several other ideas to create a new text specific to a contemporary social concern. The text borrows meanings from the original Rosie image, combined with Mexican history and lore, to express Mexican national pride and the self-determination of Mexican women.

Figure 11.12: Images of Rosie as "La Adelita" and Malala Yousafzai

The second image was painted by 17-year-old artist Anat Ronen at the Avis Frank Gallery in Houston in 2014. In this image of Rosie, Ronen substitutes Malala Yousafzai, the young Pakistani human rights activist who survived a vicious gun attack by the Taliban at the age of 15. Yousafzai was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014 for her work on equal access to education for women and children around the world.[14:6] Like Mexican Rosie, Ronen's mural draws meaning from the original

Rosie image but reinterprets it in a new context, further spreading Rosie and the cultural and historical meanings she carries.

Another important social and rhetorical aspect to consider when analyzing a visual text like Rosie is to trace how an image moves from being a shared image to a shared physical expression and enactment of the image. We can think of this type of meaning-making as performativity—the way, like Beyoncé, meaning-makers create shared rhetorical meaning and express themselves by photographing themselves performing Rosie. This act of performance has become especially relevant today in our highly visual world as we perform some aspect of our social identities with each photo we take and post. Often we take up cultural memes like Rosie to portray, as Beyoncé has, aspects of our identity that we want to highlight, performing an identity by taking up culturally familiar costumes, settings, poses, words, and movements.

Figure 11.13: Rosie the Riveter being performed by users on popular social media sites

At popular social media sites, such as YouTube, Pinterest, Instagram, and now-defunct Vine (Figure 11.13), one can find thousands of such Rosie performances by both ordinary and famous people as users continue to draw inspiration from Rosie for all kinds of rhetorical purposes.

Inquiry #5: Seeing an image in social/rhetorical contexts

The original Rosie the Riveter poster is often called a propaganda poster. Its purpose was to convince viewers to hold a particular set of beliefs and support a set of actions that would be aligned with U.S. goals in World War II (and the later versions support other political purposes and actions). The propaganda poster is a genre of visual/hybrid art that developed to serve these rhetorical purposes, and like all genres, it developed common features that evolved from its purposes.

- You can place the original Rosie poster in its historical textual context by looking at other posters from the World War II Era. (You can find examples from the National Archives or at history.com.[L14:4])
- Or you can find some examples of contemporary propaganda posters at sites like Web Design Survivalist.
- Or you can work with a poster example you discovered in Inquiry #1—perhaps, for example, the image of Michelle Obama as Rosie that was originally posted at recovery.gov and was used to convey the strength of the fiscal recovery project after the economic crisis of 2008.
- Compare examples of propaganda posters. What kinds of compositional elements do you notice? What can you say about this genre and the ways in which it suits its purpose of persuasion? If you look at other countries' propaganda, what similarities and differences do you notice? If you've chosen an older image, is it still in use today? If so, in what other contexts has it appeared? What kinds of purposes is it used for? How is the image being reinterpreted and performed? If you've chosen a contemporary image, do you find ways in which it borrows specific visual elements from older propaganda posters?
- How, in the end, do composers of these posters use the compositional elements available to them to make a visual argument?

Composing: Visual Analysis

In this chapter, we've been exploring what it means to live in a world saturated with images—images created by ourselves, as well as those created by businesses and other organizations for specific rhetorical purposes. We began with a single image, an Instagram post by popular artist Beyoncé as Rosie the Riveter, then traced the roots of her image back through time to the original Rosie the Riveter propaganda poster created in 1942. In the process of exploring, we also encountered several iterations of the Rosie image as it has circulated and been picked up by other composers to create new meanings in the process. We also saw, looking at social media sites, how the visual image of Rosie has been picked up by others, in drawings, photos, tattoos, and video, as others evoke Rosie and perform her for their own social and rhetorical purposes.

It is now your turn to create your own analysis of visual culture by selecting and curating a group of related visual artifacts—bringing them together in a collection and then exploring the compositional, cultural, and social/rhetorical aspects of these images.

Inquiring and Inventing

For this composing section, consider using an online application for curation that will help you collect and annotate any online resources (links to articles, images, and other relevant digital texts) related to an aspect of visual culture you are interested in learning more about. Some current popular apps for helping manage research online include Zotero, Diigo, Dragdis, and Instapaper. For our example here, we'll be using Diigo to demonstrate how to collect and organize images, links, and other web resources.

Gathering and curating relevant images

Through your inquiries in this chapter, you've had the chance to see and think about a number of visual texts and have probably begun to think about ones that interest you and why. As a first step in composing an analysis of visual culture, you could begin by choosing a visual artifact you find interesting and that has a significant presence in an area of contemporary culture that interests you. You'll want to begin with an image or visual meme that has circulated widely over time and has been used and performed in many different contexts for different rhetorical purposes. Examples can include a range of visual artifacts, from magazine ads, to superheroes, to political revolutionaries, to visual stereotypes of gender and race, to performances of the meme #looklikeaprofessor. In the example of Rosie, we started our inquiry with an image of Beyoncé performing Rosie, then built our initial collection of images around this image to explore and understand the Beyoncé image.

In this initial research move, the goal is to collect a large number of images to give you a broad sense of the different contexts in which this particular image is circulating in culture. You can begin with a basic image search using a variety of search engines, including Google.

Figure 11.14 is the first page of a search using "Rosie the Riveter." With an image like Rosie that is so widely present, that has spread as a meme, we could never fully explain all the different ways that Rosie is being evoked in all these different contexts. So, it's important to start simple and build your understanding of your initial image

Figure 11.14: Results for basic image search for "Rosie the Riveter"

as you gather other related images. Choose images you find visually provocative, or that are using the image in novel ways. Also think about collecting images from different time periods to give you a sense of how the use of the image has changed over time. You might also consider images that have circulated as memes. A useful resource for meme images is the site knowyourmeme.com,[L14:6] which archives past, present, and suggestions for future memes.

For our initial image search for Rosie, we used the online application Diigo to help gather and organize our images.

Figure 11.15 shows the first round of curated Rosie images, along with the user's name (tim_wallace) and descriptive tags (rosie image) for easier searching and categorizing. Applications like Diigo let users name each image they have saved and add tags to help them organize what they find. Once you have a large group of images (15–20), the next step is to begin grouping and tagging them into different categories based on the content they depict. You'll notice in Figure 11.15 a range of images drawing on Rosie for various purposes grouped according to their different uses. The first image collection resulted in the following six categories of images.

- **Category 1:** Original Rosie images from Westinghouse and Rockwell
- **Category 2:** Pop icons using Rosie
- **Category 3:** Factory images from World War II showing women working
- **Category 4:** Rosie as political protest
- **Category 5:** Performing Rosie in culture and community
- **Category 6:** Rosie toys and apparel

Further curating and selecting your images

Once you have collected a good number of images and have categorized them, the next move is to curate further by going through each category and taking notes as you look closer at each image. As you do so, you'll want to look for meaningful patterns and ideas that emerge across the images you have collected. You won't be able to analyze all the categories you have discovered, so your primary goal in this stage is to begin to find a focus you can explore further. Eventually you'll want to narrow in on 4–6 main images to work with that will anchor your analysis. You can still use other images in your analysis, but having a core group of images will help you keep your analysis focused. In our exploration of the Beyoncé image for this chapter, we also examined the two original images of Rosie alongside her use as a political message, and the way everyday people enact and perform Rosie online and off.

Stepping back and reflecting on your curated collection

Before you move into a more extended cultural and visual analysis of the images you have chosen, now is a good time to step back, read through any annotations and notes you've taken, and write about some of the things you've learned in this

Figure 11.15: Screenshot of Diigo showing the first stage of collecting and curating a group of Rosie the Riveter images

process. What kinds of patterns and relationships have you noticed across images and websites? Are there similarities in composition? What are some of the contexts in which these images emerge and circulate? How are they shared, and what different kinds of meanings are expressed in the process? As you answer these questions, you'll want to note themes and ideas that interest you and that have potential to be extended into a more in-depth analysis of these visual artifacts.

Drafting and Shaping

Now that you've had a chance to collect, curate, and think about an image and some of its variants, you are ready to shape and compose a longer, more sustained visual and cultural analysis of these images. You can use any number of prewriting strategies to map out your visual analysis, but one simple and effective way is to use a sheet of paper and a pen/pencil to draw visual relationships between different aspects of your analysis (often called "bubbling" or "mapping"), or use mind mapping software. The idea is to create a visual representation that can serve as a guide for your written analysis.

One way to set up your analysis is to start to map the three perspectives we've focused on in this chapter: compositional, contextual, and social/rhetorical. Figure 11.16 is the beginning of an example map for the Rosie images we've chosen to explore.

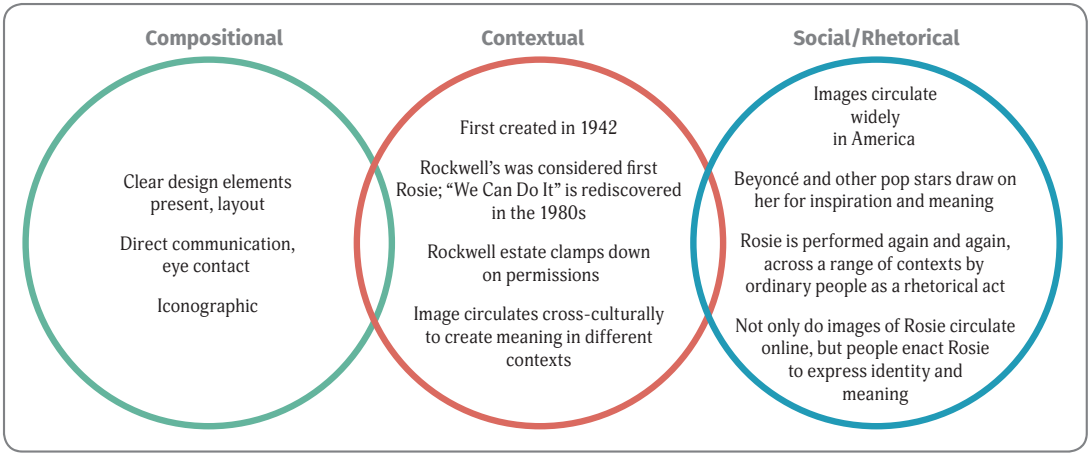


Figure 11.16: Perspectives map

Compositional analysis

As we did with the handful of Rosie images we looked at earlier, one way to begin your analysis is by looking at the **what** and **how** of the images. How are design concepts like balance, contrast, alignment, repetition, and proximity being used? How are the visual elements arranged in each example, and how are words and

images working together? Do you notice any patterns or similarities across images and how they are laid out? Working through these compositional questions will help you describe what you see and provide a good base for further analysis.

Contextualizing the images you have chosen to analyze

When contextualizing your group of images, you are trying to understand, as much as you can, the **where** and **when** of the images' composition. What are the historical circumstances of their production? Where and when were they published? By whom? As with each of the Rosie images we chose to work with, knowing the when and where of their publication helps us understand the history and context they come from. As Megan Garber's piece demonstrates, there's an important history to the Rosie images, and that history gives us a richer sense of the meanings Rosie carries with her as she moves through different contexts. For this move, and the moves that follow, you should begin collecting relevant articles and readings you can draw on for your analysis. Again, using an application like Diigo, begin collecting and bookmarking both scholarly and more popular texts that will inform your analysis of these images (Figure 11.17).

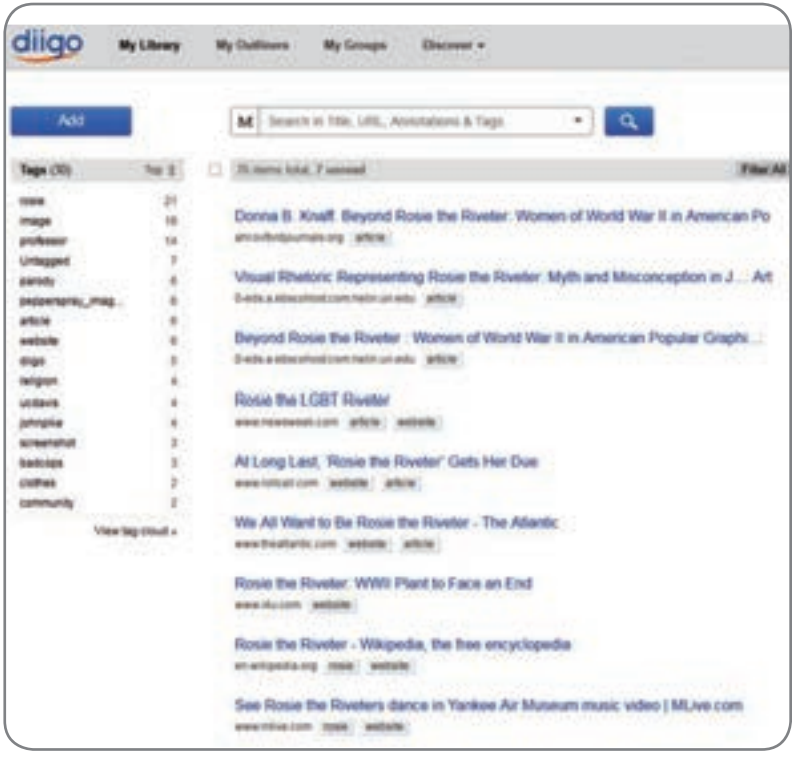


Figure 11.17: List of relevant articles for cultural and historical background on Rosie the Riveter

Using your images as your starting point, search for both scholarly and more popular articles to help inform your own cultural and historical understanding of your chosen images, and bookmark those sites so you can return to them again for closer reading and note-taking. The sixth article listed in Figure 11.17, for instance, contained a helpful discussion of some of the historical/cultural contexts of the Rosie image and therefore became the reading for this chapter.

From this perspective, you'll want to ask some of the following questions.

- When and where were the earliest versions of this image created, for what purposes, and with what meanings for those who created, viewed, or circulated them at that time?
- How has the image been taken up and used in other contexts?
- Have the earlier cultural meanings been kept or altered as others have recontextualized the image and adapted it to new times, places, or uses?
- Do you find patterns in what elements are kept and evoked as an image is reshaped and remixed?

Considering the social and rhetorical aspects of the images

At this stage in your analysis, you're most likely beginning to form ideas about why the images you selected were created and for what purpose. In addition to considering the compositional and cultural aspects of your images, you'll want to also ask questions about some of the social and rhetorical purposes behind their composition. Who is the audience of these images, and how are they attempting to communicate with that audience? What values and beliefs are they expressing? As we noted with Beyoncé as Rosie, we can tell a little about how her audience favorably reacted to her post by the number of likes and retweets it received. Likewise, understanding that the Mexican Rosie image was created in remembrance of the American farmer protests in the 1970s helps us to understand the historical context of its composition, but that information can also suggest some of the rhetorical purposes behind the image and its potential impact on the people who saw it (and continue to do so).

Finally, in considering the social and rhetorical contexts of such images, you'll want to consider how these images circulate and find expression in people's everyday lives.

How are they picked up by others in different contexts? How and why do people draw meaning from these images, and how do they perform such meanings? How are others using the images to create new meanings, or, like Beyoncé, performing a particular social identity? The image in Figure 11.18 is such an example, taken in 2015 at the Rosie the Riveter World War II Home Front National Park in San Francisco, where more than 1,000 Rosie lookalikes gathered to break the *Guinness Book*

world record for the most Rosies gathered in one location, surpassing the previous record of 776 Rosies set the year before in Michigan.

Synthesizing your ideas

At this point, you'll want to find an interesting angle to write about. You won't be able to cover all the insights you have gained during your research process, so you'll want to focus on those things that stand out most for you. For some images, you might find that the cultural and historical meanings stand out; for others, the social and rhetorical aspects and how individuals in communities perform these images as acts of social identity may seem more relevant. In any case, your goal is to bring together a rich discussion of the compositional, cultural, and social aspects of these images in a way that sheds light on how these images express meaning and how that meaning changes as it circulates from context to context and use to use.

When you've finished drafting your composition, you'll want to get feedback from peer readers/viewers to see whether they've followed (and hopefully enjoyed) your analysis and to make any necessary revisions to strengthen your work.

Figure 11.18: Women dressed as Rosie the Riveter in San Francisco, CA, 2015

Revising and Publishing

When you've finished drafting your composition, you'll want to get feedback from peer readers/viewers to see whether they've followed (and hopefully enjoyed) your analysis and to make any necessary revisions to strengthen your work.

Using peer response questions

Here are some peer response questions you can begin with, in addition to any you feel might be useful in helping your peer improve his or her work.

- Has the composer collected, organized, and reflected on a set of related and meaningful images?
- Has the composer analyzed the composition of one or more of these images, considering how the images are arranged and how their design communicates their intended meanings? Does the composer use that understanding to explore both what's constant and what varies across the set of images?

- How does the compositional analysis provided here lead to a larger point, a larger analysis of these images? Are there additional compositional elements that seem central to how these images function that the composer should consider?
- If working from a historical/cultural perspective, has the composer placed these images in their historical and cultural contexts, showing how they've been adapted to create new meanings as they've been recontextualized? What else might you want to know about where and how these images have circulated? What questions are you left with about the paths they traveled or what those paths suggest?
- If working from a social/rhetorical perspective, has the composer explored why and how these images are circulating, with what audiences, and for what new purposes? Has the composer explored what shared meanings and values are reflected in these images?
- Is the analysis well organized and easy to follow?
- Has the writer/composer chosen appropriate visual images and placed them effectively in the composition? Are there places where another image would be helpful or where an image is distracting and might be eliminated?
- Does the composer, by the end, leave you convinced that this is a fair and interesting analysis from which you've learned something?
- What other advice would you give to the composer of the text?

Revising for public circulation

You've chosen images that are already in wide public circulation. Now you'll want to consider how to place the new understandings you've gained into a public conversation. In addition to posting your full analysis to a class blog, wiki, or website, you might ask: What are some of the sites on which I've found the images I've used? Do they accept new posts or comments? Can I add particular observations to sites where they would be relevant, creating and following a plan to scatter the meanings I've come up with among the most suitable locations?

You'll want to provide source information for any images you'll post to public sites, being sure to give the appropriate credit for the original image. See also "Copyright and Fair Use: How It Works for Online Images). Reposting a widely circulating meme without explicit authorization from the originator has become common practice, but occasionally there are objections.

Reinventing and Circulating Your Work

Another way to approach a visual analysis is to explore how certain social identities and roles are performed visually. Twitter conversations like #ilooklikeanengineer and #ilooklikeaprofessor have been exploring the way online searches can often perpetuate certain stereotypes about different roles and identities. As Adeline Koh wrote about starting #ilooklikeaprofessor (Figure 11.19):

Figure 11.19: Initial post from Adeline Koh and the launch of #ILookLikeAProfessor

> #ILookLikeAProfessor isn't a catch-all. Rather, I'm interpreting the hashtag as a way to rally people whose bodies or orientations have been used to discriminate them and to tell them that they have no place in academia. If you teach in higher education in any way, you deserve the respect that comes with the title. Grad student, alt-ac, adjunct, contingent, tenure-track: if you teach in higher education, you deserve to say #ILookLikeAProfessor.

Figure 11.20 is a recent screenshot of a search for "professor" using Google.

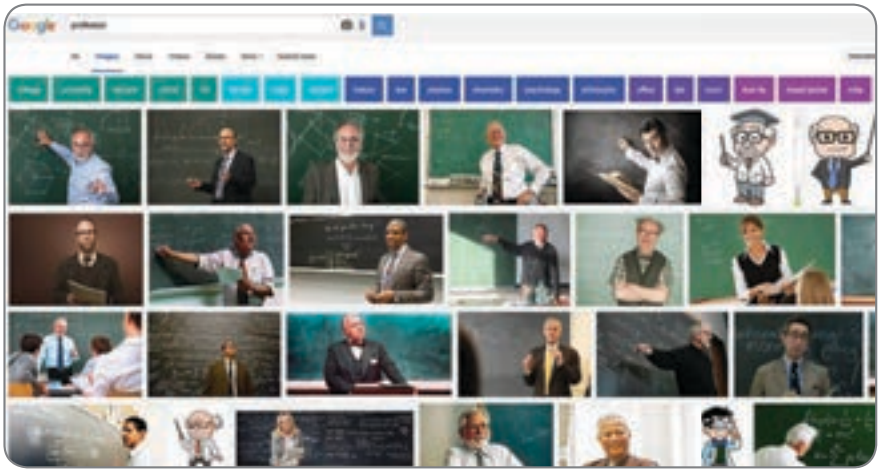


Figure 11.20: Recent screenshot of a search for "professor" using Google

Since its start in March 2015, hundreds of real professors have posted images of themselves using #ilooklikeaprofessor to show the growing diversity of professors around the country (Figure 11.21). Using the concepts from this chapter, you can explore the images themselves, the contexts that have given rise to them, and their rhetorical purposes and social meanings. How might the creative performance of a professor identity help to make strong cultural stereotypes visible and help us challenge them?

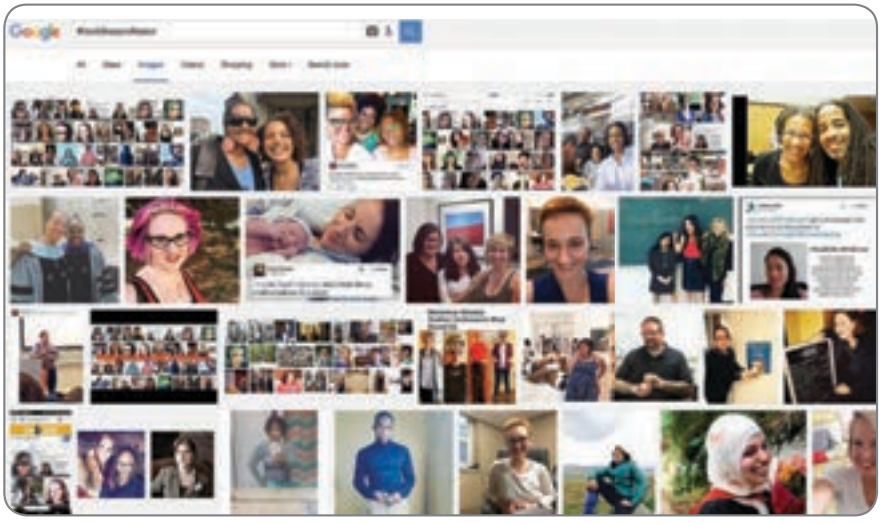


Figure 11.21: Basic image search for “#ILookLikeAProfessor”

CHAPTER 12

Review Evaluation

Central Questions

1. What are the features of our informal reviewing activities and the reviews we read and post for wider circulation as cultural practices?
2. How do reviews take shape in particular contexts, foster larger conversations, and work within textual ecologies?
3. What effective reviewing moves can be applied when composing a review for a specific context?

Chapter Preview

On the online sites of journals of cultural commentary, like *The Atlantic,* writers engage a general (nonspecialist) audience of readers in extended thinking about topics of shared public interest, among them questions related to a digital culture. At the same time, blogs of cultural and political commentary, sometimes the work of the same writers, support a more extended conversation with a community of readers. Both typically invite reader comments, and some blog writers, like Andrew Sullivan, work with and integrate those comments into their own succeeding posts, partially erasing the line between writer and reader.

In this chapter we'll focus on another set of contexts in which we are likely to participate as writers, as well as readers, in public exchanges online: the multiple review sites that have made it easy for writers to reach a wider audience with their own impressions and experiences—their own evaluations of the quality of the movies they see, the music they hear, the food they are served. Reviewing is another way in which we, as readers and writers, are joining the public knowledge-building and knowledge-sharing activities of contemporary culture. While the world of interactive media allows more of us to become creative producers of culture, composing and playing our own music, following online tutorials on painting with social community discussion, contributing to writers' sites or fan fiction, it also allows us to share how we view others' productions.

Reviewing has become a widespread cultural practice, and much more than in the past, we're now likely to not only read reviews, but also write them for an audience of others who may be interested in our opinions of music, books, movies, restaurants, products, etc. In doing so, we're participating in new audience commu-

nities with people who share our interests and might comment on, like, or share the reviews we post. As readers and writers in these review contexts, we are engaged in a form of cultural criticism, focusing our attention on the various products and productions of our contemporary culture and looking carefully to see how they work and why. The wide circulation of reviews also shows how digital resources are reshaping the ways in which we share ideas and collaboratively assess cultural productions in our ordinary lives. And our digital reviewing practices intersect with other shifts in our larger culture.

Reviewing typically involves analysis, but it goes beyond looking at **how** something works within a particular context to considering **how *well*** it works for its audience and purpose. A review can also be seen as a form of argument, one where the writer has come to a position based on experience and observation—reading a book, seeing a movie, listening to a song—and has carefully considered how and how well the work functions and now shares that position and gives evidence to support it. Such an argument about whether this book or movie or song is worth reading or seeing or hearing includes an evaluation of whatever is under review.

How do we decide not only whether something is literature or music or art, but also whether it is a "good" example of that form? Such value judgments take place within a context, sometimes within a smaller community, like a band's most loyal fans or a face-to-face book group. But in most realms of cultural production, the wider circulation of texts expands the community beyond the local toward increasingly public and global cultural exchange and a wider shared sense of what's valuable.

Exploring: The Practice of Reviewing

Within their local communities, people have always shared their opinions of the things they experience, whether simply by making a face after tasting a new food, giving a shout out to someone who's presenting at a group gathering, or clicking "like" for a Facebook post. Such responses are like mini-reviews, an opinion without any supporting reasons for it (though those could usually be added: "it's too bitter"; "she's contributed x, y, and z"; "you've used just the right words to express what many of us are feeling"). But because those opinions are shared in very familiar contexts with much shared knowledge, few words may be needed for a shared understanding. As opinions are shared with a wider audience, such shared knowledge and shared ways of conveying an opinion have to be fostered, and the unsupported opinion gradually becomes a review, with implicit or explicit expectations for both the form and substance of the review. Our reviewing practices take on new shapes and revolve around different questions in different contexts, but we can begin to discover more about this widespread online literacy practice by looking first at our most familiar settings.

Reviewing in Local and Global Contexts

In our informal local settings, we not only share quick opinions, but we also begin to turn those into informal word-of-mouth reviews. In face-to-face conversations we tell friends why they should see a particular movie or buy a particular product, and we make those friend-to-friend exchanges online as well, through posting and sharing on Snapchat, Tumblr, Twitter, or other social media platforms. These online exchanges have similar purposes and often similar content, but their shape and structure, style and tone, may be quite different.

We can think about the act of reviewing with our analytic tools of **what**, **why**, **how**, and **where**, asking

- what's being reviewed;
- why it's being reviewed (what purpose that act serves at this moment and in this community);
- how it's being reviewed (the style of language, the reviewer's stance, personal or objective, and the elements that seem to be expected within a particular community); and
- where it's being reviewed, the particular reviewing context that gives shape to these other elements.

Different communities pay attention to particular products or productions that reflect the shared interests of the community, and over time they typically develop shared criteria for what makes a good version of the things that interest them. Digital platforms make it easier to share and circulate reviews, and they also make it easier for us to see a community's interests, reviewing practices, and evaluation criteria.

Inquiry #1: Informal reviews within a local community

Identify texting or online exchanges in one of your immediate communities in which members share an opinion about an object of interest (a song, a movie, a TV program, etc.). Consider what makes a good version of that object of interest to members of this community. What implicit criteria do they look for (and how explicit do they make these)? How do they present their case to others, and how do others voice agreement/disagreement? Why does this sort of "reviewing" happen in this group?

Compare what you find about such informal reviewing across different communities. As you do this, note what this kind of comparison reveals about the different communities and the object of interest being reviewed. What shared assumptions, shared values, and shared ways seem to shape the sorts of things the community reviews and how?

Sidenote

Criticism is a scholarly genre that has much in common with the review.

Reviewing Practices in Wider Review Contexts

More formal reviews intended to reach larger audiences traditionally appeared in print—in newspapers or magazines, or journals of criticism. Now the act of reviewing has moved online, with a broad circulation of reviews that are not only being read by wider audiences, but also written by members of these audiences as well, on general product sites (Amazon or Epinions), on movie sites (Rotten Tomatoes), and on dedicated book sites (Goodreads). Almost anything that can be reviewed now has a public platform on which it's reviewed, often building a community of repeat reviewers and readers. And some platforms, such as Amazon's, allow readers to rate reviews as helpful and to comment on their quality, giving feedback to writers.

> "Moves are steps that have a specific communicative function within a type of exchange, ones that members of a discourse community would expect to find within a particular writing context."

With all of this activity, researchers have tried to discover more about the current practice of reviewing, looking at various review sites to see who posts and how often, but also **how** reviews are shaped in each reviewing context.

Scholars who study such exchanges, whether informal or formal, online or off, typically start their study of **how** with the two genre analysis concepts, moves and strategies. Moves are steps that have a specific communicative function within a type of exchange, ones that members of a discourse community would expect to find within a particular writing context. So a typical move for reviewing a book would be to introduce that book. But writers might use different strategies for doing so: beginning by quoting a few lines, beginning by giving a brief summary of its content, or beginning by giving information about its context. In each case, the goal of such introductory moves is to build the necessary background knowledge a particular audience will need to understand what follows.

A study of Amazon product reviews (see a sample review prompt in Figure 12.1) that were rated helpful by readers found that such reviews had a number of common moves, with several different strategies for accomplishing each.[12:2]

Figure 12.1: Amazon review summary and prompt

Typical moves included the following:

- Giving an evaluation of the product;
- Providing general user information about the product (a description, how it works, tips about its use); and
- Offering an account of personal experience with the product, and offering a comparison with other products.

The strategies for carrying out these moves were different, however, with some focusing directly on the writer's personal experience (with first person pronouns, "I tried. . ."), some on the readers' likely experience (with second person pronouns, "You won't. . ."), and some primarily on the product itself (with demonstrative or third person pronouns, "this product," "it"). The study found that experience-based reviews were seen as most helpful overall, but negative reviews were found to be more helpful when they focused on product comparisons rather than personal complaints. It seems that some shared criteria for good reviews have developed within the Amazon review community, and that they exclude too much complaining.

So the practice of reviewing, as it's carried out in different contexts, may include some common elements—some similar descriptive and evaluative moves. Yet the emphasis on some moves over others, and the specific strategies for accomplishing these moves, may differ significantly in the context of different interests and communities. As we know, participants in discourse communities, including more public, online communities, most often share not only areas of interest, but also background knowledge about those interests and some shared beliefs and values within that domain. They're likely to share their purposes for coming together, as well as ways of accomplishing those purposes.

For reviewing, the context includes not only the sort of thing being reviewed, but also who the reviewer is, who the imagined readers are, where the review is posted/published (including how an online platform is set up), and when. Media review sites have different priorities and concerns than product review sites (or restaurant review sites, or travel review sites) do. And, not surprisingly, there are usually differences between reviews written by professional or more experienced reviewers and those written by fans.

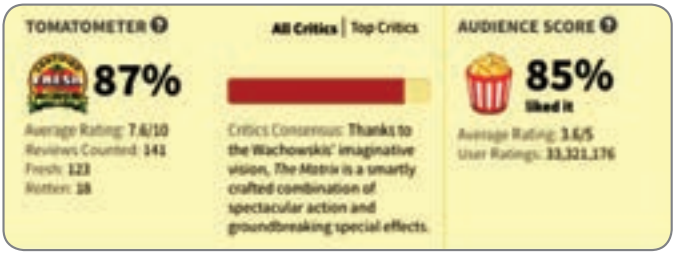


Figure 12.2: Rotten Tomatoes review

A study of movie reviews (see sample review in Figure 12.2), carried out much like the Amazon product review study mentioned above, looked at those written by film critics versus those written by the general public.[12:3] The researchers found common moves by both sets of reviewers. Some of these were descriptive moves.

- Giving practical information about the movie
- Describing the movie
- Placing the movie in context

Others were evaluative moves.

- Giving criticism
- Recommending the movie to the reader

But professional reviewers made more descriptive moves and rarely used first person pronouns in their criticisms and recommendations, while amateur reviewers made more evaluative moves, most often in the first person. The focus of their evaluations also suggested that professional film critics held different criteria than most ordinary viewers. This supported earlier studies showing that while ordinary viewers tend to prefer blockbuster-type movies with big stars, professional critics are more likely to favor "movies that are challenging, have abstract qualities of cinematic style, and move away from familiar settings." (This may explain why we are more often puzzled by movies with four-star ratings.)

Looking at a number of reviews from a particular context will let you discover more about how reviews in that context are typically structured, what moves are made and how, and what the typical style and tone are for amateurs or professionals writing reviews in that context. You might find and name other types of moves as well. While this particular research identified *descriptive moves* (focusing on **what** is included in the object being reviewed) and *evaluative moves* (focusing on **how well** the object works) there are also *moves of analysis* in most reviewing practices that look more carefully at **how** a cultural production works (how the elements that are included work together to make meaning), as well as **how well** it works, as we'll see below.

Inquiry #2: Finding moves made by reviewers of cultural productions in different online settings

Form groups by shared interest in a form of media: a TV program, film, music group, or book. Find online reviews by searching on review sites such as Blogcritics, Paste Magazine, Pitchfork, or Goodreads. Consider the likely audience for this site and its shared values, expectations, and interests. What descriptive, analytical, and evaluative moves are made, and how? What criteria are used to evaluate what's being reviewed? What seems to make a good review in this context?

How would you sum up the common genre practices for reviews in the setting—the typical moves that are made and how? If you've found reviews by both professional and amateur reviewers, what differences appear in the moves they make and the ways in which they make them? As you compare notes on different sites, what similarities and differences do you find? Why do you think the differences might exist?

Making Connections: Reading Reviews within a Context

Online reviews often reach a large audience and can have great power to shape opinion in ways that can make or break the success of a product or other type of cultural production. To get a sense of the ways in which reviews can circulate and review conversations can shift within one media context where there is typically widely shared public interest in a form of cultural production, we are going to begin with a particular music review and move out to consider related posts that give us a richer sense of the reviewing context for one group, one album, and its larger textual ecology. The moves we'll make could be applied to any example of a cultural production that has generated a number of reviews.

Exploring a Multifaceted Review Context

The following review appeared in *Pitchfork*,[L12:1] an online music publication that reviews independent music and that has had a large impact on what happens to that music. An article about *Pitchfork* in the *Washington Post* [12:4] describes its founder, Ryan Schreiber, as someone who started a music review blog as a new college grad with no public writing experience. It describes how his blog developed into the powerful and influential Pitchfork Media. *Pitchfork* (Figure 12.3) reviews have had the power to build a large following for musicians, or do the reverse and make them uncool to listen to.

Here's a somewhat typical review from the site, a 2012 review of Florence and the Machine's *MTV Unplugged* album. An "unplugged" performance or album refers

to the unplugging of electronic instruments to create an acoustic performance, and the MTV program MTV Unplugged has been the venue for such performances and resulting albums, which typically build off of earlier "plugged" versions. In fact, the interplay of recording and performance is one more example of how cultural productions are circulated and recast in contemporary society.

Figure 12.3: Pitchfork masthead

Pitchfork:

"a guide to the underground musical wilderness

a hilariously snarky, oft-elitist, sometimes impenetrable but entertaining and occasionally even enlightening internet music magazine"

Before Reading: Reading and annotating

As you read and annotate Zoladz's review, consider the following questions.

- Zoladz makes a number of key moves in this review. One is introducing the album and placing it in a larger context. What do you observe about her strategies for making this move and the contexts she brings in?
- What does she assume, you, as a reader, already know about or want to know about the program, the resulting album, and about its content—music and performances and MTV? What strategies does she use to place her readers inside this world?
- What other moves do you find that seem to be descriptive? Analytical? Evaluative?
- What seems to be the purpose of this review? What understandings about Florence and The Machine and the strengths and limitations of this example of their work does Zoladz want her readers to take away?

*According to *Ultimate Classic Rock*
Source: http://ultimateclassicrock.com/top-mtv-unplugged-episodes/

"Florence and the Machine: MTV Unplugged"

by Lindsay Zoladz
Pitchfork review,[L12:2] April 12, 2012

To answer your first question: Yes, they still do these. "MTV Unplugged" was once a showcase for pop culture writ impossibly large—a place where the entire world could gasp at Gene Simmons' bare face or where Kurt Cobain could introduce over five million record buyers to the Vaselines. But in recent years, the show's institutional power has fizzled, and its most recent installments have featured tepid, obligatorily low-lit performances from are-they-really-*that*-famous? acts like 30 Seconds to Mars and Young the Giant. Which is why Florence and the Machine's *Unplugged* instalment feels so promising. One of the more compelling pop acts to spring up in recent years,

it's hard to imagine a voice more equipped to puff new life into the series than that of celestially soulful frontwoman Florence Welch. As on mega-hits like "Dog Days Are Over"and "Shake It Out", Welch has displayed a talent for sprawling her demons and heartbreak across canvases bigger than the sky: Every song she's ever sung has been writ large.

And occasionally, that's the problem. While her promising 2009 debut, *Lungs*, had the skittish, genre-hopping restlessness of an artist still settling into her sound, the 12 tracks on its followup, *Ceremonials*, came in only one size: gigantic. Even the ballads beat with earth-shaking percussion were gilded with epic, Greek choral background vocals and all other varieties of sonic baubles. Though Welch's voice is undeniably powerful, the songs beneath it all ***seemed*** well-composed and deeply felt, but their emotional impact was often blunted by producer Paul Epworth's unrelenting maximalism, ramped up from his work on Welch's debut. Which makes them perfect candidates for the classic scaled-back, stripped-down approach, right? You'd think so.

In quite a few cases, the *Unplugged* treatment does work wonders. The opening number, "Only if for a Night", is more arresting here than it is kicking off *Ceremonials***,** where its haunting power (the song is about being visited in a dream by the ghost of a loved one: typical Florence stuff) was interrupted by a superfluous, glitchy beat. The *Unplugged* version gives the song much-needed room to breathe, and with fewer distractions the searing imagery of Welch's lyrics have a chance to float to the surface. "And the grass was so green against my new clothes," she trills, losing herself in the song's second verse, "And I did cartwheels in your honor dancing on tip-toes/My own secret ceremonials before the service began/In the graveyard, doing handstands." It's an oddly joyous funeral rite, but it's Welch articulating the feeling she plumbs best—deriving light from the deepest darkness and feeling more at home in the world of spirits than the corporeal one. Same goes for "Breaking Down." On *Ceremonials*, that song's edges are padded with stately chamber-pop echoes, as though to protect Welch from bruises as she wrestles her demons to the ground. The sparse arrangement of the *Unplugged* version allows Welch to find deeper and even more unsettling emotion in the song, transforming the chorus from a pop hook to something like a moaning, seasick dirge.

Some of the greatest "MTV Unplugged" moments have been somewhat unlikely covers (Maxwell doing Kate Bush! Nirvana doing Lead Belly!), and here we get Welch adding to this enduring trope with her take on "Try a Little Tenderness". It's a lovely vocal performance (she hits a note early on that will probably prompt someone to book her for an upcoming Whitney tribute), but it also brings into focus the problem with her *Unplugged* as a whole: Its emotional range is decidedly limited. Welch's "Try a Little Tenderness" is mournful and utterly devoid of playfulness, and—though no one's going to fault her for her putting her own signature spin on a classic—so is every other moment of this performance. Which means that "Tenderness" bleeds right into the song after it, an acoustic arrangement of the power-ballad "No Light, No Light." Her twangy duet with Josh Homme, a cover of the Johnny Cash and June Carter song "Jackson", provides a little deviation, but not much.

Many of these songs might sound good on their own, but listening to them one after the other exposes their repetitions. There's only a certain number of times you can

listen to Welch feeling lost in the verse and then found, transcendently, in the bombast of the chorus before it all starts to feel like a package of "Amazing Grace"-themed magnetic poetry, with each new track shuffling the elements around just so. Unlike one of Welch's songs, though, *Unplugged* is a decrescendo, and the performance runs out of steam by the time she gets to two of her best songs, "Dog Days are Over" and "Shake it Out". The latter, a torch song that has enough oomph not just to move mountains but to pick them up and punt them, peters out into a disappointingly tepid finale.

No one who listens to *Unplugged* will accuse Welch of being an untalented singer, but they might be left wanting more from the material she lends her voice to. Fans will enjoy hearing Welch's songs opened up in this format, but her *Unplugged* definitely doesn't rank among the classics of the series. The artists who have been responsible for the best and most enduring *Unplugged* albums—Nirvana, Lauryn Hill, and Jay-Z's collaboration with the Roots—all used the candle-lit stage to explore new directions in their respective sounds. For Welch, it serves the opposite end: It displays the boundlessness of her vocal talent but finds her tethered to a frustratingly limited aesthetic. ■

After Reading: A reviewer's positioning

To review a book, you have to show yourself to be a knowledgeable reader. To review music, you have to position yourself as knowledgeable about the music you're reviewing while evoking the shared background knowledge your readers bring. What strategies does Zoladz use as she positions herself as an insider to a relevant area of the world of music? In what ways does she show her knowledge and rich understandings of the world she enters through this review? What does she suggest about MTV Unplugged and its viewers? How does she anticipate the prior knowledge they bring? What does she show about herself and her values, expectations, and interests?

A review can be seen as a form of evaluative argument, in which the writer makes the moves of taking a position and backing it up with evidence from an analysis of what is being reviewed. Evaluating the quality of a cultural production as good, bad, or mixed suggests that the reviewer has specific criteria for making such a judgment and is measuring the work against those criteria in determining how well it works.

Inquiry #3: Responding to an evaluative argument

What position is Zoladz taking about this MTV Unplugged album? What seem to be her criteria for a good Unplugged performance, and how does this album match up against those criteria? What evidence does she use to support her position? Are you convinced by her argument?

Based on this evidence Zoladz offers, she gives the album a numerical rating of 5.9 out of 10. Would Pitchfork's often-criticized practice of assigning numerical ratings affect your own sense of the album's quality, or might you use the words of the review to come to a different judgment?

Listen to some of the group's MTV Unplugged album, or watch the video of their MTV Unplugged performance.[L12:3] Does your own experience fit with Zoladz's evaluation? What points would you agree with? Argue against?

We've described the Pitchfork review context and the role that this publication plays in the music industry. And you've considered the contexts evoked by Zoladz in her review. In addition, the online platform itself affects how we understand and respond to a review, and we suggest that you now look at this review in its original online context.

Inquiry #4: The context of the platform

Pitchfork's online platform supports links within the text and related content around the review text. What visual/aural context is this review situated in? How does both the content of the surrounding panels and the visual appearance of the whole affect your response as a reader of this review? Within the text itself, do you find the links useful in providing further background information, or possibly distracting? What elements might you find desirable if you compose your own music review?

Placing a Review in an Intertextual Context

In the music industry, as in other areas of cultural production, there is often a rich discussion of popular work across review sites, and sometimes a discussion of those review sites themselves. The music review blog Tuning Fork[L12:5] was created to offer an alternative voice to *Pitchfork's* about the independent music scene. It lasted only a few years before its founder tired of the demands of maintaining a blog. An end-of-year post from 2005 comments on the quality of writing on *Pitchfork* (PFM is Pitchfork Media):[12:6]

> **What makes us post against Pitchfork in the first place:** The PFM writers who don't fact check, those who plagiarize, those who use too many A-typical music review phrases or drop too many other band names…no less the inappropriate ones, those who offer negative opinions without backing it up with logical mature useful information, those who simply don't seem to have any real knowledge of the band they are reviewing, those who pad a review with meaningless paragraphs and there are about a million other ways a record review can go wrong so it is almost silly to try to create a list. . .
>
> Talent aside there is occasionally a level of humor, care, unique insight, thoughtfulness and knowledge that comes across in a great piece of work and it is important to celebrate those writers too.

Inquiry #5: Evaluating the evaluators

Revisiting the review of the Florence and the Machine album, where do you think Tuning Fork would place this review (which came after Tuning Fork had discontinued new posts). Would it have elicited a negative Tuning Fork response for the negative qualities listed above, or would Zoladz have been one of the writers to be celebrated?

Credit: Ari Marcopoulos

Figure 12.4: Kendrick Lamar Pitchfork review

In 2013, Pitchfork Media created a print publication, with long-form feature articles (the genre we've seen from *The New Yorker* and *The Atlantic*) about the music world, while continuing the popular online review site. Now it seems that the style of the online reviews has been changing over time (and time is one dimension of context), perhaps influenced by the context of the print essays. Compare this "pitch," an excerpt from a more "pay attention" type review of rapper Kendrick Lamar's album[L12:6] (*To Pimp a Butterfly*)[12:7] with the review of Florence and the Machine. The reviewer chooses not to focus on details of any song in the album he's reviewing, but rather on placing Lamar's work within the context of the black experience, evaluating the work on how it speaks to that experience, contrasting it with the work of Kanye West, and rejecting the idea that the album should be reviewed in the usual way.

> Unlike other artists whose juxtaposition of hip-hop bluster with confessional vulnerability feels like shtick, Kendrick does not do performative honesty. Rather, he performs honestly. And expertly. Do not buy it when critics will inevitably try to sell you that his work is rough or unbridled, the magic work of a hood savant. It is precise and skilled, as perfect in technical execution as it is uninhibited in content. *Butterfly* is not the recording of a natural genius. It is the record of a working artist who has been visited by genius and who has a deep and earned mastery of his form.
>
> It is not fake, it is not afraid, and it is not accidental. Kendrick's hip-hop is not the hip-hop that allows white guys to breathe. He does not break off pieces of blackness as a hood souvenir that you can post on your wall or bump in your car in order to feel like it's all good. He doesn't even mention you at all. It is not about you. It is about him and his complete humanity. It is about the humanity of every other black person whose face is painted on the mural of this wall of sound. The question then becomes how hard and for how long will America continue to fight, deny, or ignore this humanity.

> That is for you to decide when you are listening to his work in its completion. When you are alone with his words, do you hear them? Do you believe them? Or do you attempt to lump them together with whatever hackneyed and two-dimensional concept you have of "Compton?"
>
> Rather than reviewing this album, let's review what we do with it.
>
> Kendrick's music cannot free us. But how we respond to Kendrick's music just might.

You might also look for a *Pitchfork* review or pitch for another independent artist who interests you. Or go back to find a Tuning Fork post that responds directly to a *Pitchfork* review (usually with a link to the original review). Or read the brief *Rolling Stone*[L12:7] review and the New Musical Express (NME) review[L12:8] of Florence and the Machine's *MTV Unplugged* album to compare their approaches and evaluation. You might also want to return to the songs highlighted in any of these reviews, to see whether your own evaluation is different from what you've found in the reviews.

Inquiry #6: Learning more about a review context

As you move around, examining different reviews about different artists, or from different music review sites, what picture do you get of the conversations that go on within the community of music followers/critics and the various ways in which they work toward the same underlying purpose, discovering what's worth paying attention to in the vast world of current independent music? From your experience of these reviews as a reader, what criteria would you set for a "good" and/or "useful" review for a particular context and purpose?

Reading Advice from an Online Reviewer

While music review sites offer one context for reading a review, a more general cultural review site can provide further understanding of what effective reviews of cultural productions look like and can help both readers and writers of reviews to evaluate them. Blogcritics[L12:9] is a blog site that offers reviews of the arts and culture. Like many blogs, it has built a community of writers and readers, with more than 4,000 registered writers and more than a million monthly readers in 2014.

Here's Mark Schannon's introduction to his blog essay, "So You Want to Be a Critic," which continues with a second post on "Guidelines for Writing Reviews."[12:8]

> **Introduction**
>
> A reviewer, regardless of the art form, has a responsibility to readers to be knowledgeable about the specific art form. Reviewers do not simply express

> opinions. There's a huge difference between "I **liked** *Killer Ants Devouring Lithuania*," and "*Killer Ants Devouring Lithuania* was a **good** movie."
>
> In the former, you're only expressing a personal opinion based on your likes and dislikes. You have the right to that opinion, but as a reader, my reaction is, "who cares?" I want to know about the movie or book, not about you. In the latter, you have a set of criteria by which you can judge the work of art. Too many people fail to see or accept that distinction. If you fall into this category, you'll write lousy reviews of no interest to the reader; you'll merely be feeding your own ego by seeing your name in print.
>
> But if you study the medium, its history and trends, if you can break a performance into its component parts to evaluate how they fit together, if you can put your review into the context of similar works, then you're offering valuable insights that will help readers decide whether to experience the art, and you're teaching them how to enhance their experience and appreciation.

Schannon goes on to talk about a number of elements (what we've been calling moves) that make up an effective review.

- The hook (the opening that draws a reader in)
- After the hook (setting the stage for what will follow, suggesting the writer's purpose)
- Other elements that will form the body of the review—the art form and its context, the genre and how this example fits into it, trends that it's part of, the criteria for judging it, and the specific artistic elements that make up the item being reviewed, such as the lighting and costumes for a play, or the quality of sound-mixing for music
- And the close, leaving the reader with a new understanding

Schannon is also part of an audience community made up of people who read and write reviews. While he's specifically addressing readers who want to become reviewers, he is also addressing the other reviewers who contribute to Blogcritics. The examples he uses come from their reviews and show both what they've done that he assesses as effective, by criteria he's naming, and what revisions he might make to their already published reviews.

Inquiry #7: Applying Schannon's advice to Zoladz's review

Read Schannon's essay, "So You Want to be a Critic" in Part II Additional Readings, along with his specific suggestions for writing music reviews. Schannon's advice draws on his experience as part of the Blogcritics community—a review site that draws a more general audience as compared to *Pitchfork's* narrower focus on the indie music world. How does his advice fit with what you've found in Zoladz's review? Which of his key elements appear among the moves you've found her making? Are any miss-

ing that, as a reader, you wish she'd included (or handled differently)? Are there any moves she made that could add to those Schannon discusses? What ideas about the practice of reviewing will you draw on as you work toward writing your own review of music or another genre of cultural production?

Composing: Review

In an American culture where almost everyone listens to music, reads books, goes to movies, or watches TV shows, where many review sites exist and where anyone can write a review, reviewing has become an important public genre and one way in which you can join in a larger public conversation. It is also, itself, a form of cultural production. You'll want to draw on the reviews you've explored as you think about the kind of review you'd like to write and the type of audience you'd like to reach.

Inquiring and Inventing

Schannon talks about the importance, in reviewing, of offering a reasoned critical argument for evaluating the work you are interested in, not just giving your opinion. Some necessary preparatory moves are described below.

Identifying a review subject

Choose a genre of cultural production you'd like to review in an area you know something about, where you can position yourself as knowledgeable and worth listening to. Why might you be a good reviewer for this particular work in this genre? What sorts of prior knowledge and expertise do you bring to this reviewing activity? Why do you want to review this work? What is your purpose? And how might you position yourself?

Deciding on a review context and seeing moves typically made

Where do you find other reviews of this type of creative activity? Which review site fits best with your own sensibility, with where you'd like to add your own voice? What sort of audience would you like to connect with? (Blogcritics is a good site for reaching an audience of readers who have a more general interest in contemporary culture.) Read some other reviews on the site you choose and see what moves are common to them—moves you're likely to want to try out in your own review.

Describing, analyzing, and evaluating

Researchers have identified these as different sorts of moves made in reviewing, but they're typically interwoven. You'll want to decide how much you need to describe the work (**what**), creating shared knowledge with your readers. You'll want to look carefully at **how** this cultural production works—its key elements and how

they fit together to create a particular effect and convey particular meanings. And you'll want to determine the criteria you think make a work of this type effective, considering **how well** this work meets those criteria. Look at Schannon's guidelines for specific questions to consider in reviewing different genres of creative work.

Drafting and Shaping

Reviews, like other genres, take on particular forms as they appear in specific contexts. Nevertheless, the common elements or moves that Schannon has identified from his work with Blogcritics are useful ones to draw on as you begin to give shape to your own review. Once you've worked out what you want to say in your review and why, you are ready to work with those moves.

1. **Finding a hook**

Reread what Schannon has said about the hook. What will capture your readers' attention? What has hooked you in the reviews you've read? And how will you follow the hook, focusing attention on the work rather than on yourself?

2. **Providing context**

Schannon points to several elements of context you might consider: the art form and perhaps its history and "how what's being reviewed fits or varies from that form," the other work that's being done within the genre, or the trends (societal, political, religious, artistic movements) that this piece of art references. We've seen that Zoladz, in her review, addresses several aspects of context: the MTV Unplugged program ("once a showcase for pop culture writ impossibly large") from which Florence and the Machine's *MTV Unplugged* album was drawn, the context of the singer's other work, and background about the group's usual "plugged-in" productions, providing both shared knowledge for the reader and a context for the evaluation of the specific work on this album. Zoladz sees the genre of unplugged, acoustic music as potentially offering a new opportunity to a group whose work she finds to be overproduced in the studio.

3. **Drawing on your analysis of key elements of the work and how they measure up against your criteria for evaluation**

Schannon reminds us that we need to pay attention to the details of the artistic production being reviewed, including questions of tone, message, pacing, timing, and especially importance: "Does this work of art set new standards, raise new questions, demand that the viewer or reader challenge his or her preconceptions?" What details and examples from the work you're reviewing can best show how it measures up to the criteria you've set? Zoladz quotes from lyrics as one way of making her points.

4. Adding other key elements, including images or audio

In *Pitchfork* reviews, links—to the group's website, to other reviews of its work, to its other albums, to performance videos on YouTube—contribute significantly to placing the work in context, and Zoladz's review uses all of these links, along with one image of the album cover. The links allow readers to listen to the songs Zoladz points to. It could be even more effective to include small audio files with snippets that exemplify the points she's making, but for a public site, that would involve copyright concerns, with costly music permissions needed. (If you post to a private course site or are making a Prezi or PowerPoint presentation that will only be shared on a private site, you have more flexibility in bringing in actual examples.) In any event, you'll want to do as much as you can with links, images, sound, and video to bring your readers into the work you're discussing on the review site you choose. Capturing your own photos or videos of a live music, dance, or theater performance (if allowed) can give you one resource for enriching your discussion of the work.

5. Providing a closing

In your closing, you'll leave your readers with a strong final impression of the work you've been reviewing, clinching the evaluative argument you've been making about it. Here's an example Schannon gives of how he would improve the close of a published review:

> Here's a close that could have been much better had the writer just left himself out of the picture:
>
> "I'm sure my friends from the party are talking about my musical tastes behind my back. At forty-six, I probably should be more immersed in jazz, classical, and pop then I am. But let the mf'ers talk — so much of what we call entertainment these days is flat and boring. At least NOFX and other bands approaching middle age still have the balls to produce some very funny stuff."

Start reading from "so much of what we call entertainment. . ." and you'll see how powerful the ending could have been.

And here's Zoladz's close, contrasting what's been achieved in the best Unplugged work with what she finds in the album she's reviewing:

> The artists who have been responsible for the best and most enduring *Unplugged* albums—Nirvana, Lauryn Hill, and Jay-Z's collaboration with the Roots—all used the candle-lit stage to explore new directions in their respective sounds. For Welch, it serves the opposite end: It displays the boundlessness of her vocal talent but finds her tethered to a frustratingly limited aesthetic.

We think Schannon would approve.

Revising and Publishing

From your initial choice of the review context you're writing for, you've already made some decisions about how and where you'd like to circulate a review. As you

fine-tune your work for that site, you'll want to get feedback from others who are familiar with the site, or at least with the genre and subgenre you're reviewing.

Mark Schannon carried out a peer review process right on the Blogcritics site, posting an early version of his essay on reviewing, getting comments from his readers (many of whom were also involved in reviewing), and then revising his essay to incorporate those comments. You've read his final version. Here is his earlier introduction:

Schannon's original opening:

> One of the problems trying to explain how to write a review is that there is no one way to do it. It's not like someone climbed a mountain and returned with stone tablets from "you know who" with the absolute last world on being a critic. They're more like thin layers of soft clay that keep getting crunched and missed up.
>
> For someone just starting out, don't let all the junk here intimidate you. Read the article for the major points, and, as time goes by, you'll be able to incorporate more and more—adjusting it to your own style and tastes. For more experienced reviewers, treat the article like a refresher course. Maybe there's a gem you hadn't thought of before, or an idea that will help you better break the rules.

In his second version, after receiving readers' comments and deciding to include some of them, Schannon added the following paragraphs to his opening section, telling his readers more explicitly that the blog post is part of his ongoing effort to define effective reviews in a way that will help other writers, and that he's inviting further comments that may support further revisions.

Schannon's second version:

> And just as I'm incorporating comments from people when I posted this on BC, if you see something you disagree with or that I missed, send me an e-mail. I'm always willing to revise this article.
>
> When I posted this article on BC, Che had some excellent advice. He also wrote, "Rules are good. Breaking rules is better." He's absolutely right. I love breaking rules. But...you can't break the rules if you don't know what they are. The Picasso museum in Paris is organized chronologically. Among the paintings from his "Blue" period was this incredibly realistic painting. It was as if Picasso was saying, "Look I can paint realism, I know all the rules of composition, color, perspective, etc. I just don't want to do that anymore." But he was able to paint such incredible work because he'd learned the basics of painting.
>
> What follows will integrate suggestions based on how most critics write reviews, and absolute, unbreakable rules that apply most of the time except when you decide to ignore them. I'll try to identify them as they appear.

> Also, at the end of this article, I'll list guidelines for each art form to help you keep track of what things to consider.

For Schannon, readers' comments served as a kind of assessment of work-in-progress, offering additional perspectives or critiques for him to take into account as a writer as he worked his way toward the final two-part version, with an advice essay and a set of guidelines that now appear on the site. By that final version, the explicit reference to readers no longer appears, but their comments have led him to a more substantial revision.

Before you begin your own revision process, you might want to undertake one more inquiry, comparing the three versions of Schannon's opening section to see what you can discover about how he worked with comments on his way to a final revision. What are the significant changes that appear in the final version of his opening, and how might they reflect the sorts of understandings he shared with other reviewers? Read his words about writing a hook following this introduction. Has he accomplished what he suggests there? Would you, as a reader, have further suggestions for him as a writer?

1. Forming peer response groups by genre and possible review sites

Although you might not be part of a long-standing reviewing community in the way that Zoladz and Schannon are, you can nevertheless create your own audience community with others who are writing reviews about the same genre of cultural production and perhaps for the same review site. If Schannon's guidelines include questions for the genre you're focusing on, you can use his questions as a starting point for your peer review (or adapt them to another genre). And consider the elements he discusses: the hook, the discussion of context and analysis and evaluation of various aspects of the review object, and the closing. Depending on your course context, you might have the opportunity to post your reviews and review comments on an online class site, making it easier to capture those comments and work with them in revising.

2. Revising

Decide how to work with your reviewer's comments. If someone has offered an important new insight, you might even want to quote that person, as Schannon has done in the second version of his review essay. More likely, you'll incorporate the key points of the responses in crafting a revised version of what you've written before. And you've most likely gathered some further ideas about how you might revise your own review from being a critical reader for others' reviews. Schannon shows how changes in sentences and paragraphs can alter their impact, particularly for hooks and closings, and you might want to look again at his examples as you work through your final version.

3. **Matching your review with a public review site**

At this point, you'll want to make a final determination of a review site to which you'll post a public version of your review. You might find that as you've crafted a review, you've made it more suitable for one site than another. Some sites, like Blogcritics, seek new writers to post longer essay reviews about different forms of cultural production to become reviews for the site. On others, like Amazon or iTunes, you don't have to register as a writer to post a review. Amazon accepts reviews of up to 5,000 words, but you have to have purchased the book or music you're reviewing. If you've carefully crafted a review that speaks to an informed audience, you might want to post it to a dedicated review site that seeks more substantive writing, but we often find extended and useful reviews on Amazon or iTunes, as well as the many other sites you may have looked at in Inquiry #2.

4. **Applying finishing touches**

As always, you'll want to proofread carefully. But you'll also want to consider how else you'll present your review on its final site. If you're including links, try to make sure that they all work at the moment you post (although some will inevitably change later), and that they all actually offer rich additional context for the descriptive, analytical, and evaluative moves you are making. If you're including images, make sure they are positioned in places that will enhance the visual impact of your post. When you're done, submit your post!

Reinventing and Circulating Your Work

Now that you've contributed your own review to a larger conversation, you can follow that review context in several ways.

- Chances are that someone else has reviewed the particular cultural production you've reviewed. Find three other reviews (including reviews by classmates). How does this collection of reviews, including your own, speak to the quality of the work being reviewed, the shared expectations for such work within a larger audience community, and the place of that work within a segment of contemporary culture? What can you learn about the place of creative production in contemporary society from the multifaceted exploration of review conversations that this chapter has focused on?
- You might also want to enlarge your framework of understanding by placing the genre of work you've chosen to review within a larger industry context. Some genres of creative cultural activity, such as music and its subgenres, are driven by corporate interests as much as by the individual talent of the artists, with the industry shaping the context and forms of creative activity that get developed. Researching the history of how genres such as hip-hop or salsa have evolved and have been treated within the industry can give you a richer understanding

of how contemporary genre practices have arisen and the place of a particular example in extending or challenging those practices.

- As you consider these different contexts, you'll want to consider **how** and **why** reviews of the same cultural product may differ, and may differ widely. What kinds of different beliefs and values emerge in different reviews? How do diverging views work in relation to one another, and what do they suggest about the context of a cultural production? At this point you might want to reinvent your own work to reflect your enriched understanding of the ways in which a multifaceted review context can shape individual reviews. What might you add to or change in your original review that addresses what you've discovered by looking at multiple reviews or at the larger industry?

CHAPTER 13

Multimodal Rhetorical Analysis

Central Questions

1. What kinds of rhetorical moves do writers and content producers make online to successfully attract and communicate with a public audience?
2. How do rhetorical situations develop in digital environments, and how do they change as texts circulate?
3. How can developing your own rhetorical awareness help you participate and compose more effectively for larger, more public audiences?

Chapter Preview

A "rhetorical relationship" is a relationship that is formed when two or more people come together via talk, text, image, video, or other modes of communication. We looked particularly at the rhetorical relationships we create when we read and considered the different types of reading we can do to engage a text (participatory and critical). In this chapter we consider the other side of these rhetorical relationships, the ones we create as writers. While we are constantly involved in building rhetorical relationships through the texts we compose each day, in this chapter we'll take a closer look at some of the rhetorical moves writers make to attract an audience and enter a larger public conversation and how writers do so within a particular rhetorical context or situation.

The art of rhetoric using Aristotle's classical definition is "…as the faculty of observing in any given [communicative] situation the available means of persuasion" *(On Rhetoric)*.[10:1] For Aristotle, such means related directly to the arguments and style a speaker used when speaking to a live audience. In today's digital contexts, arguing well and writing with style are still important strategies for engaging audiences, but in considering rhetoric now we must also consider the newly available *ways* and *means* writers have on hand when composing with digital media in digital contexts. In this chapter we'll explore some of the ways contemporary writers try to appeal to an audience through their creative use of digital media to produce and share texts.

You will have the opportunity to compose your own rhetorical analysis and explore how writers, audiences, texts, and technologies come together to form a rich textual ecology around a topic or issue.

Exploring: Rhetorical Relationships and Appeals

We are surrounded by attempts to attract our attention, appeal to our emotions, and persuade us, from the advertising billboards we pass on the highway to the commercials that interrupt online videos and TV. Spammers try to fill our inboxes; ads run alongside our Facebook newsfeeds; friends text and tweet and post things that urge us to click on a link to something interesting that has more links, more ads, and more attempts to grab our attention. We, in turn, share that content with other friends, helping to circulate texts and compositions through a global network of people and media. In our increasingly digital world, we find ourselves in an intensifying rhetorical environment where friends, family, companies, organizations, and content producers of all kinds persistently compete for our attention.

Attracting an Audience in a Digital World

Content creation sites like BuzzFeed, Upworthy, and Mic are establishing themselves as popular destinations for online readers. These sites specialize in creating articles and content designed specifically to attract a large audience and encourage sharing between readers. Writer and content creator Tom Barnes's article "Scientists Just Discovered Why All Pop Music Sounds Exactly the Same" is an example of this kind of content. To explore how the rhetorical situation changes when a text appears on or offline, we have provided Barnes's text for you to read first and will then provide a link for an online reading.

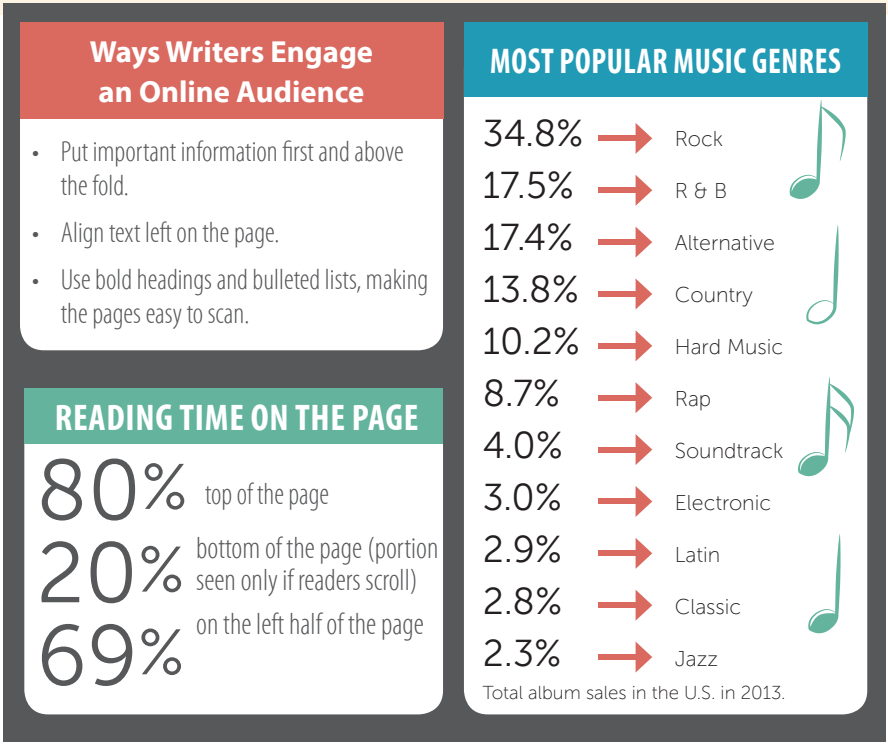
Global news and entertainment online

BuzzFeed is a well-established global network for news and entertainment online. Upworthy says its mission is "to change what the world pays attention to," and it works to make the content it gathers go viral.

Mic, offering news and opinion with a focus on politics and public policy as well as style and entertainment, is run by millenials for millennial readers, and the content it creates and distributes is shaped for that audience. All writers are competing for readers' attention.

Before Reading:Analyzing the rhetorical structure of the article

- How does writer Tom Barnes introduce the topic of his article?
- How does he conclude?
- How does he draw on other texts to create a conversation?
- What kind of style and tone do you notice, and what are their effects?



Source: https://www.statista.com/chart/1783/album-sales-in-the-us-by-genre/

"Scientists Just Discovered Why All Pop Music Sounds Exactly the Same"[10:2]

by Tom Barnes
Mic, January 7, 2015

Anyone who listens to pop radio regularly has probably been hit with this realization at one point or another—a ton of pop music sounds very similar. It seems like grandpa logic, but a growing body of research confirms what we all suspect: Pop music is actually getting more and more homogeneous. And now, thanks to a new study, they know why.

A new study, surveying more than 500,000 albums, shows simplicity sells best across all music genres. As something becomes popular, it necessarily dumbs down

and becomes more formulaic. So if you're wondering why the top 10 features two Meghan Trainor songs that sound exactly the same and two Taylor Swift songs that sound exactly the same, scientists think they finally have the answer.

The study: In a recent study, researchers from the Medical University of Vienna in Austria studied 15 genres and 374 subgenres. They rated the genre's complexity over time—measured by researchers in purely quantitative aspects, such as timbre and acoustical variations—and compared that to the genre's sales. They found that in nearly every case, as genres increase in popularity, they also become more generic.

"This can be interpreted," the researchers write, "as music becoming increasingly formulaic in terms of instrumentation under increasing sales numbers due to a tendency to popularize music styles with low variety and musicians with similar skills."

So music all starts simplifying and sounding similar. Not only that, but complexity actually starts turning people off of musical styles. Alternative rock, experimental and hip-hop music are all more complex now than when they began, and each has seen their sales plummet. Startlingly few genres have retained high levels of musical complexity over their histories, according to the researchers. And ones that have—folk, folk rock and experimental music—aren't exactly big earners. Unless, of course, they fit into the Mumford & Sons/Lumineers pop-folk mold.

The findings are somewhat intuitive. Of course a genre will sell more once it forms an established sound that listeners can identify with. But the science is only proving the now-dominant truth of pop music: Record companies are only comfortable promoting things they already know will sell. And they know that now better than ever.

Record labels are pouring resources into data analysis tools, using them to predict which songs will be the next breakout hit. According to Derek Thompson at *The **Atlantic**,* executives can use services like Shazam and HitPredictor to see which songs will break out next with surprising accuracy.

Once a worthy song or artist emerges from the data, radio conglomerates have mechanisms in place to ensure that music will connect with an audience. Clear Channel's "On the Verge" program is one of the most talked about. When a song is dubbed "On the Verge," every station in the Clear Channel network has to play it at least 150 times—blasting it to a potential network of about 245 million listeners. This undoubtedly helped launch Iggy Azalea to incredible new heights of success, which she may not have otherwise earned with her talent alone. And her success, in turn, is spawning legions of hip-hop pop imitators whom labels will choose to blast out because their chance at success has been proven. It's a cycle.

The study is right—and it's more of a problem now than ever. Iggy Azalea may be the harbinger of hip-hop's eventual homogenization, but she is only a pawn of the larger media circuit. As reported by *The Atlantic***,** "Top 40 stations last year played the 10 biggest songs almost twice as much as they did a decade ago."

Human beings crave familiarity. Numerous psychological studies show that people choose songs they're familiar with over songs that more closely match their reported music tastes. Our somewhat manipulative music industry, which chooses familiar-sounding music and pushes it to listeners in massive quantities, knows well how to capitalize on those cravings. Genres standardize over time as a way to plug into this psychology. And then we hear the same songs, over and over again.

But there's a point at which that becomes tired, and the space opens for something

revolutionary—something that totally shifts the way we think about music. If we're aware of these sort of trends and practices, we can better resist what they do to our music. We can champion the genuinely original and leave aside the derivative. We can make a better musical culture.

h/t Atlantic
Tom Barnes

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After Reading: Getting attention

Before visiting the text online, consider how Barnes attempts to capture your attention in his writing alone. What, in the style and tone of this text, seems rhetorical?

Once you have a good sense of some of the rhetorical moves Barnes is making in this print version of the text, follow the link to his original post[L10:1] online. How does your engagement with the text change? How is the digital text working differently than the print one? How is it able to attract and keep a reader's attention? What different kinds of communicative and rhetorical means do you see him using besides alphabetic text? How does he combine these elements in ways that are appealing?

Popular discussions of rhetoric tend to focus on the persuasive (usually misleading) aspects of rhetoric rather than the "available means" a writer or speaker can draw on to engage an audience. While persuasion is certainly an important part of rhetoric, digital texts radically expand the available means that writers can draw on to compose texts. For example, Barnes's composition about pop music combines conventional alphabetic writing with links, images, and video. For everyday digital texts like this one, links, images, and video are some of the newly available means for composing. From emails, to memos, to Snapchats, street signs, tweets, billboards, and websites, the amount of texts and rhetorical situations we encounter daily has grown well beyond the practice of mere persuasion. As the means and technologies of writing evolve, so too do our rhetorical practices.

The Rhetorical Situation and Appealing to Readers

When we engage in deliberate communication with others we step into a *rhetorical situation*. Rhetorical situations arise when there is a need or concern that must be addressed and talked about by a community, and each rhetorical situation we are a part of becomes part of the ongoing work we do together in maintaining the shared knowledge, purpose, and ways of a discourse community. Even our

day-to-day exchanges with friends and family often have rhetorical elements. In this chapter, though, we are more concerned with how writers use digital media to engage in larger, public conversations online and contribute to the larger textual ecologies that form around more public conversations.

Figure 10.1 is a diagram of a basic rhetorical situation. When writers and audiences seek each other out, they come together around a topic and a type of text (genre), using different combinations of media in the process. In understanding the rhetorical situation between writer and audience in Barnes's text above, we could begin by considering the topic (pop music and building popular taste), the media used (digital, social), and the genre (content post on a trending topic).

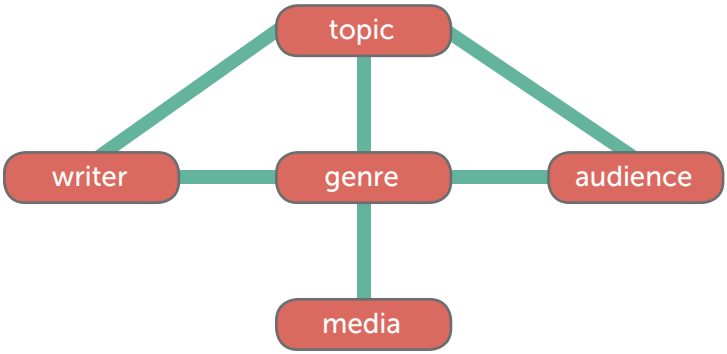


Figure 13.1: Diagram of a basic rhetorical situation

The text, and the form of genre it takes, is the cultural and social contact zone between writers and audiences. When looking at Barnes's composition, we might ask questions about the relatively new genre of the "content post." Why has this particular genre become so popular? What purposes does it serve? In what contexts? What do its current features tell us about the kinds of rhetorical situations that take place on Mic and similar sites? In considering the genre of a text, we are thinking about its shape and design and how that shape develops in response to recurring rhetorical situations that are similar. As we will see, Barnes's text is just one of several similar texts that addressed this same topic using similar rhetorical strategies. Content posts like Barnes's have become a common genre online as writers work to join a textual ecology around a trending conversation and generate user traffic to the sites they are writing for.

This basic version of the rhetorical situation is just a starting point for making sense of a text, of the meaning it is trying to convey, and to whom. As we think more deeply about a rhetorical situation, we also want to consider *how* a writer attempts to *appeal* to readers. What intentional strategies does the writer employ to connect with an audience? To get their attention and hold it? Aristotle, in the

context of ancient Athens, pointed to three key rhetorical appeals that speakers use to appeal to live audiences—ethically, logically, and emotionally—what he referred to as ***ethos, pathos,*** and ***logos***.

- **APPEALS TO CREDIBILITY (ETHOS).** Appeals to *ethos* invoke a writer's good reputation, credibility, and authority. Writers establish trustworthiness by being balanced and fair-minded and by treating other people's ideas fairly. By establishing that they are honest and to be trusted, that they cite sources reasonably without distortion, writers try to assure an audience that their motivations are in line with their values and beliefs.
- **APPEALS TO THE EMOTIONS (PATHOS).** Writers will often appeal to an audience's emotions and feelings by tapping into common beliefs and values. A writer might draw on anecdotes or personal experience to move the audience. Appeals to pathos often try to induce joy or fear in an audience. For example, insurance commercials invoke fear in viewers by exaggerating the likelihood of unforeseen accidents to produce the kind of anxiety that compels us to buy insurance.
- **APPEALS TO LOGIC (LOGOS).** Writers often appeal to the intellect of an audience through logic and reasoning. Logical appeals are often used in argumentative writing, where writers give evidence to support their points. Other examples of appeals to logic include the use of experts, statistics, data, and facts.

Inquiry #1: Appeals in contemporary culture

Use an internet search engine to conduct image searches of these three appeals. What examples come up? How do they enrich your understanding of these appeals and how they work? As a class, identify a handful of strong examples for each appeal in small groups. Share these images with your classmates (in class or on your class website), and discuss what they suggest about ethos, pathos, and logos. Based on these images, what can you say about how these appeals work in the larger contemporary culture?

These basic appeals are always overlapping. Establishing one's credibility can also serve to appeal to the reasoning and emotions of an audience. These aren't the only ways to appeal to audiences, but they are widely employed by writers and vary depending on the genre of writing. In today's competitive textual environment writers continue to develop new ways to appeal to our logic, emotions, and sense of credibility.

Inquiry #2: Analyzing a rhetorical situation

Using the basic rhetorical situation (Figure 10.1) as your guide, return to Barnes's post at Mic.

- What is Barnes's purpose in writing this text? What is he hoping readers will do?
- What kinds of appeals does Barnes use to attract a reader's attention? Are there appeals to the heart—to the emotions? To the intellect? How does he establish his credibility as a writer? Does the site establish it in other ways?
- How would you describe the genre of the composition, and how does its shape relate to the kind of media used and the topic and purpose of the text?

Expanding the Rhetorical Situation

While the basic framework for a rhetorical situation and basic appeals are a good starting point, there are additional things to consider when exploring and analyzing how rhetorical practices change in digital, networked environments.

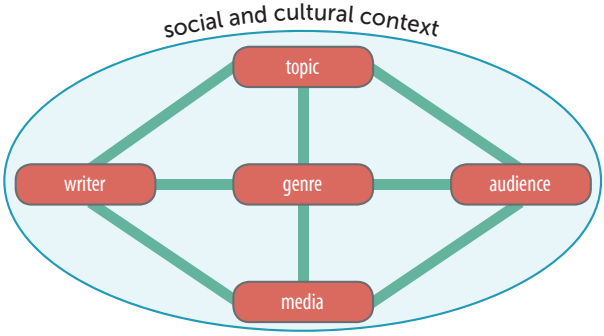


Figure 13.2: Expanded model of basic rhetorical situation

Figure 10.2 extends the basic rhetorical situation by situating it in a larger social and cultural context. The expanded rhetorical situation includes concepts that are in the foreground of the rhetorical moves a writer makes—the *stance, style, language, appeals,* and different *modes* used to achieve a communicative purpose.

Social and cultural context. As we've discussed throughout this book, context is a flexible term. In understanding the social and cultural aspects of a rhetorical situation, we are trying to understand the background, history, participants, and concerns that give rise to the situation and the production of a text. We can't expect to understand the entire context of a text's production, but the more background we know about a composition and the contexts in which a text is read and received, the richer our understanding will be. In trying to piece together the social and cultural

context of Barnes's pop music article, we can ask questions about the textual ecology that this is a part of. What else has been written about the topic? Is there already a conversation in progress? Why is it posted on this site? What other writers are cited?

In contextualizing Barnes's piece, we can begin by doing an initial search online using a standard search engine. We could also search popular social media sites like Twitter and Instagram to see if the topic was trending at some point. A basic search using the title of Barnes's piece reveals that his was one of several texts published in early 2015 focused on precisely the same topic of why popular music sounds the same (See Figure 10.3 on the following page).

Barnes's piece was published on January 7, 2015. Two days later, Tom Whitwell wrote about the same topic at *Medium*, using a title similar to Barnes's.

Three weeks later on February 5, Rajiv Narayan published another piece on Upworthy, again using a similar title and replicating Barnes's use of a Taylor Swift banner image at the top of the text.

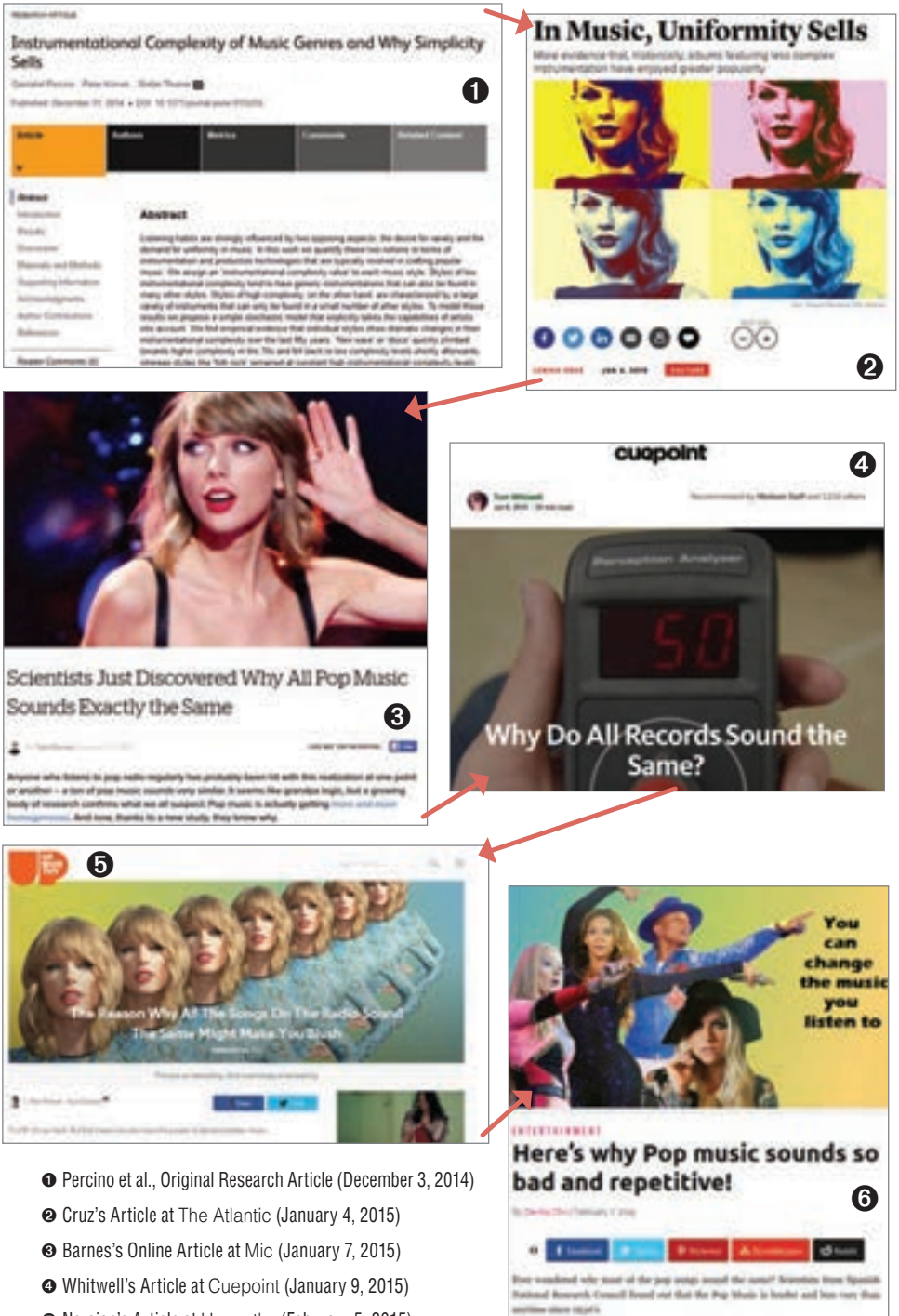
Devika Ohri made a similar post on February 7, 2015, at ReshareIt.com.

These are just a few of the texts written about this topic in very similar ways. What we see in this progression is how a textual ecology forms around a topic and how writers and content producers watch carefully for trending topics and use that information to attract their own audiences. And as they do so, they make similar rhetorical moves in composing their texts. As it turns out, Barnes's article wasn't actually the first to discuss the topic in 2015. He writes "h/t" (hat tip) at the bottom of his article and links to a text originally published at *The Atlantic* three days prior on January 4, 2015, by Lenika Cruz.

Once again, we see similar ways and means used in composing this text, including a link that Cruz has embedded in her introduction to the scientific research article that has been repeatedly referenced by each of the pop music writers as showing definitive proof that popular music does indeed sound the same.[10:3]

In understanding the social and cultural context of Barnes's piece, then, it's helpful to understand the various texts circulating about the topic, how they are different or similar to Barnes's text, and how they work together to create a conversation and textual ecology around current practices of making pop music.

As part of understanding the social and cultural contexts of digital texts, we also want to consider the *timeliness* of a text, what Aristotle called ***kairos***. In online textual ecologies like the group of texts we see above, their dates of publication illustrate how the writers were thinking about the *when* of their text, considering the timing and urgency of the publication so they might catch some of the buzz that was starting to trend around the topic. In each case, the writers demonstrate an awareness of the rhetorical situation and current contexts in which their articles will enter and (ideally) circulate. Cruz encountered the research on pop music early and was able to get out ahead of other pieces and publish her article before the others.



❶ Percino et al., Original Research Article (December 3, 2014)

❷ Cruz's Article at The Atlantic (January 4, 2015)

❸ Barnes's Online Article at Mic (January 7, 2015)

❹ Whitwell's Article at Cuepoint (January 9, 2015)

❺ Narajan's Article at Upworthy (February 5, 2015)

❻ Ohri's Article at ReshareIt (February 7, 2015)

Figure 13.3: Circulation of content across sites

#3: Seeing rhetoric move through a textual ecology

Go online and search for "why all pop music sounds the same." What other types of texts and media do you find that reference this topic? Are they part of the textual ecology we looked at above (published around the same time, linked), or part of a different one? In what ways do other texts demonstrate (or not) an awareness of kairos and the when of the rhetorical situation?

Sidenote

The step from academic research article to more popular genres is an example of how texts and ideas circulate, creating new rhetorical situations as they do.

Purpose. In Part I of this book we examined closely the **how**, **what**, **why**, and **where** of writing. Understanding these basic elements of a text are the first steps in making sense of its rhetorical purpose. Often the purpose of a text is obvious: the advertisement is trying to sell us something, and the parking ticket is dissuading us from parking illegally. In other situations, the purpose of a text may not be so clear, or it may have several purposes simultaneously, as is the case with the group of articles we've been considering. Authors write in public to participate in larger conversations and attract readers. To do so, they must appeal to the audience and do it in a compelling way. But why? What are their purposes for writing **what** they do, **how** they do it, and **when** they do it? What are they hoping readers will do beyond simply reading their text?

Barnes, as well as the authors that followed him, have several purposes in these compositions, but predictably their first priority is to attract an audience and generate traffic to the site that hosts their article. To do this, it's imperative that search engines can find the article. Thus, one of the purposes behind the "what" of the article is the strategic inclusion of key words like "pop music" and "repetition" throughout to help this page rank higher on search engines than other, similar content. Succeeding at this purpose leads to other purposes. By producers of these sites attracting an audience with content they know is trending and popular, the traffic to these sites grows and so, too, does the data they can collect about consumer habits—what topics we are reading, what we are searching for, what we share and purchase. This information can then be monetized by selling it to others, such as marketers and companies interested in knowing more about our consumption habits.

Figure 10.4: Image of Mozilla browser add-on Ghostery that shows how many different "trackers" are collecting data about our online activities

Using a browser add-on like Mozilla's "Ghostery," internet users can see how many "trackers" are being used by a particular site (Figure 10.4). Trackers are the cookies, beacons, and other technologies that are left on our computers by sites and companies interested in tracking us as we spend time online. Visitors to Mic who read Barnes's article will find that they are being tracked in 20 different ways—by the site itself to monitor site traffic, as well as marketing and advertising companies that have agreements with Mic to collect data about visitors to the site. The same holds true for other sites that replicate content to attract readers.

This, of course, is just one of many purposes behind writing these texts. When we consider the purposes behind the production of a digital text and the rhetorical moves a writer makes to achieve those purposes, we should keep in mind that multiple purposes are usually in play.

Audience. When we attend a concert or sporting event, we know who the audience is. We can see them. But when we write, the audience (the *who*) may not be so obvious. Sometimes writers are writing for multiple audiences. Other times they are writing to an audience of one (a text message). Understanding the audience(s) for a text can tell us a lot about how a text is working in context and the extent to which a writer has successfully communicated with that audience. In the case of the pop music articles, we can guess they are directed at an audience who listens to popular music and who frequently use social media for sharing. That audience, as research from the Pew Research Center has demonstrated, is primarily composed of 18- to 29-year-olds, an age group in which more than 90 percent use social media daily.[10:4] The Neilson Music Report finds that the same age group is also the largest consumer of pop music.[10:5]

Style and language. When looking at the style and language of the writing (the how) we usually begin by looking at specific instances where a writer is making an appeal. What kind of phrasing and word choice is the writer using? Is the writing style formal or informal? Informative or argumentative? What kinds of images and other design elements are used? When looking closely at Barnes's style and language, we can see he uses a combination of short and long sentences, and though his tone

is more conversational, he incorporates quotes and citations from other writers to support his observations. Barnes ends his piece urging readers to "resist" the "manipulative music industry" so we can "make a better musical culture."

Mode and media. When we ask questions about the different communicative modes a writer uses, it helps to think of them in relation to media and how different media encourage different kinds of composing. Barnes's text, like all the texts in the pop music group, exemplifies digital texts intended to be circulated and shared on social media (Figure 10.5).

Figure 10.5: Barnes's Mic profile

In what has become a common rhetorical practice on sites like Mic, Barnes's article concludes with his image, Twitter handle, and convenient links to other social media for those readers who feel moved to share this content (Figure 10.5). When we consider the media used for a text, we also want to look at the *functionality* of the text. While traditional print texts have a certain kind of functionality, digital media and online publishing platforms are designed to encourage interaction with readers, solicit comments, make a sale, or sign up users to their service. Digital social media encourages real-time engagement and responses from readers in ways that print media cannot. When we consider the media of a text in these terms, we are asking how the functionality of an interactive text works on us rhetorically.

Modes are the different symbolic means and resources writers use to compose a text from conventional alphabetic writing to images, sound, and video. Looking at the pop music pieces again, several of them use bright, colorful pictures and videos of pop stars. They use bolded headings and often include a picture of the author. Barnes, for example, intersperses his text with videos of popular bands to illustrate how the trend toward homogenization in pop music happens across music genres. All the authors integrate links to other content by changing the font color of the text to signal to readers a link to another text that, ideally, relates in some way to their overall rhetorical purposes. Analyzing the modes present in a composition can help us make sense of the different resources a writer draws on when composing a text for an audience.

Inquiry #4: Contextualizing a text or group of texts

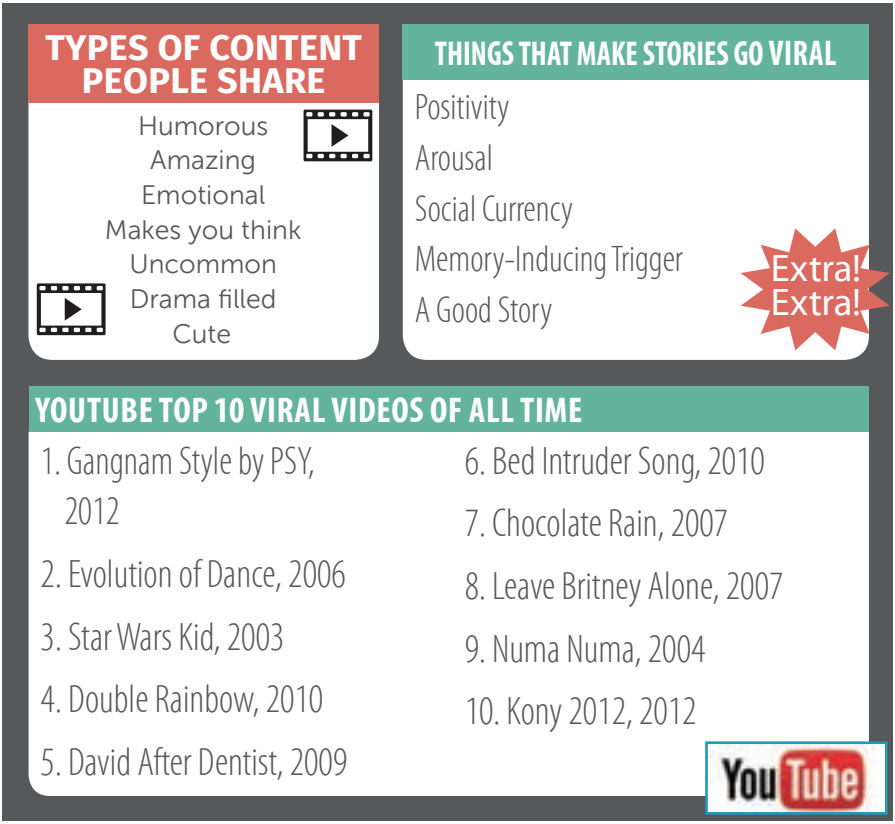
Looking back at the pop music articles, what more can you say about the social and cultural context of these texts? How does the article genre itself seem to be shaped (and reshaped) as it takes form in each different rhetorical situation? What can you say about their purposes and how they try to realize those purposes? About their likely audience(s) and how they are being reached? And about how they use similar and different styles and language to address this purpose and audience? What is the functionality of the sites? Are some more interactive than others? More "user friendly"? Which seem to do the best at attracting and keeping readers' attention?

Making Connections: Rhetoric and Social Media

In the following article, "The Six Things That Make Stories Go Viral Will Amaze, and Maybe Infuriate, You," Maria Konnikova looks at some of the rhetorical strategies writers use to attract readers online. Using current research about online sharing practices, Konnikova modernizes Aristotle's classical appeals (ethos, pathos, logos) to explore why some content goes viral and other kinds do not. In an era when there is fierce competition for audiences, today's writers continue to develop new rhetorical strategies to attract and keep an audience.

Before Reading: Reflecting on your rhetorical practices

As you read the article by Maria Konnikova, look for connections between your own rhetorical practices and the ones Konnikova points out. What kind of content is typically shared in your online communities? What kinds of content do you find yourself frequently searching for? What is it about the content that appeals to you? Do you notice yourself sharing content that is more positive (positivity) or provocative (arousal)?



Sources: http://www.bitrebels.com/technology/ultimate-viral-content-guide/
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qk4acvdyyqo

"The Six Things That Make Stories Go Viral Will Amaze, and Maybe Infuriate, You"[10:6]

by Maria Konnikova

The New Yorker, January 21, 2014

When Jonah Berger was a graduate student at Stanford, in the early aughts, he would make a habit of reading page A2 of the *Wall Street Journal*, which included a list of the five most-read and the five most-shared articles of the day. "I'd go down to the library and surreptitiously cut out that page," he recalls. "I noticed that what was read and what was shared was often different, and I wondered why that would be." What was it about a piece of content—an article, a picture, a video—that took it from simply interesting to interesting and shareable? What pushes someone not only to read a story but to pass it on?

The question predates Berger's interest in it by centuries. In 350 B.C., Aristotle was already wondering what could make content—in his case, a speech—persuasive and memorable, so that its ideas would pass from person to person. The answer, he argued, was three principles: ethos, pathos, and logos. Content should have an ethical appeal,

an emotional appeal, or a logical appeal. A rhetorician strong on all three was likely to leave behind a persuaded audience. Replace rhetorician with online content creator, and Aristotle's insights seem entirely modern. Ethics, emotion, logic—it's credible and worthy, it appeals to me, it makes sense. If you look at the last few links you shared on your Facebook page or Twitter stream, or the last article you e-mailed or recommended to a friend, chances are good that they'll fit into those categories.

Aristotle's diagnosis was broad, and tweets, of course, differ from Greek oratory. So Berger, who is now a professor of marketing at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School, worked with another Penn professor, Katherine Milkman, to put his interest in content-sharing to an empirical test. Together, they analyzed just under seven thousand articles that had appeared in the *Times* in 2008, between August 30th and November 30th, to try to determine what distinguished pieces that made the most-emailed list. After controlling for online and print placement, timing, author popularity, author gender, length, and complexity, Berger and Milkman found that two features predictably determined an article's success: how positive its message was and how much it excited its reader. Articles that evoked some emotion did better than those that evoked none—an article with the headline "BABY POLAR BEAR'S FEEDER DIES" did better than "TEAMS PREPARE FOR THE COURTSHIP OF LEBRON JAMES." But happy emotions ("WIDE-EYED NEW ARRIVALS FALLING IN LOVE WITH THE CITY") outperformed sad ones ("WEB RUMORS TIED TO KOREAN ACTRESS'S SUICIDE").

Just how arousing each emotion was also made a difference. If an article made readers extremely angry or highly anxious—stories about a political scandal or new risk factor for cancer, for example—they became just as likely to share it as they would a feel-good story about a cuddly panda. (In this particular study, certain pieces were coded as eliciting arousing emotions; in a follow-up, arousal was further measured physiologically.)

Berger and Milkman went on to test their findings in a more controlled setting, presenting students with content and observing their propensity to pass it along. Here, too, they found the same patterns. Amusing stories that had been chosen specifically because they were positive and arousing were shared more frequently than less amusing ones. Anger-inducing stories were shared more than moderate takes on the same events. When the researchers manipulated the framing of a story to be either negative (a person is injured) or positive (an injured person is "trying to be better again"), they found that the positive framing made a piece far more popular. The findings have since been replicated by several independent research teams, who have found that videos that shock or inspire are more likely to be shared on Facebook and more likely to gain viral traction.

Positivity and arousal go a long way toward explaining the success of Web sites like Upworthy, which started in 2012 and is known for using headlines designed to make you laugh, cry, or feel righteous anger (for example, on the site right now, "A Hilarious Stand-Up Routine About How Commercials for Black People Actually Sound" and "The Struggles of Being a Woman in a Male-Dominated Field Summed Up in a Short Comic"). Even the site's tearjerker content has a positive message: "Watch a Teenager Bring His Class to Tears Just by Saying a Few Words," reads one. Despite launching less than two years ago, the site has steadily climbed the ranks of Internet popularity, ranking third

in a December rating of Facebook shares, right behind BuzzFeed and the Huffington Post. Its posts are like the infamous cat videos on YouTube—funny, positive, and arousing—but taken to a new level. Still, as Berger points out, "There are lots of cat videos that don't get shared"—and lots of would-be Upworthys that never quite make it. So what characterizes the ones that do?

Since his initial foray into the nature of sharing, Berger has gone on to research and test a variety of viral-promoting factors, which he details in his new book, "Contagious: Why Things Catch On." Almost ten years in, he feels he's discovered a formula of sorts: as sites like Upworthy or BuzzFeed would likely put it, The Six Things You Need to Know to Make Your Voice Heard. While emotion and arousal still top the list, a few additional factors seem to make a big difference. First, he told me, you need to create social currency—something that makes people feel that they're not only smart but in the know. "Memes like LOLcats, I think, are a perfect example of social currency, an insider culture or handshake," Berger told me. "Your ability to pass it on and riff on it shows that you understand. It's the ultimate, subtle insider signal: I know without yelling that I know. When your mom sees an LOLcat, she has no idea what it is." When Upworthy first started, not everyone knew what it was, and the videos seemed fresh. Now they are being derided as link bait and mocked. Other sites, including the *Washington* ***Post***, are copying their formula.

The presence of a memory-inducing trigger is also important. We share what we're thinking about—and we think about the things we can remember. This facet of sharing helps explain the appeal of list-type stories (which I wrote about in detail last month), as well as stories that stick in your mind because they are bizarre. Lists also get shared because of another feature that Berger often finds successful: the promise of practical value. "We see top-ten lists on Buzzfeed and the like all the time," he notes. "It allows people to feel like there's a nice packet of useful information that they can share with others." We want to feel smart and for others to perceive us as smart and helpful, so we craft our online image accordingly.

A final predictor of success is the quality of the story itself. "People love stories. The more you see your story as part of a broader narrative, the better," Berger says. Some cat lists are better than others, and some descriptions of crying teen-agers are more immediately poignant; the best underlying story, regardless of its trappings, will come out on top. That, in fact, is what the Upworthy editors have argued in response to their critics: the headlines may seem like link bait, but the stories, the curators promise, are worthwhile. "Coming up with catchy, curiosity-inducing headlines wasn't the reason Upworthy had those 87 million visitors," they write. "It was because millions of members of the Upworthy community watched the videos we curated and found them important, compelling, and worth sharing with their friends."

Some of these features, of course, are incompatible: a list, for the most part, isn't going to tell much of a story, and a LOLcat video or other meme isn't usually informative. But, taken together, especially with the underlying principles of arousal and positivity in mind, the guidelines can help. "I see it as a batting average," Berger says. "No one is going to hit a home run every time, but if you understand the science of hitting your batting average goes up."

The irony, of course, is that the more data we mine, and the closer we come to

determining a precise calculus of sharing, the less likely it will be for what we know to remain true. If emotion and arousal are key, then, in a social application of the observer effect, we may be changing what will become popular even as we're studying it. "If everyone is perfectly implementing the best headline to pass on, it's not as effective any more," Berger says. "What used to be emotionally arousing simply isn't any longer." Those in search of evidence for this should look no further than Viralnova.com, a site that was started just eight months ago and is already the seventh most popular site on the Web, at least as measured by Facebook shares. As I type, the lead story on its front page is "Her Little Boy Has No Idea His Mother Is About To Die. What She's Doing About That Is Amazing." ■

After Reading: Analytical reading

After reading Konnikova's article, consider the following questions.

- What does the article suggest about how rhetorical relationships take shape online? What kinds of rhetorical appeals and strategies does she highlight that are unique to online environments? From the perspective of the writer, what kinds of rhetorical strategies is she herself using in this article?
- Konnikova introduces a new concept for us: social currency. From her discussion, what is your understanding of this term, and why might you find it useful (or not) in making sense of why some of the memes you've been considering have circulated?
- Konnikova's article is part of a textual ecology, connecting to a larger set of contemporary texts that have gone viral, to past cultural texts (Aristotle), and to the work of researchers on the topic. How does she use this textual ecology to support the social currency of her own text?
- Readers' comments form another part of this textual ecology and particular rhetorical situation. Go to the online version of Konnikova's article,L10:2 and look over the comments that readers left. How have readers responded, and what do their responses tell us about the success or failure of Konnikova's article?

Composing: A Multimodal Rhetorical Analysis

A rhetorical analysis focuses on close analysis of specific symbolic, textual productions—from a song, to a movie, to an essay, to a blog—and looks at the *potential* work a text is trying do in relation to the audiences it attempts to address. When analyzing how rhetoric functions in a digital text, we are concerned with how relations get situated in the production of that particular piece—relations between writer, topic, audience, media, and the contexts the exchange is a part of.

To prepare you to compose your own rhetorical analysis, we turn to a student example by Alex Slotkin posted at Storify.com. In this piece, Slotkin draws on two terms we've introduced in this chapter, *pathos* and *kairos*, to explore a rhetorical situation that erupted online in response to the problem of domestic abuse in the National Football League.

"Rhetorical Analysis of 'Get Your Game Face On'" 10:7

by Alex Slotkin (Student)

February 15, 2014, Ray Rice, running back for the Baltimore Ravens, punched his fiancée, Janay Palmer, unconscious in an elevator while the two were arguing. Two days later, the general manager of the Baltimore Ravens said in a press conference: "Rice 'was still a big part of what we plan to do in 2014'" (qtd. in Josh Levin). It is common knowledge that Rice is not the only player in the National Football League (NFL) to commit acts of domestic violence; everyone, sports fan or not, who has ever watched the news knows that. His teammate Terrell Suggs, for instance, has had two protective orders filed against him by his wife (Levin).

Figure 13.6: Photoshopped ad—image that started the conversation, as retweeted by E! News (top), original CoverGirl ad (bottom)

But in the wake of the Ray Rice scandal, something important happened: women's rights activists, in response to how the NFL handled the controversy, took a CoverGirl ad promoting its line of NFL-inspired makeup and photoshopped a black eye onto the model's face. (Figure 10.6) You don't need to know much about football, domestic violence, or even Ray Rice to recognize that this is important. Tweets made in response to the "Get Your Game Face On" mock-NFL CoverGirl ad show a keen awareness of the opportunity of the moment—kairos—to create a persuasive argument through the use of pathos.

The edited photo was published shortly after the video capturing Rice's actions was leaked and posted online. It was initially released to discredit Rodger Goodell, the commissioner of the NFL, who chose not to obtain the video capturing the crime before handing Rice a two-game suspension (Barr). The thousand words this photo expresses, then, is best understood in this particular moment and in relation to the NFL's mismanagement of the incident.

Had the photo been published at a different time, say a year in the future, it would

not have been well received because it would be out of context. The context of an issue is determined by its kairos, a term used by Aristotle to capture the window of time when acting is most beneficial. This photo is a good example of the proper use of kairos because it was published a few days after the video was leaked, when the incident was fresh in our minds. In addition to kairos, it is also a good example of pathos, an appeal to emotion. CoverGirl's edited model, juxtaposed with the NFL's motto "Get Your Game Face On," sends a powerful message to her viewers, namely that the NFL condones domestic violence. It is this message, this appeal to emotion, and the timeliness of the text, that caused a flood of responses on Twitter that, in turn, used appeals of pathos and awareness of the kairotic moment to join in the conversation.

The response on Twitter testifies to the effectiveness of the mock-CoverGirl ad in raising awareness about the Ray Rice scandal. For example, the tweet below (in as poor taste as it is) demonstrates how the photoshopped "Get Your Game Face On" ad successfully appealed to its audience's emotions, made effective by the kairotic moment:

Sasha no doubt responded to the mock-CoverGirl ad in this way because it moved and inspired her to help bring attention to the issue. Her response is timely and shows an awareness of kairos because the edited image is fresh in her readers' minds and appeals to our emotions, humor, and anger over the incident. Her point, that CoverGirl and the NFL make an unfortunate pairing, is thereby well made. The attention brought to the issue through tweets such as Sasha's help create the beginnings of a dialogue about the scandal.

This dialogue mushroomed as more and more Twitter users responded to the photoshopped ad. The New York City branch of the National Organization for Women (NOW), for example, wrote:

Questions like this one are the beginnings of a discussion about one aspect of the issue at hand—how the controversy was handled. Other tweeters, however, decided to tackle the incident from a different angle. These writers focused their attention on Janay Palmer's decision to marry Ray Rice after he punched her unconscious. Palmer's decision to marry her abusive fiancé spurred the formation of the "Why I Stayed" and "Why I Left" campaigns.

Members of the "Why I Stayed" campaign rationalized her decision to marry Rice

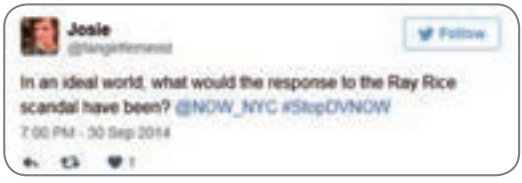
and posted tweets like the one shown on right:

Members of the "Why I Left" campaign voiced the opinion that Janay should have walked away from their marriage, posting tweets like Sarah's:

Both tweeters may reach different conclusions about Janay Palmer's decision to marry Ray Rice, but they both agree that domestic violence is unacceptable. By agreeing on this fundamental proposition, the two can begin to recognize where they agree to disagree. This point of mutual disagreement is known as stasis. Because the two agree that domestic violence is unacceptable, they can recognize where they disagree, thus establishing a working stasis that allows for their discussion to take place.

Rhetoric was and always will be related to persuasive language, but social media sites like Twitter and Storify have effectively changed the scale at which rhetoric is practiced. In our age of social media, anyone can spread information around the world in the blink of an eye, such as the Twitter user Fangirlfeminist.

Josie or Fangirlfeminist copied NOW NYC's post about the Ray Rice scandal, and posed her own public response on Twitter:



Reposting NOW NYC's question is a good example of the internet's version of how information spreads by "word of mouth." Josie has read a question that she finds to be important, then decides to repost it in the hopes of sharing it with her community of followers who may not have seen the question as originally tweeted by NOW NYC. Her actions mirror a child repeating something interesting he learned in school to his mother, or a business executive repeating what she thinks are the important parts of a meeting to her colleague. The Fangirlfeminist has understood the kairotic moment by sharing information with her audience that she believes will interest them.

The internet's rapid dissemination of information and abundance of texts results in the greater significance of kairos and pathos for communicating with others. While only one rhetorician can speak at a time in person, the internet is a special space where hundreds, thousands, or millions of people could conceivably talk simultaneously. Therefore, writers on the internet rely heavily on a powerful use of pathos, in

accordance with kairos, to enter a public conversation and have their voices heard. In other words, internet writers try to make their posts stand out so as not to get lost in a sea of other voices. The mock-NFL CoverGirl ad, for instance, stands out from other posts relating to Ray Rice because of its strong use of pathos and the way it takes advantage of the kairotic moment created by the release of the video. As a result of its effectiveness, it helps initiate a larger conversation about the issue and expands kairos in the process for others to join in. In a space where speakers are limited to how many characters they can use—Twitter users, for example, are allowed 140 characters per tweet—social media has based much of what we say, or the photos we edit, on kairos and pathos. ■

Inquiring and Inventing

As you begin to think about writing a rhetorical analysis, you'll want to draw on what you've discovered in the inquiries you've written and from the examples you've seen in this chapter. We recommend doing some informal writing about each different move as a way to generate ideas. Moves are intended to build on previous moves and prepare you to write your own rhetorical analysis by the end of the chapter.

1 Finding an interesting text

Find a text online that interests and challenges you. This could be a content post like Barnes's article on Mic or perhaps an image for social critique like Slotkin's. It could even take the form of a Twitter feed you follow or website you frequent.

2 Identifying the basic rhetorical situation

Once you have a possible text and you've done some preliminary thinking about its composition, try mapping out the rhetorical situation on a sheet of paper (Figure 10.7). Identify the author (or authors) and the site of the piece. What different purposes are there for composing this text? What is the concern or topic being discussed? How is it introduced? What types of audiences might the text be addressing? What is the genre of the text, and what type of media is it?

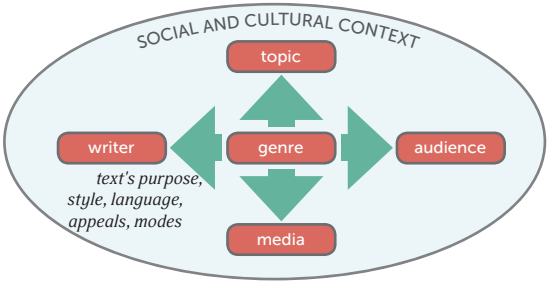


Figure 13.7: Social and cultural context

3 Exploring how the text attempts to appeal to an audience

As you are making sense of the rhetorical situation, you'll want to look closely at how the text attempts to appeal to readers, to attract their attention. How is the text appealing to readers' values and beliefs? Through their emotions, reason, or sense of credibility? Through arousal and positivity? If sources are used, how has the writer used them? How are images and other modes of communication used in the text?

As your analysis deepens and you have a good sense of the visual aspects of a text, look closely at the style and language of the writing. Is it conversational or more academic? Funny or serious? Argumentative or informative? How does the text blend conventional alphabetic text with different modes like images, video, links, and site functionality (i.e., commenting functions, social media links) to induce cooperation in readers? How are different modes used to appeal to an audience?

4 Situating the text in a textual ecology

As you become more familiar with the text you are analyzing, you'll naturally begin making connections to the culture at large. If the piece has links, follow a few to get a sense of the network of texts it is a part of. Who is cited in the text? What does this network of texts tell you about this rhetorical situation? Are there similar texts that exist? What else has been said about the topic? What cultural or historical events may have influenced the composition and content of this text? If there are comments, what do they say? Referring to Slotkin's piece, the shocking security footage posted to YouTube of NFL star Ray Rice punching his fiancée clearly hit a nerve in the public discourse and initiated a public debate around professional athletes and domestic abuse.

5 Finding a focus or theme

At this point you'll most likely have many interesting things to write about. Choose two or three rhetorical aspects of this text you find most engaging and that gives readers insight into the contexts of this text and how it is working to connect with an audience to induce their cooperation. For example, Slotkin chose to focus specifically on *kairos* (the timeliness of text) and the appeals to our emotion (*pathos)* present in the CoverGirl images.

Drafting and Shaping

From looking closely at a text to exploring one or more aspects of its context, you are likely to have generated new understandings of its rhetorical situation, the ways it appeals to readers, and how successfully it has done so. The next step is to begin to organize your draft into a more coherent rhetorical analysis of your text within the larger cultural and social contexts of its creation and its relationship to other texts.

1 Foregrounding text and context

In analyzing rhetoric in digital contexts, one of our primary goals as writers is to help readers gain a richer understanding of how a particular text is working and the cultural and social contexts it emerges from. One way to do this is to begin with the topic the text is addressing. In Slotkin's piece on domestic abuse in the NFL, he begins by describing the incident between football player Ray Rice and his then fiancée (now wife), Janay Palmer. Establishing the context gives readers helpful background knowledge about the text and conversation he'll be analyzing. However you begin your analysis, you'll want to introduce the text you are going to look at and give readers a sense of who the author is, the context of the text, and when and where the text was published.

As always, creating a working outline can be a useful strategy to help you structure your analysis. As you draft your paper and have peers look at it, you might decide to change your original outline to add or delete sections and modify the amount of background knowledge you provide about the situation you are exploring. Again, it's helpful to have a plan but to stay flexible as you work toward a final draft.

After establishing some background and context for the rhetorical situation you are analyzing, your next goal could be to explore how this text fits into a larger conversation by looking at other texts on the topic. Slotkin cites different tweets to show some of the response on Twitter to the mock CoverGirl ad. In Slotkin's analysis, not only is he thinking about how the text is working rhetorically on audiences, he also is placing the text in the larger textual ecology and conversation that it helped generate.

2 Finding examples to support your analysis

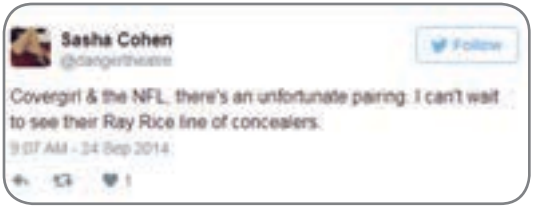
As you narrow in on what you want to highlight in your analysis, you'll want to use strong textual evidence to support your observations. Slotkin includes the image he is analyzing so readers can see the text themselves. In analysis, you'll want to point to specific examples in the text that show your understanding. You can discuss particular rhetorical strategies the writer uses, or look at the style of the language and the tone of voice. Look for compelling quotes and examples. If the text is online and includes images or video, you might include screenshots to support your analysis, as Slotkin has done with Twitter posts. You also want people to read your work, so think about ways you can make this analysis surprising and interesting. Have you thought about your writing style? Your word choice? Your tone?

3 Integrating your examples

Once you have some textual or visual examples to work with, you'll want to think carefully about how to integrate these into your analysis in ways that reinforce and support the observations you want to make about a text or rhetorical situation. As you work with quotes, consider how to introduce the quotations effectively by

mentioning the author's name and background and when and where the example was published. There are several common ways to integrate text quotes. Using quotations, you might use the quote as its own sentence, or you can try blending the writer's words into the flow of your own sentences. If the quote is particularly long (more than four lines), then you'll want to do a *block quote* and set it off from the rest of the text by indenting it. Although Slotkin only integrates a few quotations into the flow of his text, he integrates several Twitter posts as a form of quotation. Once integrated, you'll also want to explain the meaning of the example and what it does to help us understand the situation you are analyzing. Here is an example from Slotkin's essay:

> These responses on Twitter testify to the effectiveness of the mock-CoverGirl ad in raising awareness about the Ray Rice scandal. For example, the tweet below (in as poor taste as it is) demonstrates how the photoshopped "Get Your Game Face On" ad successfully appealed to its audience's emotions, made effective by the kairotic moment:
>
> Sasha no doubt responded to the mock-CoverGirl ad in this way because it moved and inspired her to help bring attention to the issue. Her response was created in a moment of good kairos because the edited image is fresh in her readers' minds and appeals to our emotions, humor, and perhaps frustration. Her point, that CoverGirl and the NFL make an unfortunate pairing, is thereby well made. The attention brought to the issue through tweets such as Sasha's help create the beginnings of a dialogue about the scandal.



In this example, Slotkin first introduces the tweet quote and explains that it is an example of how effective the mock CoverGirl ad has been with audiences. He then follows the tweet with further explanation, connecting the tweet back to his focus on *kairos* and *pathos*, and then explains how this tweet enters the larger textual ecology around the issue.

4 Concluding well

Conclude in a way that highlights the focus of your analysis and what you hope you and your readers can take away from it. This is also the place to re-emphasize the larger cultural concerns that this text is addressing and leave readers with something to ponder.

Revising and Publishing

If you're posting your work to a blog or a wiki, you've already made some decisions about how your text will circulate. As always, it's useful to circulate it first among knowledgeable and interested readers before posting it more publicly. Working with other writers involved in the same kind of writing can help us clarify what we think we are trying to say and to write in ways more responsive to the needs of an audience.

1 Working with peer review

Any peer review strategies that have worked for you in the past will be useful again. Here are some possible peer review questions that can guide you for preparing a rhetorical analysis text for wider circulation.

- Has the composer offered strong evidence from the text or texts he or she is analyzing to support her or his rhetorical analysis?
- Has the composer established enough background and contextual knowledge for you to understand the rhetorical situation she or he is exploring?
- How does the writer situate this text in a textual ecology?
- If the writer uses any rhetorical concepts, are they used appropriately? Are definitions provided when necessary?
- Is the analysis engaging? Can you follow the writer's train of thought? How have sources and examples been integrated into the text? Does the composer introduce them effectively? Has the writer sufficiently explained the relevance of examples and how they help to clarify the article's main purposes?
- Does the conclusion leave us something to think about?
- What other advice would you give to the composer of the text?

2 Reshaping your analysis for circulation to a larger audience

You might think about composing your analysis in a different medium beyond the printed page. In any case, first writing or typing out your analysis can serve as a foundation for composing effectively in different media.

When choosing another type of media to compose in, you'll want to think through the different benefits of each. Ask questions such as these: What kinds of meanings can I create in an alphabetic text that I can't create in a video, and vice versa? How can I combine different modes to express myself with? Each of the sample texts you read in this chapter was published online and contained images, video, and links to other content. In addition to alphabetic literacy, your rhetorical toolbox should include links, images, and video. These new literacies are today's available means of persuasion when composing with digital media. Using a combination of social

media tools, you can create and circulate your writing and reach out to audiences through linking, responding, liking, and sharing.

You might also have the opportunity to present your analysis to your class. In this case, you'll want to think about the medium of speech and how best to present your work to a "live audience." If you decide to use presentation software, like PowerPoint, SlideShare, or Prezi, you'll again need to think about how to use images and text together rhetorically, but in a way that takes advantage of the visual power of presentation software. The important thing to keep in mind when choosing the medium of composition is to understand, to the best of your ability, the different rhetorical benefits of each kind.

Reinventing and Circulating Your Work

Inundated with texts as we are today, there is no shortage of opportunities to extend the work of rhetorical analysis. You could compose a rhetorical analysis on a larger work, perhaps a large website, to understand some of the rhetorical strategies that large organizations, like corporations and governments, employ in their online texts. Understanding these strategies would mean going past the surface features of the text to explore how a site functions, how organized it is, and how the site collects data on users. As the collection of pop music articles emphasized, the data users provide to online services is used, in turn, to inform rhetorical strategies designed to continually attract more users to a site.

With the rise of texting, Twitter, Snapchat, and other microcommunication platforms, we can now watch larger public conversations take place in real time. The steady stream of communications allowed by social media makes it a rich space to study rhetorical practices. For example, many of the researchers and writers we have cited in this book frequently use social media to connect with audiences (danah boyd, José van Dijck, Tom Barnes, Maria Konnikova, Lawrence Lessig). You could choose to do a rhetorical analysis of one of these writers and explore how this writer writes to situate himself or herself in larger, public conversations. You might also look at someone you currently follow online, or someone you have an interest in learning more about. In any case, you'll want to choose a person or organization that is active on social media and posts often. Look at 25–50 posts or tweets, and take notes on any rhetorical patterns you see. How personal are the posts? What kinds of things do they share? Links? Images? Once you have a sense for the content, you can begin asking questions about any rhetorical strategies you notice. Is the writer appealing to our emotions? Intellect? Is the writer trustworthy? Is the writer responding in a timely fashion? What kinds of values and beliefs does the writer invoke, and for what purpose? Is there a noticeable style in which the posts are written? Following tweets, looking at several posts on someone's wall on Facebook, combing through forum responses, following an Instagram account—all of these situations raise interesting questions about how we practice rhetoric in digital environments.

Part 3

Argumentation

CHAPTER 14
Analyzing Arguments

In your college classes you will be expected to read and understand essays and chapters from textbooks, but you will also be expected to analyze them and sometimes to argue for or against the position the writer takes. And as citizens of the city, county, state, and nation, you should take an interest in what the city council, the state legislature, and the United States Congress are currently debating. What they decide can directly affect your life. For instance, in Houston there is an ongoing debate about what to do with the aging Astrodome. Should the city spend millions of tax dollars to refurbish it, perhaps by making it into an indoor park, or simply tear it down? Should concealed weapons be allowed everywhere on school campuses in the state? Nationally, what should the country do about immigration: Should we "secure the border" by building a fence across the entire border between Mexico and the United States? What should we do about the estimated 11,000,000 undocumented immigrants currently in the US? Do you really understand the issues? Do you have an opinion about these issues? Could you support your opinion with evidence?

College is the time of life for you to acquire those habits of mind that will allow you to become a fully educated citizen of the world. In order to become that educated adult, you need to acquire certain skills—skills that, over and above those you learn in the job or professional field you are pursuing, will help you to think about and sort through the millions of words and visual images you will encounter during your life. You need to learn to read critically, recognize various types of arguments, write convincing arguments of your own, and analyze the arguments of others.

Analyzing Written Arguments

When reading and responding to arguments, you will necessarily engage in analysis. As you read in Chapter 2, this means reading carefully, annotating, looking up unfamiliar words and allusions, and making sure you understand the essay's claim and the evidence given to support it. In addition to analyzing the cogency of an essay's argument, you might also be asked, or choose, to analyze the way the author appeals to his audience's emotions or how he presents himself as a trustworthy source. Indeed, there are many ways to analyze the importance and impact of a text. For example,

Lincoln's *Gettysburg Address* has been analyzed from a number of points of view: its historical context, its political implications at the time, its ethical and emotional appeals, its use of rhetorical tropes, its statement of national beliefs. Whatever you are asked to do, you will need to address a series of questions.

Activity 14.1

Each member should read and annotate the essay "Is Facebook Making Us Lonely?" at the end of Chapter 9. Compare your annotations. Now make a list of all the references to other people and other works, and have group members look them up on the internet. Next, list the evidence Marche uses to support his claim that social media, such as Facebook, are leading to greater loneliness. Discuss and then decide whether the evidence is strong enough to support his claim.

Finding the Claim

Once you have read an essay and annotated it, you need to read it again. (Yes, you have only so much time and your phone is buzzing at you, but a second read will help set the main points of the essay in your mind—and it will be a lot quicker since you can now skim.) While reading, skimming, the essay a second time, see whether you can distinguish the author's claim or claims from any evidence he uses to support those claims. A claim is a sentence that asserts the truth or value of something. Many times people accept the truth of claims simply because they have been told they are true by their parents, religious leaders, or teachers. Or their family or friends believe certain things simply because "everybody believes them." But we know that many things people once believed to be true have later been shown to be false. For example, many years ago people throughout Europe believed that the sun went around the earth. And less than two hundred years ago most people believed that individual species did not change or evolve. (Some still cling to that belief.) However, most of us, most of the time, are unwilling to accept the truth of claims that do not fit into our preconceived view of the world—we demand evidence of the truth of claims, of assertions. For example, some people believe that extraterrestrial beings (aliens) have already visited the earth. Some even claim they have been taken up into alien spacecraft and operated on. Should the rest of us simply believe the truth of these claims? Or should we demand to see evidence that these claims are true?

Not all claims are alike—there are different types of claims. The following are some of the major types.

Factual claims assert something is or is not true, was or was not true, or will or will not be true. For example, if I say that New York City is the largest city in the United States, I am making a factual claim, a claim about reality that can be verified simply by checking the United States Census Bureau's most recent numbers. Or if I say that the Baltimore Ravens will win the Super Bowl next year, I am making a predictive claim about a future event, but we must wait until January for verification of it. Finally, if I say that Socrates lived in fifth-century Athens, I am making a factual claim about the past that can be verified by reading accounts of his life by his contemporaries or by scholars who have studied the period. Therefore, statements of fact can be verified—or falsified—by studying the evidence for or against them.

Value claims are declarative sentences that assert something is good or bad, right or wrong. Some value claims are merely expressions of personal taste, of liking or disliking: "Broccoli tastes bad." "I prefer living in the city to living in the country." "I feel hot." Such claims cannot be disputed. Other value claims are moral or aesthetic judgments: "Stealing is wrong." "A liberal education is better than a technical one." "Andrew Wyeth is a better painter than Jackson Pollock." Such value claims are supported by reference to a code of morality, an accepted ideal, or a set of criteria the one arguing uses as the basis of his claim. The Christian Bible might be the basis for the first claim, the humanist ideal for the second, and standards of realist painting for the third.

Causal claims assert that something is or was the cause of something else. "Smoking is a major cause of cancer" is a causal claim. "Slavery was a major cause of the Civil War" is another.

Definitional claims assert that something is just like, or is exactly the same as, something else. "Keeping animals in cages is just like keeping slaves in shackles" is such a claim. "Abortion is murder" is another.

Deliberative claims assert that something should or should not be done. These are sometimes called claims of policy. "You should quit smoking" is a deliberative claim. "The state of Texas should adopt a law making English its official language" is another deliberative claim.

Looking for Evidence

Next, authors, like good district attorneys, will present different types of evidence to support their claims. Generally, the more evidence there is, the more likely the claim is to be true or the defendant guilty. While there are many types of evidence, and different disciplines have different standards of evidence (there are specific

"rules of evidence" in trials, for instance), here are some generally recognized types of evidence.

Facts. According to the National Academy of Sciences, a fact is "an observation that has been repeatedly confirmed and for all practical purposes is accepted as 'true.'" However, what constitutes a "fact" may be open to discussion.

Examples. Examples are used to support generalizations. They give specific instances to illustrate the material, from which inductive generalizations are derived. Examples should be relevant and appropriate; that is, they should directly bear on the issue being discussed, and they should be suitable and fitting, not extreme or unusual.

Authorities. Authorities are experts in various fields. Their work and statements are used as evidence to support claims. An authority may be an expert by virtue of knowledge, skill, experience, training, or education.

Statistics. Numerical data in the form of tables, graphs, or charts are used to support claims. Because contradictory conclusions can be drawn from the same data, special care must be taken in evaluating statistics. Good statistical data are usually presented visually (as charts or tables) as well as numerically; they should also be accompanied by analyses, and the sources of the data should be clearly stated.

Public Records. Information drawn from public records, such as the Census Bureau, state agencies, or historical archives, is frequently used as evidence.

Interviews. Personal interviews with people with experience can also be used as evidence, either as examples or as expert testimony.

Personal Experience. Relevant personal experience can also be used as evidence, as example or testimony.

Activity 14.2

Assume you are a detective. Based on what you find listed below in a family's garbage can, determine the type of inhabitants in the house. How many people live in the house? What are their approximate ages and interests? Explain your findings/conclusions in a well-structured paragraph, providing sufficient evidence to support your claims/conclusions.

Grocery Receipts	Discarded Mail
Styling gel Clearasil Olay Diet sodas AAA batteries Jell-O Gummy bears Tuna Polo cologne Decaf coffee Lean Cuisine Sugar-coated cereal Bran flakes Donuts Case of beer Low-cholesterol products Ulcer medicine	College recruitments Military recruitments Alumni magazines from universities Stockholder reports Paycheck stubs Ad from MEGA Energy Corp McDonald's
Magazines	**Canceled Checks**
Field & Stream Cosmopolitan Rolling Stone Better Homes & Gardens TV Guide Seventeen Golf Digest Country Club Living Vogue	Dance lessons The Gap Two County Sheriff's Department Traffic Division citations Neiman Marcus Hair salon Orthodontist Car insurance (three cars) Clinique cosmetics Alimony checks to Mrs. X

Distinguishing between Fact, Opinion, and Judgment

Further, when you read an article or an essay, it is important to distinguish between what is a fact, what is merely an opinion, and what is a judgment.

Facts. Facts, as we have seen, assert something is or is not true, was or was not true, or will or will not be true. They can be verified—or falsified—by studying the evidence for or against them. When reading an essay, however, you must distinguish between statements of fact and statements of opinion.

Opinions. Opinions can be merely expressions of personal taste, such as "I hate tomatoes," or "It's hot in here." Such statements cannot be verified, or falsified. People experience things or feel things in different ways. Writers express their opinions all the time. Simply look at the "Letters" section of any newspaper, the comments section at the end of online articles, or Twitter responses. People like to tell you what they think or feel about everything. However, do not confuse such "expressions of opinion" with statements of fact.

Judgments. Judgments are considered expressions of belief about the truth or falsity of certain events or sets of facts. In other words, after studying the details about a certain event or situation, a writer might make a judgment summing up what they all mean or their implications for the future. For example, a jury must "weigh the evidence" presented by the district attorney in a murder trial to determine a defendant's guilt or innocence. Their verdict is a judgment based on their deliberations about the "facts of the case" but in itself is not a fact. Or consider the latest report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change that says that climate change will have "severe, widespread, and irreversible impacts" on people and our world unless we reduce CO_2 emissions. Again, this is a "considered judgment" by a panel of experts, not a fact. It is, according to S. I. Hayakawa, "a conclusion, summing up a large number of previously observed facts."

Determining Bias

Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary defines *bias* as "a bent, tendency; an inclination of temperament or outlook, especially a personal and sometimes unreasoned judgment—prejudice." We are all biased in some way. We come to a discussion or conversation with certain attitudes we have inherited from our parents, our family, our religion, and our culture. As the definition implies, sometimes a bias becomes an unreasoned prejudice, which *MW* defines as a "preconceived judgment or opinion; an adverse opinion or leaning formed without just grounds or before sufficient knowledge." Therefore, when we read an article, an essay, or a post online, we should try to determine the bias of the writer. Is the writer striving

to be *objective* (without bias), simply reporting what she has found—as in many popular discussions of scientific discoveries—or is the author trying to *persuade* his audience to accept a certain way of looking at a subject—as in an opinion piece in a newspaper? In addition, a good writer knows his audience and will directly appeal to their biases. The words an author uses can be neutral or have positive or negative connotations, and being aware of these words can help you determine the author's bias. In an article for *Scientific American*, "The Believing Brain," Michael Shermer lists six kinds of bias.

- Anchoring bias—dependence on a single first principle in making decisions.
- Authority bias—dependence on a single authority figure.
- Belief bias—acceptance or rejection based on the believability of the conclusions.
- Confirmation bias—acceptance only of information that confirms our beliefs.
- In-group bias—believing only in those in our group.
- Blind spot bias—not seeing the mote (a dust speck) in our own eye.

Therefore, to read critically is to read carefully. You must make an effort to understand a writer's ideas by looking up words and allusions, distinguishing between claims and support, looking for types of evidence, noting the difference between fact, opinion, and judgment, and finding out about the author and any biases he may bring to the conversation. To do less is to be a passive receiver of other people's assertions, to allow others to decide what you believe.

Activity 14.3

Read the following paragraph. Determine whether it is biased, particularly whether it shows one of the six kinds of bias mentioned by Michael Shermer. Next write a short paragraph discussing the bias, supporting your point with brief quotations from the text. Or, show why it is not biased. Discuss what you have learned with your group and the class.

> *So, if you want to really hurt me, talk badly about my language. Ethnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity—I am my language. Until I can take pride in my language, I cannot take pride in myself. Until I can accept as legitimate Chicano Texas Spanish, Tex-Mex, and all the other languages I speak, I cannot accept the legitimacy of myself. Until I am free to write bilingually and to switch codes without having always to translate, while I still have to speak English or Spanish when I would rather speak Spanglish, and as long as I have to accommodate the English speakers rather than having them accommodate me, my tongue will be illegitimate.*

Determining Audience, Purpose, Situation, and Tone

If you are asked to write an analysis of an argument, you will need to address a series of questions.

Who is the audience? The intended audience of an essay may be identified by looking at the author's style (his diction and sentence structure), the complexity and type of ideas discussed, the essay's length, its purpose and situation, and the persona adopted by the writer. Where an essay is published, in *Time*, *Field & Stream*, or *Scientific American*, is also a clue to the educational level and interests of the audience. The intended audience is discovered inductively; for example, we might determine that the 5:30 evening news is aimed toward an older, conservative, affluent audience by noting the number of advertisements shown during the half hour for such things as denture cream, investment opportunities, and luxury automobiles.

What is the author's purpose? What does the writer want the reader to understand, to feel, to do? Writers want to change their readers' beliefs or attitudes, make them laugh, make them cry, or make them understand a complex issue. A list of purposes would be very long: to entertain, to persuade, to explain, to frighten, to teach, to anger, to placate.

What is the situation? All discourse is constrained by the situation in which it appears. Situation, loosely defined, is the context in which a particular text appears or the occasion on which a discourse is delivered. For example, the following are different situations with different contexts: You are required to write a ten-page report on the causes of the American Civil War in a history class. You volunteer to speak to your younger brother's scout troop on *tae kwon do*. You write a letter applying for a summer job at Yellowstone National Park. Each situation or context demands a different response. In analyzing an essay, you should try to determine the situation or context in which the essay was written and the specific constraints such a situation places on what the writer says. Keys to context or situation for published essays include when it was published, in what magazine or journal it was published, and the tone and language employed by the writer.

What is the voice and tone of the author? The writer reveals his personality, attitudes, prejudices, and desires through what he says and the way he says it. Just as there is a narrator who tells a story from a particular point of view, just as there is a "voice" in poetry, so there is a speaker in an essay, a *persona* (in Latin, literally "actor's mask"). A writer may unconsciously reveal the kind of person he is through what he writes. We may determine that he is arrogant, friendly, aloof, narrow-minded, or flippant. More often the writer's purpose,

his audience, and the writing situation cause him to assume or adopt a persona. Aristotle says, for example, that when trying to persuade an audience we should present ourselves as honest, open-minded, and knowledgeable, with the *best interests of our audience in mind*. The persona a writer adopts may also reflect his social or cultural role. For example, we expect a priest and a movie critic to write in certain ways, reflecting their different roles and positions in society. Finally, the tone of an essay is closely connected to persona. Writers may adopt tones that are serious, playful, ironic, antagonistic, or passionate, among others. In writing a critical analysis of an essay, you should determine the persona and tone of the writer. Whether consciously or unconsciously revealed, tone is crucial to the total effect a text has on its audience.

Analyzing the Rational Appeal

Aristotle believed that the one quality that set humans apart from the other animals was our ability to reason. Therefore, appealing to other people's reasoning, to what many call "common sense," is a major strategy in most attempts to persuade. If a speaker or writer builds a strong argument, a strong case, for his position, it becomes not only convincing but difficult for others to attack. So it is important to look at the ways people organize and develop arguments. In *An Introduction to Reasoning* (1984), Steven Toulmin presents a simple, practical method for analyzing an argument. He divides his analysis into an attractive scheme of three primary parts—claim, data (grounds), and warrant.

Claim. First find the claim—the conclusion of the argument or the thesis of the essay. Make sure that the claim is a testable claim (that it is possible to support the claim by evidence), and that it is not preposterous or whimsical. Remember that you may base your argument on different types of claims.The grounds used to support the claim will vary depending on the type of claim. For example, the following claim was made by a student in a paper on women in the military: *"Women should not be allowed in ground combat units in the army."*

Grounds. Next look for the data that support that claim, that is, the evidence the writer gives in support of his proposition. For example, the student supported the above claim with the following evidence: "*The fact that a woman can get pregnant may keep her from performing her task, thus rendering the squad ineffective to perform in a combat situation. An example of this situation occurred when I was stationed at Ft. Rucker, Alabama; in my squad there were four men, and each of us was assigned a different task: machine gunner, sniper, squad leader, and Dragon gunner. We went on an exercise, and the machine gunner became ill. He was rushed to the hospital, and I had to take over his*

task. The result of his illness was a catastrophe. When we attacked the enemy we were slower because I had to perform the jobs of two men. Therefore, the squad lost the battle, which not only had an effect on the squad but produced a chain reaction and destroyed the whole company. Thus, if a woman were to be assigned to a combat unit and she became pregnant, it would have a negative influence on the whole company."

Warrant. Third, look for any support that the writer gives to show that the evidence is relevant to the claim. For example, if the writer cites the statement of an authority, does she give the credentials of the authority? Is the authority speaking in his own field of expertise? If a major scientific study is discussed as evidence, are other confirming studies also cited? For example, the student writing on women in combat added the following to the evidence given above: *"More than 1,200 pregnant women were evacuated from the Gulf region during the Gulf War; that is the equivalent of two infantry battalions. If the loss of one man from a squad can cause a company's performance to drop, how much more harm would there be with the loss of two battalions of soldiers? It would have a devastating effect."*

Backing. Fourth, look for information that gives added support to the warrant. For example, our student next added the following sentence to the above warrant: *"The statistics on the number of women evacuated from the Gulf War were released in a report by the Pentagon."*

Rebuttal. Finally, check to see whether the writer has acknowledged counterclaims and arguments; that is, has he mentioned and then refuted claims that contradict his own? Also see whether the writer has explained apparent exceptions to his evidence or mitigated the force of counterclaims in some way. For example, our student included the following in a refutation section: *"Some women argue that many other countries use women in combat roles. This statement is not altogether true. There are very few countries that have women in combat roles. Israel was one of those countries that tried to put women in combat, but they quickly stopped the program because it was a catastrophe. Israel still uses women in its military but does not allow them in combat."*

Using Toulmin's scheme will help you recognize the structure of the argument you are analyzing and the strengths and weaknesses of that argument; however, simply because a writer supplies a warrant and backing for a claim does not mean that his argument is sound or cogent. Be sure to apply the standards of appropriate evidence and reasoning to the argument. Finally, remember that arguments are made to be convincing and that we are inundated daily by the mass media with visual images and hundreds of claims. The only rational stance to adopt in a world such as ours is one based on a respect for truth and an attitude of skepticism. In his essay "Of

Cannibals," Michel de Montaigne says, "We should be on our guard against clinging to vulgar opinions and . . . we should judge things by light of reason, and not from common rumor."

Activity 14.4

Identify the claim and the grounds of each of the following arguments, and write them out on a piece of paper.

1. Philosophy is the best subject in which to major because it teaches one to reason, an essential skill for a good life.
2. Cutting wage rates may enable one employer to hire more workers, but cutting the wages of all workers may lead to fewer jobs, not more, because workers would have less to spend on goods.
3. The human mind is not the same thing as the human brain. The human body, including the brain, is a material thing. The human mind is a spiritual thing. Nothing is both a material thing and a spiritual thing.
4. All 70 students who ate dinner at the fraternity house on Friday became ill during the night. None of the students who live at the house but didn't dine there that night became ill, so the illness must have been food poisoning caused by something served for dinner at the house on Friday.
5. The investigation of supernatural phenomena lies outside the realm of science. Therefore, science can neither prove nor disprove the existence of God.
6. But the particular evil of silencing the expression of an opinion is that it is robbing the human race, posterity as well as the existing generation, those who dissent from the opinion still more than those who hold it. If the opinion is right, they are deprived of the opportunity of exchanging error for truth: if wrong, they lose what is almost as great a benefit, the clearer perception and livelier impression of truth, produced by its collision with error.

Logical Fallacies

In addition to using Toulmin's scheme to analyze an argument, be on the lookout for logical fallacies. A fallacy is a faux pas, or misstep, in a chain of reasoning (although fallacies can also be used intentionally to fool the reader or listener). See Appendix 2 for a list of common fallacies.

Activity 14.5

Each of the following statements contains at least one fallacy. Using Appendix 2 as a guide, write out the fallacy or fallacies on a piece of paper. Compare your answers with those of your group and the whole class.

1. Polygraph tests do not provide reliable evidence because their results cannot be trusted.
2. Overcrowded conditions in the inner city have forced people together like rats in a cage. So, like rats, they have turned on one another, fighting and killing. Who can blame them?
3. The city should not take seriously the Director of the Health Department's proposals for increasing the city's health budget. Who can believe a man who has admitted he is a recovering alcoholic and who was recently discovered having an affair with a much-younger intern?
4. We must choose between life and death, between banning this procedure and sanctioning murder. There can be no neutral position on this issue.
5. This college is much like a slaughterhouse; neither the freshmen nor the cattle know what is in store for them. They both get chopped up in the process.
6. According to Savannah Guthrie, interest rates will remain at historic lows for the coming year.
7. We elected Governor Frogmore, and the state has since had record budget deficits. We should not elect him again for another four-year term.
8. More than three-fourths of American universities have required courses on cultural diversity, so our university should also develop and require such a course.
9. Congress should repeal the health care bill. Nearly seventy-five percent of the bill's backers received campaign contributions from the health care industry.
10. This offer will be good for only one more day! Thousands have already taken advantage of this one-time offer. Sign up now; this offer may never be repeated!

Activity 14.6

Take one of the essays from the *Additional Readings* section of this book, and write an analysis of its rational appeal.

Analyzing the Emotional Appeal

If all people were as dispassionate as Spock or Data on *Star Trek*, then an account of the argument of an essay, of its rational appeal, would be the only analysis we would need to make. Yet while all people may be born with the capacity to reason, reasoning well requires knowledge, training, and practice. However, to echo the French eighteenth-century writer Jean-Jacques Rousseau, we *felt* before we *thought*. Feeling, Rousseau said, is primary; it, not reason, makes us human. Further, as Antonio R. Damasio, Professor of Neuroscience at the University of Southern California, has pointed out, emotions "inform the deployment of logic."

Therefore, when we want to persuade an audience, we often find it necessary to appeal to the personal nature of our topic. People are generally more interested in those matters that touch their hearts than in statistics or logic. The writer of a persuasive argument cannot ignore the fact that much of our identity resides in our emotions and imaginations. If we are to convince readers, we must appeal to their emotions, attempting to ascertain which of our own emotions they will accept or approve. The clever writer can then use certain associations that will elicit the desired emotional response in his audience. For instance, if he is addressing a Christian group, he might associate the idea of human leadership or fellowship with Christ. This reference links the writer's own propositions to what the audience already identifies with and respects. Sometimes a well-placed word or phrase will enhance the emotional appeal of an argument, as when a writer of an essay against pornography mentions "innocent" children. Conversely, astute writers know, because they know the emotional character of their audiences, what not to use in their appeal.

Thus, emotions are powerful forces in humans, and while we might think of some people as "lacking feeling," most people are strongly affected by their emotions. In Book II of *Rhetoric*, on "Emotion," Aristotle lists ten emotions. The first four are positive—calm, friendship, favor, and pity; the next six are negative—anger, fear, shame, indignation, envy, and jealousy. In his 1872 book *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, Charles Darwin began the modern discussion of the nature and origin of emotions. More recent investigators have emphasized the neurological basis of emotions and have listed eight main emotions—anger, fear, joy, sadness, acceptance, disgust, surprise, and interest or curiosity. Others have

divided emotions into primary and secondary emotions. Robert Plutchik, late professor at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, lists the eight basic emotions as fear (terror, shock), anger (rage), sorrow (sadness), joy (happiness, glee), disgust, acceptance, anticipation, and surprise. In an article in *American Scientist* in 2001, he gave a three-dimensional "color wheel" model of the emotions (Figure 14.1). From outside in, the opposed emotions on the wheel are as follows.

- Pensiveness, sadness, grief—ecstasy, joy, serenity
- Boredom, disgust, loathing—admiration, trust, acceptance
- Distraction, surprise, amazement—vigilance, anticipation, interest
- Annoyance, anger, rage—terror, fear, apprehension

Figure 14.1: Color Wheel of Emotions

Further, in an article in *Scientific American*, Michael Shermer states that recent experiments have shown that "the left brain is associated with positive emotions such as love, attachment, bonding and safety." He continues by saying that the emotions help us maintain a balance.

> Positive emotions help us build enduring personal resources, such as problem-solving skills, coordination and social resources. Negative emotions, in contrast, help to protect us. Fear causes us to pull back

> and retreat from risks. Disgust directs us to push out and expel that which is bad for us. Anger leads us to fight back or to signal displeasure at the violation of a social agreement. Jealousy leads us to guard our mates against intruders in pair-bonded relationships.

Finally, while we consider our emotions *natural*, we know that these emotions are conditioned by our culture, our social background, and our individual upbringing. Writers appeal to their particular audience's emotions in order to motivate them to action or to gain their commitment to a belief or a group. For example, writers are well aware that people respond emotionally to words and images that appeal to certain deep-seated human desires, such as love, sex, nourishment, and pleasure. Conversely, people respond emotionally to what they fear: rejection, privation, pain, and death. On the one hand, writers appeal to their audience's sense of comfort, which they derive from belonging to a group, such as a family, city, state, or country, or their affiliation with a certain ethnic or linguistic group, economic class, or political party; on the other hand, writers play on their audience's fear and distrust of things or people who are strange or foreign to them.

The language used in emotional appeals can be direct or subtle. Writers can use words that have an obvious and immediate emotional impact on their audience and that are calculated to provoke a strong and predictable response. For instance, how do you react to the following words: *jerk, extremist, atheist, Bubba, dumb blonde*; or to *peace, patriot, Christian, Muslim, entrepreneur, mother*? For example, note Richard Nixon's use of emotionally charged language in the following paragraph, the conclusion to a famous speech he made on television in September 1952; at the time many people were calling for his resignation as candidate for vice president under Dwight Eisenhower because of allegations of misappropriation of campaign funds.

> But just let me say this last word. Regardless of what happens, I am going to continue this fight. I am going to campaign up and down America until we drive the crooks and the communists and those that defend them out of Washington, and remember, folks, Eisenhower is a great man, and a vote for Eisenhower is a vote for what is good for America.

The words used in this passage depict two contrasting sets of images. The first set creates the image of a man battling against the forces of evil: "I am going to continue this *fight* [. . .] until *we* [Note the shift in person. He is one of us.] drive the *crooks* and the *communists* and *those that defend them* out of *Washington*." Here is the image of a man trying to drive out evil from one of our political holy places, perhaps like Jesus drove the moneychangers out of the temple. The second set of words—"*Eisenhower is a great man*" and "what is *good for America*"—evokes

the feelings of pride we have in a renowned military leader and associates those emotions with our feelings of patriotism. These feelings of greatness, goodness, and loyalty to our homeland are linked to the lonely fight against evil conducted by this man on our behalf.

In another example, in 2008, as the war in Iraq entered its sixth year and the number of United States troops rose to over 40,000, President George W. Bush continued to defend the righteousness and necessity of the war. Speaking of those who had given their lives, he said, "One day people will look back at this moment in history and say, 'Thank God there were courageous people willing to serve because they laid the foundation for peace for generations to come.'" Bush here uses the words "God," "courageous," "serve," and "peace" to evoke religious and patriotic emotions. He further intimates that history, "one day," will ultimately be on his side in judging the morality of the war, and that the future "generations to come" will praise those who, under his leadership and command, gave their lives for the benefit of their countrymen. With this statement, President Bush both aligns his policies in Iraq with God, country, and history and implies that those who oppose the war and want to withdraw US forces lack courage, foresight, and backbone.

The emotion of a passage may also arise naturally from the writer's subject and the intensity of the writer's engagement with that subject. For example, few would question the sincerity of the emotion expressed in the following sentences by the Russian writer Leo Tolstoy who, at the peak of his career as a writer, with fame, wealth, an interesting circle of friends, a family—all that a person might desire—suddenly experienced a terrible, gripping sense of the utter futility of life. He wrote of this life-altering experience in *Confession* (here translated by David Patterson).

> If not today, then tomorrow sickness and death will come (indeed, they were already approaching) to everyone, to me, and nothing will remain except the stench and the worms. My deeds, whatever they may be, will be forgotten sooner or later, and I myself will be no more. Why, then, do anything? How can anyone fail to see this and live? That's what is amazing! It is possible to live only as long as life intoxicates us; once we are sober we cannot help seeing that it is all a delusion, a stupid delusion! Nor is there anything funny or witty about it; it is only cruel and stupid.

The intensity of feeling in this passage arises from the writer's emotional involvement with his subjects—death and the meaning of life. Tolstoy conveys his fear of death and his sense of the utter meaninglessness of life in such phrases as "sickness and death will come," "the stench and the worms," and "I myself will be no more." These words are simple, direct, and unadorned. Tolstoy also employs an everyday image of a drunk versus a sober man to convey his feelings about every

man's blindness to the reality of his own death. The emotions we feel when we read such a passage arise directly from the subject and the writer's engagement with it. Tolstoy's primary purpose is to convey his feelings, to make us feel what he himself feels.

In writing an analysis of an essay that focuses on its emotional content, therefore, you will need to look carefully for any emotionally charged words used by the writer, at any images the writer creates through description, and at any figurative language the writer uses. In addition, ask yourself the following questions.

- What emotion is the writer trying to make the reader feel?
- Is the writer's use of emotion consistent with his purpose?
- Is the writer's use of emotion appropriate to the subject, audience, and occasion?
- Does the writer's use of emotionally charged language dominate the essay, or is it subordinated to more rational arguments?

Answering these questions will also help you decide what the writer's attitude is toward his material and his audience. For example, is the writer asking the reader to sympathize or be outraged? Is the writer being satiric or ironic?

Finally, what can an analysis of the emotional appeals made in an essay tell us? First, it can clarify a complex argument by helping us separate the emotional appeals from the logical ones. Focusing on the language and metaphors employed by the writer in developing an emotional appeal can help us gain emotional distance, and thus objectivity. Therefore we may begin to notice that the writer gives little solid evidence to support his claims and essentially begs the question he is trying to prove. Or we may find that the emotional language drives home a point supported abundantly by evidence and reason. Second, an analysis of the emotional language and appeals in a speech or an essay can sensitize us to the sometimes-subtle assault on our emotions made in newspapers and magazines, or over television and radio, by politicians, preachers, teachers, and radio talk show hosts (and overwhelmingly in advertisements). Studying the emotional appeals made even in a single essay can help us to understand and to arm ourselves against such assaults. Emotions are very powerful; be wary of allowing yours to be manipulated.

Activity 14.7

Read the following paragraph, and write a short analysis of the author's emotional appeal.

> And even those who do have some knowledge, or those who are disturbed by the reports of cruelty that are occasionally released by animal rights organizations, believe that all animal research is essential to human health and progress in medicine and that the suffering so often involved is a necessary part of the research. This is not true. Sadly, while some research is undertaken with a clearly defined objective that could lead to a medical breakthrough, a good many projects, some of which cause extreme suffering to the animals used, are of absolutely no value to human (or animal) health. Additionally, many experiments simply duplicate previous experiments. Finally, some research is carried out for the sake of gaining knowledge for its own sake. And while this is one of our more sophisticated intellectual abilities, should we be pursuing this goal at the expense of other living beings whom, unfortunately for them, we are able to dominate and control? Is it not an arrogant assumption that we have the right to (for example) cut up, probe, inject, drug, and implant electrodes into animals of all species simply in our attempt to learn more about what makes them tick? Or what effect certain chemicals might have on them?

Analyzing the Ethical Appeal

Besides being rational and emotional creatures, humans also are social creatures who depend on the honesty and reliability of others. Ken J. Rotenberg, Lucy R. Betts, and Pamela Qualter write the following in an article in *Psychology Today*.

> Trusting is the central issue confronting men and women in contemporary society. Close to the heart of Shakespeare's well-known phrase in *Hamlet* ("To be or not to be"), the act of being in the social world depends on a person's decisions to trust or not to trust others almost every moment of every single day. Trust is immensely wide-ranging and spans from trusting the plumber to correctly fix a tap as promised . . . to trusting one's spouse to fulfil his or her promise of fidelity ("To Trust or Not To Trust: That is the Question").

When reading an argument (or listening to a speaker), we are therefore more willing to believe those people who seem knowledgeable, honest, upright, and fair. The ethical appeal is thus, according to Aristotle, the most potent of all the means of persuasion. For writers' arguments to be effective, their ethos must be apparent

in their work and realized by their readers. Simply because a writer presents an argument, even with sincerity or emotion mixed in, does not mean that she can expect the reader's assent, or even attention.

However, the way a writer combines the rational and emotional appeals contributes to his ethos in an essay, and although the ethical appeal is not restricted by any given specific rules or qualities, certain components can be discussed. For a writer or speaker to be convincing, he must make apparent to the audience his *good sense*, *goodwill*, and *good moral character*.

Good sense suggests that the writer is capable of making practical decisions and choosing the proper means to achieve an end. It must be apparent to the reader that the writer is confident in his argument and that it is presented in the proper perspective.

Goodwill, the second component, consists in the writer's making clear to his audience that he has nothing but goodwill toward them, that he has their best interests in mind. He must demonstrate that he shares his readers' basic aspirations, and that he shares, too, their sense of decency and honesty. In other words, writer and reader are on the same side.

Good moral character is demonstrated if the writer convinces his audience that he would not deceive them and that he genuinely knows right from wrong. To acquire this trust, the writer must be believable.

How do writers and speakers achieve these goals? First, they show that they know a lot about the subject they are discussing. They may reveal their credentials (their college degrees or their current professions, for example), they may discuss the research they themselves have done or present a wide range of research conducted by others (up-to-date research, of course), or they may provide convincing examples and other support for their generalizations and conclusions. Second, they may show their *thoroughness* by their consideration of all relevant material and points of view that have a bearing on their subject. Finally, they may show their *fairness* by considering opposing points of view and differing interpretations of the facts, by discussing those other positions courteously, and by acknowledging the strengths of those positions where reason demands they should. Ultimately, they want their readers or listeners to believe that they, themselves, are upstanding and credible people who can be believed and who have the welfare of their audience at heart. Keep in mind that the ethical appeal emerges throughout the essay. It is not something a writer merely inserts in his introduction or between paragraphs. A writer's ethos develops as he makes clear to the reader the possession of all three of the components: the heart is genuine, the intentions good, and the recommendations worthy of the reader's attention.

Writers, like trial lawyers, must convince their audiences to give them fair hearings. While it is a popular cliché that "facts speak for themselves," we should be mature enough to realize that they don't; they must be given a voice and a context by a speaker or a writer, and that voice shapes the way we understand the facts.

Core Values. In addition to expressing good sense, goodwill, and good moral character, writers also express certain basic values. Many of these values, for example the idea of "fair play," have evolutionary roots. For example, Sarah Brosnan and Frans de Waal have studied the concept of fairness among primates, such as capuchin monkeys. (The monkeys became agitated and refused to perform a task if they saw another monkey getting more fruit for performing the same task.) Other values have cultural roots. For example, the American belief in the value of hard work and thriftiness can be traced to our Puritan ancestors in New England. And our values of freedom and individualism go back to the founders of our country, many of whom were steeped in the beliefs of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment and embodied those values in *The Declaration of Independence* and *The Constitution for the United States.* Further, social groups develop certain shared values they believe are important to group cohesiveness and effectiveness. For example, if you work, everyone's being on time every day is crucial to the success of the business, so that value is ingrained in the workers. Many businesses and institutions, such as colleges, develop lists of their "core values." Google "core values" for many examples.

An interesting template of different types of core values is presented in *Argumentation and Critical Decision Making*, now in its 8th edition, by Richard D. Ricke, Malcom O. Sillars, and Tarla Rai Peterson. They identify six basic value systems, and list positive and negative words associated with each.

Puritan-Pioneer-Peasant. The Puritan-Pioneer-Peasant value system is rooted in the idea that people have an obligation to themselves and those around them, in some cases to their God, to work hard at whatever they do. This value system takes on a moral orientation and is what most Americans refer to when they speak of the "pioneer spirit," "Puritan morality," and/or "Protestant ethic." Some of the words associated with the Puritan-Pioneer-Peasant value system are listed below.

Positives: Activity, work, thrift, morality, dedication, selflessness, virtue, righteousness, duty, dependability, temperance, sobriety, savings, dignity

Negatives: Waste, immorality, dereliction, dissipation, infidelity, theft, vandalism, hunger, poverty, disgrace, vanity

Enlightenment. The Enlightenment value system is rooted in the idea that people find out about the universe through the power of reason. In this system, humans are perceived as basically good and capable of finding answers; people should never be restrained in matters of the mind (i.e., reason must be free); and government is an agreement among individuals to assist society in protecting inalienable rights. Some of the words associated with the Enlightenment value system are as follows.

> Positives: Freedom, science, nature, rationality, democracy, fact, liberty, individualism, knowledge, intelligence, reason, natural rights, natural laws, progress.
>
> Negatives: Ignorance, inattention, thoughtlessness, error, indecision, irrationality, dictatorship, fascism, book burning, falsehood, regression

Progressive. The progressive value system is rooted in the idea that progress is inherently good—that progress continually makes things get better. Some of the words associated with the progressive value system are as follows.

> Positives: Practicality, efficiency, change, improvement, science, future, modern, progress, evolution
>
> Negatives: Old-fashioned, regressive, impossible, backward

Transcendental. The transcendental value system is rooted in the idea that intuition, as a way of knowing, is a faculty higher than reason (i.e., intuition and emotion transcend reason). In this system, an emphasis exists on humanitarian values, the centrality of love for others, and the importance of feelings. Some of the words associated with the transcendental value system are as follows.

> Positives: Humanitarian, individualism, respect, intuition, truth, equality, sympathetic, affection, feeling, love, sensitivity, emotion, personal kindness, compassion, brotherhood, friendship, mysticism
>
> Negatives: Science, reason, mechanical, hate, war, anger, insensitive, coldness, unemotional

Personal Success. The personal success value system is rooted in a highly pragmatic concern for the material happiness of the individual. This value system stresses personal achievement and success. Some of the words associated with the personal success value system are as follows.

> Positives: Career, family, friends, recreation, economic security, identity, health, individualism, affection, respect, enjoyment, dignity, consideration, fair play, personal
>
> Negatives: Dullness, routine, hunger, poverty, disgrace, coercion, disease

Collectivist. The collectivist value system is rooted in the idea of cooperative action and a perceived need to control the excesses of freedom in a mass society. Some of the words associated with the collectivist value system are as follows.

Positives: Cooperation, joint action, unity, brotherhood, together, social good, order, humanitarian aid and comfort, equality

Negatives: Disorganization, selfishness, personal greed, inequality

Therefore, to analyze the ethical appeal of an argument, we can try to determine what core values the argument expresses. Of course, rarely does an individual express only one of the above value systems; as individuals, we combine many of the above attitudes from different systems depending on our age, our knowledge, and our status.

Activity 14.8

Read either Zora Neale Hurston's "How It Feels to Be Colored Me" or Michael Jernigan's "Living the Dream," and write an analysis of its ethical appeal. What core values does the writer exhibit?

Writing the Analysis

If you are asked to write an "analysis" of an argument, you need to make a plan. First, you need to follow the steps in Chapter 2 under Active Reading (page 19), so that you thoroughly understand the argument presented. Then, to help you decide what to focus on, do the following.

1. First, find the author's thesis (claim). It may be explicitly stated, usually near the beginning of the essay, or it may be implied. If it is implied, then you need to state the claim in your own words.
2. Next, look for any qualifying words throughout the essay, particularly in the thesis. For example, such words as *seems*, *suggests*, and *indicates* weaken the force of a claim or supporting evidence, as do *many*, *might*, *some*, *probably*, and *likely*. More emphatic qualifiers, such as *all*, *every*, *always*, and *impossible* strengthen a claim—but also raise the bar for the evidence needed to prove it.
3. In addition to qualifying words, look for words that are ambiguous, that is, terms that are open to interpretation. For example, *light*, *work*, *right*, *sound*, *hot*, *solid*, *subject*, *average*, *fair*, and *value* all have multiple meanings, depending on

context. Further, look for jargon words (such as *factor*, *instance*, and *condition*) that can mean almost anything.

4. Next, list the kinds and amount of evidence the author uses to support his claim. Is the evidence clear? Does he say where the evidence comes from? Review the section above on Toulmin's analysis. If the writer fails to support her claims, or if she uses colorful, emotional language, be sure to note where this occurs.
5. Does the author engage in fallacious reasoning? (See the list of fallacies in Appendix 2.)
6. Does the author consider contradictory claims? If so, does he give evidence to refute them?
7. Does the author exhibit any bias? (See the section on bias above.) In addition, ask yourself what frame of reference, context, or initial assumption the author begins from.
8. What values does the writer exhibit? (See above.)
9. What are the practical implications of the argument? Would the author, or his political party or company, benefit from following his argument/proposal?
10. Now *outline the essay*, focusing on the thesis and the major supports of that thesis (evidence, examples, explanations, extended arguments, causes, effects, and so on). Making this outline will give you a much clearer idea of the structure and scope of the essay.
11. Next, make a decision about what critical approach to take in analyzing your chosen essay. You might want to focus on the writer's use of the rational, emotional, or ethical appeals.
12. Now that you have chosen an approach, read the essay again, listing or otherwise noting examples of the types of support, instances of sound or cogent (or flawed) reasoning, or emotional language you want to emphasize in your essay.
13. Organize the material you have isolated, draw your conclusions, set up a thesis, and write your paper, providing several examples from the essay to support general observations. When you write your introduction, be sure to mention the author's full name and the complete title of the essay you are analyzing.
14. Finally, be sure you give your essay a precise, descriptive title, such as "The Emotional Appeal in Jane Goodall's 'Some Thoughts on the Exploitation of Non-Human Animals.'"

In addition, keep in mind that your reader, while she may be familiar with the text you are analyzing, will not be as familiar with it as you are. (You have just spent a great deal of time working on it.) Therefore, you must guide her through your analysis carefully.

1. Be sure that you have an analytical thesis and not a descriptive one. A critical thesis is one that states an *evaluation or judgment* of an essay based on your analysis of it. For example: *In "Some Thoughts on the Exploitation of Non-Human Animals," Jane Goodall mounts a strong emotional appeal by using highly connotative language, vivid figures of speech, and an effective moral analogy.* A descriptive thesis, however, summarizes what the author says and no more: *In "Some Thoughts on the Exploitation of Non-Human Animals," Jane Goodall says that experimenting on animals, even if it benefits humans, is morally wrong.* This thesis will lead the writer merely to summarize what Goodall *says* in her essay; it provides no *analysis* of what she says nor indicates what approach the critical analysis will take.
2. Keep in mind that assertions are not arguments but judgments; they must be supported with details and examples drawn from the essay. For example, if you say that Goodall engages in fallacious reasoning, you must name the fallacies she uses and give examples of them drawn from the text. You must also tie in what the author says to the point you are making. Don't say merely that "Goodall uses emotionally charged words, such as 'concentration camps,' 'suffering,' and 'heartless monsters.'" Instead, for example, say that "Goodall's use of words and phrases such as 'concentration camps,' 'suffering,' and 'heartless monsters' helps to develop her emotional appeal by causing the reader to think of scientists as cruel and inhuman."
3. Never use such phrases as "It is my opinion that . . ." or "I believe that . . . ." A critical analysis is written from a third-person, objective point of view.
4. Do not write about your chosen essay in the past tense; use the historical present: not "Goodall *said*," but "Goodall *says*."

Analyzing Visual Arguments

Many of the strategies used to analyze written or oral arguments can also be used to analyze visual arguments, especially those contained in advertisements, political cartoons, and photographs found in newspapers, promotions, and public service announcements. Because visuals are meant to be interpreted by an audience for one reason or another—to persuade, to sell, to inform, to entertain—we can address them analytically and critically. Because visual messages are different in kind from textual ones (although many visuals contain text), we must use additional tools to analyze them depending on our specific purposes and what types of visuals we are examining. The criteria you use when analyzing a visual include the standard components of context (situation), purpose, audience, and voice/image of the visual's designer/sponsor. In addition, as you read earlier in this chapter, the three appeals—emotional, ethical, and logical—often play a major role in the presentation and effectiveness of a persuasive message. With visual arguments, however, you

should also consider the roles played by color, space, layout/design, social/cultural contexts, and the relationship between the visual elements and the message conveyed.

Advertisements

These are the most abundant of these three forms of visual texts. Since their obvious purpose is to sell a concept, idea, or product to a designated audience, specific rhetorical strategies are often used. When examining an advertisement for the purpose of rhetorical analysis, consider the following:

What is being advertised, and for what audience?

What is the sponsor's purpose? Is the purpose to support a claim, sell a product, emphasize a written text?

What general impression do you have of the visual? Is it eye-catching, funny, offbeat?

Does color contribute to the purpose/effect? How does color create the mood of the visual? Do the colors function symbolically or exist more to draw the viewer's attention to an intended focus?

What is the central focal point? Does it immediately attract your attention?

Does the design play a role in the message? For example, does either the background or foreground contribute more or less to the message? Is there an obvious omission of anything one would normally expect in such an ad?

Are people in the ad? Does their ethnic or socioeconomic status play a role in the ad's message? What is their age? Gender? How are these elements related to the overall message?

What emotions are evoked in the ad? How does the ad's text reflect upon the sponsor's image? Is an appeal to reason a part of the text?

Is the written text tied into the overall visual effect? Which is most prominent, the visual or the text?

Can you find additional elements? How do they contribute to the visual?

Photographs

Images highlight what the designer or editor of a story determines to be most important—as our eyes will naturally focus on the picture before engaging the text. Because photographs are frozen moments of time, they help us grasp the immediacy of a situation, whether they accompany a text or stand alone. For example, *National Geographic* magazine is famous for its photographs depicting people and places around the world. In *National Geographic*, it is the full-page pictures that capture our attention. Here, the text supplements the photographs. In other magazines, such as

Scientific American or *Harper's*, the photographs serve to illustrate the text. So the size and placement of photographs can help us determine the purpose they serve in the overall context of the presentation. In addition, as we look at a photographic image, we can draw inferences about not only what is represented in the image but also what is left out. For example, in a story about protests that led to violence, do the photographs only show people throwing rocks at police and burning cars, or do they only show people being beaten or bleeding on the sidewalk? When examining a photograph for the purpose of rhetorical analysis, consider the following.

What figures appear in the photo? Can you identify their age, ethnicity, social class, profession? Do any of these elements contribute to the visual's meaning?

Do the figures' facial expressions or appearance suggest interpretations consistent with the apparent message of the photo? Does the image express the meaning better than words could?

Does the image suggest what scene preceded the moment captured in the photo? How about what followed?

What seems to be the primary purpose of the message posed by the photo? What specific details lend to the meaning?

Does the photograph have a sponsor? How does the sponsor's relationship to the content itself influence your perception of the photograph?

What is your general impression of the message conveyed by the visual? Does any bias seem apparent in the image? Is there a caption? If so, does it effectively add to or help explain the image?

What is the social or cultural context of the image? How is it linked to the message and/or purpose?

What rhetorical appeals are present in the photo?

Does color contribute to the interpretation of the message?

What is the prevailing tone of the image? Is it consistent with the intended message?

Cartoons

The combination of drawn figures and textual captions sometimes also include what are called speech bubbles or word balloons. They normally appear in the opinion pages of newspapers, in magazines, and on various websites. One of the Pulitzer Prizes (one of fourteen Pulitzer Prizes) given every year is for Editorial Cartooning. As the definition implies, political cartoons can be biased. They take sides on current events, national and international, and present a specific viewpoint—liberal, conservative, Democrat, Republican. Some cartoons, however, such as those in *The New Yorker*, simply present a wry or humorous take on contemporary life. (Simply

Google "political cartoons" or "*New Yorke*r cartoons," and hit the Images button.) When examining a cartoon for the purpose of rhetorical analysis, consider the following.

What is the general context of the visual?

What current event or events led up to the cartoon?

Where did it appear (The *New York Times*, *Huffington Post, American Rifleman* . . .)?

Can you identify each character or symbol present in the visual?

Are lines spoken in word balloons? How do the words relate to the overall message of the cartoon?

Is there a caption? What is its tone (satiric, patriotic, ironic, humorous . . .)?

Does the cartoon address a specific political or social event, or is it directed at a specific person or group?

Does the cartoon present a specific position or ideology? For example, would you characterize it as liberal, conservative, probusiness, prolabor, pro-Democrat, pro-Republican . . .)?

Who is the cartoon's intended audience?

Is the cartoonist's message clear? Successful? Partisan?

What does the visual make you feel or think?

What specific details of the cartoon stand out in your mind? How is each related to the message?

All three of these visual genres are arguments and therefore are subject to rhetorical scrutiny and analysis just as is written discourse. So remember to bring your knowledge of rhetoric, with its general elements and appeals, to bear on visual texts as well. You are not limited to the general questions listed above. They are only queries that will allow you to initiate a more fully developed response in time. The answers you derive from these questions will provide the substance for your own argumentative claims in your analysis of the visual. Examining all these details can also help you understand the powerful effect visuals have on all of us.

Analysis of an Advertisement

Examine Figure 14.2, a public service announcement (PSA), looking carefully at all the details.

Figure 14.2: PSA

Now that you have familiarized yourself with the ad, ask yourself the following questions:

- What is your immediate reaction to the visual?
- What is the dominant image in the visual? The rhetorical situation?
- What is its explicit message?
- Is there an implied message? What is it?
- What text is provided? Does it complement the visual?
- Does the design play a role in the message? Does it immediately attract your attention?
- What rhetorical appeals are used in the visual?

The visual evokes horror at what is about to happen—a tragic event. An automobile is about to strike a child because the driver is distracted by his cell phone and the conversation he is having with the adult passenger sitting next to him. The unstated but implied message is that distractions while driving can result in accidents or death.

The main textual message, "THINK OF BOTH SIDES," urges the audience to be as attentive and protective of children outside the automobile as they are with children in the car. An additional cautionary passage at the bottom of the ad reads: "The number of car accidents involving children increases during school holidays.

Please be extremely careful." The advertiser/sponsor reiterates that drivers must be especially aware of other children, just as they are protective of their own.

The design of the ad contributes immensely to the message. Note how the focal point—the two children's faces—is the first and most dominant image the audience sees. Being in the center of the frame, with its divided facial depictions and apparent contrast between facial expressions of horror and calm, this focal point sets the mood and tone of the ad. This double image is supported by the caption that states "THINK OF BOTH SIDES," bringing together the written text and the overall visual effect. Note, too, the colors—except for the words "BOTH SIDES" in red letters—are generally muted, which helps direct our focus to the images in the center. The completely faded background is contrasted with the subtle blues and flesh colors in the foreground, again drawing attention to the red letters and two distinct expressions in the center. The adults in the ad appear to be parents whose child is securely placed in his or her own seat in the rear of the car. The parents' distracted focus on each other, a map, and a conversation on a cell phone speak to the potential dangers while driving and failing to observe what is occurring outside the car.

Aside from the obvious emotional appeal for the well-being of our children, the sponsor's ethos is apparent through the general regard for parental awareness and especially the safety of schoolchildren everywhere. The sponsor gains nothing from its ad other than trying to make the world a safer place, which is certainly a demonstration of goodwill. In addition, the implied syllogism—"Distracted drivers kill people; this driver is distracted; therefore, this driver kills people"—suggests support for both the visual and textual messages of the ad.

Additional information can be derived from further examination of the details, but the responses to the questions above should get you started on your path toward a thorough analysis. For example, how does symmetry and contrast play a role in the design? What do the differing facial expressions contribute to the message's impact? And what specific audience is being targeted? Once you have exhausted your question/response process, gather the information you have collected, and begin to group that information into an informal outline for your analysis. For example, your initial outline might look like the following.

Thesis: (Formulate a thesis based on the information you've discovered from the visual.)

I. Message/purpose of the ad

II. Impressions of the design and effects of the visual

III. Rhetorical appeals used in the ad and their effectiveness

Activity 14.9

Look at the photo below. As a group, decide on answers to the questions listed under "Analyzing Visual Arguments." Next, draw a conclusion about the effectiveness of the ad. Now, individually, write an extended paragraph discussing the ad's effectiveness and appeal.

Letter From Birmingham Jail

Martin Luther King, Jr.

The Reverend Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Letter from Birmingham Jail" is a classic example of argumentative and persuasive writing. It was written in response to a statement by eight clergymen urging the withdrawal of support for the civil rights movement orchestrated by King and other leaders. When you read King's letter, look especially at his use of the ethical, emotional, and logical appeals (both induction and deduction). Also consider the four elements of rhetoric—situation, voice, purpose, and audience. You should discover through your examination of this letter why King is considered one of history's foremost speakers/writers. King's letter is preceded by the statement to which his letter is a reply.

King's "letter" is famous not only for its message and argument as well as its rational appeal, but also for its rhetoric, its emotional appeal. And strongly woven throughout the text is King's ethical appeal. After all, it is written from jail, where a man working to liberate his people has been unjustly placed. Study this essay, and highlight passages that illustrate King's use of the three appeals. Yes, it is long, but it is well worth the effort.

April 16, 1963
Public Statement By Eight Alabama Clergymen
April 12, 1963

We the undersigned clergymen are among those who, in January, issued "An Appeal for Law and Order and Common Sense," in dealing with racial problems in Alabama. We expressed understanding that honest convictions in racial matters could properly be pursued in the courts, but urged that decisions of those courts should in the meantime be peacefully obeyed.

Since that time there had been some evidence of increased forbearance and a willingness to face facts. Responsible citizens have undertaken to work on various problems which cause racial friction and unrest. In Birmingham, recent public events have given indication that we all have opportunity for a new and constructive and realistic approach to racial problems.

However, we are now confronted by a series of demonstrations by some of our Negro citizens, directed and led in part by outsiders. We recognize the natural impatience of people who feel that their hopes are slow in being realized. But we are convinced that these demonstrations are unwise and untimely.

We agree rather with certain local Negro leadership which has called for honest and open negotiation of racial issues in our area. And we believe this kind of facing of issues can best be accomplished by citizens of our own metropolitan area, white and Negro, meeting with their knowledge and experience of the local situation. All of us need to face that responsibility and find proper channels for its accomplishment.

Just as we formerly pointed out that "hatred and violence have no sanction in our religious and political traditions," we also point out that such actions as incite to hatred and violence, however technically peaceful those actions may be, have not contributed to the resolution of our local problems. We do not believe that these days of new hope are days when extreme measures are justified in Birmingham.

We commend the community as a whole, and the local news media and law enforcement officials in particular, on the calm manner in which these demonstrations have been handled. We urge the public to continue to show restraint should the demonstrations continue, and the law enforcement officials to remain calm and continue to protect our city from violence.

We further strongly urge our own Negro community to withdraw support from these demonstrations, and to unite locally in working peacefully for a better Birmingham. When rights are consistently denied, a cause should be pressed in the courts and in negotiations among local leaders, and not in the streets. We appeal to both our white and Negro citizenry to observe the principles of law and order and common sense.

King's Reply

My Dear Fellow Clergymen:

While confined here in the Birmingham city jail, I came across your recent statement calling my present activities "unwise and untimely." Seldom do I pause to answer criticism of my work and ideas. If I sought to answer all the criticisms that cross my desk, my secretaries would have little time for anything other than such correspondence in the course of the day, and I would have no time for constructive work. But since I feel that you are men of genuine good will and that your criticisms are sincerely set forth, I want to try to answer your statement in what I hope will be patient and reasonable terms.

I think I should indicate why I am here in Birmingham, since you have been influenced by the view which argues against "outsiders coming in." I have the honor of serving as president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, an organization operating in every southern state, with headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia. We have some eighty-five affiliated organizations across the South, and one of them is the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights. Frequently we share staff, educational and financial resources with our affiliates. Several months ago the affiliate here in Birmingham asked us to be on call to engage in a nonviolent direct action program if such were deemed necessary. We readily consented, and when the hour came we lived up to our promise. So I, along with several members of my staff, am here because I was invited here. I am here because I have organizational ties here.

But more basically, I am in Birmingham because injustice is here. Just as the prophets of the eighth century B.C. left their villages and carried their "thus saith the Lord" far beyond the boundaries of their home towns, and just as the Apostle Paul left his village of Tarsus and carried the gospel of Jesus Christ to the far corners of the Greco Roman world, so am I compelled to carry the gospel of freedom beyond my own home town. Like Paul, I must constantly respond to the Macedonian call for aid.

Moreover, I am cognizant of the interrelatedness of all communities and states. I cannot sit idly by in Atlanta and not be concerned about what happens in Birmingham. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. Never again can we afford to live with the narrow, provincial "outside agitator" idea. Anyone who lives inside the United States can never be considered an outsider anywhere within its bounds.

You deplore the demonstrations taking place in Birmingham. But your statement, I am sorry to say, fails to express a similar concern for the conditions that brought about the demonstrations. I am sure that none of you would want to rest content with the superficial kind of social analysis that deals merely with effects and does not grapple with underlying causes. It is unfortunate that demonstrations are taking place in Birmingham, but it is even more unfortunate that the city's white power structure left the Negro community with no alternative.

In any nonviolent campaign there are four basic steps: collection of the facts to determine whether injustices exist; negotiation; self purification; and direct action. We have gone through all these steps in Birmingham. There can be no gainsaying the fact that racial injustice engulfs this community. Birmingham is probably the most thoroughly segregated city in the United States. Its ugly record of brutality is widely known. Negroes have experienced grossly unjust treatment in the courts. There have been more unsolved bombings of Negro homes and churches in Birmingham than in any other city in the nation. These are the hard, brutal facts of the case. On the basis of these conditions, Negro leaders sought to negotiate with the city fathers. But the latter consistently refused to engage in good-faith negotiation.

Then, last September, came the opportunity to talk with leaders of Birmingham's economic community. In the course of the negotiations, certain promises were made by the merchants—for example, to remove the stores' humiliating racial signs. On the basis of these promises, the Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth and the leaders of the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights agreed to a moratorium on all demonstrations. As the weeks and months went by, we realized that we were the victims of a broken promise. A few signs, briefly removed, returned; the others remained.

As in so many past experiences, our hopes had been blasted, and the shadow of deep disappointment settled upon us. We had no alternative except to prepare

for direct action, whereby we would present our very bodies as a means of laying our case before the conscience of the local and the national community. Mindful of the difficulties involved, we decided to undertake a process of self purification. We began a series of workshops on nonviolence, and we repeatedly asked ourselves: "Are you able to accept blows without retaliating?" "Are you able to endure the ordeal of jail?" We decided to schedule our direct action program for the Easter season, realizing that except for Christmas, this is the main shopping period of the year. Knowing that a strong economic-withdrawal program would be the byproduct of direct action, we felt that this would be the best time to bring pressure to bear on the merchants for the needed change.

Then it occurred to us that Birmingham's mayoral election was coming up in March, and we speedily decided to postpone action until after election day. When we discovered that the Commissioner of Public Safety, Eugene "Bull" Connor, had piled up enough votes to be in the run off, we decided again to postpone action until the day after the run off so that the demonstrations could not be used to cloud the issues. Like many others, we waited to see Mr. Connor defeated, and to this end we endured postponement after postponement. Having aided in this community need, we felt that our direct action program could be delayed no longer.

You may well ask: "Why direct action? Why sit ins, marches and so forth? Isn't negotiation a better path?" You are quite right in calling for negotiation. Indeed, this is the very purpose of direct action. Nonviolent direct action seeks to create such a crisis and foster such a tension that a community which has constantly refused to negotiate is forced to confront the issue. It seeks so to dramatize the issue that it can no longer be ignored. My citing the creation of tension as part of the work of the nonviolent resister may sound rather shocking. But I must confess that I am not afraid of the word "tension." I have earnestly opposed violent tension, but there is a type of constructive, nonviolent tension which is necessary for growth. Just as Socrates felt that it was necessary to create a tension in the mind so that individuals could rise from the bondage of myths and halftruths to the unfettered realm of creative analysis and objective appraisal, so must we see the need for nonviolent gadflies to create the kind of tension in society that will help men rise from the dark depths of prejudice and racism to the majestic heights of understanding and brotherhood.

The purpose of our direct action program is to create a situation so crisis packed that it will inevitably open the door to negotiation. I therefore concur with you in your call for negotiation. Too long has our beloved Southland been bogged down in a tragic effort to live in monologue rather than dialogue.

One of the basic points in your statement is that the action that I and my associates have taken in Birmingham is untimely. Some have asked: "Why didn't you give the new city administration time to act?" The only answer that I can give to this query is that the new Birmingham administration must be prodded about as

much as the outgoing one, before it will act. We are sadly mistaken if we feel that the election of Albert Boutwell as mayor will bring the millennium to Birmingham. While Mr. Boutwell is a much more gentle person than Mr. Connor, they are both segregationists, dedicated to maintenance of the status quo. I have hope that Mr. Boutwell will be reasonable enough to see the futility of massive resistance to desegregation. But he will not see this without pressure from devotees of civil rights. My friends, I must say to you that we have not made a single gain in civil rights without determined legal and nonviolent pressure. Lamentably, it is an historical fact that privileged groups seldom give up their privileges voluntarily. Individuals may see the moral light and voluntarily give up their unjust posture; but, as Reinhold Niebuhr has reminded us, groups tend to be more immoral than individuals.

We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed. Frankly, I have yet to engage in a direct action campaign that was "well timed" in the view of those who have not suffered unduly from the disease of segregation. For years now I have heard the word "Wait!" It rings in the ear of every Negro with piercing familiarity. This "Wait" has almost always meant "Never." We must come to see, with one of our distinguished jurists, that "justice too long delayed is justice denied."

We have waited for more than 340 years for our constitutional and God-given rights. The nations of Asia and Africa are moving with jetlike speed toward gaining political independence, but we still creep at horse-and-buggy pace toward gaining a cup of coffee at a lunch counter. Perhaps it is easy for those who have never felt the stinging darts of segregation to say, "Wait." But when you have seen vicious mobs lynch your mothers and fathers at will and drown your sisters and brothers at whim; when you have seen hate-filled policemen curse, kick and even kill your black brothers and sisters; when you see the vast majority of your twenty million Negro brothers smothering in an airtight cage of poverty in the midst of an affluent society; when you suddenly find your tongue twisted and your speech stammering as you seek to explain to your six-year-old daughter why she can't go to the public amusement park that has just been advertised on television, and see tears welling up in her eyes when she is told that Funtown is closed to colored children, and see ominous clouds of inferiority beginning to form in her little mental sky, and see her beginning to distort her personality by developing an unconscious bitterness toward white people; when you have to concoct an answer for a five-year-old son who is asking: "Daddy, why do white people treat colored people so mean?"; when you take a cross county drive and find it necessary to sleep night after night in the uncomfortable corners of your automobile because no motel will accept you; when you are humiliated day in and day out by nagging signs reading "white" and "colored"; when your first name becomes "nigger," your middle name becomes "boy" (however old you are) and your last name becomes "John," and your wife and

mother are never given the respected title "Mrs."; when you are harried by day and haunted by night by the fact that you are a Negro, living constantly at tiptoe stance, never quite knowing what to expect next, and are plagued with inner fears and outer resentments; when you are forever fighting a degenerating sense of "nobodiness"—then you will understand why we find it difficult to wait. There comes a time when the cup of endurance runs over, and men are no longer willing to be plunged into the abyss of despair. I hope, sirs, you can understand our legitimate and unavoidable impatience.

You express a great deal of anxiety over our willingness to break laws. This is certainly a legitimate concern. Since we so diligently urge people to obey the Supreme Court's decision of 1954 outlawing segregation in the public schools, at first glance it may seem rather paradoxical for us consciously to break laws. One may well ask: "How can you advocate breaking some laws and obeying others?" The answer lies in the fact that there are two types of laws: just and unjust. I would be the first to advocate obeying just laws. One has not only a legal but a moral responsibility to obey just laws. Conversely, one has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws. I would agree with St. Augustine that "an unjust law is no law at all."

Now, what is the difference between the two? How does one determine whether a law is just or unjust? A just law is a man made code that squares with the moral law or the law of God. An unjust law is a code that is out of harmony with the moral law. To put it in the terms of St. Thomas Aquinas: An unjust law is a human law that is not rooted in eternal law and natural law. Any law that uplifts human personality is just. Any law that degrades human personality is unjust. All segregation statutes are unjust because segregation distorts the soul and damages the personality. It gives the segregator a false sense of superiority and the segregated a false sense of inferiority. Segregation, to use the terminology of the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber, substitutes an "I it" relationship for an "I thou" relationship and ends up relegating persons to the status of things. Hence segregation is not only politically, economically and sociologically unsound, it is morally wrong and sinful. Paul Tillich has said that sin is separation. Is not segregation an existential expression of man's tragic separation, his awful estrangement, his terrible sinfulness? Thus it is that I can urge men to obey the 1954 decision of the Supreme Court, for it is morally right; and I can urge them to disobey segregation ordinances, for they are morally wrong.

Let us consider a more concrete example of just and unjust laws. An unjust law is a code that a numerical or power majority group compels a minority group to obey but does not make binding on itself. This is difference made legal. By the same token, a just law is a code that a majority compels a minority to follow and that it is willing to follow itself. This is sameness made legal.

Let me give another explanation. A law is unjust if it is inflicted on a minority that, as a result of being denied the right to vote, had no part in enacting or devis-

ing the law. Who can say that the legislature of Alabama which set up that state's segregation laws was democratically elected? Throughout Alabama all sorts of devious methods are used to prevent Negroes from becoming registered voters, and there are some counties in which, even though Negroes constitute a majority of the population, not a single Negro is registered. Can any law enacted under such circumstances be considered democratically structured?

Sometimes a law is just on its face and unjust in its application. For instance, I have been arrested on a charge of parading without a permit. Now, there is nothing wrong in having an ordinance which requires a permit for a parade. But such an ordinance becomes unjust when it is used to maintain segregation and to deny citizens the First-Amendment privilege of peaceful assembly and protest.

I hope you are able to see the distinction I am trying to point out. In no sense do I advocate evading or defying the law, as would the rabid segregationist. That would lead to anarchy. One who breaks an unjust law must do so openly, lovingly, and with a willingness to accept the penalty. I submit that an individual who breaks a law that conscience tells him is unjust, and who willingly accepts the penalty of imprisonment in order to arouse the conscience of the community over its injustice, is in reality expressing the highest respect for law.

Of course, there is nothing new about this kind of civil disobedience. It was evidenced sublimely in the refusal of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to obey the laws of Nebuchadnezzar, on the ground that a higher moral law was at stake. It was practiced superbly by the early Christians, who were willing to face hungry lions and the excruciating pain of chopping blocks rather than submit to certain unjust laws of the Roman Empire. To a degree, academic freedom is a reality today because Socrates practiced civil disobedience. In our own nation, the Boston Tea Party represented a massive act of civil disobedience.

We should never forget that everything Adolf Hitler did in Germany was "legal" and everything the Hungarian freedom fighters did in Hungary was "illegal." It was "illegal" to aid and comfort a Jew in Hitler's Germany. Even so, I am sure that, had I lived in Germany at the time, I would have aided and comforted my Jewish brothers. If today I lived in a Communist country where certain principles dear to the Christian faith are suppressed, I would openly advocate disobeying that country's antireligious laws.

I must make two honest confessions to you, my Christian and Jewish brothers. First, I must confess that over the past few years I have been gravely disappointed with the white moderate. I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro's great stumbling block in his stride toward freedom is not the White Citizen's Counciler or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate, who is more devoted to "order" than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice; who constantly says: "I

agree with you in the goal you seek, but I cannot agree with your methods of direct action"; who paternalistically believes he can set the timetable for another man's freedom; who lives by a mythical concept of time and who constantly advises the Negro to wait for a "more convenient season." Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will. Lukewarm acceptance is much more bewildering than outright rejection.

I had hoped that the white moderate would understand that law and order exist for the purpose of establishing justice and that when they fail in this purpose they become the dangerously structured dams that block the flow of social progress. I had hoped that the white moderate would understand that the present tension in the South is a necessary phase of the transition from an obnoxious negative peace, in which the Negro passively accepted his unjust plight, to a substantive and positive peace, in which all men will respect the dignity and worth of human personality. Actually, we who engage in nonviolent direct action are not the creators of tension. We merely bring to the surface the hidden tension that is already alive. We bring it out in the open, where it can be seen and dealt with. Like a boil that can never be cured so long as it is covered up but must be opened with all its ugliness to the natural medicines of air and light, injustice must be exposed, with all the tension its exposure creates, to the light of human conscience and the air of national opinion before it can be cured.

In your statement you assert that our actions, even though peaceful, must be condemned because they precipitate violence. But is this a logical assertion? Isn't this like condemning a robbed man because his possession of money precipitated the evil act of robbery? Isn't this like condemning Socrates because his unswerving commitment to truth and his philosophical inquiries precipitated the act by the misguided populace in which they made him drink hemlock? Isn't this like condemning Jesus because his unique God consciousness and never ceasing devotion to God's will precipitated the evil act of crucifixion? We must come to see that, as the federal courts have consistently affirmed, it is wrong to urge an individual to cease his efforts to gain his basic constitutional rights because the quest may precipitate violence. Society must protect the robbed and punish the robber.

I had also hoped that the white moderate would reject the myth concerning time in relation to the struggle for freedom. I have just received a letter from a white brother in Texas. He writes: "All Christians know that the colored people will receive equal rights eventually, but it is possible that you are in too great a religious hurry. It has taken Christianity almost two thousand years to accomplish what it has. The teachings of Christ take time to come to earth." Such an attitude stems from a tragic misconception of time, from the strangely irrational notion that there is something in the very flow of time that will inevitably cure all ills. Actually, time itself is neutral; it can be used either destructively or constructively. More and more I feel that the

people of ill will have used time much more effectively than have the people of good will. We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the hateful words and actions of the bad people but for the appalling silence of the good people. Human progress never rolls in on wheels of inevitability; it comes through the tireless efforts of men willing to be co workers with God, and without this hard work, time itself becomes an ally of the forces of social stagnation. We must use time creatively, in the knowledge that the time is always ripe to do right. Now is the time to make real the promise of democracy and transform our pending national elegy into a creative psalm of brotherhood. Now is the time to lift our national policy from the quicksand of racial injustice to the solid rock of human dignity.

You speak of our activity in Birmingham as extreme. At first I was rather disappointed that fellow clergymen would see my nonviolent efforts as those of an extremist. I began thinking about the fact that I stand in the middle of two opposing forces in the Negro community. One is a force of complacency, made up in part of Negroes who, as a result of long years of oppression, are so drained of self respect and a sense of "somebodiness" that they have adjusted to segregation; and in part of a few middle-class Negroes who, because of a degree of academic and economic security and because in some ways they profit by segregation, have become insensitive to the problems of the masses. The other force is one of bitterness and hatred, and it comes perilously close to advocating violence. It is expressed in the various black nationalist groups that are springing up across the nation, the largest and best known being Elijah Muhammad's Muslim movement. Nourished by the Negro's frustration over the continued existence of racial discrimination, this movement is made up of people who have lost faith in America, who have absolutely repudiated Christianity, and who have concluded that the white man is an incorrigible "devil."

I have tried to stand between these two forces, saying that we need emulate neither the "do nothingism" of the complacent nor the hatred and despair of the black nationalist. For there is the more excellent way of love and nonviolent protest. I am grateful to God that, through the influence of the Negro church, the way of nonviolence became an integral part of our struggle.

If this philosophy had not emerged, by now many streets of the South would, I am convinced, be flowing with blood. And I am further convinced that if our white brothers dismiss as "rabble rousers" and "outside agitators" those of us who employ nonviolent direct action, and if they refuse to support our nonviolent efforts, millions of Negroes will, out of frustration and despair, seek solace and security in black nationalist ideologies—a development that would inevitably lead to a frightening racial nightmare.

Oppressed people cannot remain oppressed forever. The yearning for freedom eventually manifests itself, and that is what has happened to the American Negro. Something within has reminded him of his birthright of freedom, and something

without has reminded him that it can be gained. Consciously or unconsciously, he has been caught up by the Zeitgeist, and with his black brothers of Africa and his brown and yellow brothers of Asia, South America and the Caribbean, the United States Negro is moving with a sense of great urgency toward the promised land of racial justice. If one recognizes this vital urge that has engulfed the Negro community, one should readily understand why public demonstrations are taking place. The Negro has many pent up resentments and latent frustrations, and he must release them. So let him march; let him make prayer pilgrimages to the city hall; let him go on freedom rides—and try to understand why he must do so. If his repressed emotions are not released in nonviolent ways, they will seek expression through violence; this is not a threat but a fact of history. So I have not said to my people: "Get rid of your discontent." Rather, I have tried to say that this normal and healthy discontent can be channeled into the creative outlet of nonviolent direct action. And now this approach is being termed extremist.

But though I was initially disappointed at being categorized as an extremist, as I continued to think about the matter I gradually gained a measure of satisfaction from the label. Was not Jesus an extremist for love: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." Was not Amos an extremist for justice: "Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever flowing stream." Was not Paul an extremist for the Christian gospel: "I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." Was not Martin Luther an extremist: "Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise, so help me God." And John Bunyan: "I will stay in jail to the end of my days before I make a butchery of my conscience." And Abraham Lincoln: "This nation cannot survive half slave and half free." And Thomas Jefferson: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal. . . ." So the question is not whether we will be extremists, but what kind of extremists we will be. Will we be extremists for hate or for love? Will we be extremists for the preservation of injustice or for the extension of justice? In that dramatic scene on Calvary's hill three men were crucified. We must never forget that all three were crucified for the same crime—the crime of extremism. Two were extremists for immorality, and thus fell below their environment. The other, Jesus Christ, was an extremist for love, truth and goodness, and thereby rose above his environment. Perhaps the South, the nation and the world are in dire need of creative extremists.

I had hoped that the white moderate would see this need. Perhaps I was too optimistic; perhaps I expected too much. I suppose I should have realized that few members of the oppressor race can understand the deep groans and passionate yearnings of the oppressed race, and still fewer have the vision to see that injustice must be rooted out by strong, persistent and determined action. I am thankful, however, that some of our white brothers in the South have grasped the meaning

of this social revolution and committed themselves to it. They are still all too few in quantity, but they are big in quality. Some—such as Ralph McGill, Lillian Smith, Harry Golden, James McBride Dabbs, Ann Braden and Sarah Patton Boyle—have written about our struggle in eloquent and prophetic terms. Others have marched with us down nameless streets of the South. They have languished in filthy, roach infested jails, suffering the abuse and brutality of policemen who view them as "dirty nigger-lovers." Unlike so many of their moderate brothers and sisters, they have recognized the urgency of the moment and sensed the need for powerful "action" antidotes to combat the disease of segregation.

Let me take note of my other major disappointment. I have been so greatly disappointed with the white church and its leadership. Of course, there are some notable exceptions. I am not unmindful of the fact that each of you has taken some significant stands on this issue. I commend you, Reverend Stallings, for your Christian stand on this past Sunday, in welcoming Negroes to your worship service on a nonsegregated basis. I commend the Catholic leaders of this state for integrating Spring Hill College several years ago.

But despite these notable exceptions, I must honestly reiterate that I have been disappointed with the church. I do not say this as one of those negative critics who can always find something wrong with the church. I say this as a minister of the gospel, who loves the church; who was nurtured in its bosom; who has been sustained by its spiritual blessings and who will remain true to it as long as the cord of life shall lengthen.

When I was suddenly catapulted into the leadership of the bus protest in Montgomery, Alabama, a few years ago, I felt we would be supported by the white church. I felt that the white ministers, priests and rabbis of the South would be among our strongest allies. Instead, some have been outright opponents, refusing to understand the freedom movement and misrepresenting its leaders; all too many others have been more cautious than courageous and have remained silent behind the anesthetizing security of stained glass windows.

In spite of my shattered dreams, I came to Birmingham with the hope that the white religious leadership of this community would see the justice of our cause and, with deep moral concern, would serve as the channel through which our just grievances could reach the power structure. I had hoped that each of you would understand. But again I have been disappointed.

I have heard numerous southern religious leaders admonish their worshipers to comply with a desegregation decision because it is the law, but I have longed to hear white ministers declare: "Follow this decree because integration is morally right and because the Negro is your brother." In the midst of blatant injustices inflicted upon the Negro, I have watched white churchmen stand on the sideline and mouth pious irrelevancies and sanctimonious trivialities. In the midst of a mighty struggle

to rid our nation of racial and economic injustice, I have heard many ministers say: "Those are social issues, with which the gospel has no real concern." And I have watched many churches commit themselves to a completely other worldly religion which makes a strange, un-Biblical distinction between body and soul, between the sacred and the secular.

I have traveled the length and breadth of Alabama, Mississippi and all the other southern states. On sweltering summer days and crisp autumn mornings I have looked at the South's beautiful churches with their lofty spires pointing heavenward. I have beheld the impressive outlines of her massive religious education buildings. Over and over I have found myself asking: "What kind of people worship here? Who is their God? Where were their voices when the lips of Governor Barnett dripped with words of interposition and nullification? Where were they when Governor Wallace gave a clarion call for defiance and hatred? Where were their voices of support when bruised and weary Negro men and women decided to rise from the dark dungeons of complacency to the bright hills of creative protest?"

Yes, these questions are still in my mind. In deep disappointment I have wept over the laxity of the church. But be assured that my tears have been tears of love. There can be no deep disappointment where there is not deep love. Yes, I love the church. How could I do otherwise? I am in the rather unique position of being the son, the grandson and the great grandson of preachers. Yes, I see the church as the body of Christ. But, oh! How we have blemished and scarred that body through social neglect and through fear of being nonconformists.

There was a time when the church was very powerful—in the time when the early Christians rejoiced at being deemed worthy to suffer for what they believed. In those days the church was not merely a thermometer that recorded the ideas and principles of popular opinion; it was a thermostat that transformed the mores of society. Whenever the early Christians entered a town, the people in power became disturbed and immediately sought to convict the Christians for being "disturbers of the peace" and "outside agitators." But the Christians pressed on, in the conviction that they were "a colony of heaven," called to obey God rather than man. Small in number, they were big in commitment. They were too God-intoxicated to be "astronomically intimidated." By their effort and example they brought an end to such ancient evils as infanticide and gladiatorial contests.

Things are different now. So often the contemporary church is a weak, ineffectual voice with an uncertain sound. So often it is an arch-defender of the status quo. Far from being disturbed by the presence of the church, the power structure of the average community is consoled by the church's silent—and often even vocal—sanction of things as they are.

But the judgment of God is upon the church as never before. If today's church does not recapture the sacrificial spirit of the early church, it will lose its authen-

ticity, forfeit the loyalty of millions, and be dismissed as an irrelevant social club with no meaning for the twentieth century. Every day I meet young people whose disappointment with the church has turned into outright disgust.

Perhaps I have once again been too optimistic. Is organized religion too inextricably bound to the status quo to save our nation and the world? Perhaps I must turn my faith to the inner spiritual church, the church within the church, as the true ekklesia and the hope of the world. But again I am thankful to God that some noble souls from the ranks of organized religion have broken loose from the paralyzing chains of conformity and joined us as active partners in the struggle for freedom. They have left their secure congregations and walked the streets of Albany, Georgia, with us. They have gone down the highways of the South on tortuous rides for freedom. Yes, they have gone to jail with us. Some have been dismissed from their churches, have lost the support of their bishops and fellow ministers. But they have acted in the faith that right defeated is stronger than evil triumphant. Their witness has been the spiritual salt that has preserved the true meaning of the gospel in these troubled times. They have carved a tunnel of hope through the dark mountain of disappointment.

I hope the church as a whole will meet the challenge of this decisive hour. But even if the church does not come to the aid of justice, I have no despair about the future. I have no fear about the outcome of our struggle in Birmingham, even if our motives are at present misunderstood. We will reach the goal of freedom in Birmingham and all over the nation, because the goal of America is freedom. Abused and scorned though we may be, our destiny is tied up with America's destiny. Before the pilgrims landed at Plymouth, we were here. Before the pen of Jefferson etched the majestic words of the Declaration of Independence across the pages of history, we were here. For more than two centuries our forebears labored in this country without wages; they made cotton king; they built the homes of their masters while suffering gross injustice and shameful humiliation—and yet out of a bottomless vitality they continued to thrive and develop. If the inexpressible cruelties of slavery could not stop us, the opposition we now face will surely fail. We will win our freedom because the sacred heritage of our nation and the eternal will of God are embodied in our echoing demands.

Before closing I feel impelled to mention one other point in your statement that has troubled me profoundly. You warmly commended the Birmingham police force for keeping "order" and "preventing violence." I doubt that you would have so warmly commended the police force if you had seen its dogs sinking their teeth into unarmed, nonviolent Negroes. I doubt that you would so quickly commend the policemen if you were to observe their ugly and inhumane treatment of Negroes here in the city jail; if you were to watch them push and curse old Negro women and young Negro girls; if you were to see them slap and kick old Negro men and young

boys; if you were to observe them, as they did on two occasions, refuse to give us food because we wanted to sing our grace together. I cannot join you in your praise of the Birmingham police department.

It is true that the police have exercised a degree of discipline in handling the demonstrators. In this sense they have conducted themselves rather "nonviolently" in public. But for what purpose? To preserve the evil system of segregation. Over the past few years I have consistently preached that nonviolence demands that the means we use must be as pure as the ends we seek. I have tried to make clear that it is wrong to use immoral means to attain moral ends. But now I must affirm that it is just as wrong, or perhaps even more so, to use moral means to preserve immoral ends. Perhaps Mr. Connor and his policemen have been rather nonviolent in public, as was Chief Pritchett in Albany, Georgia, but they have used the moral means of nonviolence to maintain the immoral end of racial injustice. As T. S. Eliot has said: "The last temptation is the greatest treason: To do the right deed for the wrong reason."

I wish you had commended the Negro sit inners and demonstrators of Birmingham for their sublime courage, their willingness to suffer and their amazing discipline in the midst of great provocation. One day the South will recognize its real heroes. They will be the James Merediths, with the noble sense of purpose that enables them to face jeering and hostile mobs, and with the agonizing loneliness that characterizes the life of the pioneer. They will be old, oppressed, battered Negro women, symbolized in a seventy two year old woman in Montgomery, Alabama, who rose up with a sense of dignity and with her people decided not to ride segregated buses, and who responded with ungrammatical profundity to one who inquired about her weariness: "My feets is tired, but my soul is at rest." They will be the young high school and college students, the young ministers of the gospel and a host of their elders, courageously and nonviolently sitting in at lunch counters and willingly going to jail for conscience' sake. One day the South will know that when these disinherited children of God sat down at lunch counters, they were in reality standing up for what is best in the American dream and for the most sacred values in our Judaeo Christian heritage, thereby bringing our nation back to those great wells of democracy which were dug deep by the founding fathers in their formulation of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence.

Never before have I written so long a letter. I'm afraid it is much too long to take your precious time. I can assure you that it would have been much shorter if I had been writing from a comfortable desk, but what else can one do when he is alone in a narrow jail cell, other than write long letters, think long thoughts and pray long prayers?

If I have said anything in this letter that overstates the truth and indicates an unreasonable impatience, I beg you to forgive me. If I have said anything that un-

derstates the truth and indicates my having a patience that allows me to settle for anything less than brotherhood, I beg God to forgive me.

I hope this letter finds you strong in the faith. I also hope that circumstances will soon make it possible for me to meet each of you, not as an integrationist or a civil-rights leader but as a fellow clergyman and a Christian brother. Let us all hope that the dark clouds of racial prejudice will soon pass away and the deep fog of misunderstanding will be lifted from our fear drenched communities, and in some not too distant tomorrow the radiant stars of love and brotherhood will shine over our great nation with all their scintillating beauty.

Yours for the cause of Peace and Brotherhood,

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Topics for Writing and Discussion

1. How is King's letter a conversation? With whom? Why? When?
2. How did King's writing process reflect an inquiry of his world during the civil rights era?
3. How does King develop his credibility and authority as a writer?
4. Study the different sources King uses in the letter to support his argument. How do they connect him to his audience and lend support to the moral authority of his prose?
5. King uses all three of the classical appeals—the rational, emotional, and ethical—in his letter. Focus on one of these appeals (see Chapter 14., and write an analysis of his letter.
6. Focus on one or two paragraphs of King's letter, and write an analysis of King's style (his use of parallel structure, antithesis, and diction, for example).
7. King is justly famous for his advocacy of nonviolent political action. Today people continue his legacy by protesting in the streets against perceived abuses of power by governments and employers. Have you ever engaged in such a protest? Do you think such protests, which are sometimes disruptive of the normal activities of other people, are a legitimate means of our freedom of expression? Why or why not?

Letter to a Southern Baptist Pastor

E. O. Wilson

E. O. Wilson is a preeminent evolutionary biologist who teaches at Harvard University. His primary field is the study of ants, but he has written extensively on a wide range of subjects, including ecology, philosophy, and social issues. His latest book is *Half Earth: Our Planet's Fight for Life* (2016). The following letter is the opening chapter from his book *The Creation: An Appeal to Save Life on Earth* (2006).

Wilson's letter is a clear example of an attempt to "bridge the gap" between himself and who he conceives of as someone who would be completely at odds with what he stands for. It is an example of what is called Rogerian argument, named after the late psychologist Carl Rogers (1902-1987), who pioneered the concept of argument not as winning a debate but as resolving conflict. How does Wilson delineate the differences between himself and the Baptist minister? How does he propose a solution to those differences?

Dear Pastor:

We have not met, yet I feel I know you well enough to call you friend. First of all, we grew up in the same faith. As a boy I too answered the altar call; I went under the water. Although I no longer belong to that faith, I am confident that if we met and spoke privately of our deepest beliefs, it would be in a spirit of mutual respect and good will. I know we share many precepts of moral behavior. Perhaps it also matters that we are both Americans and, insofar as it might still affect civility and good manners, we are both Southerners.

I write to you now for your counsel and help. Of course, in doing so, I see no way to avoid the fundamental differences in our respective worldviews. You are a literalist interpreter of Christian Holy Scripture. You reject the conclusion of science that mankind evolved from lower forms. You believe that each person's soul is immortal, making this planet a way station to a second, eternal life. Salvation is assured those who are redeemed in Christ.

I am a secular humanist. I think existence is what we make of it as individuals. There is no guarantee of life after death, and heaven and hell are what we create for ourselves, on this planet. There is no other home. Humanity originated here by evolution from lower forms over millions of years. And yes, I will speak plain, our ancestors were apelike animals. The human species has adapted physically and mentally to life on Earth and no place else. Ethics is the code of behavior we share on the basis of reason, law, honor, and an inborn sense of decency, even as some ascribe it to God's will.

For you, the glory of an unseen divinity; for me, the glory of the universe revealed at last. For you, the belief in God made flesh to save mankind; for me, the belief in Promethean fire seized to set men free. You have found your final truth; I am still searching. I may be wrong, you may be wrong. We may both be partly right.

Does this difference in worldview separate us in all things? It does not. You and I and every other human being strive for the same imperatives of security, freedom of choice, personal dignity, and a cause to believe in that is larger than ourselves.

Let us see, then, if we can, and you are willing, to meet on the near side of metaphysics in order to deal with the real world we share. I put it this way because you have the power to help solve a great problem about which I care deeply. I hope you have the same concern. I suggest that we set aside our differences in order to save the Creation. The defense of living Nature is a universal value. It doesn't rise from, nor does it promote, any religious or ideological dogma. Rather, it serves without discrimination the interests of all humanity.

Pastor, we need your help. The Creation—living Nature—is in deep trouble. Scientists estimate that if habitat conversion and other destructive human activities continue at their present rates, half the species of plants and animals on Earth could be either gone or at least fated for early extinction by the end of the century. A full quarter will drop to this level during the next half century as a result of climate change alone. The ongoing extinction rate is calculated in the most conservative estimates to be about a hundred times above that prevailing before humans appeared on Earth, and it is expected to rise to at least a thousand times greater or more in the next few decades. If this rise continues unabated, the cost to humanity, in wealth, environmental security, and quality of life, will be catastrophic.

Surely we can agree that each species, however inconspicuous and humble it may seem to us at this moment, is a masterpiece of biology, and well worth saving. Each species possesses a unique combination of genetic traits that fits it more or less precisely to a particular part of the environment. Prudence alone dictates that we act quickly to prevent the extinction of species and, with it, the pauperization of Earth's ecosystems—hence of the Creation.

You may well ask at this point, Why me? Because religion and science are the two most powerful forces in the world today, including especially the United States. If religion and science could be united on the common ground of biological conservation, the problem would soon be solved. If there is any moral precept shared by people of all beliefs, it is that we owe ourselves and future generations a beautiful, rich, and healthful environment.

I am puzzled that so many religious leaders, who spiritually represent a large majority of people around the world, have hesitated to make protection of the Creation an important part of their magisterium. Do they believe that human-centered ethics and preparation for the afterlife are the only things that matter? Even more

perplexing is the widespread conviction among Christians that the Second Coming is imminent, and that therefore the condition of the planet is of little consequence. Sixty percent of Americans, according to a 2004 poll, believe that the prophecies of the book of Revelation are accurate. Many of these, numbering in the millions, think the End of Time will occur within the life span of those now living. Jesus will return to Earth, and those redeemed by Christian faith will be transported bodily to heaven, while those left behind will struggle through severe hard times and, when they die, suffer eternal damnation. The condemned will remain in hell, like those already consigned in the generations before them, for a trillion trillion years, enough for the universe to expand to its own, entropic death, time enough for countless universes like it afterward to be born, expand, and likewise die away. And that is just the beginning of how long condemned souls will suffer in hell—all for a mistake they made in choice of religion during the infinitesimally small time they inhabited Earth.

For those who believe this form of Christianity, the fate of ten million other life forms indeed does not matter. This and other similar doctrines are not gospels of hope and compassion. They are gospels of cruelty and despair. They were not born of the heart of Christianity. Pastor, tell me I am wrong!

However you will respond, let me here venture an alternative ethic. The great challenge of the twenty-first century is to raise people everywhere to a decent standard of living while preserving as much of the rest of life as possible. Science has provided this part of the argument for the ethic: the more we learn about the biosphere, the more complex and beautiful it turns out to be. Knowledge of it is a magic well: the more you draw from it, the more there is to draw. Earth, and especially the razor-thin film of life enveloping it, is our home, our wellspring, our physical and much of our spiritual sustenance.

I know that science and environmentalism are linked in the minds of many with evolution, Darwin, and secularism. Let me postpone disentangling all this (I will come back to it later) and stress again: to protect the beauty of Earth and of its prodigious variety of life forms should be a common goal, regardless of differences in our metaphysical beliefs.

To make the point in good gospel manner, let me tell the story of a young man, newly trained for the ministry, and so fixed in his Christian faith that he referred all questions of morality to readings from the Bible. When he visited the cathedral-like Atlantic rainforest of Brazil, he saw the manifest hand of God and in his notebook wrote, “It is not possible to give an adequate idea of the higher feelings of wonder, admiration, and devotion which fill and elevate the mind.”

That was Charles Darwin in 1832, early into the voyage of HMS *Beagle*, before he had given any thought to evolution.

And here is Darwin, concluding *On the Origin of Species* in 1859, having first abandoned Christian dogma and then, with his newfound intellectual freedom,

formulated the theory of evolution by natural selection: "There is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers, having been originally breathed into a few forms or into one; and that, whilst this planet has gone cycling on according to the fixed law of gravity, from so simple a beginning endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been, and are being, evolved."

Darwin's reverence for life remained the same as he crossed the seismic divide that divided his spiritual life. And so it can be for the divide that today separates scientific humanism from mainstream religion. And separates you and me.

You are well prepared to present the theological and moral arguments for saving the Creation. I am heartened by the movement growing within Christian denominations to support global conservation. The stream of thought has arisen from many sources, from evangelical to unitarian. Today it is but a rivulet. Tomorrow it will be a flood.

I already know much of the religious argument on behalf of the Creation, and would like to learn more. I will now lay before you and others who may wish to hear it the scientific argument. You will not agree with all that I say about the origins of life—science and religion do not easily mix in such matters—but I like to think that in this one life-and-death issue we have a common purpose.

Topics for Writing and Discussion

1. This essay is written as an "open letter" to a group Wilson knows is on the opposite side of the religious/scientific divide in this country. Yet he begins by stating that he, too, was raised as this hypothetical preacher was raised—as a Southern Christian. He is trying to establish common ground between them. His concern is not their differences but how they should both be concerned about nature and the fate of all the other species on earth. Do you think this approach is convincing? Why or why not?
2. Wilson says: "The great challenge of the twenty-first century is to raise people everywhere to a decent standard of living while preserving as much of the rest of life as possible." This is perhaps the major problem facing your and your children's generations. The world population today is over 7 billion, headed to 9 (some say 11) billion by 2050. The effects of human-induced climate change are already being felt, with glaciers melting and sea levels rising, and so many species are currently going extinct that we are witnessing what some call the sixth mass extinction in earth's history. What can be done about all this? What can you, individually, do? Take any one of these large issues—population increase, climate change, species extinction—do some basic research, and write a paper on what, if anything, people of your generation might do about it. Be sure to avoid plagiarism, and cite your sources.

CHAPTER 15
Writing Arguments

When you read an essay or an argument in English, history, psychology, or any other class, you may be asked to respond to it in writing. No matter what you are specifically asked to do, you must first make an effort to understand the author's meaning and purpose, so you will need to read and annotate the argument. As you read (and reread) the essay, you will begin to form an opinion about it: you will like it, dislike it, perhaps agree with the author's point, or disagree with it—or be totally bored by it. If you are asked simply to react or respond to it, then you must organize your thoughts in some logical fashion and decide on a thesis for your own essay. In other words, you will use the techniques described in the earlier parts of this book to craft your essay.

Another possibility is that you will be asked to "agree or disagree" with the author's thesis or claim in the essay. For example, in the essay "Lifeboat Ethics: The Case Against Helping the Poor," Garrett Hardin argues that rich nations should not provide aid to poor ones because the world's resources are limited, and providing poor people with aid will cause them to have more children, eventually swamping the lifeboat of those living in rich nations. Or, in numerous essays, Peter Singer argues that animals (the nonhuman kind) should be accorded the same status as humans and should be treated as ends in themselves, rather than as "things" to be used for human benefit. In crafting your response, you must decide if you agree with the author's position, if you disagree with it, or if you agree with some points but not others. You must also say *why* you agree or disagree, in effect putting up your own argument. You will need to state clearly the author's thesis and quote from the essay, showing that you understand his argument and mentioning points that you agree with or disagree with. *But you should not attack the author or belittle his argument.* Remember, you are engaging in a rational discussion of a controversial issue. You are joining a conversation.

Traditionally, going back to the rhetoricians of classical Athens, the purpose of an argument is to persuade others to agree with the speaker's or writer's position on an issue. Logic texts emphasize the importance of argument in the discovery of truth. More recently, Carl Rogers has written that the purpose of argument is to help

people understand one another "from the other's point of view." In this situation, the point is to find common ground between two positions that are polar opposites, such as the disagreement between those who oppose all abortions and those who think it is a woman's right to choose what happens to her own body.

To construct a persuasive argument, you must determine what your purpose is. Do you intend to persuade by offering a defense or an attack? Because you will be expected to argue your views in an attempt to persuade your reader to see the issues as you do, and, possibly, to act upon the views or recommendations you have prescribed, you must understand and be able to use effectively the rhetorical elements involved in writing persuasive arguments. In addition, the specific audience for your essay determines the approach you take to your argument. Next, with your purpose and audience in mind, you must take a stand on your topic, state a claim that reflects that stand, and finally provide evidence to support that claim.

Finally, if you are asked to write a "research paper" (on a topic suggested by an essay in the readings section of this book, for example), you will not only need to read the headnote and the essay included, but also research the topic further in your library's databases and online.

Whatever you are asked to do, the process involved in writing an argument includes the same elements.

First, read the material. Go through the process of thorough reading, discussed in Chapter 2 under Active Reading (page 19) in order to understand the issues involved before you begin to think about writing a response.

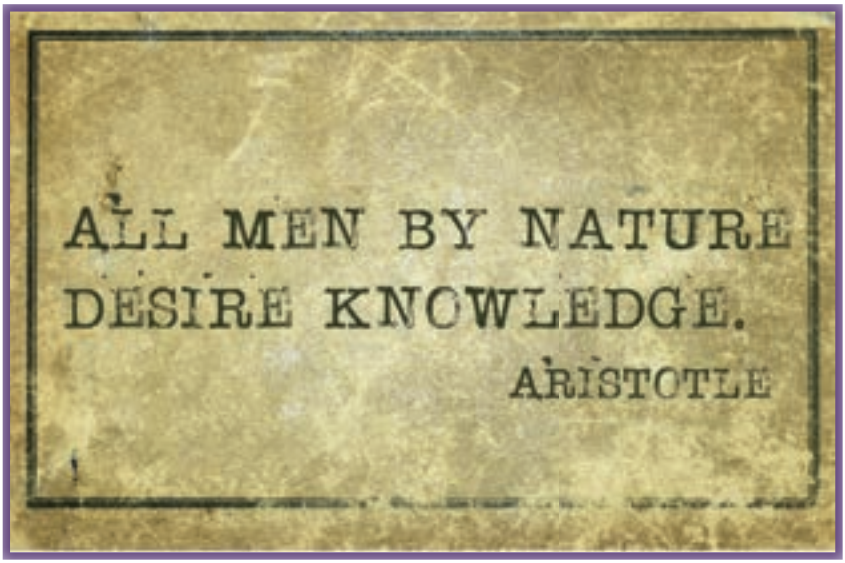
Second, analyze the material. Follow the procedures presented in Chapter 10. Many times students start out with a position on a current issue only to change their minds during the process. Be skeptical, examine the evidence, and look for fallacious reasoning, but don't let your own bias keep you from recognizing a strong argument.

Third, plan your essay. Once you have decided on the point you want to argue, it's time to outline and structure your first draft. Take this draft to a tutor in the Writing Center, and discuss any weaknesses you or the tutor perceive in its grammar, structure, or argument, then do a new draft to strengthen your essay.

Fourth, if you use sources, integrate them into your argument and make sure you cite them correctly. Follow the procedures presented according to the style preferred by your instructor.

Finally, write a final revision. Make whatever changes you think will strengthen your argument; you want it to be as tight and convincing as possible. If time

allows, put this final draft aside for a while (a full day is best), and proofread it one last time. Be sure to turn it in when it is due!



Determining Your Audience

You must have a clear understanding of your audience. Your audience will shape a great deal of what you say and how you say it and will guide you in determining your particular approach to your topic. First, your language must be appropriate for your readers. It would be unwise to address a group of middle-school readers with complex language and reasoning, just as it would be imprudent to address a group of experts on your topic in a manner that assumes no knowledge on their part. You must always be both clear with and respectful of your audience. In addition, knowing the audience allows you to make certain assumptions in order to select the appropriate and most convincing points to be discussed. It also gives you the ability to anticipate what objections to your ideas your audience will have. Generally, you should assume that your audience is intelligent, informed about your topic, and will not only oppose your position but will likely resist it. By anticipating your audience's opposition, your stand on a given topic will be stronger and more convincing.

While argument begins in conflict, it should, ideally, end in resolution. However, because your topic is controversial, both sides believe they are right, and your opponent will probably have at least one sound argument on his side. Yet even if your readers remain unconvinced that you are right and they are wrong, you can present such a clear and coherent argument that they must admit, at least, the credibility of your position.

Activity 15.1

Read the following paragraphs from the beginning of a short article, and determine the intended audience.

> *"What really interests me is whether God had any choice in creating the world."*
>
> That's how Albert Einstein, in his characteristically poetic way, asked whether our universe is the only possible universe.
>
> The reference to God is easily misread, as Einstein's question wasn't theological. Instead, Einstein wanted to know whether the laws of physics necessarily yield a unique universe—ours—filled with galaxies, stars, and planets. Or instead, like each year's assortment of new cars on the dealer's lot, could the laws allow for universes with a wide range of different features? And if so, is the majestic reality we've come to know—through powerful telescopes and mammoth particle colliders—the product of some random process, a cosmic roll of the dice that selected our features from a menu of possibilities? Or is there a deeper explanation for why things are the way they are?

Answer the following questions.

1. What is the topic of the essay?
2. How many sentences are in the second paragraph? How many words?
3. Are there any words you would consider difficult or any words anyone in your group needs defining?
4. Does the author use any figures of speech or comparisons?
5. Do you think the paragraph is intended for men? Women? A mixed audience?
6. What sort of magazine or publication do you think this essay appeared in? For example: a peer-reviewed journal, a general science magazine, a general news magazine, a women's magazine?
7. What is the author's purpose? To persuade? Inform? Entertain?
8. Discuss your answers and those of other groups with the class.

Establishing Credibility

First, in any attempt to persuade, we must present ourselves as honest, upright, fair, and knowledgeable. This is what Aristotle called the ethical appeal. The ethical

appeal is the most potent of all the means of persuasion. For writers' arguments to be effective, their ethos must be apparent in their work and realized by their readers. Simply because a writer presents an argument does not mean that she can expect the reader's assent or even attention; nor can the mere presence of sincerity bring about the desired assent. To determine the nature of the ethical appeal, one must understand that the writer's words have emotional associations as well as definite meanings. Although the ethical appeal is not restricted by any given specific rules or qualities, certain components can be discussed. For example, three major qualities of the ethical appeal illustrate how writers can reveal their character, their authenticity, through the words they choose.

For a writer or speaker to be convincing, he must make apparent to the audience his *good sense, goodwill*, and *good moral character*. *Good sense* suggests that the writer is capable of making practical decisions and choosing an acceptable means to achieve an end. It must be apparent to the reader that the writer is confident in his argument, that it is—in fact—correct, and that he views his topic in the proper perspective. Very simply, *goodwill*, the second component, consists in the writer's making clear to his audience that he has nothing but goodwill toward them. He must demonstrate that he shares their good intentions and basic aspirations and that he shares, too, some of their biases and prejudices, if necessary. The third component, *good moral character*, is successfully presented if the writer convinces his audience that he would not deceive them and that he genuinely knows right from wrong. To acquire this trust, the writer must be sincere and believable.

The principles of credibility one practices as a writer of arguments are the same as those one looks to when analyzing arguments. Good writers and speakers must attempt to present themselves as reasonable and trustworthy. They do this, first, by showing that they know a lot about the subject they are discussing. They may reveal their credentials (their college degrees, their current positions in government or at universities, for example), they may discuss the research they themselves have done or discuss a wide range of research conducted by others (up-to-date research, of course), or they may provide convincing examples and other support for their generalizations and conclusions. Second, they may show their thoroughness by their consideration of all relevant material and points of view that have a bearing on their subject. Finally, they may show their fairness by considering opposing points of view and differing interpretations of the facts, by discussing those other positions courteously, and by acknowledging the strengths of those

positions where reason demands they should. Ultimately, they want their readers or listeners to believe that they, themselves, are upstanding and creditable people who can be believed and who have the welfare of their audience at heart.

Keep in mind that the ethical appeal emerges throughout the essay. It is not something a writer merely inserts in his introduction or between paragraphs. A writer's ethos develops as he or she makes clear to the reader the possession of all three of the components: the heart is genuine, the intentions good, and the recommendations worthy of the reader's attention.

Writers, like trial lawyers, must convince their audience. While it is a popular cliché that "facts speak for themselves," we should be mature enough to realize that they do not; they must be given a voice and a context by a speaker or a writer, and that voice shapes the way we understand the facts.

Activity 15.2

Read the following paragraphs from E. O. Wilson's "Letter to a Southern Baptist Pastor." Underline phrases or statements that show what you think demonstrate the writer's "good sense," "goodwill," and "good moral character." Discuss his ethical appeal with your group and the class.

> We have not met, yet I feel I know you well enough to call you friend. First of all, we grew up in the same faith. As a boy I too answered the altar call; I went under the water. Although I no longer belong to that faith, I am confident that if we met and spoke privately of our deepest beliefs, it would be in a spirit of mutual respect and good will. I know we share many precepts of moral behavior. Perhaps it also matters that we are both Americans and, insofar as it might still affect civility and good manners, we are both Southerners. . . .
>
> Let us see, then, if we can, and you are willing, to meet on the near side of metaphysics in order to deal with the real world we share. I put it this way because you have the power to help solve a great problem about which I care deeply. I hope you have the same concern. I suggest that we set aside our differences in order to save the Creation. The defense of living Nature is a universal value. It doesn't rise from, nor does it promote, any religious or ideological dogma. Rather, it serves without discrimination the interests of all humanity.

Defining Terms

Many arguments fail because the writer does not define the terms on which his essay is based. Therefore, make very clear the terms you plan to discuss. State, for example, what you mean by "affirmative action," "sexual harassment," "censorship," "pornography," "aesthetic value," or "redeeming quality." You must define any term your audience, for one reason or another, might misunderstand. Consult a dictionary, or construct your own definition based on your understanding of the term and on the manner in which you discuss the term in your argument.

Sources

Because a crucial element of persuasive argumentation is the evidence you use to support your assertions, you must pay particular attention to the sources of that evidence. Sources include reports in the media, statistics, testimonials, research, and authority. More weight is generally attributed to primary sources than to secondary sources. Primary sources include such things as original documents and eyewitness accounts. Secondary sources are those materials that are based on primary sources. For example, in a political science class you might be asked to write a paper on the freedom of religion in this country. One of your primary sources might be the Constitution itself; your secondary sources might include analyses and interpretations by historians, scholars, and legal experts of what the Constitution means. Secondary sources should be assessed in relation to whatever primary evidence is accessible. You will find that among secondary sources there is usually disagreement, which makes your task of evaluating them more difficult. Sources should be reliable, appropriate, unbiased, authoritative, and depending on your topic, current. For example, check the date of the published source, and see whether there is any material available on the author (Is she a university professor? Has he published other articles on this topic?), and find out who published the material. (Is it a university press, a political organization, a government department?) The more secondary sources you are able to accumulate, the better your chances are at arriving at some general assumptions regarding the validity of the sources you actually use.

Using Reason to Persuade

The rational appeal is one of three methods of persuasion identified by Aristotle. Since his time, it has been discussed, expanded, and analyzed by philosophers, rhetoricians, and scientists. The rational appeal employs logic to convince an audience that the writer's claims are true. In order to employ the rational appeal effectively, however, you must first understand some basic concepts and terms. First, *logic* can be defined as a method of distinguishing between correct and incorrect reasoning.

Because reasoning is represented in arguments, logic is a method for evaluating arguments. An *argument* is an organized discussion of an idea or an issue. It can proceed from a premise or several premises to a conclusion, or it can start with a claim and then give evidence to support that claim. An argument is meant to persuade its readers or listeners that the belief or position held by the arguer is true and valid. Arguments are composed of two types of claims, premises and conclusions. A *premise* is a claim stated by the arguer as evidence for the belief that he is trying to prove. Either the premise will be readily accepted by the audience as being true, or it will be necessary to devise further arguments to show that the premises of the main argument are true. The *conclusion* is the claim expressing the belief that the arguer is trying to persuade the hearer or reader to accept. In a sound argument the conclusion follows logically from the premises. Finally, a sound or cogent argument not only provides evidence that its claims are true—it also makes sure that its conclusions are *validly* drawn from its premises. An argument is valid if its conclusion is properly drawn from its premises—that is, if the established rules of logic have been followed in proceeding from premise to conclusion. To fully grasp the power of logical persuasion, you should consider taking an introductory logic course from the philosophy department. For further information on deductive logic and syllogistic reasoning, look up "Deductive and Inductive Arguments" on the *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* website.

Avoiding Fallacies

A fallacy is a particular kind of defect in an argument caused by unsound or incomplete reasoning. It weakens an argument and makes it vulnerable to attack. There are two kinds of fallacies: Formal fallacies result from not following the rules of formal logic, such as not distributing the middle term in a categorical syllogism. Informal fallacies result from the ambiguity inherent in language, such as when a word is used in two different senses in the same argument, called equivocation. Of the two, the informal fallacies are more regularly employed in everyday argument. After all, normal arguments between people are conducted through language, not mathematical symbols. Therefore, not only should you be familiar with informal fallacies so you can avoid them in your own argumentative essays, you should also be able to identify your opponent's defective arguments, allowing you to refute his claims more easily. See the list of informal fallacies in Appendix 2.

Inventing Arguments

Invention is the process or method writers use to discover arguments. Aristotle divided the process into two parts, finding arguments and devising arguments from scratch. What Aristotle called *nonartistic proofs* are arguments that have already

been formulated by others. We call this process *research*. Properly conducted, research will lead to an abundance of information on, and authoritative discussion of, the topic you are writing about. See below for further guidance on finding sources. *Artistic proofs*, according to Aristotle, are arguments you develop on your own; that is, they are arguments you devise through your own ability, your own art, without reference to outside sources. They include the logical appeal, the emotional appeal, and the ethical appeal (discussed in Chapter 10). Finally, Aristotle mentions *topics*, proofs grouped under common headings.

Under *common topics*, for example, Aristotle discusses such genres as definition, comparison-contrast, causal analysis, and the proper use of testimony or authority. You must determine which mode best fits the argument you are making. Under *special topics* for a deliberative discourse (arguments about what we should or should not do to achieve some desired goal), Aristotle points out that an argument can attempt to persuade the reader that a particular solution to a problem is a common good, that it is moral, just, or right. If a writer can do that, readers will more easily offer their assent. In making this kind of an appeal, a writer may refer to the following sensibilities.

- Our religious beliefs (Adultery may be condemned because it is forbidden in the Bible.)
- Our sense of fair play (We may be told that eliminating the capital gains tax will unfairly benefit the very rich, who already pay few taxes.)
- Our belief in law (We may be told that we should not smoke marijuana because it is illegal.)
- Our sense of loyalty to an ideal (It may be argued that political action committees should be severely curtailed because they are inherently undemocratic.)
- Our empathy for fellow humans (All people deserve to have food and shelter.)

Next, one can attempt to persuade readers that a particular solution to a problem will benefit them in some way. Not only may you include that quitting smoking will promote one's health, for example, because health is a common good, but it will also save one money.

In addition to the above—as always when writing—you must pay careful attention to your purpose and audience.

Organizing an Argument

Once you have gathered evidence, you will need to organize your material in a convincing way. In his *Rhetoric,* Aristotle discusses the five parts of the deliberative discourse (a discussion of what we should or should not do to bring about some future goal), only two of which, *invention* and *disposition*, are relevant to the organization

of the written essay. Arguments can be organized in many ways. According to Aristotle, there are six parts, or sections, to an argument.

Introduction. In your introduction you need to supply an attention-getting opener to your topic and then a statement of your claim (the stand you intend to take).

Narration. The narration is a discussion of the background of the issue under consideration. Readers, for example, may not know that there is a problem to be solved. The amount of background material you provide depends upon the knowledge of your audience and the complexity of the issue you are dealing with.

Division. In the division you list the arguments you will advance in support of your proposition/claim.

Confirmation. The confirmation is the longest and most important part of your argument. Here you give the evidence to support your proposition/claim (thesis) arranged in the order you have listed in the division.

Refutation. The refutation is a discussion and rebuttal of your opponents' counterarguments. See below.

Conclusion. In your conclusion make a strong appeal for acceptance of your argument.

In a face-to-face argument, you have the advantage of responding directly to an opponent. In writing, however, you lack this advantage. Therefore, you must depend on refutation when you argue ideas in writing. You can either attack what your opponent has already written or you can anticipate your opponents' arguments. You will show those arguments are, to some degree, wrong, invalid, or fallacious. Methods of refutation include (but are not limited to) pointing out your opponents' weaknesses, such as the following.

- Inappropriate or inaccurate evidence
- Lack of or insufficient evidence
- Questionable authorities
- Faulty premises
- Vague or faulty definitions
- Errors in deductive logic
- Logical fallacies

For the most part, refutation involves undermining an opponent's argument. You might deny that he has proved his claim, refute the truth of his premises, or object to the inferences drawn from the premises. You might say, "I admit the truth of your conclusion, but I challenge its appropriateness in this particular instance because.

. .” Let good judgment and common sense rule. Consider your audience and their emotional biases, the occasion, the subject, and your own personality to help you determine the best course of action regarding refutation.

Some instructors prefer (and some situations require) that you refute the opposition before beginning your confirmation. There is reasonable cause for such placement, especially if your opponents’ views are shared strongly by your audience. However, if your opponents’ arguments are weak, you can afford to delay refutation until the end of your own argument, using your discussion to build a case against your opponents’ views. If your audience is hostile to your views, it might work to your advantage, psychologically, to delay your refutation until the end of your argument, to keep the direct attack of your opposition out of sight as long as possible. You need not remind your audience at the outset of your opposition, thus closing their ears to the remainder of what you have to say. By placing the refutation at the end, you may dispose your audience momentarily to hear what you have to say without compounding their hostility. Finally, you can also incorporate refutation wherever it is needed in each paragraph, rather than placing it in a separate section.

Activity 15.3

Read the following paragraph, and then plan and write a refutation of the point(s) made within it.

> First, illegal immigrants are, by definition, illegal. When someone commits a crime, he should be punished. In this situation, he should be sent back across the border. Next, even “native born” children of illegals should be sent back since they were conceived by illegal parents. We don’t allow thieves and extortionists to keep the money they stole, do we? Further, anyone who hires an illegal (even someone having his lawn mowed by one) should be liable to stiff penalties. Finally, police should be allowed to stop anyone they think is an illegal. Isn’t that what police are supposed to do? Stop crimes from being committed?

While this format is the standard method of organizing an inductive essay, it offers you options in the construction of the introductory paragraph and the placement of counterarguments. Consult your instructor for guidelines and preferences.

The following is a sample outline for an inductive argument—one based on a claim or thesis derived from evidence that will be used to support it.

Sample Outline for an Argument Essay

I. Introduction
   A. Lead-in to your topic
      1. Startling statistic and/or
      2. Interesting example
   B. Statement of the generalization you have reached through your research; the proposition or claim you are going to defend in your argument

II. Narration
   A. Statement of background information to clarify your topic and to illustrate the problem you are dealing with. You might need to include here definitions of terms relevant to your argument.
   B. Statement listing in one sentence at least three major pieces of evidence (X, Y, and Z) that support your generalization or claim

III. First major piece of supporting evidence (X) as topic sentence
   A. Subtopic #1 supporting X
      1. Examples
      2. Statistics
      3. Authority
   B. Subtopic #2 supporting X
      1. Examples
      2. Statistics
      3. Authority

IV and V—Y and Z—follow the pattern of III.

VI. Refutation (optional—see discussion of refutation above)
   A. Statement of counterargument (alternative conclusion) #1
      1. Evidence #1 to refute or mitigate the force of A
      2. Evidence #2 to refute or mitigate the force of A

B. Statement of counterargument (alternative conclusion) #2
   1. Evidence #1 to refute or mitigate the force of B
   2. Evidence #2 to refute or mitigate the force of B

VII. Conclusion: A strong appeal for acceptance of your generalization and/or a call to action

Strategic Questions

1. Have you identified your audience and adopted the appropriate voice for your audience?
2. Is your claim or thesis clear?
3. Is your purpose, or position, on the issues at hand clearly stated?
4. Did you check your premises and reasoning to make sure your argument is sound and valid?
4. Is your argument free of logical fallacies?
5. Is your representation of the facts for your argument honest and accurate?
6. Is your argument supported with adequate and convincing examples?
7. Have you organized your evidence from least to most convincing?
8. Have you accounted for the arguments of the opposition and refuted them either early in the essay, throughout your discussion, or before your conclusion?
9. Are your transitions clear and logical?
10. Does your argument make a significant contribution to your audience's understanding of the point at hand?

Activity 15.4

Take one of the following claims, or one suggested by your instructor, and research and write an argument. These claims are general ones that may be narrowed or altered as long as the resulting claim remains a part of the general issue. Follow proper documentation and formatting procedures. (Use the style preferred by your instructor.) Before writing your essay, read the student-written essay "Violent Video Games=Violent Video Gamers?" by Gelina Breaux in the *Student Examples* section.

1. Drugs [or marijuana] should be legalized.
2. A national tax should be levied on junk food.
3. The state should abolish the death penalty.
4. The sale and distribution of firearms should be severely restricted.
5. Texas should make English its official language.
6. The United States should pass a law creating a process to allow currently illegal residents to become citizens.
7. Genetically engineered foods should be banned.
8. The state should pass a law outlawing the use of cell phones in automobiles.
9. Terminally ill patients who choose to commit suicide should be allowed a doctor's assistance.
10. Affirmative action laws and policies should be abolished.

The Declaration of Independence

Thomas Jefferson and Others

Revered by many Americans, the following hallowed statement is an argument. It starts with an introduction, follows with a narration explaining the philosophical basis of a people's right to choose their own government, states a clear claim detailing the English king's attempts to establish "an absolute Tyranny over these States," follows with a long list of examples to prove the claim, continues with a short refutation, and ends with a strong conclusion.

The *Declaration*, like Lincoln's *Gettysburg Address*, makes ample use of repetition and parallelism. It is a rhetorical set piece meant both to rally the support of the colonists for the revolution as well as the support of great world powers opposed to Great Britain, particularly France. As such, it can still be profitably studied for its use of the emotional and ethical appeals as well as its obvious logical appeal.

IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776
THE UNANIMOUS DECLARATION OF THE
THIRTEEN UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness—That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed,—That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.—Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of

the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.

He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their Public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.

He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative Powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the mean time exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within.

He has endeavored to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.

He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary Powers.

He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harass our people, and eat out their substance.

He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures.

He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil Power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation.

For quartering large bodies of armed troops among us.

For protecting them, by a mock Trial, from punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States.

For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world.

For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent.

For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by Jury.

For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offenses.

For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies.

For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments.

For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.

He has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.

He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to compleat the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty and Perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation.

He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.

He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavored to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes, and conditions.

In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

Nor have We been wanting in attentions to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore,

acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

Topics for Writing and Discussion

1. As the preeminent founding document of the United States, *The Declaration of Independence* has been held up as a model for other people around the world "yearning to be free." However, its limited scope has also often been pointed out. For example, the famous phrase "all men are created equal" did not include slaves or women. Since that time, in the United States as well as other countries, the struggle to gain equality by all sorts of groups— women, African-Americans, minorities, and the LGBTQ community for example—has been ongoing and continues to this day. Do you think true equality for all people will ever be achieved? Further, given that different people are born with different abilities and talents, what would true equality even mean? Write an essay defining "equality."
2. To see an extreme case of what it might look like if a society demanded complete equality of its people, read Kurt Vonnegut's short story "Harrison Bergeron." (It can be found on the internet.)
3. Read the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" on the United Nations website. Article 1 says, "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood." Is this statement (and the document as a whole) an adequate description of human rights? Write an analysis of this document.

CHAPTER 16

Framing Arguments

Pinpointing Chapter 16

Argument is one of the most complex aspects of academic writing, making use of the elements from each chapter to this point in *Writing in Transit*. When writers develop arguments, they conduct research, pose questions, read critically, summarize, synthesize, and analyze others' research, as they progress through the stages of the writing process. To provide you with strategies for *arguments in transit*, this chapter addresses the following concepts:

- Correcting Common Myths about Arguments
- What is an Argument?
- Purposes of Argument
- Featured Purposes of Arguments
- Criteria for Effective Argument
- Featured Criteria for Effective Argument: Avoiding Logical Fallacies

Chapters 9 and 10 address structural aspects and scope of arguments across disciplines and offer discussion on how various platforms and designs for argument impact the way an argument develops.

Namoratunga, located in Kenya, dates from 300 B.C.E. and is considered one of the oldest archaeoastronomical sites in sub-Saharan Africa. The location actually consists of two separate sites, both of which hold astronomical significance. Namoratunga pillars are aligned with astronomical precision, demonstrating that "an accurate and complex calendar system based on astronomical reckoning was developed by the first millennium B.C.E. in eastern Africa." The stones of Namoratunga track "the movement of seven constellations in relation to the lunar cycle" (Chwanya; Lynch and Robbins; Martin).

Many different scholars have engaged in arguments surrounding Namoratunga. While some of these focus on the age of the stones or interpretation of their design, much like the arguments we encountered regarding petroglyphs in Chapter 7, the vast range of arguments about Namoratunga reflect what is an enormously wide array of possible disciplinary perspectives within and across which arguments emerge.

Timothy Clack and Marcus Brittain, for example, draw on Namoratunga as a site to argue for a more ethical approach to archaeology, a "participative archaeology research framework in which accountability is directed toward common ground between multiple 'stake-holders.' " Another team of researchers, led by Astrophysicist Jarita Holbrook, include Namoratunga as one of several sites around which they have developed a research conference and publication about African archaeoastronomy. One of their primary arguments is that, contrary to popular conception, tribal populations and ancient herdsmen in Africa had sophisticated calendar and astronomical knowledge.

Meanwhile, Barbara P. Nash, Harry V. Merrick, and Francis H. Brown, a team with geological and engineering expertise, examine black, glass-like volcanic rock called obsidian at localities in and around Namoratunga as a means of arguing about "patterns of source utilization within the region during the Later Stone Age and Pastoral Neolithic times."

The many arguments surrounding Namoratunga—which engage, by turns, such issues as the discipline of archaeology, ethics, power dynamics, cultural knowledge, and history—illustrate the high stakes that often accompany arguments. Scholars develop and formulate arguments in order to advance knowledge, influence others, and draw attention to ideas that matter.

Although each argument about Namoratunga carries unique attributes, together they gesture toward two vital features of argument in academic writing worth emphasizing: significance and purpose.

These arguments show that even highly academic and somewhat nuanced topics, such as archaeological approaches or stone aging, have a larger significance and matter on a profound level. Similarly, while you might on occasion have the opportunity to argue in academic writing about a highly contentious issue such as the death penalty or abortion, it is far more likely that across your academic career you will be asked to develop arguments about issues that might seem on the surface much less polarizing, and perhaps initially somewhat less significant. Both occasions for argument have challenges: in the former, how do you convert opinion and emotion into a reasoned, effective, evidence-based argument? In the latter, how do you become intellectually and emotionally invested in less-contentious topics?

The Namoratunga arguments also convey a sense of what argumentative purpose may entail in the context of academic writing: namely that the purpose of arguments in academic writing is not usually to win so much as to advance knowledge. Joseph Joubert, an eighteenth-century French essayist, captures this version of argument quite well in a line from his famous text, *Pensées*: "The aim of argument…should not be victory, but progress."

As the Namoratunga arguments demonstrate, and as Joubert's quote argues, argument in the context of academic writing is more often about progress than victory. Whereas the concept of victory seems harnessed to a desire to vanquish an opponent, arguments aimed at progress instead help us learn and grow; they enable us to move forward with our goals and dreams, or reconsider our actions and change course when necessary.

Of course, progress itself is open to debate—progress according to one person might be lack of progress according to another—but Joubert's larger point is that argument should move our thinking along; it should advance knowledge by examining questions, listening to others' ideas, and communicating what you have learned.

Write Here

Reflect on why each of the arguments about Namoratunga might be important. What is at stake in these arguments? Why might they be significant? A different, perhaps brasher, way to ask this question would be, "So what?" What difference might these arguments make? Who is, or should be, invested in these arguments? Can you think of any other kinds of scholarly arguments that might emerge around Namoratunga? What might their significance be?

Correcting Common Myths about Arguments

Arguments are often affiliated with several common misconceptions that actually can be quite counterproductive to the construction of effective arguments. So let's begin by debunking some of these common myths about argument.

Myth #1: Arguments are about winning

As the opening section suggested, arguments in academic writing are not about winning, but about pursuing lines of inquiry, advancing knowledge, and making progress. Being focused on winning could have the negative consequence of making a scholar misinterpret evidence, or avoid considering certain evidence, or focus on winning at all costs.

Just because arguments are not about winning, though, does not mean that academic writers do not care very much about influencing or persuading others to think differently or take action (or cease action). For instance, academic writers across disciplines construct arguments about issues such as female genital mutilation or climate change and, in so doing, likely hope that their arguments will sway readers to modify behaviors and enact policy changes. Academic writers involved in social activism or social justice movements, similarly, may strongly advocate for certain positions on women's rights, minority rights, LGBTQ rights, or immigrant rights; they may hope to win more equality for groups of people based on their efforts. However, as they construct arguments about these issues, these academic writers are more than likely focusing on how they can persuade others or on what they are learning about particular experiences instead of winning.

Being overly focused on winning, therefore, can divert attention away from other, more important questions, such as what evidence and approach will persuade others to enact change or think differently? Or, what does the evidence and research indicate? Or even, what questions should I be asking? These questions, rather than one about winning, should reinforce effective academic arguments.

Myth #2: Arguments involve only highly debated issues

Some issues are so contentious as to be considered hot-buttons for arguments. The top ten arguments between parents and kids, for example, according to Nolan Katkowski, include grades/school (#1), money and privilege (#5 & #6), and driving (#9). The "10 Topics Guaranteed to Start an Argument," according to Listverse, include the existence of God (#10), freedom of speech (#4), and abortion (#1). These issues have high register value in that they are somewhat easily recognizable, have much available research at hand, and are issues about which people care deeply. But the truth is, people can argue about nearly anything. While academic writers do construct arguments about these kinds of hot-button issues, they also construct arguments about issues that may initially seem somewhat less divisive. For example, in the preceding chapters, we

have seen academic writers constructing arguments about all sorts of ideas, from how ancient art should be preserved to how the media discuss vaccines. Arguments in academic writing can be about anything. The website *Useful Science* offers a glimpse into the range of arguments academic writers construct. Here are a few arguments posted on this website:

> When people held hot beverages (hot coffee), they perceived strangers as friendlier and warmer than when they held cold beverages (iced coffee).
>
> Swearing increases pain tolerance: people were able to hold their hand in ice water longer if they swore (this effect was reduced for people who swore frequently).
>
> Red clothing may be a medium of sexual signaling: women expecting to meet an attractive man were more likely to select a red shirt than women expecting to meet an unattractive man.

Although it is unlikely that any of these arguments will ever make it to a top ten list of issues likely to start a debate, they matter, nonetheless, and carry with them a fair measure of significance for a number of stakeholders.

Myth #3: Arguments have only pro/con positions

While certain arguments may seem pro or con, they are actually more often than not much more complicated. Effective arguments generally take into account alternative perspectives, make concessions, and qualify the circumstances under which a position is most applicable. As an example, let's look more closely at the issue of "The Israel/Palestine question," which comes in, according to Listverse, as the ninth most likely topic to start an argument.

According to *ProCon.org,* the Israel/Palestine question is (somewhat ironically given the organization's name) not pro/con at all. The core question, according to *ProCon.org,* is, "What are the solutions to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?" Within that question exist a number of other parameters to argue about: implications of one-state or two-state solutions, land disputes, refugees, international involvement, historical context. Each of these subcategories then have other elements, all of which can and need to be argued about and all of which do not fit neatly into a pro/con format. Arguments that adopt a pro/con perspective tend to diminish the complexity of an issue and overlook many important aspects related to that issue.

Myth #4: Arguments are based on opinion

While academic writers have opinions about the issues around which they construct arguments, academic arguments are more often based instead on research and evi-

dence. Privileging opinion has the counterproductive impact of not really being an argument; how can anyone really argue that you do or do not have a particular opinion? And, how can your opinion influence anyone else? Why would people change their minds just because you have an opinion? Opinion lacks full sway unless you pair opinion with an appeal based on *ethos*, in which you establish your expertise and knowledge in such a way that people realize they should listen to you.

Privileging opinion can also have the negative consequence of delimiting the capacity of academic writers to examine evidence and reconsider positions. Perhaps you might even change your own opinion as you encounter others' arguments or new information.

A good example of the present but somewhat limited role of opinion in academic argument is the death penalty. Academic writers might have an opinion that the death penalty is warranted or not, in some cases more or less. But the academic arguments they construct will instead be based on answers to their research questions spurned from their preliminarily opinion. What is the impact of the death penalty on deterring crime? What demographic data exists about death penalty decisions? How is the death penalty carried out?

A final point about opinion being somewhat counterproductive as a frame for academic argument is that opinion does not necessarily translate into action or behavior. If someone's opinion is that the death penalty is unwarranted, that only goes so far; what carries farther is if an argument can influence someone not only to have a certain opinion but to take certain actions or engage in particular behaviors that will make an impact on that issue, such as legislation, additional research, or other forms of activism.

Myth #5: Arguments are about proving points

In the context of academic writing, an argument is not necessarily a final answer to a question. Instead, argument in academic writing might be conceived of as an occasion for a writer to communicate to others what he or she has learned by researching one or more questions. Then, as others continue to learn more, subsequent questions and arguments can continue to emerge. Arguments are, at heart, about inquiry.

Thinking about argument as inquiry challenges commonly held assumptions that argument involves proving a point. Instead, asking what argument is in academic writing requires asking what the questions are that have given rise to a particular argument.

What is Argument?

Now that we have argued against several myths about what argument is not, let's turn to exploring what argument is.

At the most basic level, an argument in academic writing is the position a writer takes in a particular writing project, the evidence he or she includes for that argument, and the way he or she chooses to structure and format the argument. The term argument brushes against several other related terms, some of which you may have encountered before: claim, thesis, proof, or position. These terms help situate argument within the context of academic writing and begin to illustrate how the notion of argument shifts slightly depending on disciplinary context. Though discipline-specific definitions most certainly overlap and fluctuate, disciplinary perspectives provide particular inflections on how argument is defined.

Sociologist Greta Krippner, for example, defines argument based on her disciplinary perspective of Sociology:

> Once you have developed a viable research question, your next task is to review the evidence in order to formulate an answer to your question. The answer to your question is your thesis, or your argument. Typically, researchers do original research at this point—they analyze statistical data, go to the field, administer surveys, conduct experiments, etc.

For Krippner, argument involves an answer to a research question based on original research. Arguments in the natural sciences, by contrast, might be defined more explicitly around evidence, accuracy, and logic:

> Taken together, the expectations generated by a scientific idea and the actual observations relevant to those expectations form what we'll call a scientific argument. This is a bit like an argument in a court case—a logical description of what we think and why we think it. A scientific argument uses evidence to make a case for whether a scientific idea is accurate or inaccurate.

Philosophy also has a discipline-specific definition of argument, perhaps one of the most extensive since philosophy is in many ways grounded on logic, argument, and reasoning. Matthew McKeon, a philosopher from Michigan State University, defines argument:

> [A]rgument [is] a collection of truth-bearers (that is, the things that bear truth and falsity, or are true and false) some of which are offered as reasons for one of them, the conclusion. [P]ropositions [are] the primary truth bearers. The reasons offered within the argument are

> called "premises," and the proposition that the premises are offered for is called the "conclusion."

Thus, in Philosophy, according to McKeon, argument should be understood in relationship to truth-bearers, propositions, premises, and conclusions.

While you will not be expected to understand argument as it is defined in each discipline, you should be prepared to encounter varying approaches to argument across disciplines. Recognizing that argument can carry disciplinary conventions and expectations will equip you with the awareness to learn more about argument within each new discipline and context you encounter.

Purposes of Argument

Writer Insights

How do you argue in your field?

In advertising you write more than you would ever expect; from proposals, to follow up emails, to copy for clients, it is all very reliant on words... the right words. I never considered how much I wrote. It was just a way to communicate ideas and generate interest resulting in sales. I am more [conscious] of it now that I have realized I am a writer. Sales is a thinking sport; researching clients and their industry, planning out what would be best for the client and executing. It is all strategic. Away from work, I have started writing a blog following my passion which is nutrition and the American food system.

~Cherie L. Dreves, Advertising Sales, Prescott Valley, Arizona, U.S.

Academic writers construct arguments across disciplines for nearly as many purposes as there are arguments. The purpose of any given argument can be multiple and manifold, depending on the disciplinary context, the writer, and the writing occasion. As we will see later in this chapter, the structure of an argument also impacts purpose. For instance, Rogerian argument, emphasizes common ground and compromise, and these are therefore priorities of purpose for academic writers invoking Rogerian argumentation.

Disciplines also provide discipline-specific purposes for argument. Ian Johnston, of Malaspina University College in British Columbia, describes the purpose of argument in the context of Liberal Studies and English. Notice the emphasis on persuasion:

> Put most simply, an argument is an attempt to persuade someone of something. It is prompted usually by a disagreement, confusion, or ignorance about something which the arguers wish to resolve or illuminate in a convincing way.... The final goal of an argument is usually to reach a conclusion which is sufficiently persuasive to convince someone of something (a course of action, the reasons for an event, the responsibility for certain acts, the probable truth of an analysis, or the validity of an interpretation).

Arguments can also have an important negative purpose: to convince someone that something is not the case. Other disciplines refer to argument not so much as about convincing others but about justification. In a paper investigating students' use of argument in engineering courses, Sibel Erduran and Rosa Villamanan argue that "the nature of arguments in the applied field of Engineering [involves] appeals to scientific principles [in order] to justify the design of an industrial product."

Despite the many varying purposes for argument across disciplines, some purposes do seem to be more widely embraced by academic writers. Some of the more commonly deployed purposes for arguments are:

- to persuade others to think or act
- to communicate research and conclusions
- to share and interpret evidence and data
- to define one or more terms or ideas
- to push against, critique, or counter another idea
- to explain a relationship or cause
- to propose a solution to a problem
- to suggest a policy or proposal for future action
- to generate consensus or mediate conflict
- to raise questions

These, however, are only a few of the possible purposes for arguments, and they are also often overlapping. As you encounter other writers' projects, the best way to consider purpose is to ask the writer to describe his purpose (if possible), read his text text to see if the purpose is explicit, and/or discern on your own what you take to be the writer's aims and purpose based on his text (see also Chapter 4: Reading).

Writer Insights

What was the purpose of your most recent argument?

[W]riting…is a very important part of my daily job as a tax lawyer. I have to build up an essay whose goal is convincing the judge, so I have to write it in the most effective way. To reach the goal I have to divide the writing in three parts: introduce the matter, explain my arguments to support my final conclusions, and finally set my conclusions. Depending on your side (tax administration or taxpayer) the judge will probably know what the conclusion will be, so the important part of the essay is making up my arguments and quoting the part of court decisions that best support my position.

~Manuel Menchero, Tax Attorney, Madrid, Spain

Featured Purposes of Argument

Some purposes for argument are widespread enough that they warrant a more extensive discussion. This chapter addresses and illustrates three common purposes of argument: causal argument, proposal argument, and definitional argument.

Causal argument

A causal argument's purpose is to argue how something has become the way it is. Joseph Moxley at *Writing Commons* describes causal arguments as investigating the questions, "Why are things like this? What is the effect, or result, of this?" and, "What causes this?" Causal arguments appear in numerous ways across disciplines. These two examples can help illustrate causal arguments and their purpose.

Example 1: Causal Argument, Spanish Languages and Literature

This excerpt comes from a well-known book that critically examines the relationship between travel writing and colonialism, *Imperial Eyes,* by professor of Spanish Literature and Culture, Mary Louise Pratt. Pratt's line of inquiry asks, "what was the sociopolitical impact of travel writing in the twentieth century?" In the excerpt, Pratt presents a causal argument, in which she argues that European travel writing contributed to European colonization and expansionism.

Excerpt from *Imperial Eyes:Travel Writing and Transculturation* by M. L. Pratt

Pratt locates her causal argument as significant in that it participates in an ongoing effort to mitigate the long-term and ongoing impact of colonialism.

In the last decades of the twentieth century, processes of decolonization opened the meaning-making powers of empire to scrutiny, as part of a large-scale effort to decolonize knowledge, history, and human relations. This book is part of that effort. Its main, but not its only, subject is European travel and exploration writing, analyzed in connection with European economic and political expansion since around 1750. The book aims to be both a study in genre and a critique of ideology. Its predominant theme is how travel books written by Europeans about non-European parts of the world created the imperial order for Europeans "at home" and gave them their place in it. I ask how travel writing made imperial expansion meaningful and desirable to the citizenries of the imperial countries, even though the material benefits of empire accrued mainly to the few. Travel books, I argue, gave European reading publics a sense of ownership, entitlement and familiarity with respect to the distant parts of the world that were being explored, invaded, invested in, and colonized. Travel books were very popular. They created a sense of curiosity, excitement, adventure, and even moral fervor about European expansionism. They were, I argue, one of the key instruments that made people "at home" in Europe feel part of the planetary project; a key instrument, in other words, in creating the "domestic subject" of empire.

Here, Pratt specifies her causal argument. This strategy of naming her argument directly with the phrase, "I argue" is frequently deployed in disciplines dealing with languages and literature.

Pratt notes here how her argument emerges from inquiry, having asked "how travel writing made imperial expansion meaningful and desirable."

From *Travel Writing and Transculturation*, 1992.

Write Now

In the previous selection, Pratt uses several related terms to describe her project: argument, effort, subject, inquiry, and theme. How does Pratt differentiate between each of these terms? Based on her text, how is she articulating the difference, for example, between an argument and a subject? Between a theme and an inquiry?

Example 2: Causal Argument, Marine Biology

Where Pratt relies on rhetorical analysis for her causal argument, this second example, from Hamish Campbell, et al., uses quantitative evidence. In this article, Campbell, et al. ask how crocodiles travel long distances. Their causal argument is that surface currents enable crocodiles to travel greater distances.

Excerpt from "Estuarine Crocodiles Ride Surface Currents to Facilitate Long-Distance Travel" by H. Campbell, et al.

Here, the authors demonstrate that they are filling a gap in knowledge with their research because current research does not fully explain how crocodiles travel long-distances.

Many anecdotal accounts exist of large crocodiles being sighted in open-ocean, and on islands hundreds of kilometres from the nearest known population (Ditmars 1957; Allen 1974; Webb & Manolis 1989), yet their capacity for long distance ocean travel remains poorly understood and it is unknown if ocean voyages form part of their ecological repertoire or merely represent occasional mishaps of navigation.…

This segment occurs in the discussion section, after the authors have presented their results. Here, they articulate their causal argument.

The expansive geographical distribution of C. porosus suggests that long-distance ocean voyages are a regular occurrence between island populations. Certainly, large individuals have been sighted from vessels far out at sea (Ditmars 1957), but C. porosus cannot be considered a marine reptile, and primarily inhabits rivers and coastal systems. They live a low-cost energy lifestyle with limited capacity for sustained exercise (Pough 1980; Elsworth, Seebacher & Franklin 2003), and as such, their ability to purposefully traverse significant expanses of open-ocean seems extreme. This study provides an explanation as to how these remarkable feats of ocean travel may be achieved, by demonstrating that C. porosus adopt behavioural strategies which utilise

From *Journal of Animal Ecology* (79.5), 2010.

the momentum of surface currents to transport themselves long distances.…

This study has shown that adult estuarine crocodiles dramatically increase their travel potential by riding surface currents. This observation has profound management applications because a problem crocodile translocated to an area where residual surface currents flow in the direction of the home-area will rapidly travel back home. Moreover, changes in coastal current systems, by either natural cycle or anthropogenically driven, may result in estuarine crocodiles travelling to locations without a recent history of their presence. Because adult estuarine crocodiles pose a significant risk to humans (Caldicott, et al. 2005), inshore current systems should be monitored in areas where humans and C. porosus may interact, and problem crocodiles should be translocated to areas where residual currents are not available for homeward travel.

The authors emphasize again their argument in the first sentence of this paragraph and make its significance and applicability explicit, suggesting that demonstrating cause in this circumstance will help with crocodile management.

Proposal argument

Proposal arguments aim to offer a proposal for a problem or issue. These can include grant proposals or proposals for policies or other actions. While fields such as Business and Public Policy seem to lend themselves naturally to proposal arguments, many other disciplines also issue proposals. For instance, in English Literature, an academic writer might argue for a proposal that the field re-examine, or newly examine, an author, period, or genre of literature.

As with causal arguments, academic arguments whose main purpose is to create a proposal will often show how the proposal has broader applicability beyond the particular instance under consideration. Proposal arguments and causal arguments might also have some overlap, as academic writers making proposal arguments might also need to argue for what the causes of the current problems are or why the current arrangements are lacking in some way.

This example of a proposal argument comes from the field of Management Science. The authors argue in favor of a new proposal for how to determine time distribution models for emergency response vehicles. They articulate their purpose as follows: “We propose a new specification for the coefficient of variation, which decreases with distance. We illustrate how the resulting travel-time distribution model can be used to create probability-of-coverage maps for diagnosis and improvement of system performance.”

Excerpt from "Empirical Analysis of Ambulance Travel Times: The Case of Calgary Emergency Medical Services" by S. Budge, A. Ingolfsson, and D. Zerom

The authors show how "past approaches" did not offer an adequate formula for predicting travel time. This background research establishes a need for a proposal.

Our paper provides the first thorough examination of the distribution of travel times in a way that can be easily incorporated into…models for EMS planning. Unlike the approach in this paper, past approaches often failed to account appropriately for the stochastic nature of travel time, which, even for a given origin and destination, will vary because of route choice, driver characteristics, traffic conditions, geographic aggregation of points into zones, and other known and unknown factors. This paper makes four main contributions. (1) We demonstrate that the KWH model for mean fire engine travel times is a valid and useful description of median ambulance travel times. We perform our validation by comparing the KWH function to the best-fitting nonparametric estimate of the median function; that is, we compare the KWH function to an infinite number of other possible functions, and find that it performs about as well as any of them. (2) We expand the KWH model to represent explicitly the full probability distribution of travel times conditional on travel distances. We propose a statistical model that allows the median travel time and its coefficient of variation (CV) to vary with distance, and we account for skewness and excess kurtosis (i.e., the distribution has a higher peak and fatter tails than a normal distribution). (3) We present and justify a parametric specification for how the CV varies with distance. (4) We show how our model of travel-time distributions can be used to create probability-of-coverage maps that facilitate decisions about where to locate stations and how to allocate ambulances to them.

The authors enumerate very clearly the "four main contributions" made by their proposal.

The implications of this research extend beyond emergency services. Travel-time distributions are also critical in nonemergency applications, such as the routing of pickup and delivery vehicles… Delivery time is one of the operational dimensions on which private-sector firms compete…A familiar example is the delivery-time guarantees offered by companies such as Domino's Pizza.

The authors here demonstrate the more extended significance and applicability of their proposal argument.

—

From *Management Science* (56.4), 2010.

Definitional argument

A third especially frequent purpose for arguments across disciplines involves definition. Definitional arguments hold as their primary purpose defining a new term or concept, expanding the definition of an established term or concept, or challenging existing definitions.

One example of definitional arguments currently experiencing some measure of United States media coverage involves marriage, where many are arguing over the definition of what does or does not, should or should not, constitute the definition of marriage. Some argue that marriage is defined as between one man and one woman; others argue that marriage is a civil union. Some argue as well over who holds the power to define: should the state hold the power to define what marriage is or isn't? Other arguments in this arena of definition might argue for how dictionaries are defining the very word "marriage." All of these are examples of definitional arguments, and demonstrate that definitional arguments can hold significant impact.

The excerpted reading of a definitional argument comes from academic writer Yolanda Martínez-San Miguel, who argues for an expanded definition of the term "sexile."

Excerpt from "Female Sexiles? Toward an Archeology of Displacement of Sexual Minorities in the Caribbean" by Y. Martínez-San Miguel

Martínez-San Miguel begins by offering what have been the more widely deployed definitions of the term "sexile." She therefore establishes that she will likely be challenging or expanding these definitions.

According to Manolo Guzmán, the term "sexile" refers to "the exile of those who have had to leave their nations of origin on account of their sexual orientation" (1997, 227). Yet sexile has a very different meaning for many contemporary university students in the United States. According to the Urban Dictionary, to sexile is "to banish a roommate from the room/dorm/apartment for the purpose of engaging in intimate relations with one's significant other/sex partner." It turns out that there is even an etiquette to sexiling, and some university newspapers have published articles educating students on the best way to sexile a roommate (Axelbank 2004). Proper warning, courtesy, timing, and consideration are among the most important elements in making sexile fall within the appropriate codes of conduct. In this sense, sexile is a paradoxical recognition of the ethical limits for negotiating a common domestic space. The other is excluded but only temporarily and as a result of an agreement, in order for sexual intimacy to take place. Thus, the other is complicit with the self in the fulfillment of a

From *Signs* (36.4), 2011.

desire that is not necessarily shared, and the other and the self negotiate the modes of appropriation and use of a common space.

Comparing some of the most common U.S. campus definitions of this notion, it became clear to me that "sexile," with its already double meaning, afforded an interesting point of departure in my study of the coloniality of diasporas in the Caribbean. In this essay I propose a working definition of sexile that refers to displacement in two simultaneous and complementary ways. The first is the displacement of subjects who are deemed misfits within the patriarchal, heteronormative discourses of collective identity formation in the Caribbean national states, neocolonial overseas territories, commonwealths, and departments that in many cases mimic the practices of exclusion found in the most traditional national discourses. The second form of displacement points to the negotiated and temporary exclusion of another from a shared communal space for the fulfillment of a diverging sexual desire. The aim of this essay is to extend the meaning of sexile as it has been used in Caribbean queer studies (Guzmán 1997; La Fountain-Stokes 2009): to propose it as a script to think about the configuration of alternative communal identities based on recent narratives that go beyond the heteronormative and homonormative matrixes (Martínez-San Miguel 2008).

Martínez-San Miguel then offers her own working definition, which expands the term to include displacement and thereby apply the term to Caribbean sexual studies.

At the end of this paragraph, Martínez-San Miguel explains the aim of her essay. Even though she frames it as a proposal, and it does have carryover with proposal arguments, her main purpose is to redefine a term. She also offers a sense of why this redefinition is important, and what the impact of it will be.

As evidenced by these examples, argument purposes have considerable overlap. This is in part because arguments are complex and often carry multiple implications. When constructing your own arguments, you can determine your own purpose(s) by considering what you hope to accomplish through the writing project. Understanding what makes for an effective argument will help you identify and shape your purposes.

Write Now

For each of the examples included in the featured purposes section, identify what the argument is and evaluate it according to the criteria for effective arguments. Which criteria does it meet, and why? Are there any criteria it does not meet? If so, does this detract from the argument significantly? Based on each argument, can you identify any additional criteria that you think should be added to the list?

Criteria for Effective Argument

Given the immense variety of argument, it is nearly impossible to develop an exhaustive list of criteria for what makes an argument more or less effective. Many disciplines have particular discipline-specific measures of effective argument. In some approaches to rhetoric, for instance, an argument might be evaluated on the basis of whether it achieves an equal balance of the three argumentative appeals (*ethos, pathos, logos*). In the sciences, an argument is often deemed effective if it is valid, reliable, and replicable.

Some disciplines even argue about what constitutes effective argumentation. For instance, in philosophy, scholars argue about whether the concept of "soundness" is a criterion (or not) for effective argument. Complicating matters further is the fact that the purpose of an argument impacts and shapes the criteria by which it can be determined to be effective; if you are writing a proposal argument, then the proposal should be explained thoroughly and should address the problem and offer a viable solution. If instead you are writing a definitional argument, then your approach to definition should be well researched and widely applicable.

As we shall see in Chapter 9, the structure of arguments also creates certain criteria for efficacy. If you are writing a Rogerian argument, identifying common ground is a key criterion. Finally, as Chapters 10 and 11 will demonstrate, format and evidence likewise generate additional criteria. If you are writing an op-ed, it is more effective not to include extensive citations and quoted evidence. If, on the other hand, you are writing a scholarly argument, then this kind of evidence is of vital importance.

Still, amidst all the disciplinary and contextual variation, it is possible to identify several criteria for effective arguments that might be considered relatively applicable across contexts.

Writer Insights

How do you convince others through your arguments?

In Argentina we use the verb *chamuyar* and the noun *chamuyo* a lot. With its origin in local slang and a broad meaning, these terms can imply, for example, telling lies, or improving a story you are telling, or even using pick-up lines with a girl. Of course you can do it when writing as well. Teachers here have to produce a lot of well-grounded planning that will be assessed by principals and inspectors. Peer assessment helps but *chamuyo* might save your day, not by lying but by putting some attitude and creativity into what you say. Dress up your words and bureaucracy will open its heavy gates for you.

~Fernando D. González Cordóba,
ESL Primary and Secondary School Teacher–Translator,
La Plata, Buenos Aires Province, Argentina

Complexity

Most arguments in academic writing should be sufficiently complex that they are not entirely self-evident and that they address meaningful questions and multiple avenues for exploration and research. As discussed earlier, arguments in academic writing are more often than not those that should move an ongoing conversation forward rather than function as the end-all finality of a point.

Contestable premises

Arguments generally involve issues about which reasonable people can disagree, not necessarily in pro/con ways, but in nuanced ways. Your argument should provide enough material that someone could reasonably launch a different or modified perspective.

Evidence-based

Your argument should be connected to evidence. If you do not have the evidence to put forward your argument, then you should probably either find the evidence or change your argument.

Address rhetorical appeals

Argumentative appeals (discussed in detail in Chapter 4: Reading) provide the means for persuading your readers. In some contexts, an argument might call for an equal balance across all three appeals. Other contexts might privilege one or two appeals over another. Arguments generally, however, gesture in some meaningful way to each of the three appeals:

- ***Ethos:*** appeals made by establishing the character or image of the writer
- ***Logos:*** appeals based on evidence and reason
- ***Pathos:*** appeals to people's emotions and values

Demonstrate kairos

In Chapter 4: Reading, we addressed the dual meanings of *kairos*: appropriateness and timeliness. Effective arguments take into account appropriateness, demonstrating awareness of expectations and conventions in context in order to move an argument forward effectively. Effective arguments also show how and why they are significant and timely at this particular juncture.

Include qualifications

Hardly any arguments in academic writing are applicable across all circumstances. Effective arguments generally include qualifications. Qualifications are specifics about the circumstances under which an argument works, and when it might or will not work.

Framed within existing research

Arguments do not happen in a vacuum. They are situated within others' research and arguments, as part of a larger conversation. Arguments should be conceived of as making a contribution to an ongoing conversation, and in this way others can build on, modify, or extend your arguments as well.

Significant

While not everyone would agree about what constitutes significance, arguments should generally be about ideas that matter to you and, preferably, to at least some number of other people. Connect your argument to this larger significance.

Compliant with discipline and context

For every argument occasion, there are also likely discipline- and context-specific criteria. For philosophers, for instance, arguments should be valid or sound. In rhetoric, arguments are deemed more effective if they have a balance of three types of argumentative appeals: logical, ethical, and emotional ("The Three Appeals"). In evidence-based science disciplines, arguments are deemed more effective if they are replicable: "Scientists aim for their studies' findings to be replicable—so that, for example, an experiment testing ideas about the attraction between electrons and protons should yield the same results when repeated in different labs" ("Copycats"). Identify if there are any discipline-specific criteria for arguments so you can work to meet them.

Reasonable and logical

Whether something is reasonable or not is often more a matter of degree than a definite yes or no; and reason also depends on context. This criterion basically asks that the argument make sense and hold validity. Rhetoricians have developed a series of what they term logical fallacies to name common flaws in reasoning. Effective arguments avoid logical fallacies and display reasonable logic and evidence.

Featured Criteria for Effective Argument: Avoiding Logical Fallacies

Logical fallacies are a rhetorical term that denotes common flaws in reasoning that can often (though not always) make arguments less effective, or sometimes ineffective. According to Charles Hamblin, "a fallacious argument…is one that *seems to be valid* but *is not* so." Fallacies might diminish an argument's efficacy by distracting readers from the main point or by inviting what is often unnecessary disagreement and resistance from readers.

Aristotle originally developed 13 logical fallacies in his work *On Sophistical Refutations*. These, however, have since been expanded, with some sources naming as many as 150 unique logical fallacies. Because there are so many fallacies, they often overlap, have complex subcategories, or appear by varying names. For instance, the fallacies of *post hoc* and slippery slope both address false conclusions: the *post hoc* fallacy yields a false conclusion based on a cause and effect,

while the slippery slope fallacy has a false conclusion based on loosely connected or unconnected statements.

Fallacies can also be confusing in that sometimes they seem closely connected with aspects of argument that are actually effective. For instance, one logical fallacy is termed "appeal to emotion" (also sometimes subcategorized into "appeal to pity" or "appeal to sympathy"). This fallacy seems (and is) closely connected to the Aristotelian appeal to *pathos*. However, in the fallacious use of emotional appeal, a writer will be overly sentimental, use emotion in contexts that do not warrant emotion, or use emotion at the expense of *kairos, logos,* and *ethos*. Therefore, as you encounter logical fallacies, be sure to evaluate the context in which they emerge to best determine if they are indeed fallacious or if it might be in fact efficacious.

Logical fallacies can occur across disciplines, but some disciplines might be more at risk for certain types of fallacies over others. For example, in disciplines such as development studies or human rights branches of public policy, academic writers might be particularly cognizant of how extensively they appeal to emotion. Since issues surrounding poverty, violence, and abuse are so inherently likely to evoke emotion in both readers and the researchers themselves, academic writers in these fields might need to work harder to remember to integrate appeals to *logos, ethos*, and *kairos* in order to make their arguments even more effective. This is not to say that these researchers should not also use *pathos*, but that their disciplinary context already holds *pathos* and so might warrant instead energy toward constructing arguments around *ethos*, *logos*, and *kairos*, as well as *pathos*.

Becoming familiar with logical fallacies and understanding more about how and when they emerge in arguments will help you avoid them in your own arguments as well as help you identify logical fallacies in others' arguments so you can contribute your own responses and ideas to ongoing debates in various fields. Take a look at several of the more common logical fallacies.

Hasty generalization

A hasty generalization fallacy is an overgeneralization based on incorrect, inadequate, or otherwise insufficient evidence. It may also describe an argument where "exceptions are overlooked and not properly taken into account" (Walton). An example of a hasty generalization might look something like this:

> Susan is writing a public policy brief on public perceptions about the common core curriculum in K-12 education. For her research, Susan surveys her two closest friends, both of whom dislike the common core. She concludes that everyone in the United States dislikes the common core.

Susan has made a hasty generalization because she surveyed only two people, both of whom were friends (perhaps of similar ages), and she therefore does not have enough evidence to justify her conclusion. Moreover, her argument that everyone dislikes the common core has neglected to consider exceptions—it would take only one person to say he or she likes the common core and Susan's argument would be discredited.

Ad hominem

Ad hominem arguments focus on a person's character. Sometimes arguments about character make sense, as when *ethos* matters: "Jones is not a fit candidate for public office, since he is a known embezzler" (Brinton). Other times, however, an *ad hominem* argument presents an irrelevant and/or overly venomous character attack, such as, "I refuse to listen to Senator Jones's proposals for amending the New Bank Bill; he cheats on his wife" (Hansen and Pinto). Note that some might still suggest that Senator Jones's marital fidelity is relevant, even for a bank bill. However, an *ad hominem* attack generally focuses on character at the expense of addressing other, more relevant aspects of the argument.

Straw Man

Straw Man fallacies involve a writer misrepresenting an opposing position in order to more easily refute it. Philosophers Robert Talisse and Scott F. Aikin argue that there are two forms of Straw Man fallacy: representation and selection.

Representation Straw Man

Representation occurs "in an adversarial argumentative context between two speakers (A and B), where the proponent (A) represents her opponent's (B's) position in an inaccurate way which facilitates or strengthens A's case against B." (Talisse and Aikin). An example of this type of Straw Man argument might be:

> "Senator Jones says that we should not fund the attack submarine program. I disagree entirely. I can't understand why he wants to leave us defenseless like that."

Selection Straw Man

Selection forms of Straw Man involve researchers choosing too selectively what evidence they will include based on an assumption that readers will be unaware of other evidence that might possibly work against their argument. Talisse and Aikin argue that the selection form of Straw Man is even more vicious than representation Straw Man because it takes advantage of reader ignorance: "(A) correctly presents (B's) argument and legitimately refutes it, but she fails to countenance

stronger objections from other sources.... Unless her audience is familiar with the better counter-arguments proposed by (A's) opposition, then (A) succeeds in winning their assent." An example of a selection form of a Straw Man argument appears in the excerpted article, in which the authors claim that the American Society of Reproductive Medicine Practice Committee is guilty of a Straw Man argument by having based their message on selective evidence and assuming general ignorance on the part of the public and funding organizations:

> The American Society of Reproductive Medicine Practice Committee (ASRMPC) has suggested that DNA damage in spermatozoa should not be assessed because the correlation with pregnancy is inconsistent across independent studies. However this is a straw man argument. The reason why such assays should be undertaken is not just because they reflect the underlying quality of spermatogenesis but, more importantly, because the DNA damage they reveal may have detrimental effects on the developmental normality of the embryo and health of possible future children. (Aitken, et al.).

Some disciplines may lend themselves more readily to certain fallacies than others. In a field such as reproductive health, those making funding decisions (likely members of institutional or organizational administration or government) probably do not have the expertise that the members of the ASRMPC would have. Thus, these readers would be relying on the ASRMPC to provide a full consideration of the research, and a failure to include that evidence is considered a breach of trust. Aitken et al. claim that the ASRMPC is committing a Straw Man fallacy by refuting one justification for research when in fact another, better justification for research exists.

Other common logical fallacies

While the previous three are frequently occurring fallacies, there are a number of other logical fallacies, also worthy of your review and consideration.

Begging the Question: Using a conclusion that is already presumed to be true, or starting with an assumption that has not yet been proven

Many Questions: Posing numerous questions, some relevant, some irrelevant

False Dilemma: Suggesting that there is no middle ground and one position automatically negates or is in direct antithesis to the other position

Equivocation: Using words that have multiple meanings as a way of confusing readers

No True Scotsman: Refuting counterevidence by discrediting it entirely and completely

Missing the Point: Arriving at a conclusion that is unconnected (or not closely linked) to the evidence provided

Post Hoc: Assuming that because one thing followed another, then the second thing was caused by the first. For instance, if you wear a blue shirt and get in a car accident, *post hoc* fallacy would say that the blue shirt caused the car accident

Red Herring: Distracting readers by including an idea or concept that is irrelevant and therefore takes them away from the main issue

Slippery Slope: Stringing together a series of events and arriving at a conclusion that is extreme. For instance, a slippery slope argument would say that if you reduce fines for driving without a license, then more people will do so, and drunk driving will increase, and deaths from drunk driving will increase, until finally all civilian driving licenses will need to be revoked

Again, this is but a partial, overlapping list, and as you explore these fallacies in more depth, you will likely encounter more complex variations of them. The main point is for you to think carefully about the conclusions you draw and the claims you make to ensure that they are reasonable and relevant, and that they avoid these (or other) logical fallacies.

Write Now

Under most circumstances, academic writers try to avoid logical fallacies. But sometimes it's fun to purposefully create them if only as a way of better understanding how writers can accidentally fall into them. Review the logical fallacies discussed in this chapter, and do a quick Internet search to locate others. Then, practice... and then practice purposefully generating as many logical fallacies as you can for a general argument topic. For instance, with an argument about video games, a hasty generalization might be that all video games contain violence, or no video games contain violence.

Transferring Argument Frames

While arguments across contexts are enormously varied, they nearly all should strive to have a defined purpose, demonstrate effective criteria, and avoid logical fallacies. These elements, purpose, efficacy, and logical soundness, provide a

strong frame for arguments across context. The specifics of each of these elements might shift, however, according to context.

Across contexts, arguments integrate nearly all the aspects of preceding chapters, from questions and reading to summary, synthesis, and analysis. This chapter is connected closely to the next two chapters, which will deepen your knowledge of argument by exploring, successively, particular argument structures (Chapter 9) and options for argument design (Chapter 10). By the end of Chapter 10, you will have a strong sense of argument in all its many complexities.

Chapter 16 Key Terms

Argument
Claim
Thesis
Proof
Position
Premise
Conclusion
Persuasion
Causal argument
Proposal argument
Definitional argument
Argumentative appeals
Logical fallacy
Hasty generalization fallacy
Ad hominem fallacy
Straw Man fallacy

Write Away

Although you may feel relatively new to arguments, this activity asks you to take on an advanced role involved with publication: developmental editor. Developmental editors help authors (academic or not) prepare manuscripts for publication. These editors do not correct grammar but instead focus on ideas; they provide specific suggestions to authors for how to improve the content of their drafts-in-progress. You, as the developmental editor in this case, will work with an author to help make his or her somewhat lacking argument into a highly effective one.

Find a partner in your class.

Each partner chooses a discipline and a topic. Each person should choose a particular disciplinary perspective and a topic to focus on for this Write Away. Pretend you are a biologist, for example, working on plant photosynthesis. Or, pretend you are a cultural anthropologist studying agrarian societies.

Each partner writes a really "bad" argument. This is the fun part. Write the worst argument you can possibly imagine. Aim for an argument that is about as long as an abstract of 100-150 words. Try to include as many logical fallacies as possible, and stay as far away as possible from the criteria for effective arguments. Remember, though, developmental editors do not fix typos, so try to make your "bad" argument as grammatically accurate as possible.

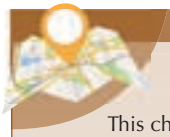
Exchange "bad" arguments with your partner.

Developmental editors, get to work! Now it is time for you to assume your role as developmental editor. You are tasked with getting your partner's bad argument into shape. Revise, rewrite, and improve the "bad" argument to make it as effective as possible. This may require at times taking a few liberties with the original argument, which is fine in this case. Your author can always decide to decline your suggestions. For now, do not be shy, and make any and all changes you think the argument needs to become as effective as possible.

Trade arguments back, and reflect. Return the now-much-improved argument to the original author, and then examine your returned argument. Reflect for ten minutes about what you learned about argument from being a developmental editor and from seeing your "bad" argument become better. When providing and receiving developmental editing assistance, which changes made the biggest impact? What changes were deployed across both "bad" arguments? Which ones, if any, seem more particular to one instance than the other?

CHAPTER 17

Constructing Arguments



Pinpointing Chapter 17

This chapter extends the material about arguments introduced in Chapter 8 by examining how writers go about actually constructing arguments. Where Chapter 8 helped to frame what arguments accomplish and what makes them more or less effective, this chapter digs deeper to examine how writers structure their arguments. To provide you with strategies for *constructing arguments in transit*, this chapter addresses the following concepts:

- Questions that Shape Arguments
- Inductive and Deductive Reasoning
- Argument Structure
- Stasis Theory
- Classical Argument Structure
- Toulmin Argument Structure
- Rogerian Argument Structure

Chapter 10 builds on our exploration of argument by addressing the choices writers make regarding design and format, aspects that are, like structure, crucial to developing effective arguments.

In July 1911, explorer and Yale History Professor Hiram Bingham (who has since become the prototype for Indiana Jones) suddenly came across the Peruvian site now known as Machu Picchu and declared it the "lost capital" of the Incas. Constructed in the fifteenth century, Machu Picchu sits at an elevated point between two mountains. From the sky the structural layout resembles a condor sitting in its lofty nest (Heaney; Magli).

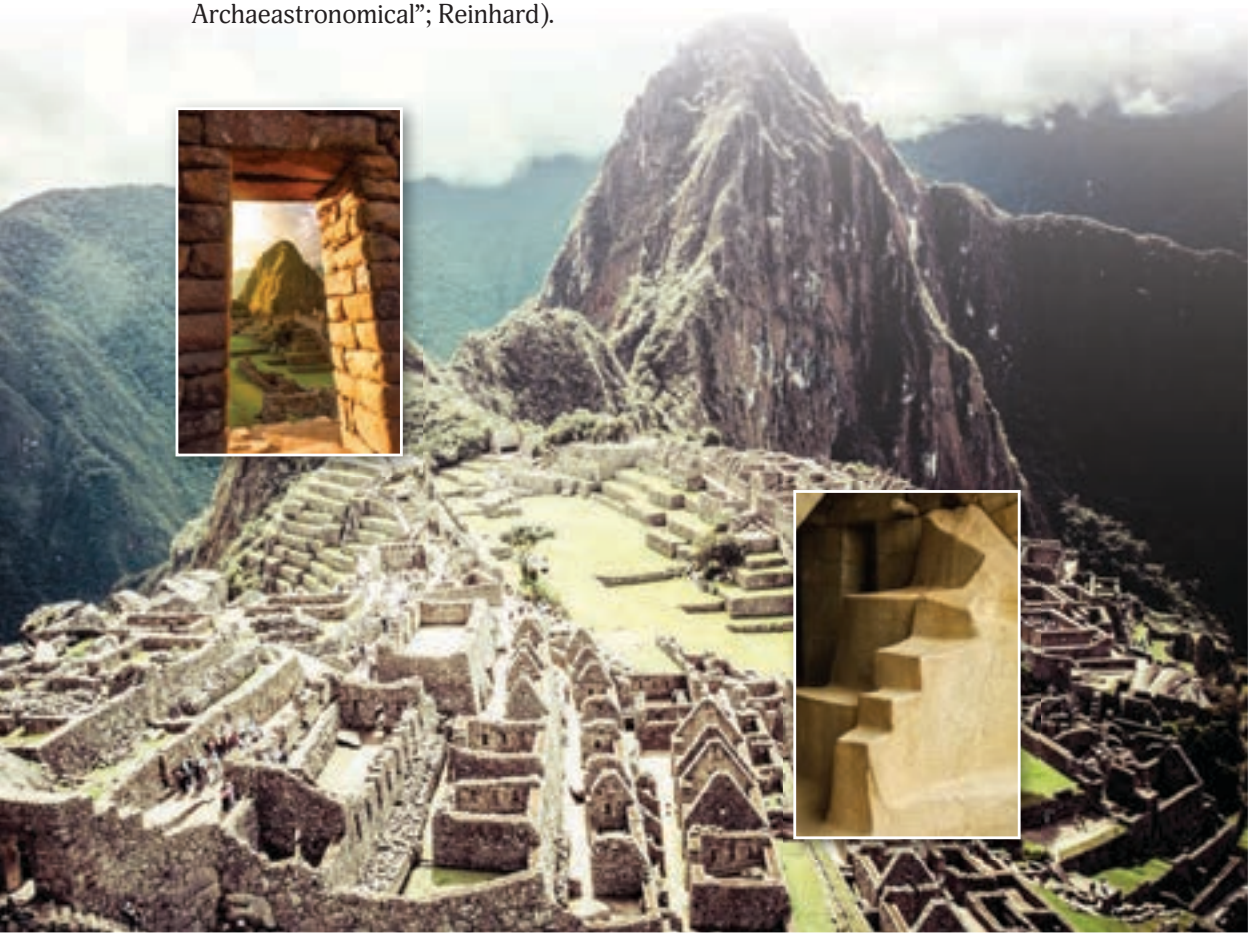
Since Bingham's re-discovery of Machu Picchu, the site has sparked numerous debates across academic disciplines. Some even debate Bingham's role as re-discoverer, arguing that those accolades should instead go to a 1910 German exploration team or to Peruvians themselves long before (Eisner).

Research about the purpose of Machu Picchu occupies some of the most contentious scholarly terrain. Because so much about the site demonstrates that the Incas paid deliberate, sustained attention to the structure of Machu

Picchu—be it for geometrical, religious, astronomical, cosmological, or political purposes—scholars seek to find evidence for their arguments from Machu Picchu's structure itself.

Some scholars argue that it was primarily a royal retreat for a fifteenth century Inca ruler. Recently, evolutionary anthropologists conducted mtDNA analyses on skeletons Bingham had collected a century ago: "[Study] results support the hypothesis that the remains of residents of the Inca-period rural communities of Paucarcancha and Patallacta that were analyzed were native highlanders [and] we argue that they served roles of supporting the nearby Inca royal estate of Machu Picchu" (Verano).

Discrediting the notion of a royal retreat, other researchers argue that Machu Picchu served as an astronomical observatory. A team of Peruvian and Polish archaeologists used stone conservation and 3D documentation methods to argue that the building called El Mirador served as "a device used probably by a small group of Inca priest-astronomers for precise observations of the position of celestial bodies on the horizon, against the distinctive Yanantin mountain peaks." The Torreón structure, similarly, has been found to have a window that opens in such a way as to track the solstices and equinoxes (Aveni; Dearborn and White; "New Archaeastronomical"; Reinhard).



Astrophysicist Guilio Magli argues that this astronomical function intersected with Machu Picchu's religious purposes: "[The geometry of the structural designs] lead[s] us to propose that Machu Picchu was intentionally planned and built as a pilgrimage center connected with the Inca "cosmovision." Travel blogger Julio Moreno explains how the archaeoastronomical planning might have impressed pilgrims as they arrived at Machu Picchu at particular points of the year: "[T]he sun rises exactly at a point between Machu Picchu Mountain, and the mountain next to it on June 21, the summer solstice. This is called the gateway of the sun, and the entrance to Machu Picchu is you come through the Inca Trail. During this day, some buildings are designed to cast shadows on altars or other religiously significant stones."

Constructing arguments across disciplines resonates with the mtDNA analyses conducted on the Machu Picchu skeletons. While the basic DNA building blocks of humans have universal, structural similarities, we all also have unique characteristics that make us more or less similar to one another and that ultimately make us each individual human beings. We can think of argument in the same vein; while there are nearly infinite opportunities for discipline-specificity, contextualization, and creativity for any given argument, there are also some structural similarities with argument construction that we can usefully identify across disciplines and contexts.

Drawing out the intersection between purpose and structure further, the scholars studying Machu Picchu create their very own arguments about the archaeological site with deliberate, sustained attention to structure. Their choices for how they construct arguments hinge not only on their disciplinary, historical, and individual context but also on whether their purpose is to affirm, compromise, debunk, hypothesize, or accomplish something else. Purpose deeply impacts choices made about construction, be it of an archaeological site or an archaeological argument.

Developing an awareness of the underlying structures for arguments as well as the ways in which they can be modified will help you recognize the choices academic writers make as they construct arguments and will help you make choices about constructing your own arguments.

Write Here

Identify an ongoing controversy surrounding Machu Picchu, and read an argument related to this controversy. Then, recreate that person's argument using objects (not words). To do so, find a variety of small objects that you can use to represent the various components of that person's argument, and arrange them in such a way as to represent that argument. Explain the argument, and your choices about constructional representation, in writing. Share your construction and your written account of it with your classmates and instructor.

Questions that Shape Arguments

Chapter 3 emphasized that posing questions is a key feature of academic writing across disciplines and contexts. As writers construct arguments, they often gradually move toward posing a somewhat more focused range of questions. Developing the most refined and precise question enables writers to thereby craft more effective, targeted arguments.

Research questions

What questions are you asking in relation to the argument? What do you need to learn or research in order to arrive at an argument? Well-defined questions will help shape your argument.

Disciplinary and publication contexts

What is the disciplinary and publication context of your writing occasion? Perhaps above all other questions to consider as you construct an argument are those pertaining to disciplinary and publication context. Readers carry different expectations across disciplines for what an argument looks like and what makes it more or less effective. Additionally, arguments look vastly different depending on whether they are published in contexts that are more academic, more public, or a combination of these. Of course, as you are learning in this text, writing contexts have overlap and we can transfer what we learn in one context to another. However, it is best, as you prepare to construct an argument, to review examples of argument in the context in which you are writing so you can model your approach on these, or, if not, at least break with or modify convention in an informed and deliberate way.

Purpose

What do you hope to accomplish by writing this argument? What would you like readers to do or think after having read your argument? Having a clearer sense of your aims and purpose will help you focus your argument. If your purpose is to provide a solution to a problem, then you'll want to focus primarily on defining the solution and demonstrating why this solution offers an advantage over other solutions. By contrast, if your purpose is to illustrate nuanced aspects of a text, then you'll want to focus mainly on analysis and interpretation of evidence.

Evidence

What is your evidence, or what evidence are you seeking? Since arguments in academic writing are linked to evidence, make sure you use your evidence to arrive at your argument. Sometimes writers review evidence and learn that they need additional evidence, or a different kind of evidence. In most cases, arguments should emerge from the evidence rather than the other way around. If you

have to work hard to make your evidence fit with your argument, you are likely working with an argument that needs revision.

Assumptions

What assumptions will you make? Every writer makes assumptions. Perhaps these assumptions involve an assumed understanding of pre-existing knowledge or an assumption about how readers are likely to receive an argument. Some assumptions involve how we define terms, or what we value.

Davis Oldham, a writing professor at Shoreline Community College, suggests that assumptions can involve facts, values, or analysis. Daniel Kies, a writing Professor at DuPage University, argues that assumptions emerge from cultural, biological, intellectual, and idiosyncratic origins.

Not only should academic writers understand what their assumptions are, but they should also consider naming them explicitly so readers can see how the assumptions are functioning in an argument. "Every person is a learner," for instance, is an assumption named by the National Council of Teachers of English on their website.

Sometimes, through the process of naming an assumption, we realize that the assumption should be reconsidered. "Every person has traveled on vacation," for instance, could be an assumption based on one's own experiences and would need to be reconsidered to accommodate people with divergent experiences.

Audience

To whom are you directing your argument? While we cannot assume that we will always be able to reach our intended audience, nor that we can fully know our intended audience, nor that others outside of that audience might also be reading our writing, it is nevertheless a good idea to take into consideration those to whom you are directing your argument. Sometimes these readers can span across several different groups, each with varying levels of expertise, disagreement, or agreement with you. What do you hope they do with or think about your argument? What perspectives do you think they might have about your argument? How can you use this knowledge to shape your argument in such a way as to be more accessible, provocative, and/or effective?

Qualifications

What qualifications exist for your argument? Rarely are arguments universally applicable or valid in all possible circumstances. Holding arguments up to this expectation is unreasonable. Instead, academic writers qualify their arguments, or specify the circumstances for their argument and the instances where it makes

sense. Avoid as much as possible making generalizations and trying to develop an argument that fits all occasions.

Alternative viewpoints

How might people disagree with your position or offer alternative viewpoints? Alternative viewpoints are sometimes termed counterarguments, but such a term can suggest that the only reason academic writers consider these arguments is in order to eliminate them. Instead, writers often take alternative views into consideration simply to acknowledge those views or to shape qualifications as we will see specifically in Toulmin argumentation. Disagreement can often be sustained productively.

Structure

What structure will best suit your argument? Deciding how to structure an argument is complex, enough so that there are entire books devoted to the challenge. Some arguments are better focused on compromise. Others focus more on debunking others' ideas, and others are best structured around a focus on one's own position nearly exclusively. Guidelines and examples for various structures of argument will be provided in the latter portion of this chapter.

Writer Insights

What is the significance of your most recent writing project?

As a flute teacher, I create recital program notes to entertain, educate, and engage the audiences of my students. Listeners are more apt to connect with "Skip to My Lou" performed by a fledgling flutist if they know this popular American Frontier-era song encouraged the stealing of dance partners during its heyday. And what's the difference between a nocturne and a gavotte? The audience delights in such details. Writing is a valuable tool that I use to enhance the appreciation of music.

~June Newton, Flute Teacher and Freelance Musician, Augusta, Georgia, U.S.

Credibility

How will you establish your credibility? Thinking deliberately about how you will gain and convey credibility about the argument will enable you to move beyond opinions into research-based evidence. What steps will you need to take in order to learn more about the ongoing scholarly conversation and debates centered around this area of inquiry? Sometimes this involves fieldwork, literature reviews, archival research, or some combination of these or other research methodologies (see Chapter 1 for more on research methodologies).

Format(s) or modalities

Should your argument appear in visual, verbal, multimodal, or written format? Is it a scholarly argument or a popular piece? Would it be better suited for multiple modalities? The format of arguments impacts what you argue and how you argue it. We will provide guidelines and examples in Chapter 10: Designing Arguments, for various formats and modalities of argument, including visual, written, and oral arguments that can emerge in print, digital, and/or in-person contexts.

So what?

This question is so important that it deserves to hold a power position as a final point of emphasis in this list of questions. While all of these questions are crucial, the "so what?" of your argument may be of most importance. This question invites you to identify why your argument matters. Why should people care about this argument? What important issues does it address? Not every argument is going to bring about world peace or end hunger, but every argument should have some larger significance to it. Articulate what this larger significance is for yourself, if not explicitly in your writing project as well.

Inductive and Deductive Reasoning

Arguments are developed through reasoning and proof. Chapter 8 already addressed reasoning in part through logical fallacies. But developing an effective argument entails deciding the way in which you will build your line of reasoning. Philosophers have created two general categories, or labels, for reasoning in arguments: inductive and deductive.

Inductive reasoning

Inductive reasoning involves moving from examples or observations (premises) to general assertions that are likely to be true (Figure 17.1). Economists Mikko Ketokivi and Saku Mantere describe inductive reasoning, and its challenges:

> Inductive reasoning…runs…from particulars to generalizations. When one generalizes from data, one's inferences are always inductive.... [I]nduction is sometimes dubbed an ampliative form of reasoning (e.g., Salmon, 1966)—it "amplifies" our knowledge in that the conclusion is more than a restatement of the premises.

One can find inductive reasoning across disciplines. For example, Ketokivi and Mantere discuss inductive reasoning in the field of management and economics, where researchers collect data and then draw inferences and conclusions based on that data.

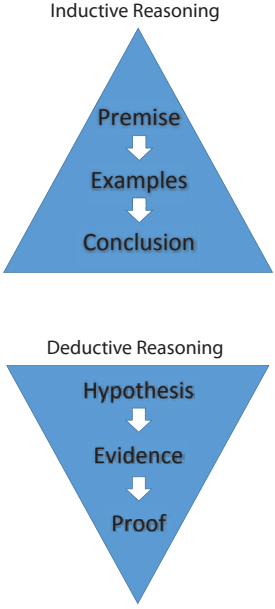


Figure 1.2: Mind Mapping

Deductive reasoning

In contrast to inductive reasoning, deductive reasoning moves from the general to the particular (Figure 17.1). Deductive reasoning has roots in the construction of hypotheses. For instance, if an academic writer develops a hypothesis to test, then she is approaching an argument through deductive reasoning. Deductive reasoning also presents challenges because it must be judged as being valid or invalid: if the premises (also termed evidence) hold truth, then the conclusion (also termed proof) will be true and the argument can be understood as valid.

Like inductive reasoning, deductive reasoning is woven throughout disciplines. Because of its emphasis on validity, Michal Ayalon and Ruhama Even argue that "deductive reasoning is often used as a synonym for mathematical thinking." Mathematicians, that is, might start a proof with a premise or law, and then apply it to a particular case in order to reach a conclusion. Offering another example of how deductive reasoning operates in a discipline, H. David Tuggle, Alex H. Townsend and Thomas J. Riley argue that the field of archaeology makes extensive use of deductive reasoning: "[the] identification of artifacts or features by archaeologists is accomplished by deductive reasoning."

Both forms of reasoning, therefore, have challenges and benefits, each affording academic writers with the opportunity to make claims based on premises and evidence and each having use across disciplines.

Write Now

Read an op-ed about an issue of interest to you. Write for 10 minutes about why you think the argument relies on inductive reasoning, deductive reasoning, or a combination of both.

Argument Structure

Although academic writers situate arguments uniquely within particular writing occasions, they also draw from a shared array of structures as they construct arguments. Argument structure helps determine how academic writers organize and emphasize certain shared features of arguments, such as introductions, conclusions, opposing viewpoints, evidence, and an articulation of a main position. Developing awareness of these common argument structures, as well as the ways in which they can be modified, will help you recognize the choices academic writers make as you encounter and respond to others', and generate your own arguments.

Four common approaches to argument structures that emerge across disciplines are Stasis theory, Classical argumentation, Toulmin argumentation, and

Rogerian argumentation. Although each of these argument structures occurs across disciplines, certain structures might fit more readily in particular contexts. For instance, if you are working and writing in a field such as ethics or development studies, which often cover complex and ambiguous terrain, it might make sense to invoke Rogerian argument structure since Rogerian argument focuses on compromise. If you are writing in a field such as the Health Sciences and showing how a previous study reached a faulty conclusion, it might make sense to use the Classical structure because this structure emphasizes refuting others' arguments. In disciplines such as English Literature, History, or Cultural Anthropology, where writers often make use of deep analysis of texts to develop claims, the Toulmin argument structure might often make sense given that it provides guidelines for carefully connecting evidence to a main argument. Of course, a writer in History might use Classical argument structure to refute common perceptions about the narrative of a particular historical event. Still, it is important to consider how disciplinary context and writing occasion impact argument structure.

The upcoming sections introduce you to these four argumentation structures and provide examples of each. These examples demonstrate structure through written formats but can also be mapped onto and modified to other argument modalities, such as digital and in-person contexts, and for arguments that are visual or oral as well as written. Chapter 10: Designing Arguments will offer you the opportunity to think about how the platform and modality of an argument impacts the construction and design of an argument's structure. As you will also see, despite each of these structures having distinct features, they also have overlap, and academic writers often modify or blend these structures depending on the writing occasion. Thus, as you reflect on these structures, consider them not as strict templates, but as beginning points for constructing arguments.

Stasis Theory

Stasis theory provides a bridge between questions that shape an argument and argument structure. Where the questions in the prior section are more general in nature, stasis theory offers a structured set of questions—a heuristic—that can help you develop, refine, and shape your argument. It can be conceived of as a method of invention or discovery (or pre-writing, as we discussed in Chapter 2: Research and Writing as a Process), specifically geared toward argument. Stasis theory can essen-

Writer Insights

What are the purposes of your arguments?

I am a nonprofit professional…. As someone with nine years of experience in campaigns, communications, policy and philanthropy, I have an eye for detail, a drive to impact the world and a passion for leaving the earth, like a campground, better than I found it. I would like to think my writing is more than my work. The mission is always the same; I write to inspire, to teach, to share, to motivate, to communicate and to connect.

~Claire LaFrance, Nonprofit Professional, Washington, D.C., U.S.

tially help structure any argument by helping you determine what the main issues are in an argument, how significant they are, what the implications are, and what you think next steps should be related to the argument.

After using the stasis questions to generate a range of possible approaches to an argument, academic writers can then make choices about which aspects they think are most significant and/or which ones they may want to focus on for a particular argument.

Stasis theory, also known as Issue theory, has its origins with "Hermagoras of Temnos, a rhetor of the second century B.C.E. [and] Hermogenes of Tarsus" [a rhetor of the second century C.E.] (Fernández-Garrido). Stasis theory initially emerged in the context of judicial deliberations as a way for lawyers and judges to discover and determine what issues were at stake pertaining to a particular legal case. Those in judicial circles could, ostensibly, go through the questions to gain clarity on whether a crime was committed, what that crime entailed, who was harmed, who was guilty, how significant the crime was, and what the punishment should be.

Now, stasis theory has found many realms of application beyond its legalistic, and arguably punitive, origins. For instance, Allen Brizee argues that stasis theory can help as a strategy for "workplace teaming and decision making." Kathryn Northcut has applied stasis theory to Paleontology. And Charles Marsh has applied stasis theory to crisis communication.

In terms of its application to argument structure, stasis theory invites you to pursue four main areas of questioning, or issue seeking, as a way of discovering the potential contours of an argument. Arguing for the universal applicability of these questions or issues, Cicero maintained that "There will always be one of these issues applicable to every kind of case; for where none applies, there can be no controversy."

The four stases, or issues, and their questions, are as follows:

Facts (termed 'conjectural'):
What has happened?
What has caused it?

Definition (termed 'definitional'):
Has harm been done?
What type of harm is it?
To whom or what has this harm been done?
Who is responsible for this harm?

Quality (termed 'qualitative'):
How severe is the harm or impact?
What is the degree of the harm or impact?

Policy (termed 'procedural'):
Should something be done?
What should be done?

Considering each of these questions helps writers determine the parameters of their argument. Arguments can emerge through one or more stases, depending on not only the particular issue, but also the writer, the context for the argument and discipline.

As an example of how stasis theory can work to shape arguments across disciplines, let's consider an academic writer who is interested in questions about climate change. He might pursue any of the following stases related to climate change:

Facts/Conjecture: Academic writers might argue over whether the climate is or is not changing, or about what is causing it. For instance, scholars David Stern and Robert Kaufman argue that "both natural and anthropogenic forcings cause temperature change."

Definition: Academic writers might also argue over what the impact is of climate change. For instance, Abigail Cahill and her coauthors argue in their article "How Does Climate Change Cause Extinction?" "Anthropogenic climate change is predicted to be a major cause of species extinctions in the next 100 years."

Quality: Those interested in examining the degree of the impact of climate change would be making an argument about issues of quality. For instance, in their article, "Climate Change Impacts on Marine Ecosystems," Doney, et al. argue about the severity of the impact of climate change, such as "shifts in the size structure…and…abundance of populations [and] altered species interactions."

Procedure: The stasis of procedure asks what policies should be enacted, what solutions can be achieved, or what behaviors should be developed. Guy Dauncey, for instance, focuses the majority of his book, *Stormy Weather*, on practical solutions to climate change that utilize available technology.

Many arguments span multiple stases, even sometimes all four stases, and other times writers will instead demonstrate why they are focusing on one particular stasis over others, having perhaps shown that other stases are less relevant, less significant, or already resolved.

In the excerpt from her book, *Kill the Messenger*, Maria Armoudian makes an argument about climate change and the media by systematically progressing through all four stases. In the text's annotations, I show how others could have argued alternative positions within each of the stases.

Excerpt from *Kill the Messenger: the Media's Role in the Fate of the World* by M. Armoudian

In 2007, political changes fueled more robust media coverage. With the climate on their agenda, Democrats gained control of both houses of Congress; the U.S. Supreme Court decided the EPA's role in regulating greenhouse gases; and California passed groundbreaking climate legislation, signed into law by actor-turned-governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. To disambiguate the science, former vice president Al Gore dispelled the myth of a scientific debate in his film, *An Inconvenient Truth*. …

Armoudian is arguing about the facts (conjecture), building a case as to what caused media to shift in 2007 to "more robust coverage" of climate change. Others might argue that different facts created this media shift, or that these facts tell only part of the story and that there are other facts leading to a conclusion that media coverage did not shift in 2007.

Armoudian moves next to an argument of definition, arguing that the impact of this coverage generated a perception of "two sides to climate science." Others, presumably, could argue about a different impact.

Without checking the veracity of the naysayers' statements, many journalists gave equal footing to denialists and real climate scientists, ultimately framing an established climate science as "he-said-she-said" and creating an illusion that there were two sides to climate science.…

Armoudian now demonstrates the stasis of quality along with definition, arguing that the that this media coverage was severe in that it "unjustly tarnished climate scientists and misled the public." Those with different views could argue that this impact was not severe or problematic.

Eager for controversy, some journalists seized upon a handful of words that turned errors in judgment into evidence of a conspiracy that unjustly tarnished climate scientists and misled the public on the seriousness of global warming. …

Toward the end of her book, Armoudian moves to an argument of procedure. Here she argues for increased legislation to protect "information diversity and pluralism." Others might argue for different kinds of legislation.

Media consolidation and concentration of ownership are the enemies of information diversity and pluralism, serving only media owners, not

the public. To prevent narrow-minded discourse from dominating the public sphere, legal structures including antitrust laws, protections for net neutrality (unrestricted and unbiased Internet access and flow), treaties, and other thoughtful regulation are needed to help limit concentrated ownership and related forces that strangle the flow of independent information.

—

From *Kill the Messenger: the Media's Role in the Fate of the World*, 2011.

Write Now

The preceding annotated example addresses climate, which seems to somewhat readily map onto the four stases because of its highly controversial and policy-driven nature. Choose another line of inquiry or discipline, perhaps one that seems less controversial, and develop questions and controversies for it based on the four stases. How would you develop stases, for instance, with arguments about sports psychology or the history of the plague?

Classical Argument Structure

Deployed since at least the fifth century B.C.E, the classical argument structure is most suitable when you are trying to make an argument convincing for readers who oppose your ideas, by addressing and refuting opposing viewpoints as a means of forwarding your own position. Classical argument structure may be familiar to you in the context of political debates, where candidates will argue for a particular agenda or approach, and in the process demonstrate why other candidates' approaches are less advantageous.

Classical argument has five primary components: introduction, narrative, confirmation, refutation and concession, and summary and conclusion.

Introduction

The introduction should accomplish several important objectives: secure the reader's interest, orient the reader to your argument, cultivate a positive relationship with the reader, and articulate your argument.

Securing readers' interest

Although your professors or teaching assistants are largely required to read your writing—it's part of their job—other readers have considerably more choice. Sometimes readers need encouragement to read, either because they may not know why an issue is important or interesting, or because they may be choosing from among a number of different options for research on a particular topic. Given

all the options and choices readers have, what will encourage them to read your writing project?

You might consider this a hook for your readers, where you put a line out and hope they take a bite. Perhaps you can begin with something surprising, or a narrative anecdote, or a relevant quote or concept. Whatever it is you choose, be sure your hook is relevant in content, purpose, and tone to your overall argument.

Write Now

With a current writing project of your own, try developing at least three different possible hooks for readers. You might try a compelling sentence, a narrative anecdote, a significant fact or observation, a relevant quote, or some other way of capturing your reader's interest. Developing several different hooks will enable you to see that there is great variety in options for how writers go about securing readers' interest.

Orienting readers to the argument

Help readers prepare for the argument by providing key terms, the main line of inquiry, your approach, and any other relevant information you think they will need to adequately consider your argument. You may decide to expand on these aspects later in the argument, but offer a glimpse now of the main concepts under discussion.

Cultivating a positive relationship with readers

Creating a positive relationship between writer and readers involves presenting yourself as ethical, trustworthy, knowledgeable, and courteous. You might think of it as a performance of sorts, even if it is an honest performance. Erving Goffman argues in his well-known book, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, that all presentations are a performance:

> When an individual plays a part he implicitly requests his observers to take seriously the impression that is fostered before them. They are asked to believe that the character they see actually possesses the attributes he appears to possess, that the task he performs will have the consequences that are implicitly claimed for it, and that, in general, matters are what they appear to be.

Goffman's notion of performance can enable academic writers to think about the role they are playing in relationship to their readers, their presentation of self.

Articulating the argument (claim, thesis, position, etc.)

Articulate for readers as clearly as possible what your argument is. Your argument itself can consist of multiple sentences or one sentence, or even sometimes an entire paragraph; depending on the context, you might even say something like, "This article argues…" as a way of signaling to readers what the argument is.

Narrative

This second component of classical argument can be thought of as the story behind your argument. What other research has already been conducted about this issue? Why is your argument significant? Often this narrative section consists of the literature review (as discussed in Chapter 5: Summary, and Chapter 7: Analysis), where academic writers summarize and synthesize previous research. Include in this narrative section enough information for readers to feel fully apprised of the current state of research on a particular issue. One challenge of academic arguments is that readers often have varying levels of expertise. Writers must consider how they can bring those with less expertise up to speed and not condescend to or bore those with more expertise.

Confirmation

This aspect of classical argument provides readers with the main reasons and evidence supporting your argument. Using the evidence you have gathered, confirmations support your argument based on your narrative. This section might also include smaller arguments that are related to your overarching argument.

Refutation and concession

After offering evidence toward an argument, academic writers using classical arguments also address what are known as counterarguments. Academic writers anticipate what those with opposing views might argue, and they attempt to address, and counter, these views. Rather than dismissing them outright, though, academic writers often approach this through qualification or concession. A writer might acknowledge that an opposing view may have elements that are reasonable under certain circumstances. As we work to convince others to change their opinions, people rarely like to hear that they are completely wrong about something. More effective approaches will suggest that they are somewhat right, or that they are right under certain contexts.

Summary and conclusion

The final section of classical argument summarizes your argument and the main points you hope to have made. Think of this as the final opportunity to provide

readers with your takeaway points: What do you want your readers to be thinking about as they finish reading your argument?

Effective conclusions tend to include certain components: a recap of the main argument, hints at future research, and a call to action.

Conclusions, unfortunately, sometimes get short shrift. Writers can find themselves with insufficient time to focus on a conclusion. Instead, writers should devote significant energy to conclusions because they are so important, holding the final opportunity for you to address your readers in that particular writing occasion.

Review or echo the main argument

While it is important to summarize your main argument (some busy readers may read only your conclusion!), you should avoid cutting and pasting text from earlier in the argument into the conclusion. Think about this conclusion as an echo of sorts, recasting the argument, but with just a slight variation in tone, content, or style.

Include ideas for future research and/or new questions

Since effective academic arguments contribute to ongoing conversations, furthering knowledge and making progress rather than providing the final say-so, effective conclusions should offer readers ideas for what still remains to be considered or researched.

Make a call to action of some sort (depending on context)

Now that readers have read your argument, what would you like them to do with what they have learned? Do you want them to think differently? Are you advocating for a policy or behavior of some kind? Provide readers with ideas for what they might do next.

In this example of a classical argument, David Corso, an undergraduate student majoring in biology and minoring in psychology at the University of South Carolina, Spartanburg, pursues the question, "What are the potential uses for video games in improving our lives?"

Corso perhaps adopts the classical style of argument because he anticipates that many readers will have opposing positions on video games, believing them instead to have deleterious effects on our lives. His strategy of refutation involves qualifying the context of others' research. This strategy of refuting others' claims based on methodology (what games they used in their experiments, for example) is a common strategy in the sciences and lends itself well to the Classical argument structure because it offers the opportunity to develop both refutation and concession.

Excerpt from "The Psychological and Physical Effects of Video Game Play" by D. Corso

From light and food to singing and dancing, our world is characterized by phenomena, events, and processes that have a physical and psychological effect on us. Our environment and our experience shape us—physically and mentally. Games work in a similar fashion. A game is any mental and/or physical activity that is defined by goals, rules, challenges, a feedback system, and voluntary participation (Game, n.d.; McGonigal, 2011; Prensky, 2001). A video game is a complex form of digital media that incorporates these gamic properties, and it requires the active interaction between a human and computer (Galloway, 2006; Wardrip-Fruin, 2009)….

In the introduction, Corso provides a hook for readers, inviting us to think about light, food, singing, and dancing—universal human activities. The effect of this is also to link video games with other forms of enjoyment and leisure activities, thereby starting to link positivity with video games. Corso establishes goodwill and expertise by using a scholarly tone, and invoking current scholarship.

Video games are the popularized, digital form of games, and through their inherent properties, video games are a perfect tool to quantifiably measure a number of physical and mental capacities, capabilities, and characteristics.… We have to understand the cognitive and physiological effects of video game play in order to understand how these processes can be utilized to help us interpret and navigate our world. By understanding these effects, we can begin to develop games that facilitate our lives, e.g. constructing beneficial stratagems for education and public health.…

Corso's thesis, his main argument, appears here, where he argues that video games can help us "interpret and navigate our world" and "facilitate our lives." Thinking in terms of stases, Corso's argument would fall under definition and quality.

Cognitive Effects

Video games exercise and train cognitive skills. Cognition is defined as the mental processes associated with memory, language, perception, attention, problem solving, decision-making, and reasoning (Goldstein, 2011). Video games create engaging environments that allow for cognitive growth and development in mental rotational skills, object location ability, attention, visual attention, targeting, iconic and verbal representation of processes, verbal fluency, executive control, and both short and long-term memory skills (Boyan & Sherry, 2011).… Through their intrinsic qualities, video games

This section marks the beginning of Corso's narrative, where he offers a literature review of video-game research. It is clear from the research he's citing that his disciplinary perspective is psychology and neuroscience. Corso uses summary and synthesis throughout this section.

Corso blends narrative and confirmation, using Green and Bavelier as evidence for his own argument about the potential benefits of video games.

From *Caravel, Undergraduate Research Journal*, 2014.

promote cognitive growth and development.

A 2003 study by Green and Bavelier demonstrated cognitive growth through video game play.… They conducted five experiments…

Corso now moves into refutation and concession, reviewing the literature that argues for the negative impact of video games. He summarizes and synthesizes fully, choosing not to refute it right away. This approach demonstrates judiciousness.

The State of Video Game Research: Problems and Solutions

Our lives and our world are characterized by complexity—the workings of a cell, law, quantum physics, etc.—and video games reflect these intricacies. … On the one hand, video games and video game play … have great utility in a number of areas, such as academia, research, and healthcare (Astle et al., 2011; Griffiths, 2002; Van Eck, 2006). On the other hand, video games and video game play create a number of problems that must be understood and resolved in order to utilize their full potential. … Through surveys, models, experimental tests, and correlational studies, video games have been shown to produce a number of negative effects (Carnagey et al., 2007; Gentile et al., 2012; Gentile et al., 2004; Wang et al., 2011). … Several studies have found correlation effects between aggressive behavior and video game habits (Gentile et al., 2004). …

The major factor in a number of these studies is the nature of video game play: the content of the game, i.e. fighting and death, the context in which people play, i.e. a lack of supervision, and the amount of time spent playing.… Since we know that video games will create this effect under specific environmental influences, i.e. violent video games producing aggression and desensitization, then specific environmental influences on the other spectrum should be able to produce a different response, e.g. construction games producing cooperation and collaboration (Ito, 2009).…

Now Corso refutes the literature, conceding that these studies present solid evidence, but then stating that they address only certain types of video games. This approach qualifies the opposing point of view, showing that these arguments are valid, but only in certain circumstances.

The Potential Uses for Video Games

Video games have enormous potential as tools to study human growth and development, as training simulators for various jobs and skills, for education at primary, secondary, and collegiate institutions, and so much more. … As Griffiths (2002) states,

Corso now moves into a full section of confirmation, making specific points about how video games can facilitate "growth and success." He divides his confirmation into several categories (research, treatment/prevention, education), within which he argues that video games can have a strong impact.

"Videogames can be used as research and/or measurement tools. Furthermore, as research tools, they have great diversity" (p. 47)....

Prevention and Treatment Strategies

Video games provide an effective prevention and treatment strategy for a variety of problems, such as with Alzheimer's and ADHD. … Aart et al. (2007) report a number of problems that video game neurofeedback can be applied to as medication; these include alleviating attention and hyperactivity disorders, muscular tonicity recovery for cardiovascular patients, relaxation and meditation …

Corso's confirmation continues, providing evidence for the positive impact and use of video games.

Educational Value

Video games are excellent pedagogical tools. As Gentile (2011) reports, video games can provide immediate feedback, motivate players, set specific goals, promote mastery, encourage distributed learning, teach for transfer, adapt themselves to the level of the learner, and provide various other teaching techniques. …

Conclusion

Video games have measurable effects—physically and cognitively. Video games produce cognitive improvements, e.g. visual attention processes, as well as physical changes, such as the brain areas responsible for processing and learning. However, video games also produce impairments that cause psychological deficits, e.g. inhibition and decision-making skills, from physical effects, i.e. prolonged stress mechanisms. As long as we approach video games in a holistic sense, we can design them to make us smarter and stronger while minimizing negative effects. There are no limits to the cognitive training and learning opportunities created by video games, and they can be developed to improve cognitive resources, such as memory, language, and problem-solving skills.

Corso now moves into the conclusion, reminding readers of the contrasting positions as well but encouraging a "holistic" approach and inspiring readers about the many possibilities video games can confer. This opens the door for readers to pick up on this research and explore these potential uses in more depth.

Toulmin Argument Structure

Toulmin argument structure emerged from a book by rhetorician and philosopher Stephen Toulmin (1922-2009) titled *The Uses of Argument* (1958). Toulmin arguments overlap with certain features of the Classical argument structure, such as an introduction and conclusion, but Toulmin focuses primarily on how writers use evidence to move their argument forward. Where Classical argument structures makes sense in contexts with oppositional readers, Toulmin argument structures might be applicable for more neutral contexts.

The Toulmin model involves six component parts: claim, evidence, warrant, backing, qualifier(s), and rebuttal.

Claim

The claim is the main argument or position of a writing project. Instead of labeling an argument a thesis, Toulmin refers to it as a claim. The word claim originates from the Latin route word of *clamare*, which can be translated as "to shout" or "to proclaim." Toulmin's terminology, then, illustrates that even in neutral contexts, writers should develop arguments that have significance, about which they feel compelled to "shout."

Evidence

Evidence works to move a claim forward or support a claim. Evidence, as we will see in Chapter 10, can include data, quotes, paraphrase, summary, and/or personal experience.

Warrant

This is the important connection between the evidence and the claim. The warrant enables the writer to explain how the evidence is connected to the claim.

Backing

Backing provides additional support for or explanations of the warrant.

Qualifier

Qualifiers indicate what the circumstances are when the argument works, or they indicate other limitations to the claim. This might be the moment also when an academic writer addresses the assumptions that are undergirding the argument.

Rebuttal

The rebuttal is much like the refutation or concession of the Classical argument structure. Rebuttals address counterarguments and are best approached by demonstrating which portions of counterarguments are accurate, or the circumstances under which counterarguments might be accurate rather than discounting them wholesale.

This example of a Toulmin-based argument is a literary analysis of George R.R. Martin's *A Game of Thrones*. Rebecca Jones, an undergraduate at the University of Wisconsin, River Falls, majoring in English, examines these questions: how are female characters depicted in Martin's novels?; and, how are female characters depicted in the television show?

Excerpt from "A Game of Genders: Comparing Depictions of Empowered Women between *A Game of Thrones* Novel and Television Series" by R. Jones

1. Introduction

The genre of fantasy has a long and sordid history in its depictions of women. Even today, female authors and positive female protagonists are still scarce. This is in part because the genre battles not only societal norms, but also the chivalric standards and gender roles of medieval times, which it often emulates. Knights and damsels-in-distress are often touchstones for male and female characters. Presently, "Feminist philosophy […] sees chivalry as oppressing women by formulating a specific role that not all women want for themselves, and, further, by devaluing the role that women are supposed to play." Recent fantasy novels have started to counteract this trend through the writings of female and male authors alike, refuting the former chivalric expectations for women within the genre by allowing women greater prominence within their novels. In the novel, *A Game of Thrones* by George R. R. Martin, the modern reader encounters Cersei Lannister, Catelyn Stark, Sansa Stark, Arya Stark, and Daenerys (Dany) Targaryen … Each of the aforementioned women is empowered through her political rank within the world Martin creates, while also possessing a strength of her own, which manifests through the various trials she faces.… While the series is a close adaptation of the novel, by noting the variations in the depictions of … women, one sees the changing standards for women conveyed by the differences in portrayal between the two media, utilizing the lens of their respective archetypes. …

Jones situates her claim within an ongoing conversation about the role of women in fantasy novels. In so doing, she broadens her potential range of readers to include those interested in feminist theory, women's studies, and fantasy fiction, as well as those interested in *A Game of Thrones* more specifically.

Jones provides her claim at the end of this first paragraph in the final sentence. She argues that the archetypal portrayals in the novel and the show demonstrate an increase in power for female characters.

2. The Women

2.1. Cersei Lannister: Shadow Queen and Mother

From *Journal of Student Research* (1.3), 2012.

Cersei Lannister is the most powerful woman in both novel and show, and by far the most feared.…

Four major scenes in the television show redefine Cersei's character and depict her as developed and complex, more so than Martin's presentation of her in the novel. The first of these scenes occurs in the episode "Kingsroad," when Cersei goes to the comatose Bran's room and consoles Catelyn telling of her own firstborn's death. The novel likewise mentions Cersei's first child, but much later and with a far different tone. When she tells Catelyn the story of her stillborn son in the show, it is with a quiet, somber voice. This change redefines her character and in the show's storyline gives her a different attitude and motivation than that of the poisonous, bitter Queen of the novel. This moment hints at the seeds of love she once had for Robert that have long since die: how there was a time when she bore his children, and rather than intentionally killing the child, as she does in the novel, he is already dead, and foreshadows the fate of her love for Robert. This moment gives the viewer some ground upon which to understand Cersei's later actions, as well as presenting her character as that of a Mother figure not just the Queen …

In the show, [Cersei] is calm the entire time and in control. The novel, however, paints a different picture. She is still the strong woman but she shows her anger …

While the show presents her as strong, unashamed, and unafraid…, Martin presents her as pathetic, disgusting, and [subordinate] in the novel. The differing lines in the novel and the actions presented in the show are what shape the difference between Cersei's two representations and allow her to be stronger in the show.…

3. Conclusion

Fantasy has not always been kind in its depictions of women, such as its damsels-in-distress, passive ladies who do little but fill in the background space of the castle, or

Jones includes backing here as she provides information about Cersei's history with Robert that helps readers understand the warrant and evidence.

Jones includes evidence here for the show's depiction of a more complex character in the "Kingsroad" scene.

Here, Jones provides the warrant for the evidence by demonstrating why this change is so significant in strengthening Cersei's character.

Jones offers a qualification to her argument, by admitting that Cersei also displays strength in the novel, just not as much as in the show.

Jones concludes this section by re-emphasizing her claim: that the show presents Cersei as a stronger, more complex female character than the novel does. In subsequent sections, Jones provides evidence, backing, and warrants about the other female characters in *A Game of Thrones*.

serving only as possessions who produce heirs for their lords. However, as society changes, so too must the literature it produces. Martin has already established strong and empowered women in his novel, yet in the show adaptation these women have often gained more strength, as fifteen years later he is now catering to a society whose standards for television have changed and is now able to have leading women who are strong, without objectifying them.… Allowing for [these changes], Martin reveals how society is more open to strong women, and looks for complex characters… In the end, [Martin] shows that while our culture has changed over the past fifteen years, there is still plenty of progress to be made …

Jones here offers a rebuttal to the counterargument that women are depicted in problematic ways in fantasy fiction shows and novels. Rather than suggesting this position is wrong, Jones instead reframes it by illustrating the opportunity for progress.

Jones qualifies her argument by acknowledging that women are strong and empowered in the novel already, even though the show takes it to a greater degree. And, she further qualifies her argument by showing that more progress is yet to be made.

Rogerian Argument Structure

Rogerian argument, developed by psychologist Carl Rogers (1902-1947), is founded on compromise and understanding, resting on the premise that an argument should reach resolution. Rogerian argument focuses more explicitly on the refutation or rebuttal components of argument, and with more of a goal of compromise, than do the Classical or Toulmin argument structures. Approaching common ground and compromise may be more realistic or appropriate in some contexts. In the prior two examples, common ground might have been achieved if Corso had argued for increased regulation of violent video games even as he also argued for the positive impacts among other video games. For Jones, compromise might have emerged by exploring in more detail the lack of power among female characters in the show, or the lack of power among female characters in another show.

Rogerian argument is comprised of four components: catching the reader's interest, presenting the opposition's viewpoint, presenting the writer's viewpoint, and establishing common ground.

Catching readers' interest

As with other argument structures, Rogerian argument begins with an introduction that captures reader interest.

Presenting the opposing side's position

Rogerian argument offers an extended discussion of opposing views and emphasizes understanding and acknowledgement rather than criticism.

Present the writer's position

As with the other argument structures, Rogerian asks for a full discussion of the writer's point of view or position. Evidence and reasons should be included here, relying on appeals to *ethos, pathos, logos*, and also *kairos* as appropriate for the context.

Finding common ground

Where other argument structures might lean more heavily toward concluding with the writer's position, Rogerian asks for an emphasis on common ground and compromise.

The example of Rogerian argument comes from Eva Orbuch, who wrote this article while an undergraduate at Stanford University where she majored in Urban Studies and minored in Education. In the article on microfinance, published in the *Journal of Politics and Society*, Orbuch takes up the question, "[W]hat approach to service delivery is most effective in helping [microfinance institutions (MFIs)] achieve a balance between financial well-being and social impact?" She explores the debate between two approaches to MFI service delivery: a financial approach or an integrated approach. While Orbuch ultimately advocates for an integrated approach, she forges a compromise with those who advocate for a financial approach.

Excerpt from "Toward an Integrated Approach to Microfinance: Sustainability in Bolivia and Peru" by E. Orbuch

Microfinance is a concept that has greatly expanded in meaning and practice since its inception. … One group of MFIs chooses to provide only financial products to their clients, primarily in the form of small loans, in order to maximize operational efficiency. This strategy contrasts with MFIs that choose to [use an "integrated approach"] and consider additional means of economic and social development … such as life insurance products, educational programs, and direct healthcare.

Orbuch outlines the two positions here: one focused on "financial products" and the other, an "integrated approach." Orbuch does not malign or elevate either approach.

Current literature has called into question the previously touted effectiveness of microfinance and many in the microfinance community acknowledge the difficulty of fighting poverty through micro-loans alone. … Based on contemporaneous literature and on the perspectives of MFI leaders and employees, I conclude that the integrated service approach provides the best framework through which to balance the demands between financial sustainability and social impact.

Orbuch captures reader interest by noting that the effectiveness of MFIs is being called into question.

Orbuch here conveys her argument for the integrated approach, but, in Rogerian fashion, introduces the idea that this offers a "balance" between financial and social interests.

Literature Review

… In 2005, the MIT Poverty Action Lab undertook a randomized evaluation of the impacts of introducing microcredit in a new market.… The results revealed that the introduction of microcredit has some varied and significant effects on business outcomes and the composition of household expenditure.… In a 2003 paper, researchers … give the rationale that many other interventions such as employment, education, and healthcare depend on people's access to financial services, and that improvements in these other areas can only be maintained when households have increased control over financial resources.

Orbuch offers a literature review of the financial approach, Notice there is no rebuttal or concession here, but, in a Rogerian manner, Orbuch is establishing common ground.

While research focusing specifically on the effects of integrated microfinance is relatively rare, the work done has largely confirmed the positive nature of its impact.

From *Journal of Politics & Society* (22), 2011.

Institutions like Freedom from Hunger (FFH)…have performed several useful studies.… The results indicated that recipients of both credit and education services displayed greater business acumen and higher revenues than those who received only credit services.…

Next, Orbuch outlines the integrated approach, building on the common ground by showing that the integrated approach actually enhances the financial outcomes.

[S]ome organizations are being pressured into… leaving out non-credit products. There are also additional pressures for MFIs to "install complex accounting and managerial systems."… These pressures squeeze current practitioners of the integrated approach and discourage new MFIs from adopting service integration… Yet, as I will discuss later, my interviews also indicate that a strong social mandate and well-defined organizational policies could allow MFIs to continue to pursue their stated goals rather than face "mission drift," i.e., the gradual abandonment of the poverty-reduction aims of the microfinance sector.… I argue that this sought-after equilibrium between the banking and development aspects of MFIs can be translated into a more general balance between financial sustainability and social impact in the microfinance sector. While agreement among those interviewed was not unanimous, I believe that this balance is possible and the tradeoff is not inevitable.

Orbuch acknowledges the challenges involved with adopting the integrated approach, demonstrating a keen awareness of opposing viewpoints.

Orbuch establishes a "both/and" approach rather than an "either/or," suggesting that the integrated approach provides equilibrium and balance.

Project Methodology

To ensure a general amount of representation of the two sectors and a variety of service delivery approaches, … I visited thirteen MFIs and conducted interviews with thirty-one different MFI managers and employees,

Orbuch's methodology also achieves a Rogerian equanimity as she specifically sought out MFIs delivering through both perspectives.

Organizational Benefits to Service Integration

1) Financial Sustainability and Cost-Effectiveness

Secondary data confirms the cost-effectiveness of the service integration approach.… Data from the Consortium of Private Organizations for the Promotion of Small and Micro-Enterprise (COPEME), a microfinance umbrella organization, shows that every Peruvian integrated organization studied had reached financial and operational sustainability.

Social Benefits of Service Integration

1) Client Health

…My interviews strongly suggest that health training and direct health interventions improve client health.… [H]ealth education and direct delivery of health services are not only beneficial for clients, but also for the organization delivering them. According to Carmen Velasco, "Even if you don't care about the social component of the program of what you do, if you're clever, you don't want to kill your clients…"

Orbuch continues to offer evidence for her own position, but continues to speak in terms of financial benefit, showing how even health care offers financial reward.

As Orbuch moves to present her own position, she first discusses the financial sustainability of the integrated approach. This organization places emphasis on the financial aspects and forges a compromise with opposing perspectives. This section is then followed with more evidence about how the integrated approach increases organizational competitiveness and client loyalty.

3) Economic Improvement

The final social benefit of integrated microfinance is the added economic progress for the clients. … [C]lients in solidarity loan groups are graduating out of their small group loan products, demonstrating that they are financially prepared to access a larger individual loan for their business.…

Orbuch's final evidence returns to the common ground: financial improvement.

Under What Circumstances Does Microfinance Integration Work?

Integrated microfinance will not work effectively in every context.… Integrated microfinance can work well in countries that have consumer protections in the form of interest rate caps, but that have the flexibility to allow the rates required by integrated programs. Integration may not be possible in countries with rigid interest rate regulations, such as Venezuela.…

This section is key for Orbuch's Rogerian approach as she suggests that the financial approach might in fact be more effective in some contexts.

Conclusion

…This paper argues that one of the most effective ways for MFIs to maintain [their] original social mission while also remaining financially sustainable is through a deliberate mix of financial and non-financial services.

Even in her conclusion, Orbuch continues to establish common ground by showing that one can have an approach that is simultaneously social and financial.

Transferring Argument Construction

This chapter has built on the preceding chapter by deepening our consideration of argument, helping you discover how writers shape and construct arguments. Specifically, this chapter has provided guidance for how you might decide what to argue, what approach to reasoning you might use, and what structure will likely best suit your argument. These decisions will shift dramatically across writing occasions, with different situations inspiring you to tailor these choices in response to their circumstances.

Chapter 10 continues our exploration of argument by addressing the importance of format and design in shaping argument. As we will see, there are many modalities and formats—print, digital, and in-person, visual, written, or oral—within which arguments can emerge and which also shape writers' decisions about structure. Then, Chapter 11 continues to help you learn how to develop arguments by addressing how academic writers across disciplines integrate evidence. And, finally, Chapter 12 completes this foray into argument by providing guidelines on how to cite evidence effectively, again with an explicit focus on how writers actively engage in transferring their knowledge about citation across contexts.

Chapter 17 Key Terms

Assumptions
Inductive reasoning
Deductive reasoning
Credibility
Stasis theory
Classical argument
Counterargument
Concession
Toulmin argument
Rogerian argument

Write Away

One of the best ways to improve your own ability to construct effective arguments is to unpack the structures of others' arguments. This activity asks you to do so with one area of argumentation across several different instances so you can begin to see the ways in which writers customize general structures for argument as demanded by particular writing occasions. This activity also enables you to gain an advance perspective on argument design and format, the next chapter's area of focus.

Decide on a general area of argumentation. Choose a general area of argumentation you would like to investigate. This can be any area in which you have an interest.

Select three to four different arguments in this area to examine. Locate three or four different examples of arguments in this area, being careful to choose different argument formats. For instance, if you are examining arguments about refugee issues, you might choose one peer-reviewed scholarly article, one YouTube video, and one op-ed. Or, you might choose a blog post, a homepage of a website, and a policy brief.

Identify the argument's structure. Carefully examine each of the arguments and identify the structure. The concept of a reverse outline, the revision method introduced in Chapter 2, can also be applied to examining others' arguments: Identify what each paragraph is accomplishing with a key word or phrase. What does the writer do first, then, next? After developing the reverse outline for each argument, see if you can discern the argument structure. Does it seem to resemble Classical, Toulmin, or Rogerian structure, or some combination of those, or a different structure altogether? What area of the stases do you see each argument operating within? What kinds of reasoning do you notice in the arguments?

Reflect on transfer and argument structure. Having seen several different arguments and their structures, reflect in writing for ten minutes about how writers tailor and customize argument structures for particular writing occasions. Did you notice that the writers employ, modify, or challenge one of the structures identified in this section? How and why do you think the writers chose their structures? In what ways do you think argument format and writing occasion might impact the choices writers make about argument structure?

CHAPTER 18

Claiming Positions in Digital Contexts

Central Questions

1. What does one blog writer's position about social media and the counter-arguments raised by his readers demonstrate about what claims might be convincing and how they are convincing for individuals within a particular community?
2. What does a widely circulated public argument about the broader political impact of social media contribute to our understanding of how claims about the digital world might be supported or countered?
3. What position about the impact of social media within a local or wider community might you present in a reasoned argument, and how would you present it?

Chapter Preview

We've been exploring some of the ways in which digital culture has supported wider participation in more global conversations as we find more common sites for sharing and exchange. In many of those exchanges, we find others making claims, or we make them ourselves, about what is happening in the world around us and why it might be positive or troublesome. A novelist makes an implicit claim that Silicon Valley companies are gradually eroding our privacy and could be controlling all aspects of our lives in the future. Political candidates often make outrageous claims about the risks of one another's proposals that then circulate through the internet. Our Facebook pages are filled with claims shared by friends about the benefits of health products, the behavior of celebrities, or the dangers of drones. Our conversations, and the rhetorical relationships they support, often involve an expanding cultural critique of the role the internet is playing in our lives and in our society, and often constitute an informal inquiry into the effects it might be having at both personal and societal levels.

At the same time, much of what we do on the internet helps us claim and develop stances: what we search for, what we post, what we share, and what we "like" all helps us to articulate our own positions on issues. Some of the claims we read and share are developed and backed by analysis and research. Many are put

forward without real evidence. There's a difference between claiming a position and developing a reasoned position. Both are common rhetorical moves, but we'll begin to explore what's involved in the latter in this chapter.

Here, we'll focus on a recurring theme in claims about social media and their potential impact both in our individual and local settings and in more global contexts. We'll look at claims made both for and against using Facebook.

Exploring: Claims about Social Media

The internet has become the space where we make arguments about private or public concerns. Where once we might have argued for or against various positions in conversation with family or friends or through writing to a newspaper, we're now likely to take those positions through our use of social media—through what we like or share or comment on, as well as through our own posts.

Arguments, in general, are rhetorical—they are intended to persuade a particular audience to consider a specific position on an issue where there are likely to be opposing views. For example, a teenager who wants to have his curfew extended might now use Google to find evidence showing typical curfews for people his age. A community organization that wants to build a homeless shelter in a particular neighborhood might now conduct an online media campaign to present its arguments. And a president who wants the Congress to support a health care initiative might have her aides tweet links to evidence that refutes counterarguments. In each case, the proponent of the position must make some basic rhetorical moves. She must state the position and make some claims about it, present some logical reasons and evidence in support of those claims, and counter others' likely objections to those reasons or to the chain of reasoning. And doing this effectively requires understanding the audience for a particular argument and what that audience will likely respond to.

Taking and supporting a reasoned position typically involves gathering information related to that position: engaging in the sorts of analysis we've been doing to understand whether a cultural production is groundbreaking or just repetitive of earlier work, for example, or gathering data from observations or other research that shows whether texting is helping or interfering with our relationships. Indeed, most of our attempts to learn more about our digital contexts and the textual ecologies of our local and global communities involve the careful examination of claims and positions, and finding evidence that might support or refute them. In the process, we set forth our own arguments, make our own claims, and present our own evidence. As we join the larger public and research conversations about the issues and concerns we've been exploring, we are engaging in what is referred to in academic contexts as the genre of argument.

Context, Shared Knowledge, and What Makes a Good Argument

The context for a particular argument matters (the **where**). In local communities, people often have shared knowledge and are trying to come to a shared understanding about a question or issue. They may take different positions or see things in different ways. But they are taking part in a reasoned conversation with a common purpose—trying to solve a problem, to analyze a situation, or to figure out why something works as it does. Arguments are often exploratory—testing out a position or thesis. While those involved in them may hold different views, they will take into account and try to understand one another's perspectives.

Public arguments with wider audiences may or may not function in similar ways. Often, on the internet, those who put forth claims offer little support for them, yet they are widely shared and reposted. Claims made by candidates for electoral office, for example, often lack supporting evidence or are blatantly false, and various respectable fact-checking sites have arisen to address this problem. The Pulitzer Prize-winning site PolitiFact rates the claims of politicians, and the claims of others that spread virally in emails and Facebook posts, rating them on a scale from true to false to "pants on fire," for claims like the very unscientific fact that spread virally as a chain email (Figure 18.1) or false facts about Facebook's policies that spread through Facebook posts (Figure 18.2). And Snopes fact-checks urban legends, folklore, myths, rumors, and other misinformation.

Factcheck.org is another site that addresses not just political candidates' statements, but also what it calls "the viral spiral," posting information about current false claims spreading through email and the internet, and it offers a helpful video of advice about how to spot bogus claims.

Figure 18.2: PolitiFact Pants on Fire Facebook post

Most public claims can eventually be supported or refuted, or, as the fact-checking sites often find, can be understood as half-truths. But not every claim can be so easily fact-checked. Often people take positions and make claims based on experience and opinion, and these can be harder to sort through, like the much-debated topic among individuals of whether using a particular form of social media is likely to improve your life.

Inquiry #1: Arguments for and against using social media

What are your primary ways of connecting with others online? Do you belong to Facebook, use Twitter, post to Instagram or Snapchat, or use WhatsApp? What arguments might you make in favor of your preferred medium for connecting against another medium? Are there are other members of your community who are Facebook enthusiasts or Facebook rejectors, for example? From members of your community and/or your classmates, what reasons do people give for using or not using the sites that are used most frequently? What claims get made about these sites and their advantages or disadvantages?

Sidenote

Facebook's been around for more than 10 years (a long time in the life of the internet) and has a global reach (with well more than a billion monthly users).

Facebook has been the focus of many social media arguments and of much research about its effects.[15:1] Though newer social media platforms continue to be developed, Facebook continues to be widely used by people young and old, and arguments about its advantages and disadvantages are common as people continue to decide whether to join or quit. For example, in her *Huffington Post* article, Renee Jacques, using the now-common online "list" text offers "11 Reasons You Should Quit Facebook In 2014."

Her reasons can be grouped around several areas of concern, several claims that can be made to support an argument against using Facebook.

- There are problems with the platform: newer social media platforms can suit your needs better, allowing you to post photos (Instagram) or status updates (Twitter) more easily; Facebook keeps suggesting friends you don't know or want to know; it's including too many ads.
- There are problems with your network of friends and what they see and post (family members might learn too much about what you're doing or post photos you'd find embarrassing; you're only really interested in a small subset of those friends; you don't want to read the "good" news about their engagements).

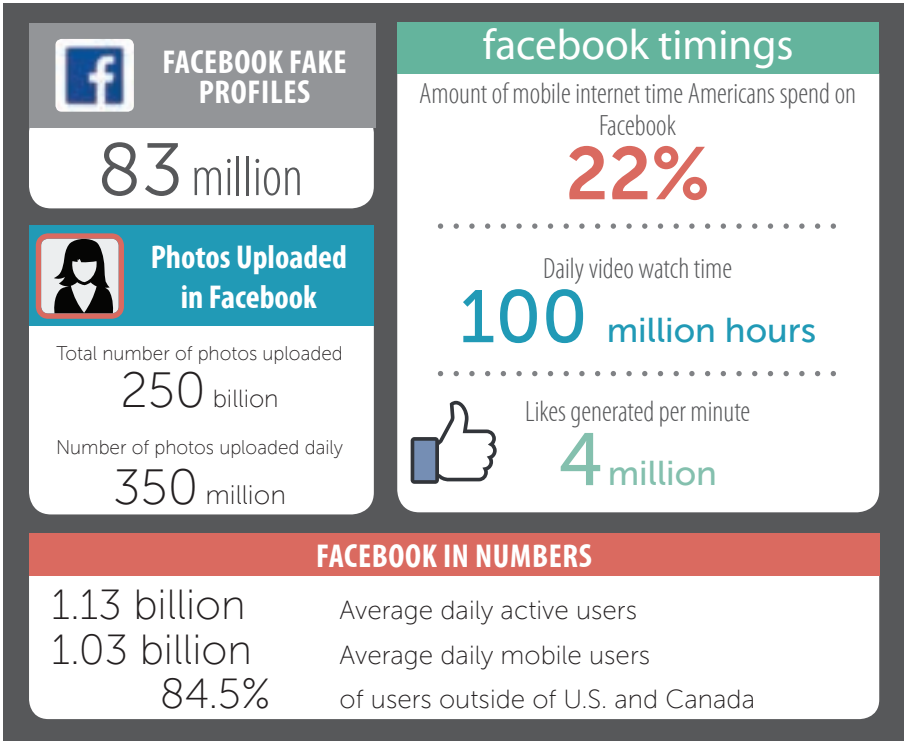
- Some studies show heavy users to be less happy with their lives.
- There are concerns about privacy (Facebook makes it hard to keep your identity hidden, and it even tracks what you type but don't post).

This rather tongue-in-cheek list for a popular audience does reflect some real concerns about Facebook, tossing in a number of claims in no particular order. As an example of the list genre, its rhetorical purpose is to raise some provocative issues rather than making a carefully reasoned argument that takes opposing claims and evidence into account.

Here's a more careful consideration of the other side, as the journalist Gideon Lichfield, who has long taken the position for himself not to join Facebook, makes the decision to join after resisting for 10 years.

Before Reading: Reading for reasoning

In this post to the blog Quartz, where he's the global news editor, Lichfield is presenting and, in a sense, arguing against his former position. His reasons for not joining Facebook focus on privacy and the potential merging of private and public social identities that the site encourages. As you read, consider his reasons for not joining and how he counters those reasons in making his new decision.



"Why I've Finally Joined Facebook on Facebook's Tenth Anniversary"

by Gideon Lichfield

Quartz, February 4, 2014

When Facebook opened up to the general public in 2006, I was living in Jerusalem, covering the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Before that I'd spent two years in Vladimir Putin's Russia. My work involved trying to gain the trust of groups of people who were sometimes out to kill each other. I was circumspect and maybe a little paranoid. I got good at compartmentalizing.

Facebook was not good at compartmentalizing. At the time, there was no way to hide your friend list from people who were not on it. Mine would have included Palestinian activists, Israeli nationalists, religious Jewish settlers (perhaps my cousins among them), and a lot of gay people on both sides. What if they could all see each other? And what if the wrong person or government got hold of my friend list? For some people I knew, just being on that list might put them at risk.

Facebook's CEO, Mark Zuckerberg, offered his answer to such worries in a 2009 interview with David Kirkpatrick, author of *The Facebook Effect:*

"You have one identity... The days of you having a different image for your work friends or co-workers and for the other people you know are probably coming to an end pretty quickly... Having two identities for yourself is an example of a lack of integrity."

That seemed stupid to me (and not only to me). Only someone cocooned in a temple of reasonableness like a Harvard dorm room or a Silicon Valley tech company could be so naive. Out there where I lived, it wasn't like you could just find another job if your co-workers didn't like the company you kept. In most places, and especially in the world's less free countries, many have no choice: Life forces them to form ties with people from whom they must perforce keep secrets.

So I didn't join Facebook.

By the time I moved to New York in 2009, not being on Facebook was already exotic enough to be a kind of badge of pride. And serious people started to warn about the dangers of the network's ever-laxer privacy policy. Every time I considered joining, a new scandal or revelation deterred me.

One of them was personal. In June 2010, Facebook sent me an email telling me a friend had tagged me in a photo. Not just any photo: I was wearing drag at a gay pride march. In theory, since I wasn't on Facebook, this should have been impossible. But because several people had previously sent me invitations to join Facebook, the system knew there was an entity with my name and email address. And so, even though I had exercised the ultimate opt-out, it gave me no choice in the matter. I couldn't even untag myself, because that required logging into Facebook. I had to ask my friend to do it.

Since then, more and more prominent people have started shutting down their Facebook accounts or trimming their friend lists. They cite a lack of time, fears about privacy, Facebook's shadowy corporate governance, or its profiteering from their data. Besides, we've been told, the kids are all leaving it anyway.

So why have I just joined Facebook?

There are practical reasons. I'm missing out on invitations to things. I'm losing track of what a lot of acquaintances (especially far-flung ones) are up to, and Facebook is good way to keep up those "weak ties." There are some people with whom I want to get back in touch, and Facebook is the easiest way to find them.

But mainly it's that I'm no longer as worried as I was about privacy. This isn't because I think Facebook has become more benign; it still has a commercial incentive to not only encourage us but, as danah boyd has written, to trick us into exposing as much of ourselves as possible. Just a couple of months ago, for example, it emerged that making your friend list "private" doesn't really make it private.

No, there are two reasons I'm less worried. The first is that I've changed, partly because I've now spent five years cocooned in the temple of (relative) reasonableness that is New York City, and partly because I'm older and have less patience for other people's prejudices about who I am.

The second is that Edward Snowden's revelations about US surveillance and the steady drumbeat of stories about hackers breaching company databases have convinced me that many of my worries are moot. We all now have to live with the assumption that our privacy can be blown apart at any moment.

Such a world is not one I'd choose to live in. It's one in which I write every email, text or instant message with a little privacy devil sitting on my shoulder, whispering "What if this gets out?" But I don't have a choice. Even if governments scale back their surveillance excesses and impose tighter regulations on companies that hold our data, the sheer quantity of that data—and the things that can be exposed by a security breach or even an indiscreet friend or colleague—is still huge. Google knows more about me than I myself do. LinkedIn and Twitter know a lot. Am I really protecting myself by keeping Facebook at bay?

So I'll protect myself the way anyone should: by being careful. I won't share or "like" much; I'll use Facebook mostly passively. I'll be selective about whom I friend, and I won't friend anyone I need to protect. I'll keep the privacy settings cranked up to the max and watch out for when Facebook quietly changes them.

And when I have to win the trust of suspicious people, I may just have to earn that trust through openness instead of by concealment. And that may not be such a bad thing. ■

To support their positions, both Jacques and Lichfield point to particular examples of the extensive research that has been done on Facebook.

What they link to tells us a lot about the claims they make and how they support their positions. For example, Jacques links to a *Time* magazine article about why teenagers are leaving Facebook, as well as a scholarly article about how more frequent users of Facebook felt "that others were happier and had better lives." [15:3] Lichfield begins in a similar way, linking to articles about privacy concerns on Facebook and their data collection policies, but rather than use the articles to support why he shouldn't use Facebook, he uses them as a counterpoint to the position he is advocating, that Facebook's pros outweigh its cons.

Inquiry #2: Responding to claims about Facebook

After reading both articles, what is your own response to the claims made there? From your own examples, can you list some of the strongest arguments and counterarguments for and against using this form of social media?

The appeal of arguments depends on audience and context. Which reasons to join or not join Facebook are likely to be most convincing within one of your own communities? What other evidence might you seek to support a particular argument for that community?

The Huffington Post has had posts on both sides of the argument (though not in direct conversation with each other), with some tongue-in-cheek posts like Jacques's list of reasons to quit Facebook (like "It Makes Getting Over a Breakup Really Hard") and another post on the ways in which social media can benefit relationships. Would the claims offered in either of these alter the position you'd present to your community?

Common Forms of Position Arguments

The many writers who have taken a public position for or against joining Facebook have the likely rhetorical purposes of convincing others of its benefits or its risks. Some of these arguments fall into patterns that rhetoricians who have studied the larger genre of argument have found to recur across many positions and topics.

Types of arguments that have been used to support a position include the following.

A causal argument. Causal arguments, stating the position that one thing causes another, may be the most common type in public discourse. We see the argument that extensive use of the internet is altering students' reading patterns and reducing their attention span, or that the abbreviated language of texting is harming texters' ability to spell, and evidence can be found to support both sides of these positions. Many arguments against Facebook or other social media are causal.

- Using a particular site is a bad idea because inadequate privacy controls may cause risk to users.
- Spending time on social media causes a reduction in time for maintaining face-to-face relationships.
- Spending time on social media serves as a distraction from more focused activities.

In many instances, what seems causal may just be co-occurring. If there's evidence that spelling has gotten worse since the advent of texting, it could be coincidental, or there could be other causes. If a Facebook user doesn't see friends as often, he

might be otherwise busy at the times they get together. In such co-occurrence or correlation, one thing happens along with another, without necessarily being a primary cause. An article in *The Atlantic* asking "Is Facebook Making us Lonely?" points to a lack of evidence that Facebook is the cause for current loneliness, citing a study of 1,200 Facebook users by researcher Moira Burke:

> Burke's research does not support the assertion that Facebook creates loneliness. The people who experience loneliness on Facebook are lonely away from Facebook, too, she points out; on Facebook, as everywhere else, correlation is not causation.

As a reader, it's important that you consider carefully any evidence for causation versus correlation. Arguments about the social world, for example about causes and effects related to social media, aren't likely to have definitive evidence for one side or the other, but as a writer, you'll want your causal arguments to draw on the strongest evidence you can find.

A definition argument**.** Another common type of argument in public and academic spaces attempts to define one thing in terms of another. To argue that some particular instances of online posts constitute cyberbullying, one would have to define cyberbullying and show how these examples fit that definition.

Thus a definition argument will take the form: *x* is *y*. For example, cyberbullying is the repeated posting of humiliating comments about someone online, or collecting massive amounts of data on U.S. citizens is a violation of our right to privacy (where "right to privacy" is defined). Such definitions are built into many arguments. Several of Jacques' 11 points depend on how "friend" is defined, and most definitions wouldn't include the "complete strangers" that Facebook proposes you add.

Other types of argument

Evaluative arguments involve taking a position and making claims about the quality of something, such as those made in reviews of cultural productions—a movie, a music blog, or a performance. One can also make a proposal argument, proposing a course of action in the world or a proposal for a project to be carried out. Embedded in these arguments is the question **why. Why** is the proposed work needed? What evidence is there to show that? Finally, in opposition to any of these arguments are what might be termed counter *or* rebuttal arguments, attempting to refute or oppose an argument someone has already made, responding to the terms and claims that the arguer has proposed. Our next reading for this chapter, written by Malcolm Gladwell, also involves a counterargument, against others who would make the claim that activity on social media can cause significant political change.

The arguments that circulate often depend on more than one of these types, or perhaps others we haven't named. But the types we've named here have proven to be useful working categories for understanding the arguments that are commonly made both within and about our digital world.

Often in digital contexts arguments are made visually as well as verbally, working toward their own rhetorical purposes. For example, *Wired,* a magazine that focuses on the digital world, took the position in 2010 that "The Web is Dead,"[15:7]making that claim in bold headlines on a red background. The image quickly became a circulating meme and soon generated counterarguments and counter images. See Figure 18.3.

Because arguments are rhetorical acts, not only will you find logical reasons to believe a position (*logos*), you'll find reasons that appeal to emotions (*pathos*), as when fears about privacy concerns are invoked in anti-social-media arguments. You'll also find appeals to authority (*ethos*). Sherry Turkle, as an MIT researcher on the effects of our digital lives, is often cited by those who argue that using social media adversely affects our relationships,[15:8] while Moira Burke's research on Facebook and loneliness[15:9] is cited to support the opposite. The images of visual arguments likewise depend on these appeals.

Figure 18.3: Wired magazine images

Inquiry #3: Identifying appeals

Returning to some of the arguments you gathered for or against using Facebook or other social media in one of your own communities, what types of appeals (emotion-*pathos*, authority-*ethos*, reason-*logos*) are they based on, and what forms do they take? Do these choices reflect the particular purposes of the person making the argument within a particular context?

Making Connections: Arguments about the Power of Social Media

The posts about why to quit Facebook or why to join focus on the advantages or disadvantages of using a particular form of social media for individual users or groups of users—a primarily local concern. But arguments are being made about the global impact of social media as well. At a time when there is much concern about the ways in which social media have been used to gather recruits for ISIS and other terrorist groups, but also interest in social media as a means of engaging young people in this country in democratic political activity, there is a significant debate about the potential for the internet to impact what goes on in the world in major ways.

The article we'll turn to, by the social science journalist Malcolm Gladwell, was an early entry (2010) into an argument that continues about the potential for social media to affect large-scale political change. His article, written for *The New Yorker,* spawned a number of counterarguments at the time and has been reexamined often as newer political developments take place. We'll spend some time with Gladwell's argument before considering its later textual ecology—the ways in which it has been picked up and echoed, and its claims revisited in the context of current events. (We've reproduced major portions of his argument and summarized other sections.) Another argument essay, "Is Google Making Us Stupid?" by journalist Nicholas Carr, appears in the Additional Readings for Part II and can be explored in a similar way.

Following an Argument

As a reader, you'll want to focus your first efforts on understanding the argument being presented and the points being made to support it, even if you find yourself disagreeing and wanting to counter it in the end. As you read Gladwell's essay, note first the argument he is making.

Inquiry #4: Establishing context as a reader

In exploring a new topic of argument about the role of social media in creating social change, it is useful to consider what you know and how you might tentatively position yourself on this question. Before you read Malcolm Gladwell's argument for his position that such sites cannot mobilize revolutions or social change, collect your own thoughts on this issue. Can sites like Facebook or Twitter work to organize and enact social causes? What examples come to mind? Where might you find evidence to support your position?

Before Reading: Reading and annotating

As you read and annotate, consider the following questions.

- What argument does Gladwell present in this article? What are his claims?
- What claims is he arguing against?
- What theories does he use to support his stance?
- What evidence does he draw on?
- What comparisons does he structure this piece around?
- What do you think of Gladwell's argument? How strong is his position?

- What can you say about the appeals of Gladwell's argument (to authority, reason, or emotion)? What effect does using a historical event from the civil rights movement as a point of comparison have on you as a reader? What sort of appeal or appeals do you find imbedded in his recounting of this event?
- How convincing do you find this piece?

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malcolm_Gladwell

Selection from

"Small Change: Why the Revolution Will Not Be Tweeted"

by Malcolm Gladwell

The New Yorker, October 4, 2010

At four-thirty in the afternoon on Monday, February 1, 1960, four college students sat down at the lunch counter at the Woolworth's in downtown Greensboro, North Carolina. They were freshmen at North Carolina A. & T., a black college a mile or so away. "I'd like a cup of coffee, please," one of the four, Ezell Blair, said to the waitress. "We don't serve Negroes here," she replied.

The Woolworth's lunch counter was a long L-shaped bar that could seat sixty-six people, with a standup snack bar at one end. The seats were for whites. The snack bar was for blacks. Another employee, a black woman who worked at the steam table, approached the students and tried to warn them away. "You're acting stupid, ignorant!" she said. They didn't move. Around five-thirty, the front doors to the store were locked. The four still didn't move. Finally, they left by a side door. Outside, a small crowd had gathered, including a photographer from the Greensboro Record. "I'll be back tomorrow with A. & T. College," one of the students said.

By next morning, the protest had grown to twenty-seven men and four women, most from the same dormitory as the original four. The men were dressed in suits and ties. The students had brought their schoolwork, and studied as they sat at the counter. On Wednesday, students from Greensboro's "Negro" secondary school, Dudley High, joined in, and the number of protesters swelled to eighty. By Thursday, the protesters numbered three hundred, including three white women, from the Greensboro campus of the University of North Carolina. By Saturday, the sit-in had reached six hundred. People spilled out onto the street. White teen-agers waved Confederate flags. Someone threw a firecracker. At noon, the A. & T. football team arrived. "Here comes the wrecking crew," one of the white students shouted.

By the following Monday, sit-ins had spread to Winston-Salem, twenty-five miles away, and Durham, fifty miles away. The day after that, students at Fayetteville State Teachers College and at Johnson C. Smith College, in Charlotte, joined in, followed on Wednesday by students at St. Augustine's College and Shaw University, in Raleigh. On Thursday and Friday, the protest crossed state lines, surfacing in Hampton and Portsmouth, Virginia, in Rock Hill, South Carolina, and in Chattanooga, Tennessee. By the end of the month, there were sit-ins throughout the South, as far west as Texas. "I asked every student I met what the first day of the sit downs had been like on his campus," the political theorist Michael Walzer wrote in Dissent. "The answer was always the same: 'It was like a fever. Everyone wanted to go.' " Some seventy thousand students eventually took part. Thousands were arrested and untold thousands more radicalized.

These events in the early sixties became a civil-rights war that engulfed the South for the rest of the decade—and it happened without e-mail, texting, Facebook, or Twitter. The world, we are told, is in the midst of a revolution. The new tools of social media have reinvented social activism. With Facebook and Twitter and the like, the tradi-

tional relationship between political authority and popular will has been upended, making it easier for the powerless to collaborate, coördinate, and give voice to their concerns. When ten thousand protesters took to the streets in Moldova in the spring of 2009 to protest against their country's Communist government, the action was dubbed the Twitter Revolution, because of the means by which the demonstrators had been brought together. A few months after that, when student protests rocked Tehran, the State Department took the unusual step of asking Twitter to suspend scheduled maintenance of its Web site, because the Administration didn't want such a critical organizing tool out of service at the height of the demonstrations. "Without Twitter the people of Iran would not have felt empowered and confident to stand up for freedom and democracy," Mark Pfeifle, a former national-security adviser, later wrote, calling for Twitter to be nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. Where activists were once defined by their causes, they are now defined by their tools. Facebook warriors go online to push for change. "You are the best hope for us all," James K. Glassman, a former senior State Department official, told a crowd of cyber activists at a recent conference sponsored by Facebook, A. T. & T., Howcast, MTV, and Google. Sites like Facebook, Glassman said, "give the U.S. a significant competitive advantage over terrorists. Some time ago, I said that Al Qaeda was 'eating our lunch on the Internet.' That is no longer the case. Al Qaeda is stuck in Web 1.0. The Internet is now about interactivity and conversation."

These are strong, and puzzling, claims. Why does it matter who is eating whose lunch on the Internet? Are people who log on to their Facebook page really the best hope for us all?

Gladwell goes on to quote several people who saw the role of social media activity in Moldova and Iran as having limited effect and suggests that innovators tend to believe that their technologies are more important than they are. He then returns to the Greensboro sit-in, noting that the core participants were college roommates, and to other civil rights activism during the Mississippi Freedom Summer Project of 1964, where the dangers were even greater (three civil rights workers were kidnapped and killed, and 37 black churches were burned, amid other violence against the protestors). He asks "What makes people capable of this kind of activism?" and cites research that showed that the difference between those who stuck with the Freedom Summer and those who dropped out was "an applicant's degree of personal connection to the civil rights movement, with more close friends who were participating, and that concluded that high risk activism is "a 'strong-tie' phenomenon."

Gladwell goes on to say:

The kind of activism associated with social media isn't like this at all. The platforms of social media are built around weak ties. Twitter is a way of following (or being followed by) people you may never have met. Facebook is a tool for efficiently managing your acquaintances, for keeping up with the people you would not otherwise be able to stay in touch with. That's why you can have a thousand "friends" on Facebook, as you never could real life. This is in many ways a wonderful thing. There is strength in weak ties, as the sociologist Mark Granovetter has observed. Our acquaintances—not our friends—are our greatest source of new ideas and information. The Internet lets us exploit the power of these kinds of distant connections with marvellous efficiency. It's terrific at the diffusion of innovation, interdisciplinary collaboration, seamlessly

matching up buyers and sellers, and the logistical functions of the dating world. But weak ties seldom lead to high-risk activism.

> Gladwell then points to two examples of instances where social media has been held up as supporting effective action, one in finding a donor for a bone-marrow transplant through a network of Facebook acquaintances who eventually added 25,000 new people to a bone-marrow database and succeeded in making a rare match, and a second with the Save Darfur Coalition, which has 1,282,339 members with donations that have averaged nine cents apiece. He argues that "social networks increase participation by lessening the level of motivation that participation requires." He then returns to his Greensboro example, adding that the sit-ins were organized, with training and structure provided by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) with further support from ministers, using a hierarchical organization that supports "strategic activism."

This is the second crucial distinction between traditional activism and its online variant: social media are not about this kind of hierarchical organization. Facebook and the like are tools for building networks, which are the opposite, in structure and character, of hierarchies. Unlike hierarchies, with their rules and procedures, networks aren't controlled by a single central authority. Decisions are made through consensus, and the ties that bind people to the group are loose.

This structure makes networks enormously resilient and adaptable in low-risk situations. Wikipedia is a perfect example. It doesn't have an editor, sitting in New York, who directs and corrects each entry. The effort of putting together each entry is self-organized. If every entry in Wikipedia were to be erased tomorrow, the content would swiftly be restored, because that's what happens when a network of thousands spontaneously devote their time to a task. There are many things, though, that networks don't do well. Car companies sensibly use a network to organize their hundreds of suppliers, but not to design their cars. No one believes that the articulation of a coherent design philosophy is best handled by a sprawling, leaderless organizational system. Because networks don't have a centralized leadership structure and clear lines of authority, they have real difficulty reaching consensus and setting goals. They can't think strategically; they are chronically prone to conflict and error. How do you make difficult choices about tactics or strategy or philosophical direction when everyone has an equal say?

The Palestine Liberation Organization originated as a network, and the international-relations scholars Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni and Calvert Jones argue in a recent essay in International Security that this is why it ran into such trouble as it grew: "Structural features typical of networks—the absence of central authority, the unchecked autonomy of rival groups, and the inability to arbitrate quarrels through formal mechanisms—made the P.L.O. excessively vulnerable to outside manipulation and internal strife."

In Germany in the nineteen-seventies, they go on, "the far more unified and successful left-wing terrorists tended to organize hierarchically, with professional management and clear divisions of labor. They were concentrated geographically in universities, where they could establish central leadership, trust, and camaraderie through regular, face-to-face meetings." They seldom betrayed their comrades in arms during police interrogations. Their counterparts on the right were organized as decentralized

networks, and had no such discipline. These groups were regularly infiltrated, and members, once arrested, easily gave up their comrades. Similarly, Al Qaeda was most dangerous when it was a unified hierarchy. Now that it has dissipated into a network, it has proved far less effective.

The drawbacks of networks scarcely matter if the network isn't interested in systemic change—if it just wants to frighten or humiliate or make a splash—or if it doesn't need to think strategically. But if you're taking on a powerful and organized establishment you have to be a hierarchy. The Montgomery bus boycott required the participation of tens of thousands of people who depended on public transit to get to and from work each day. It lasted a year. In order to persuade those people to stay true to the cause, the boycott's organizers tasked each local black church with maintaining morale, and put together a free alternative private carpool service, with forty-eight dispatchers and forty-two pickup stations. Even the White Citizens Council, King later said, conceded that the carpool system moved with "military precision." By the time King came to Birmingham, for the climactic showdown with Police Commissioner Eugene (Bull) Connor, he had a budget of a million dollars, and a hundred full-time staff members on the ground, divided into operational units. The operation itself was divided into steadily escalating phases, mapped out in advance. Support was maintained through consecutive mass meetings rotating from church to church around the city.

Boycotts and sit-ins and nonviolent confrontations—which were the weapons of choice for the civil-rights movement—are high-risk strategies. They leave little room for conflict and error. The moment even one protester deviates from the script and responds to provocation, the moral legitimacy of the entire protest is compromised. Enthusiasts for social media would no doubt have us believe that King's task in Birmingham would have been made infinitely easier had he been able to communicate with his followers through Facebook, and contented himself with tweets from a Birmingham jail. But networks are messy: think of the ceaseless pattern of correction and revision, amendment and debate, that characterizes Wikipedia. If Martin Luther King, Jr., had tried to do a wiki-boycott in Montgomery, he would have been steamrollered by the white power structure. And of what use would a digital communication tool be in a town where ninety-eight per cent of the black community could be reached every Sunday morning at church? The things that King needed in Birmingham—discipline and strategy—were things that online social media cannot provide.

The bible of the social-media movement is Clay Shirky's "Here Comes Everybody." Shirky, who teaches at New York University, sets out to demonstrate the organizing power of the Internet, and he begins with the story of Evan, who worked on Wall Street, and his friend Ivanna, after she left her smart phone, an expensive Sidekick, on the back seat of a New York City taxicab. The telephone company transferred the data on Ivanna's lost phone to a new phone, whereupon she and Evan discovered that the Sidekick was now in the hands of a teen-ager from Queens, who was using it to take photographs of herself and her friends.

When Evan e-mailed the teen-ager, Sasha, asking for the phone back, she replied that his "white ass" didn't deserve to have it back. Miffed, he set up a Web page with her picture and a description of what had happened. He forwarded the link to his friends, and they forwarded it to their friends. Someone found the MySpace page of Sasha's boyfriend, and a link to it found its way onto the site. Someone found her address

online and took a video of her home while driving by; Evan posted the video on the site. The story was picked up by the news filter Digg. Evan was now up to ten e-mails a minute. He created a bulletin board for his readers to share their stories, but it crashed under the weight of responses. Evan and Ivanna went to the police, but the police filed the report under "lost," rather than "stolen," which essentially closed the case. "By this point millions of readers were watching," Shirky writes, "and dozens of mainstream news outlets had covered the story." Bowing to the pressure, the N.Y.P.D. reclassified the item as "stolen." Sasha was arrested, and Evan got his friend's Sidekick back.

Shirky's argument is that this is the kind of thing that could never have happened in the pre-Internet age—and he's right. Evan could never have tracked down Sasha. The story of the Sidekick would never have been publicized. An army of people could never have been assembled to wage this fight. The police wouldn't have bowed to the pressure of a lone person who had misplaced something as trivial as a cell phone. The story, to Shirky, illustrates "the ease and speed with which a group can be mobilized for the right kind of cause" in the Internet age.

Shirky considers this model of activism an upgrade. But it is simply a form of organizing which favors the weak-tie connections that give us access to information over the strong-tie connections that help us persevere in the face of danger. It shifts our energies from organizations that promote strategic and disciplined activity and toward those which promote resilience and adaptability. It makes it easier for activists to express themselves, and harder for that expression to have any impact. The instruments of social media are well suited to making the existing social order more efficient. They are not a natural enemy of the status quo. If you are of the opinion that all the world needs is a little buffing around the edges, this should not trouble you. But if you think that there are still lunch counters out there that need integrating it ought to give you pause.

Shirky ends the story of the lost Sidekick by asking, portentously, "What happens next?"—no doubt imagining future waves of digital protesters. But he has already answered the question. What happens next is more of the same. A networked, weak-tie world is good at things like helping Wall Streeters get phones back from teen-age girls. Viva la revolución. ■

After Reading: Responding to Gladwell's argument

What is your first response to Gladwell's claims? Do you agree that successful activism requires strong ties and a hierarchical structure? Do you see ways in which social media might contribute to strong ties as well as weak ones? Do you see ways it might contribute to the sort of hierarchical organization Gladwell sees as needed to accomplish significant results in the larger social world?

Write a response to Gladwell's position based on your own experiences and on those frequently reported. What connections do you see as existing between media and social action? Can sites like Facebook or Twitter work to organize and enact social causes? What potentials do you find in these social networking sites for such action? Do other forms of media seem better suited for such organizing? Where might you find evidence to support your position?

Inquiry #5: Seeing the moves of a counterargument

Who does Gladwell seem to see as being on the other side? What are the specific claims he presents as being made by that side—the side that sees social networking as helping to support revolutionary change—the side he is opposing here? How do the claims he attributes to them match up against the claims he is making against the power of social media?

Seeing an Argument in Context

Throughout Part II, we've been exploring the various ways in which context shapes how we read an individual text, and there are several contexts that intersect to affect our understanding of this text and of the larger conversation circulating around it. One is the context in which you are reading and responding to his text—the historical/cultural context of relevant events that are happening in the world around you at the time you are reading, the larger context your classmates bring into your exchanges. A second is the intertextual context that Gladwell himself brings in—the connections between his own inquiry and the other research he refers to, the other writers and social media experts he is drawing from or responding to. And a third is the larger textual ecology beyond the text itself and your immediate discussion—not only what has been written before that Gladwell addresses, but how his text has circulated and how his claims have been taken up and responded to (see Figure 18.5 on page 340).

- **The reader's context.** As a reader, you've brought some prior knowledge and ideas to your encounter with Gladwell's essay. Now that you've read his argument, it's likely to resonate with other experiences you've had or events and ideas you've read about. The additional knowledge you bring to his text offers you a richer framework of understanding for exploring and responding to the argument Gladwell is making. And a significant part of such additional knowledge in a classroom context includes what has been shared by your classmates in class discussion, online or off.

  The student discussion below took place just after one of our too-common tragedies as a nation, when a gunman killed nine people—members of a Bible study group, including a state senator, and their pastor—at the historic Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina, in June 2015. The context of those events and the role social media played in the aftermath shaped the responses of these students to Gladwell's claims about the role of social media. As you read these students' posts, consider how the dual context of external events and what others have to say contributes to their larger conversation about the ideas of Gladwell's essay.

Excerpts from Online Discussion of Gladwell's Essay

Jordan: Maybe the larger issue here is that we as a society expect our social media to reflect our society when it doesn't any more than our personal profiles really reflect ourselves. There are kernels of truth, but there is some artificial construction…a show if you will for a larger public. Changing the language and rallying people on social media changes what is happening on social media, it doesn't change what is happening in our society.

Megan: This article was very interesting to me, especially since it spoke about civil rights events which is something I'm particularly passionate about. I loved reading about all the sit-ins and protests of brave college students and how word spread across the south so quickly. However, I am an avid Twitter user and rely on it for lots of news breaks and other gossips locally and nationally. I heard about the Charleston shooting on Twitter over any news outlet or any other source. It seemed like the news spread like wildfire with links to live pictures and video footage from Charleston. Twitter was also a source that gave me live updates of President Obama's eulogy from inside the arena the funeral of the senator was held. It is true that social media is not a necessity for news to hit people all over the world, but it is the most easy and accessible source to stay updated consistently and quickly.

McLean: Like Jordan, I would caution us against relying on social media as a substitute for real life, much less real activism, which requires what Gladwell refers to as "strong-tie" relationships. Like Megan, my mind also went to the recent church shooting in Charleston as I was reading this article. That there was an abundance of social media discussion regarding this event is undeniable. And this communication is a good thing. However, the scenes of native Charlestonians and visitors gathered together side by side in the aftermath is what gave a true voice to the victims. The power was in the physical, tangible unity of real people, flesh and blood. As Gladwell points out, there's a big difference between being actively committed to a cause and simply participating in it. Platforms like Facebook and Twitter make online organizing relatively quick and convenient, but motivating people to come out into the streets and join the fight is an entirely different thing.

Inquiry #6: Resituating an argument in a new context

In their online discussion, these students pick up on and extend central points Gladwell makes in "Small Changes." They consider his claim about social media's weak ties versus the strong ties he sees as supporting social activism as they look to one recent event they read about on Twitter. How do they bring together their own social media experiences, the contemporary Charleston events, and one another's contributions in responding to Gladwell's claims?

Investigators later found that Dylann Roof, the shooter in Charleston, had created a website with a racist manifesto and photos of himself in paraphernalia with Nazi associations at Confederate heritage sites, and that he wrote that he had been radicalized through what he learned on the internet. What might this knowledge have added to these students' responses to Gladwell' s essay?

Do any recent events form part of your context as you respond to Gladwell's argument? Social media experiences? Points made by classmates? How does the rich context surrounding your reading of Gladwell's essay contribute to your own understanding and to your evolving response to arguments about the potential offered by social media in the larger world?

- **The writer's intertextual context.** In all of our composing activity we are continuing some aspect of an ongoing conversation; our ideas are always informed by what we've heard and read, and we make that process more visible in our public and academic writing. Gladwell, in distinguishing between traditional and online activism, draws on research by sociologist Mark Granovetter (who identified the importance of weak ties in social networks in a 1973 paper looking at job-seekers' networks) that has influenced a lot of more recent research into the social effects of internet use (such as Ellison et al. 2007).Although Granovetter's work had already been gaining in circulation before 2010, Gladwell's essay brought new attention to it. The following graph (Figure 18.4) showing citations of work by others, lets us see that an increasing number of other writers cited Granovetter's work as it was brought into new arguments about social media.

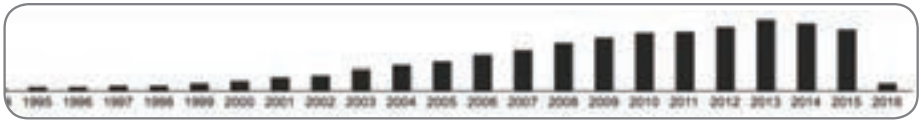


Figure 18.4: Google Scholar citation graph

Gladwell acknowledges what Granovetter showed about weak ties—"There is strength in weak ties, as the sociologist Mark Granovetter has observed." But, as we've seen, he makes the claims that both strong ties and a hierarchical organization are central to traditional activism and thus to actually accomplishing significant change, arguing that because they are organized around weak ties, social networking sites cannot become catalysts for social action. (Lichfield picks up on the same "weak tie" idea, arguing that in his situation, having worked in many parts of the world, it's keeping up with "far-flung acquaintances" that is an advantage to joining Facebook.)

Gladwell makes brief references to the work of other researchers (and you can follow the link to his full article, but he hones in specifically on the work of Clay Shirky, discussing an example from Shirky's book, *Here Comes Everybody* (2008) at some length.

- The context of circulation. Gladwell's essay for the The New Yorker was written in 2010, before a number of events in which social media played a role, including significant revolutionary events in the Middle East and in the Ukraine, the Occupy Wall Street movement, protests across the United States in response to the deaths of unarmed black men at the hands of police, and the increasing use of social media for ISIS and other terrorist recruiting efforts. Since then there have been several articles that have explicitly responded to Gladwell's position and a number of studies of social media and their role in revolution. For example, one article from The Huffington Post uses the title, "Tweeting the Revolution" (a conscious echo of Gladwell's title). That article draws on real-time data about the use of social media in protests in the Ukraine in February 2014 that was collected at the Social Media and Political Participation Lab at New York University. In this article, which is included in the Additional Readings for Part II, the researchers Pablo Barberá and Megan Metzger first set the context, pointing out that the three previous days were the most violent in recent Ukrainian history, with more than 70 protesters reported to have been killed. They then explain that they have been collecting Twitter and Facebook data related to key protest hashtags and analyzing those data, which seem to counter Gladwell's position.

  > Our findings suggest that social media, as it has throughout these protests, continues to be a pivotal organization tool for those in Kiev and also the most relevant mechanism for disseminating and exchanging information both within Ukraine and abroad. . . . What social media has shown over the last few days. . .is its flexibility as a tool. As needed, and in response to dramatically shifting events on the ground, Twitter and Facebook have been effective means to convey messages about the violence to the international community, to organize those willing to get involved in the protests, and to coordinate resources for the injured and those in need in Maidan square.

Inquiry #8: Exploring the context of circulation

To see how Gladwell's ideas have been taken up and responded to, circulating through many posts of all sorts on the internet, search for "Tweet and Revolution" (or Twitter, Facebook, or social media and revolution). What are some of the events for which arguments about the power of social media have played out since Gladwell wrote his piece? From your quick survey of what's online, do you see other articles like the one from

the NYU researchers that directly echo his work? Do you think Gladwell took a position in an argument that was already circulating and would have circulated without him? Or did his widely circulated essay frame a discussion that might have pushed others to take their own positions or to look more closely at the role of social media in other contexts where activity directed toward social and political change was taking place?

To see more about how the NYU research data speaks to claims about social media and revolution, turn to the full article in Part II Additional Readings. As you follow the evidence presented, are you inclined to adjust the position you've come to through your reading thus far?

Composing: Position Argument

While an argument like the one Gladwell makes is built around the statement of a position, it most likely began as an inquiry. Perhaps Gladwell heard a Silicon Valley guru speak about the powers of social media and thought to himself, *I wonder if that's right?* Or perhaps he read the example he points to from Shirky's book and thought, *No, I don't think that's real social activism of the sort that will produce significant changes in our society*. Before most serious journalists, like Gladwell, take on a position, they try to discover all they can about a question, about the claims that might be made and the evidence that might support those claims.

Gladwell's strategy of comparing current examples of political action to the civil rights movement offers a useful method of inquiry, as does his research into what different authorities have said about the role of social media in recent situations and about the ways in which social media work. Does his essay offer you, as a reader, a sense of a real inquiry into a complex issue? Do you think he might he have done more to bring his readers into an authentic and open inquiry into the question of whether social media are contributing to major social and political change?

By now, as you've read, thought about, and conducted your own inquiries into the ways in which digital media are affecting our lives, both locally and in a changing global culture, you have probably begun to identify some claims you think seem convincing but that you would want to explore further—or some positions you're starting to hold, tentatively, and want to examine. Perhaps you'd like to jump right into the debates about social media we've explored in this chapter, considering its potential value or limitations on either a personal or a social level. You might start out believing in a position, but as you gather supporting evidence and take into account the opposing position, you are likely to see more complexities and nuances, leaving room for questions and uncertainties.

Inquiring and Inventing

In preparing to add your voice to an ongoing argument with many voices, you'll first need to discover what arguments interest you and what those other voices are saying.

1. Reflecting on the context

What claims for or concerns about our digital environment seem significant to you at the moment? What events or experiences in a global or local context seem to speak to the issues and concerns that have emerged through your reading and discussion? What points have you wanted to engage with? What claims have you wanted to think through more carefully? Where do you find a position represented that you might want to learn about, take up, or argue with, entering a larger conversation? Who makes up the likely audience for this area of concern, and how might you finally reach that audience?

2. Deciding on an independent or a collaborative inquiry

Although we most often see individuals presenting their sides of an argument, many debated concerns about our digital world lend themselves to collaborative inquiry. If several of your classmates are interested in the same question or issue, you might work in a group to present two sides of an argument (and assign sides without reference to the positions members initially hold). Debating teams often work in this way.

3. Exploring the territory of the current debate

What are some of the voices that are relevant to the issue you're focusing on? Gladwell doesn't make his own claims. He sees what others are saying and engages in that discussion. If you decide to take on the argument about the potential of social media to enact social and political change, you already have Gladwell's piece to work with. A quick Google search with his title, or with the terms "tweeting" and "revolution," will bring up a number of direct and indirect responses to his essay and give you a sense of the discussion it stimulated and some of the supporting and counter evidence that was offered. You might also look at Shirky's response to Gladwel (or a subsequent exchange between them or a reassessment of their positions in *Wired* a year after Gladwell's article). Your classroom discussion site can also offer a sense of what others think and why on this or other issues. Or you might look for information about the role of social media in other protests that have taken place in the last several years, such as the 2013 Gezi Park protests in Turkey, for example; an analysis of the use of social media in those protests explores some of the territory covered in the Gladwell-Shirky debate but asks whether there's a social-media-fueled protest style and considers the visual images that were circulated.

Likewise, Turkle's concerns about the impact of our current technologies on our social interactions, which she sees as leaving us "alone together," has generated much debate you can begin to discover with a quick search, while the concerns Eggers raised in *The Circle* about where the increasing collection of our data might lead and whether or not we should be concerned are also topics of ongoing discussion. From your own exploration of a question that concerns you, you can begin to see where you want to place yourself in an ongoing debate.

4. Identifying others' claims and counterclaims

From your inquiry, what positions do you find people taking on the issue you're exploring? What claims and counterclaims are being made? What sorts of appeals are being used on each side? What moves do people make in support of their claims? What evidence is being offered? Where do you now want to position yourself, what counterclaims do you want to argue against, and what claims do you want to make?

5. Finding compelling examples and evidence to refute others' claims and support your own

Gladwell, in making his claim that strong ties and hierarchical organization are needed for effective social action, draws on the example of the civil rights movement to show what those elements looked like in a time before the internet. His account of that movement, when matched up against Shirky's lost phone example, is much more compelling. But the example of how protesters used social media for organization in the Ukraine might be a more compelling counterexample to refute Gladwell's idea that "the revolution won't be tweeted." What compelling example(s) and evidence, for yourself and your readers, can you draw on to support the claims you're making? How can you counter the most compelling evidence from the other side?

Consider also the role of visual evidence in supporting your claims, both images and visual displays of data.

When you're ready to add your own voice to the larger public conversation about the issue you're focusing on—to put forth your position and respond to the claims of others—you'll want to consider the following moves.

Drafting and Shaping

When you're ready to add your own voice to the larger public conversation about the issue you're focusing on—to put forth your position and respond to the claims of others—you'll want to consider the following moves.

1. Framing your argument

We've seen that Gladwell frames his argument with an account of the Greensboro lunch counter sit-in and that Shirky, in the book Gladwell is countering as "the

bible" of the social media movement (Shirky 2008[15:19]) frames his with the lost cell phone story. Each of them is ordering the reader's experience and expectations by these choices of a beginning, involving the reader before setting forth any claims or counterclaims. While sometimes it's useful to state your position almost immediately ("Social media advocates think X is true, but I'm going to show Y is true for the following reasons"), a structure you've probably used before and that's implicit underneath many arguments, more often you'll want to use a compelling scene or example to bring your reader into the territory of the argument you'll be making, to set that argument up, and then to state the position you're arguing for or against. For Gladwell, the "against" doesn't come until the fifth paragraph ("The world, we are told, is in the midst of a revolution").

2. Setting forth the counterclaims and your own claims

You've already lined up the claims and counterclaims others are making and decided what you want to argue for and which claims and evidence you think will be most powerful. Now you want to think about the most effective order for these, typically presenting the claims for the other side and countering each with your own, and moving toward the strongest claim you can make for your own position. But we can see that Gladwell has brought us into an example that speaks for his own argument first. And his final paragraphs focus on Shirky's example for the side he is countering, using it to state his version of Shirky's position in a way that would lead his readers away from embracing it: "A networked, weak-tie world is good at things like helping Wall Streeters get phones back from teen-age girls." Whatever order you decide on, it's important to take your readers through a sequence of reasoning that will bring them with you to your conclusion: For Gladwell, strong ties are needed for engaged social activism, social media support weak ties, therefore the revolution won't be tweeted.

3. Presenting others' evidence and your own

Once you've determined the sequencing of your claims and counterclaims, you're ready to present the strongest evidence you can for each of them—to show why you've come to see the claims of the other side as less right than those on the side you're arguing for. Of course putting it this way makes it sound clear and simple. In reality, all arguments about the social world are messy. Gladwell's argument for his position works fine if indeed social media can't support strong ties and hierarchies, but less well if they can. The point of exploring arguments about the digital world is not to beat down the other side, but to gain a richer understanding of what's going on, and finding that something is still an open question, or that there's a stronger middle ground between two apparently opposite claims often makes a more useful contribution to a larger conversation.

As you present your evidence, consider also how you might use visual evidence. Most contemporary protest activity takes place across several social media platforms and includes a variety of images, posters, and other icons as well as photos of events. The New York University researchers, in examining the role of Facebook in the protests in Ukraine, found that the most widely shared posts on Facebook were "images of police violence, injured protesters, or individuals acting bravely." Such images are part of the argument protesters are making in support of resistance. And graphic images displaying data on Twitter or Facebook usage contribute to an argument about the role of social media in this situation. In turn, your own argument might draw on such images, on sound, and on videos. You might also use the visual analysis of protest or other images to support claims you might make about how social media are being used.

Revising and Publishing

In adding to any conversation about our larger social world, you'll most likely want to circulate your own contribution locally before doing so more globally on public media. The effectiveness of your argument essay can be measured by how well your audience is convinced of the position it presents. For an argument in which a series of claims are made with relevant evidence in support of the position, you'll want to know whether your readers could follow the reasoning you've presented, whether they agree that your position can be supported by the evidence you've presented, and whether you've adequately countered the likely claims of the opposing side.

1. Getting local response from peers

Whether you've worked on your argument independently or by preparing arguments and counterarguments in debate team fashion, you'll want to present that argument to your peers, with questions designed to elicit the feedback you want. Here are some possible questions to start with.

- What argument is being made? Where do you find the clearest statement of position?
- Create a sketch of the argument: of the position being put forward, of the claims that support it and the evidence for those claims, of the opposing position, claims, and counter evidence being refuted.
- Do the composer's claims fit logically with the position being presented?
- Does the evidence the composer has provided offer convincing support for the position the composer presents?
- Has the composer provided convincing evidence against the opposing view?
- What further evidence or explanation of the evidence might you like to see?

- Has the composer taken into account the likely shared knowledge of the audience and provided new background knowledge if needed?
- Does the composer have a clear pattern of organization?
- Does the conclusion leave you convinced of this position (or with a clearer understanding why someone would hold it)? Is there anything else you'd add to it?
- What other advice would you give to this composer?
- Use these responses to revise or reshape your argument and prepare it for larger public circulation.

2. Entering the public conversation

It's not always easy to insert your claims into a larger public conversation and get a response to them. You can make your argument public by posting to a public class blog or website, or to another site you've identified. Or you might add parts of your own argument to ongoing threads of readers' comments on other sites where a discussion of the topic is going on. Or you might post and then tweet a link to the post with some hashtags that will bring it up in a relevant topic area. Or you might create a video of a classroom debate and post it to YouTube. Plan, with your classmates, some social media strategies for adding your voices to the voices of others in a public arena, and then keep track of any activity that shows your work being shared, liked, retweeted, or any direct comments from readers, reflecting on the success of the strategies you've tried and how any response you've received contributes to your own understanding.

Reinventing and Circulating Your Work

One possibility for extending your work for this chapter is to move beyond Gladwell in examining the role of Twitter.

With his title, Gladwell's article focused attention on one social media platform above others. Biz Stone, the co-founder of Twitter, in a response to Gladwell in *The Atlantic* (2010), not surprisingly picked up on the challenge about Twitter and looked at how it was being used in political and protest activity in China, Kenya, and Moldova. But there's been more recent attention to its role as well, and if you search on "Twitter and Activism," or on "Twitter" and key words that address any recent political activity, you'll find further discussion of its role. Look at some of the ways in which Twitter is being used for social and political causes. (One recent presidential candidate used Twitter as his primary platform, tweeting his thoughts constantly.) What do you find about its role in more recent events that adds to or alters your sense of its possibilities? How might you use it to organize a multifaceted campaign about an area of your own concern?

CHAPTER 19

Putting Data to Work

Central Questions

- What possibilities and potential problems does "big data" collection present?
- What are the characteristics of effective data presentation and visualization?
- How can we draw on these understandings to create effective presentations that explore a hypothesis and build an argument from small data and with relevant big data?

Chapter Preview

In Chapter 18, we considered some of the arguments and claims being made for and against the value of social media for particular uses at both the personal/local and the public/global level. In this chapter, we extend this exploration to examine critically both the potential and the limitations of digital tools for communicating in ways that can help a society reflect common beliefs and values.

As we try to sort out how to build and maintain shared values in more public contexts, we continue to identify new areas of concern and new questions to explore through argument and inquiry. One of those concerns is the massive production of data we now create when we go online, via any kind of electronic device, and the wide-scale collection and analysis of this data—what is often called big data. We saw in Chapter 8 how author Dave Eggers imaginatively explored a future where personal privacy was no longer considered important and where everyone was encouraged to produce and consume as much data as possible. Today, we find ourselves in a big data world that is changing some of our fundamental notions about both our public and private lives. Large-scale data production alters what we can learn about our world and how, and it's providing information that can help us understand, and perhaps act on, a range of public concerns. It's also changing the work of researchers who endeavor to study and learn about the growing complexity of the digital world. Big data changes how researchers think about and use data, big and small, to build shared knowledge and make sense of the world around us.

Researchers working with both big and small data are also engaging in a form of argument—not the sort of top-down argument that involves setting forth a position and finding examples and evidence to support it—the kind of argument we saw with Malcolm Gladwell in Chapter 18—but what we might call a bottom-up argument. A bottom-up argument *begins* with collecting data, finding patterns in the data that

point to possible interpretations, and working from those observations to make informed claims and take positions based on what you've researched.

Here again, argument is used as a means of inquiry—to ask questions, work out new understandings, and build a stance on a topic—this time based on a close examination of *data*. Data, in their simplest form, are types of evidence that support an idea or hypothesis we have about the world. Data can be observations, records, statistics, or surveys—any kind of information used to make reasonable judgments that can lead to valid arguments.

Exploring: Big Data

The production and collection of data continues to grow, providing researchers with more data than ever for studying all aspects of our world. Faster computers and networks, along with growing storage capacity, have helped expand the amount and type of data that is collected in our current culture of information. Increasingly, not only are sites like Google, Facebook, and Twitter collecting data about users and citizens, "big data" collection is becoming standard practice in business, health care, education, and government for managing our complex, modern societies. Every time we do an online search, it is big data technology that spits out an instantaneous result. Individual researchers and journalists are also drawing on big data to build new understandings and shape new arguments. Big data is thus an exaggerated term to describe the use of digital, electronic computing and very large data sets to study and understand the world in new ways.

As we saw in Chapter 13, there are significant critiques of the role of big data in contemporary life as more and more data is collected about individuals. This ability to monitor and save information about citizens and consumers is raising serious concerns about and challenging our shared understandings about work, money, information, and privacy. In his in-depth analysis of Facebook, "What Facebook Knows," Tom Simonite writes that

> If Facebook were a country, a conceit that founder Mark Zuckerberg has entertained in public, its 900 million members would make it the third largest in the world. It would far outstrip any regime past or present in how intimately it records the lives of its citizens. Private conversations, family photos, and records of road trips, births, marriages, and deaths all stream into the company's servers and lodge there. Facebook has collected the most extensive data set ever assembled on human social behavior. Some of your personal information is probably part of it. (44)

Such large-scale data collection about users raises important concerns about privacy and technologies that can be used intrusively for surveillance purposes. Facebook is just one of many businesses and institutions that specialize in collecting

and analyzing user data for all kinds of purposes, ranging from academic studies on why we share online content to understanding how to better entice users to click a link.

The world of big data collection is a newly emerging one, and we are currently living through its earliest stages. Schools, courts, and governments are in the process of understanding how to manage and legislate big data practices. As users and citizens, it will be necessary for us to ensure there is adequate oversight and that data is used ethically, transparently, and in ways that do not infringe on our rights as citizens.

At the same time, the capability of collecting and analyzing such digital data can contribute greatly to our building of shared public knowledge in many areas. Whether or not writers learn to do the work of data analysis themselves, much research and many public arguments will draw on the results of such analysis, and it is increasingly important to take our growing use of big data into account when thinking about how public arguments are made and how shared knowledge is created.

Big Data for Shared Knowledge

Big data isn't simply a potential violation of privacy—it is also helping researchers understand new aspects of both the natural and social worlds we inhabit. Social media companies like Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook use big data to see and understand all kinds of new patterns and phenomena about our communication practices that we couldn't see before. Twitter, for example, is an important source of communication data, collecting more than 500 million tweets (micromessages) a day. Twitter data is commonly used by media corporations, government, and academic researchers to learn everything from where earthquakes might be occurring based on the occurrence of many short tweets at once with "earthquake?"to the dietary habits of a population.

The U.S. Census Bureau is one of the oldest collectors of big data, collecting information about U.S. citizens and residents since 1790. What's new now is 1) the ability to collect and analyze information faster and in more volume to produce census results within one year instead of 10, and 2) the ease of sharing digital data, which can be easily accessed and analyzed by other researchers. Data USA is one site that draws on data gathered by the U.S. Census Bureau to report on such topics as the demographics of U.S. cities and the average salaries earned by college graduates in various majors, information you might find valuable in thinking about your own future.

Using other large data sets, a reporter can discover what's happening to music sales in different formats, finding, for example, that downloads of MP3s plummeted in 2014 while sales for streaming music sites and vinyl records went up.The data for such reports is collected through Nielsen SoundScan, a company that collects and analyzes music sales data from around the world. Big data collection like this

has become an important resource for musicians and producers alike for tracking the popularity of a song and providing a basis for calculating the royalties each should receive.

Some big data inquiries can provide a larger context for the more local themes we explored in Part I, such as the role that fandom plays in contributing to an individual's social identity and the connections it can draw between a local community and a wider culture. For example, Seth Stephens-Davidowitz, in a *New York Times* feature article, "They Hook You When You're Young,"used big data to ask a new question about baseball fandom: Does a team's record during a person's childhood shape his or her team preferences as an adult? Here's what he says about his use of data from Facebook:

> From Facebook's publicly available advertising platform, I downloaded data on how many fans every baseball team has, broken out by gender and age. (Facebook estimates whether someone is a fan of a team based on both "likes" and posts.)
>
> This data is not perfect, but it does correlate pretty well with previous polling. According to Facebook, the most popular teams are the Yankees, Red Sox, Mets, Cardinals and Braves; there are 1.65 Yankees fans for every Mets fan.
>
> Facebook data can reveal patterns that polls generally do not have large enough sample sizes to detect. For example, Facebook tells us that among men, the ratio of Yankees fans to Mets fans fluctuates enormously depending on when those men were born. The Mets are popular among an unusually high number of men born in 1961 and 1978. (Interestingly, women's fandom depends much less on when they were born.)
>
> These huge swings appear to be driven by winning over young boys with on-the-field success. Fans born in 1961 and 1978 were both 8 years old when the Mets won the World Series. Fandom is determined by a huge number of factors, like what team your father supports, but winning when boys are young stands out clearly in the data.

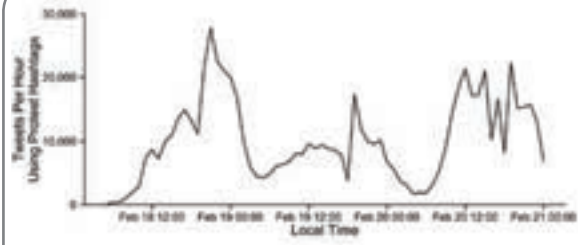
Stephens-Davidowitz goes on to connect the pattern he finds in these data with his own experience as a Mets fan, noting that he was a young boy when the Mets won the World Series in 1986. In this case, Stephens-Davidowitz began his inquiry from the bottom up, noting how his personal experience as a fan led him to ask larger questions about this experience. He notes several other interesting questions others are asking of such large data sets, including the long-term effects that events from our childhoods might have on our political and economic outlooks, with evidence, for example, that "if you grew up in bad economic times, you are more risk averse as an adult."

Inquiry #1: Generating big data questions

Researchers use big data to answer questions any of us might ask. What questions have arisen in your work with this book that big data might help to answer? Generate a common list with your classmates and do a quick Google search to see whether some of them have been addressed, and if so, using what data. What questions about local trends, such as college students' dating behavior, or public concerns, such as the effects of climate change, are being studied, and how? How does this research connect to more local practices?

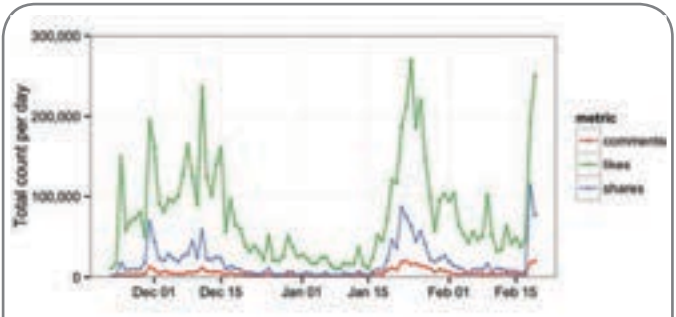
Visualizing Data

Along with the growth in the use of big data to study and make sense of the world has come a need to make those data easier to understand for larger public audiences. Big data arguments are often accompanied by visual representations of those data. The ability to read, use, and compose charts, graphs, and infographics—visual representations of information representing data and information like those that appear in this book's chapters—has become an important literacy in a digital, big data age.



Ukrainian protests tweets by hour over the past few days (Data: NYU Social Media and Political Participation (smapp.nyu.edu) Lab; Figure: Pablo Barberá and Megan Metzger)

Figure 19.1: Ukranian Protest Activity Graph 1 – Tweets by the hour

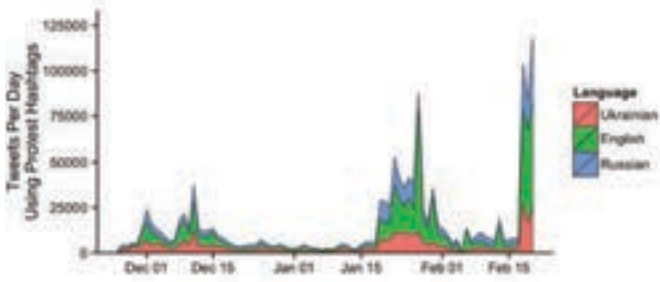


Facebook activity on public pages related to Ukrainian protests (Data: NYU Social Media and Political Participation (smapp.nyu.edu) Lab; Figure: Pablo Barberá and Megan Metzger)

Figure 19.3: Ukranian Protest Activity Graph 3 – Facebook

The article on "Tweeting the Revolution" (in Part II Additional Readings) includes several examples of data-driven visualization, including graphs for social media use in the Ukrainian protests of 2014 (Figures 16.1, 16.2, and 16.3).

Examples include a simple one-line timeline graph of tweets per hour on different days that were related to the Euromaidan protests (#Euromaidan), a colored graph breaking up that same information into the different languages (English, Ukrainian, Russian) used in these



Ukrainian protests tweets by language (Data: NYU Social Media and Political Participation (smapp.nyu.edu) Lab; Figure: Pablo Barberá and Megan Metzger)

Figure 19.2: Ukranian Protest Activity Graph 2 – Tweets by language

tweets (and showing a shift to more English as the protests went on and received more international attention), and a three-color graph of Facebook activity over the same days, showing likes, shares, and comments, with increased activity as violence around the protests increased. The visual images allow us to see these changes in activity easily, helping us to make sense of the supporting data for the verbal claims being made in the article. Moreover, using big data, researchers are able to make claims about communication behavior across a larger number of people.

Stephens-Davidowitz likewise uses graphs that let readers visualize what he has learned about baseball fandom. The first offers a combination of a timeline and notes and shows how the ratios of Yankees fans to Mets fans vary by how old the fans were when the Mets had a winning season (Figure 16.4).

The second visual uses a bar graph to convey, in a striking way, the relationship between a boy's age at the time of a World Series championship win and the likelihood of lifelong fandom (Figure 19.5).

Or we can consider again what's happening in the music industry and how to visualize the changes that have been taking place, as in the infographic "Social Sound Bytes" . This particular image combines several forms of data display to show what's been happening in the music industry as music listeners have shifted from vinyl LPs to digital MP3s over time. It shows information on MP3 music sales in 2009, showing what proportions of downloaded and streaming media were bought from different sales sources, and more. Such infographics have become a common genre and contribute greatly to our shared understanding of the changes occurring in our digital society.

Figure 19.4: Fan Data Graph 1 – Men and women by age

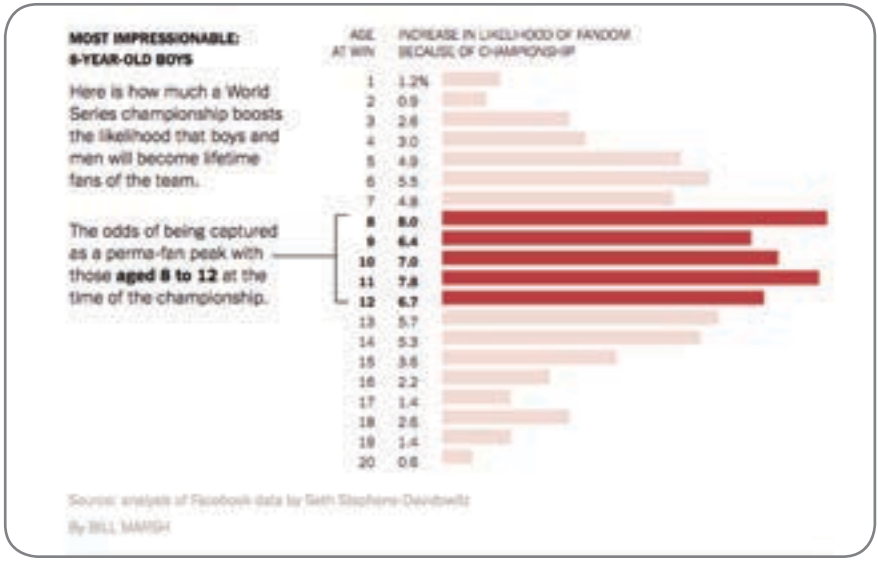


Figure 19.5: Fan Data Graph 2 – Fandom and age at championship

Figure 19.6: Social Sound Bytes infographic

Inquiry #2: Working with visual information

Look at the visualizations of data and information about the protests in the Ukraine and for baseball fandom and then at the full articles in Part II Additional Readings. What do the visualizations add to your understanding of the points being made in each article? How explanatory would you find the visual image on its own? The written text on its own? How effective do you find such multimodal compositions for the presentation of such information and interpretation of data? You might also look at the visualizations created from census data at Data USA to see how they contribute to the various stories being found in the data.

Look also at the "Social Sound Bytes" infographic about music listening and sharing habits of social media users, with its several different display formats. In this case, the composer has most likely drawn information from different sources to create one visual presentation. Which elements do you find most helpful in understanding the information presented? What do think about the arrangement of these elements? If you were composing an infographic with these elements, are there any changes you might make?

Have any of the infographics in this book seemed particularly useful in providing additional information about the chapter topics? Have any proved visually interesting as a model for an infographic you might create? Beyond this book, what other infographics have you encountered recently? Are there any you find particularly compelling? Why? Have you become more aware of their presence online and the role they're playing in the public sharing of knowledge? Why do you think such infographics have become so common?

Interacting With Data for Research and the Public Good

Social media giants make the data they collect available for marketing (and thus for their own profit-making), but also for researchers who are trying to address questions related to the public good. Twitter, for example, has created a blog that has posted about research being done with Twitter data (see "Twitter Data for Research") and has also created the account @twitterforgood with tweets about good works the company is supporting. The hashtag #twitterforgood is being used to share information about uses of Twitter for the public good—for

Figure 19.7: Tweet about Jakarta flood tweeting

example, a link to a *Guardian* article about how tweeting flood information became a "civic duty" in Jakarta, Indonesia (see Figure 19.7).

Beyond reading others' analyses of big data to explain things that are happening in the world and drawing on visualizations that offer supporting evidence for the arguments others are making, there are also ways in which we can consciously contribute our small data points to areas where we want to see our own attitudes and behavior (attitudes toward race, practices related to health) in a larger public/global context.

One of the benefits of modern data collection technologies is their ability to collect *and* analyze more data in real time, giving us new understandings of the world at various scales. One example of using big data both to offer such understandings and to present an implicit argument can be found at slaveryfootprint.org. Slaveryfootprint.org is a nonprofit organization that works to inform the public about the problem of modern-day slavery in the global economy (Figure 19.8). The site uses a series of infographics to explain how such slavery works and where and how it appears, as well as a blog that provides updated information about actions being taken to combat such slavery.

Figure 19.8. Slavery Footprint survey

Inquiry #3: Using big data to see your consumption footprint

Visit the site slaveryfootprint.org and take the "survey." In addition to considering the implications of your consumption practices, write about the ways slaveryfootprint.org collects data and how they use the data to present an argument. How do they justify the results they come up with after a user takes the survey? Are you convinced? Why or why not?

Consider also the rhetorical effectiveness of the website with its linked elements and infographics. How does the site design work toward its purposes of educating people and moving them toward action? Have the designers succeeded in engaging you and raising your awareness of this global social problem?

Here are the reflections of one student, Hayden:

"I have to admit, the survey at slaveryfootprint.org really stunned me. I rarely think about how my consumption affects workers from other countries, and I haven't thought much about where my phone and computer came from. And it's not just

phones—it all electronics combined—old ipods, ereaders, tablets, gaming consoles. In any case, it took me about 20 minutes to take the survey. It is a very visual and interactive site. After you enter details about your different levels of consumption (food, gas, electricity, water, clothes, cosmetics, etc), slaveryfootprint uses a special algorithm to calculate how many "slaves" (workers with no or little wages) might actually be supporting your consumption. I can't really say I completely understand how they come up with a number, but they claim to use data from labor statistics from around the world to make a very convincing argument."

Making Connections: Big Data and Small Data

While many researchers and activists are using big data to explore questions that interest them, others continue to use small data, the sorts of local data that you've been gathering through observing your own local digital communities or in public digital environments and the collections you've been making of texts and images you've found there. Analyzing big data and small data can be complementary approaches to studying a question or problem, and one can often give us further understanding of the other. Researchers danah boyd and Kate Crawford have raised "critical questions about big data," pointing out that

> Big Data triggers both utopian and dystopian rhetoric. On one hand, Big Data is seen as a powerful tool to address various societal ills, offering the potential of new insights into areas as diverse as cancer research, terrorism, and climate change. On the other, Big Data is seen as a troubling manifestation of Big Brother, enabling invasions of privacy, decreased civil freedoms, and increased state and corporate control. As with all socio-technical phenomena, the currents of hope and fear often obscure the more nuanced and subtle shifts that are underway. (663–64)

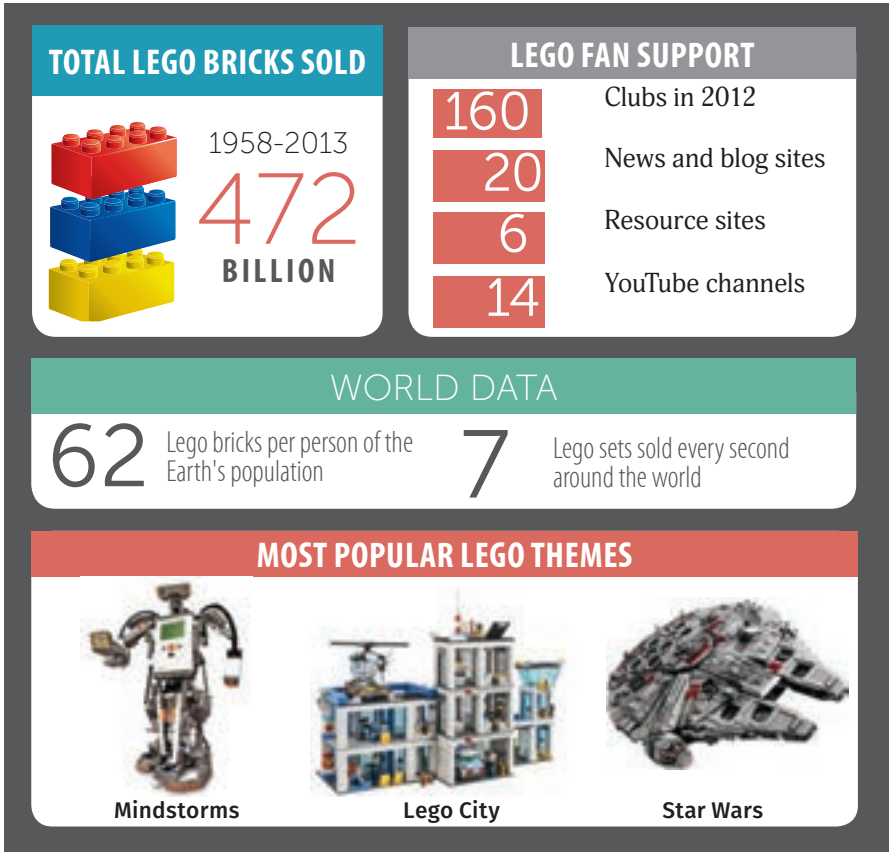
In their discussion, boyd and Crawford make several points about how we might think about big data, among them that big data is changing the definition of how we understand knowledge, human networks, and community; that we need a conceptual framework (a set of interrelated key concepts like the ones related to digital literacies we've been using in this book) in order to interpret and make sense of the huge amounts of knowledge and information available to us; that, taken out of context, big data can lose its meaning; and that "it is increasingly important to recognize the value of 'small data'" and the richness it provides on the level of individual and local experience.

Boyd and Crawford stress that working with data, big or small, involves the very sort of analytical work we've been doing throughout our inquiries. Whether data is processed on a large scale with computer algorithms or on a small scale by our efforts to sort out what we've collected and find patterns in what we've gathered, our effective use of data depends on analyzing and interpreting what we find.

The marketing and branding consultant Martin Lindstrom makes similar points in his recent book *Small DATA: The Tiny Clues That Uncover Huge Trends* (2016) in which he considers the important uses of small data in a big data world, making his own argument to a public audience. Often those who use small data begin their reports with examples from those data and build from them to lay out a larger position, and Lindstrom proceeds in precisely this way. Throughout his book, he tells the stories of the many specific instances in which he was able to discover a branding strategy for a particular company using the small data of his close observations of particular people, settings, and contexts. These stories support a larger claim that small data can tell us things that big data can miss. The following excerpt is from his introduction.[16:7]

Before Reading: Reflecting on the appeal of Lego

In this excerpt, Lindstrom begins with the story of Lego's successful rebranding strategy and how a small data moment led him and the company to see the appeal of Legos in a different way. Before you read, consider for a moment your own thoughts about Legos, about why they might have appealed to you (and maybe still do) or to others around you. As you read, what do you learn about how Lindstrom defines the appeal and what led him to that understanding? About the sort of small data he focuses on in his work and on why he does so? About the larger claims he is making with the examples he chooses?



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http://www.thebrickfan.com/lego-related-sites/
http://gizmodo.com/5019797/everything-you-always-wanted-to-know-about-lego

Selection from

Small DATA: The Tiny Clues that Uncover Huge Trends

by Martin Lindstrom
St. Martin's Press, 2016

The solution to LEGO's problems—the thing that may have rescued it from potential bankruptcy—lay in an old pair of sneakers.

It was early 2003, and the company was in trouble, having lost 30 per cent of its turnover over the past year. In 2004, another 10 per cent vanished. As Jørgen Vig Knudstorp, LEGO's CEO, put it, "We are on a burning platform, losing money with negative cash flow, and a real risk of debt default which could lead to a break-up of the company."

How had the Danish toymaker fallen so far so fast? Arguably, the company's problems could be traced back to 1981, when the world's first handheld game, Donkey Kong, came to market, inspiring a debate within the pages of LEGO's internal maga-

zine, Klodshans, about what so-called "side-scrolling platform games" meant for the future of construction toys. The consensus: platforms like Atari and Nintendo were fads—which turned out to be true, at least until the advent of computer games for PCs launched their wildly successful second wind.

I had begun advising LEGO in 2004 when the company asked me to develop its overall branding strategy. I didn't want the company to move away from what it had been doing well for so long, but no one could deny the increasing everywhere-ness of all things digital. From the mid-1990s on, LEGO began moving away from its core product, i.e. building blocks, and focusing instead on its loosely knit empire of theme parks, children's clothing lines, video games, books, magazines, television programs and retail stores. Somewhere during this same period, management decided that considering how impatient, impulsive and fidgety millennials were, LEGO should begin manufacturing bigger bricks.

Every big data study LEGO commissioned drew the exact same conclusions: future generations would lose interest in LEGO. LEGO would go the way of jackstraws, stickball, blindman's bluff. So-called Digital Natives—men and women born after 1980, who'd come of age in the Information Era—lacked the time, and the patience, for LEGO, and would quickly run out of ideas and storylines to build around. Digital natives would lose their capacity for fantasy and creativity, if they hadn't already, since computer games were doing most of the work for them. Each LEGO study showed that the generational need for instant gratification was more potent than any building block could ever hope to overcome.

In the face of such a prognosis, it seemed impossible for LEGO to turn things around—but, in fact, the company did. It sold off its theme parks. It continued successful brand alliances with the Harry Potter, Star Wars and Bob the Builder franchises. It reduced the number of products while entering new and underserved global markets.

Still, probably the biggest turnaround in LEGO's thinking came as the result of an ethnographic visit LEGO marketers paid in early 2004 to the home of an 11-year-old boy in a mid-sized German city. Their mission? To figure out what really made LEGO stand out. What executives found out that day was that everything they thought they knew, or had been told, about late twentieth—and early twenty-first-century children and their new digital behaviors—including the need for time compression and instantaneous results –was wrong.

In addition to being a LEGO aficionado, the 11-year-old German boy was also a passionate skateboarder. Asked at one point which of his possessions he was the most proud of, he pointed to a pair of beat-up Adidas sneakers with ridges and nooks along one side. Those sneakers were his trophy, he said. They were his gold medal. They were his masterpiece. More than that, they were evidence. Holding them up so everyone in the room could see and admire them, he explained that one side was worn down and abraded at precisely the right angle. The heels were scuffed and planed in an unmistakable way. The entire look of the sneakers, and the impression they conveyed to the world, was perfect; it signaled to him, to his friends and to the rest of the world that he was one of the best skateboarders in the city.

At that moment, it all came together for the LEGO team. Those theories about time compression and instant gratification? They seemed to be off base. Inspired by what an

11-year-old German boy had told them about an old pair of Adidas, the team realized that children attain social currency among their peers by playing and achieving a high level of mastery at their chosen skill, whatever that skill happens to be. If the skill is valuable, and worthwhile, they will stick with it until they get it right, never mind how long it takes. For kids, it was all about paying your dues and having something tangible to show for it in the end—in this case, a pair of tumbledown Adidas that most adults would never look at twice.

Until that point, LEGO's decision-making was predicated entirely on reams of big data. Yet ultimately it was a small, chance insight—a pair of sneakers belonging to a skateboarder and LEGO lover—that helped propel the company's turnaround. From that point on, LEGO refocused on its core product, and even upped the ante. The company not only re-engineered its bricks back to their normal size, it began adding even more, and smaller, bricks inside their boxes. The bricks became more detailed, the instruction manuals more exacting, the construction challenges more labor intensive.For users, it seemed, LEGO was all about the summons, the provocation, the mastery, the craftsmanship and, not least, the hard-won experience—a conclusion that complex predictive analytics, despite their remarkable ability to parse "average" scores, had missed.

Cut to 10 years later when, during the first half of 2014, in the wake of the worldwide success of The LEGO Movie and sales of related merchandise, LEGO's sales rose 11 percent to exceed $2 billion. For the first time ever, LEGO had surpassed Mattel to become the world's largest toymaker.

Believe it or not, almost every insight I come up with as a global branding consultant happens just this way. I might be developing a new car key for Porsche owners, designing a credit card for billionaires, creating a newfangled innovation for a weight loss organization, helping reverse the fortunes of a stumbling American supermarket chain or trying to position the Chinese automotive industry to compete globally. There's a well-known quote that says if you want to understand how animals live, you don't go to the zoo, you go to the jungle. And so I do. In nearly every instance, after conducting what I call Subtext Research (which I occasionally shorten to Subtexting), a detailed process that involves visiting consumers in their homes, gathering small data offline and online, and crunching, or Small Mining, these clues with observations and insights taken from around the world, there almost always comes a moment where I uncover an unmet or unacknowledged desire that forms the foundation of a new brand, product innovation or business.

The people I study and interview could be teenaged girls living in a Brazilian favela; merchant bankers in the Czech Republic; housewives in Southern California; sex workers in Hungary; mothers-in-law in India; or sports-obsessed fathers in Geneva, Beijing, Kyoto, Liverpool or Barcelona. Sometimes I go so far as to move inside people's houses or apartments where, with the owners' permission, I make myself at home. The families and I fraternize, listen to music, watch television and eat all our meals together. During these visits—again, with permission—I go through refrigerators, open desk drawers and kitchen cabinets, scour books, magazines, music and movie collections and downloads, inspect purses, wallets, online search histories, Facebook pages, Twitter feeds, emoji usage and Instagram and Snapchat accounts. In the search for what I call small data, almost nothing is off-limits. I've gone so far as to interview consumers through

text-messaging—a study shows that people lie less frequently in texts—though I'm far more likely to take people by surprise by inspecting their microwave ovens and glass and plastic recycling cans. I see myself as a forensic investigator of small data, or emotional DNA—a hunter, almost, of desire. [5]

Do any of us really know how we come across to other people? Are we aware of the haphazard sequence of small data we leave behind us every day—the rituals, habits, gestures and preferences that coalesce to expose who we really are inside? Most of the time, the answer is no. What we snack on, how we choreograph our Facebook page, what we tweet, whether we chew cinnamon gum or nicotine lozenges—all these slight gestures may at first seem indiscriminate, undirected and too small to have much bearing on our identities. But when we begin to see life through the new and unfamiliar lens of small data, we also come across revealing clues about the people closest to us, including ourselves.

Small data could show up in how a family's shoe collection is arrayed in a hallway, or in the scrambled letters and numbers that make up a person's computer password. In the course of doing Subtexting, I dig through garbage cans, past squeezed-out toothpaste tubes and ripped candy wrappers and expired coupons, searching for that one thing that will solve the puzzle, or provide the answer I need, even when I'm not sure what the puzzle consists of, or what it is exactly that I'm looking for. A lone piece of small data is almost never meaningful enough to build a case or create a hypothesis, but blended with other insights and observations gathered from around the world, the data eventually comes together to create a solution that forms the foundation of a future brand or business. [8-9]

In-person observation, and a preoccupation with small data, is what sets apart what I do in a world preoccupied by big data. Most of us judge practically everything in seconds, or minutes at most. We've become spontaneous seekers and instant responders. As more and more products and services migrate online, and technology helps us understand human behaviour in real time at granular levels, many people have come to believe that human observations and interaction are old-fashioned and even irrelevant. I couldn't disagree more. A source who works at Google once confessed to me that despite the almost 3 billion humans who are online, and the 70 per cent of online shoppers who go onto Facebook daily, and the 300 hours of videos on YouTube (which is owned by Google) uploaded every minute, and the fact that 90 per cent of all the world's data has been generated over the last two years, Google ultimately has only limited information about consumers. Yes, search engines can detect unusual correlations (as opposed to causations). With 70 per cent accuracy, my source tells me, software can assess how people feel based on the way they type, and the number of typos they make. With 79 per cent precision, software can determine a user's credit rating based on the degree to which they write in ALL CAPS. Yet even with all these stats, Google has come to realize it knows almost nothing about humans and what really drives us, and it is now bringing in consultants to do what small data researchers have been doing for decades. As one analyst once told me, "Considering that management doesn't know what to do with big data, everyone is searching for what is post big data—and the answer is small data." [12-13]

The integration of online and offline data—that is to say, the marriage of big data

and small data—is a crucial ingredient of marketing survival and success in the 21st century...We're living in an era in which our online behaviors and communications are haunted by subtext and obfuscation. The German word *maskenfreiheit* can be translated into "the freedom conferred by masks", and anyone who has ever spent time online knows that the ability to customise our digital selves, and our occasional online anonymity, creates personae that bear only a loose resemblance to the people we actually are, and the lives we actually live, when we're offline. You might say that thanks to technology, we are all at least two people, with at least two residences: a bricks-and-mortar home and a home page. Sometimes they overlap, but often they don't.

Nor can we say we are any more "ourselves" when we surf the web anonymously. Without a name, or a face, or an identity, we become primitive versions of ourselves, a phenomenon some experts attribute to a lack of empathy that comes from communicating laptop to laptop, and that is also familiar to anyone who has ever flipped off a pedestrian, or worse, while driving a car....This is the paradox of online behavior. We're never truly ourselves on social media, and when we communicate anonymously, the result lacks any context that our offline lives might provide and enrich. Online, what we leave behind is largely considered and strategic, whereas the insides of our refrigerators and dresser drawers are not, as they were never intended for public exhibition.

This is why, in my opinion, the best, closest approximation of who we are as humans comes from mixing our online and offline selves, and from combining big data with small data. Considering that 90 per cent of what people give off in conversation are non-verbal signals, our truest identities can be found by studying who we are in our real lives, cultures and countries. [13-14] ■

After Reading:Revisiting Lindstrom's method and claims

Lindstrom offers a number of specific details about the sorts of small data he gathers, telling us "nothing is off limits." He suggests that he searches without a guiding hypothesis or question, without a particular conceptual framework to give shape to what he collects, beyond the search for "an unmet need or an unacknowledged desire." Yet, as a marketing consultant, he is working within a defined context, usually of an existing product or brand, and that context inevitably informs and guides the activities he might pay attention to (an 11-year-old boy), and even the artifacts he might "collect" (sneakers used in a form of play). What more do you learn about his research methods and the understandings that guide his collecting of small data? Do you think he might describe his process differently if he were writing for other researchers rather than to the larger business world? (And with our concerns about online invasion of privacy, do you think that concern might apply to offline data-gathering as well?)

In building to a position in support of small data, Lindstrom makes a number of related claims about people and their desires and rewards, but also about the characteristics of our online world and how our online selves relate to our offline selves. What are some of his specific claims? How do

they contribute to his larger position? From your own gathering of small data through various inquiries, are there any of his claims you would disagree with or modify?

Lindstrom's stories offer rich examples to support the continuing value of small data—data that provide the rich details of context that can help us understand human behavior on a local level and make meaning from the big data swirling around us. He's making an argument for the vital importance of small data in the world of marketing that has, like many industries, turned to big data for market research. Occasionally his claims are misleading, as when he writes that "Google has come to realize it knows almost nothing about humans and what really drives us." Google isn't necessarily in the business of studying all the data they collect, but they are in the business of selling that data to marketing and advertising agencies who do study the data on consumers. Big data may not tell us much about our individual selves, but that's not its intention.

Big data is useful for what it can tell us, in aggregate, about ourselves, but small data give us a different kind of insight, especially on the local level. We can return to the example of census taking. The census is one of the original "big data" problems. Modern electronic computing on a large scale began in 1880, when the first tabulating machine was used for the U.S. census. The census tells us very little about individuals, but it does give us insight into larger patterns and demographic trends taking shape in the country. And understanding those demographic trends, as well as what motivates an 11-year-old boy, might offer understandings that marketers, and other researchers, need to make more informed decisions.

After considering what big data can and can't do, Lindstrom ends with a call for the integration of online and offline data in marketing. Yet he seems to finally conflate what's online with big data and what's offline with small data. Reread his last several paragraphs. How do his claims and his position line up? Might you clarify, modify, add to, or otherwise refine the moves he makes here?

Composing: Data-Driven Argument

Increasingly researchers who are exploring the effects of digital environments on our lives find themselves working with both small and big data. Those studying children's play but not working for Lego tend to do as Lindstrom says and look at both their offline and online worlds, and at both small and big data. The conceptual framework of key concepts and understandings about "play" bridge both worlds. So the small data they collect includes what takes place in the communities and interactions of both their offline and their digital worlds. Here's what one group of

researchers had to say about their use of data in a study of young teens (tweens) participating in online play in the virtual town of Whyville:

> Where do we see the benefits of big data in what we have learned? Understanding patterns and trends in participation over large numbers of people and over extended periods of time provided a bird's-eye perspective that is difficult to obtain while standing on the ground amid hundreds and thousands of participants. Where do we see the benefits of small data? The ethnographic approach gave us a lens through which to study the norms and practices that shape play in Whyville, what it means to look cool, how to talk, and what to do (139).

While working with both sorts of data might be desirable for many purposes, individual researchers working with small data can still contribute to the big picture. While it's important to take big data into account, to see what big data studies might contribute to your understanding of questions you're exploring and help to place your own discoveries in a larger context, begin first with some of the small data you've been collecting.

For this final composing activity of Part II, further your own understanding about how small data you've collected can contribute to the big picture of how digital environments are contributing to the shape of our communities, our literacy practices, and how we build shared beliefs and values in a wide range of local contexts, online and off, as well as in wider, public, and often global contexts. What big picture questions might you want to explore, and how can any of the small data you've considered so far (observations, interviews, shoebox collections, circulating images and memes, blog posts and articles, etc.) contribute to that exploration? As you seek or revisit patterns in these data, what might you look for? What tentative hypotheses can you make or positions might you build to? Part III of this book will ask you to revisit, build on, and add to some of your earlier work as part of a formal research process. This composing activity is intended to potentially contribute to your thinking for that work.

Inquiring and Inventing

As readers and writers working in networked spaces that generate lots of data, you can draw on those data—both what you've gathered and what others have collected and analyzed—to inform your thinking on a variety of research questions and to make new discoveries. Articulating your argument or tentative position as the starting point of your inquiry (the process we saw Gladwell using in Chapter 18) can define but potentially restrict the kinds of evidence and sources you draw on in your work. Exploring a question, testing out a hypothesis, and composing a tentative argument from the bottom up with data is typically

a more open-ended process than starting with a position, making claims, and then determining how to support it. Starting with your data invites a very different process of meaning-making. As you enter public conversations and address broad audiences on the web, working from data can help you arrive at unexpected insights and conclusions.

As you prepare to compose your own bottom-up argument from data you or others have collected, you'll want to work flexibly with the following moves, going back and forth to match up small data, a big picture question, and possible big data analyses, and to find patterns in these data, moving back and forth between the data you've collected and the larger understandings you believe those data can support as evidence.

1. Identifying topics, questions, and relevant data

Before you start to work with data, big or small, and begin looking for trends and patterns, you will need to consider what topics and questions you might want to explore further and what data you've already collected that can help you explore them. Have you already been gathering data about the Instagram posts, circulating memes, sports or music fan practices, music reviewing or book discussions, or Facebook discourse strategies in one of your communities? Any such data offers a good starting point for your further inquiry. And you can add to these data with quick online surveys of community participants. You are also likely to find that others have collected big data that's relevant to your focus. If you're focusing on sports fandom, Stephens-Davidowitz's article might lead you to ask new questions of your own fan community about when they became fans and what role significant team successes might have played. Or you might consider what information you can find in your own Facebook friends' likes and shares. Or perhaps you want to extend a project from Part I of this book and collect a complete set of text messages exchanged within one community to better understand the ways of using words central to that group. Maybe you want to use data to complicate your thinking about a Part II project, such as an analysis of *The Circle* or another piece of utopian or dystopian literature about the digital age, by looking at the data set created by Amazon reviews of the novel. Data can take many forms and can be located in a variety of places. Try to consider as many sources of data as you can. Your most basic goal is to pull together different sorts of related data you can consider and come to new understandings in the process.

2. Locating patterns and trends

Once you have decided on a set of data to examine, you will want to use it not just to locate evidence, but also to see what it shows or suggests about a topic. Throughout much of our schooling, we are trained to look for discrete pieces of evidence to support a preconceived point or our existing understandings. This

process should feel different. As you approach your data, allow it to direct your inquiry. You can do this by tending carefully to this data.

- Read your data looking for trends. What is repeated? What patterns do you see forming? Name these repeating patterns. Nancy Baym, for example, started finding patterns in the ways in which members of her online soap opera fan group interacted with one another in moments when they seemed to try to avoid offending others or to back off disagreements.
- Code your data. Coding your data is similar to the process of tagging—organizing and categorizing your data based on the patterns and trends you see. Once you have read for patterns and named some of your findings, return to this dataset again, and notate each and every repeated trend. Baym started to use the labels "mitigating offense" and "building affiliation" for two of the patterns she was finding.
- Count what you are seeing. Once you have created some categories to make sense of your data and have identified when and how those moves are repeated, count them. Quantifying your data can help you see more significant trends and think about how to represent this information and the types of reasonable claims you might make. Baym found that "Fully 29 percent of the disagreements in r.a.t.s. [her online community) were prefaced by partial agreements" and in 18 percent of disagreements, the person disagreeing included the other person's name, leading her to identify these moves as two major strategies for building affiliation.

3. Reviewing your small data and gathering more

Once you have located some trends and patterns, you can take stock of the understandings your data suggest. Allow these realizations to inform your tentative stance. At this point, you'll want to question your data: Does it provide you with a rich enough picture of your inquiry? Would drawing on additional data help you contextualize or extend your thinking?

4. Finding a big picture question

After "cooking" your data—spending time working it, reading it with different questions in mind, and annotating it as you try to identify patterns, you should have a sense of both what it can tell you and why that information is important. What big picture questions does your data suggest? At this point, you might want to do some exploratory freewriting about what you've been seeing and the questions that interest you, and begin articulating the stance your data seems to be leading you to claim. Baym's big picture understandings are about the role of friendliness and the use of gendered discourse patterns that maintain a friendly atmosphere in this mostly female online community, but she also sees this friendliness as "just one example of the general tendency of ongoing computer-mediated groups to develop behavioral norms."

5. Finding related big data

At this point, you might want to look for some big data studies that could contribute to a big picture question you'll explore with your small data. Such studies can often provide a much wider context for something you've observed locally. If you're interested in the role social media play for a particular fan group, you might see whether others have collected relevant data (in the way Stephens-Davidowitz did for baseball fans). If you're considering what might attract members of one of your online communities to circulating memes, look for big data studies about what makes memes circulate. If you've become interested in how a local community group is using social networking to accomplish a public good, you might find big data evidence for similar concerns at sites such as the Twitter research blog or at @twitterforgood. You could also look for infographics and other works that draw on big data to address questions similar to your own. You might not find an exact match between the small data you're focusing on and the big data that's available, but big data studies can often help you locate your small data in a larger context. Baym's online community was one of many using Usenet, an online system for discussion boards, and so in the first chapter of her book, she drew on statistical data about Usenet to contextualize her own study—to locate the group she was studying among the "high traffic" groups of users (and to suggest that the findings about her fan group might be relevant to others).

> The most popular of Usenet's groups always have been those that discuss recreational and social issues. This is demonstrated by statistics gathered by Brian Reid through 1994 and posted to Usenet. In the 20 most *read* discussion groups in March 1993, for example, his figures show that a quarter of the messages (4,629) were in groups discussing social issues ranging from political activism to Indian culture. Nearly a fifth of the messages were in groups discussing sex. If figures on readership tap users' curiosities, then figures on the number of messages each group generates tap users' creative investments. In the highest *volume* discussion groups, half of the messages (24,983) were about social issues such as Indian culture, abortion, homosexuality, and guns. Another two fifths of the messages (20,025) in these high-traffic groups were in fan groups that discussed sports, television shows, and movies (7–8).

Drafting and Shaping

Once you've worked out a big picture argument you can contribute to from the patterns you've found in your small data and any big data you've found, you're ready to turn your attention to structuring and shaping your presentation of those data and the claims you might make from them in support of a larger position.

1. Considering context and audience

Context includes the audience you'll address, the form your presentation will take, and the platform you'll use. Oftentimes writers must consider different levels

of audience. For example, Stephens-Davidowitz was writing for a general public audience—readers of the *New York Times,* so he could imagine that his audience includes other baseball fans but also people who are interested in what we can learn from social media data. In his article about Lego, Lindstrom addresses a general business audience. He most likely intends his book to reach not only marketing professionals, but also a larger audience of people who have an interest in the uses of large and small data for research. In both cases, the authors use data to tell an interesting story about human experience and behavior that is likely to engage a wider audience.

While you might choose a blog platform or a traditional print format, this sort of bottom-up use of small data for big picture exploration lends itself to presentation formats that encourage visual display, exchange, and collaboration, such as a PowerPoint or Prezi presentation for a classroom or for a community group website, or to post on an online site (with voice-over narration). Because trying to answer big picture questions can get complicated as more data are considered, collaborating with others on these questions can help you bring together pieces of a larger puzzle. Digital tools like Google Docs, wikis, or a content management application like Diigo are all highly useful for collecting, organizing, and sharing multiple pieces, including original data.

2. Organizing your presentation—telling a story

As always, a map, outline, sketch, or storyboard is helpful in structuring the information you'll present, whatever your mode of presentation. It's most likely that you'll want to take your audience on a journey with you, from the bottom up, telling them a story through your data and showing how particular moments in your data have led to the larger question you are exploring, the claims you might make, and the exploratory argument you might put forth about some aspect of the big picture of our digital world.

Your compositional arrangement will depend on your data, the writing application you choose, and on how you want to structure your argument. A ground-up argument often builds toward the strongest examples of evidence. As you compose a multimedia argument, you'll also want to be thinking visually about rhetorical ways of using images, color, typeface, and other design elements.

3. Experimenting with infographics

This is a good moment to think about how to integrate any relevant infographics you have found or created. Infographics aren't just for big data, but can be used to make key points about small data as well. Do an image search using the search terms "infographic and social media," "infographic and the music industry," and "infographic" and another search term. You're likely to find any number of existing infographics that can contribute to the points you want to make. You'll also find in-

fographics creators (included in Part IV Digital Toolbox) that work much like meme creators to guide your own infographic construction.

To the right is an infographic showing the results of a large study of how sports fans interact with social media, one that could serve as a model for your own infographic about how members of a community you're studying interact about a topic through social media (Figure 19.9).

4. Creating a full draft

As you create your full presentation, whether in print form or in a multimodal presentation, you'll want to present the data and examples that are most compelling and that give your audience a rich picture of your research without overwhelming them. And you'll want to work to convince them, in the end, that your larger argument, your big picture claim, is plausible, or even likely, based on what you've shown them.

Figure 19.9: Infographic—Sports fans and social media

Revising and Publishing

For a bottom-up argument, where the position follows from the data, it is useful to get a sense of whether a reader can follow your process of selecting and analyzing data and whether they agree that the position you take can be supported by the data you've presented. It can be very useful to share your data with others before asking them to read and consider the ways in which you have written about it.

1. Getting another perspective on your data

Though you won't want to completely overwhelm your classmates (or the members of your writing group) or ask that they do too much of the analytical work you need to do to really understand your data, asking readers to look at a representative sample of your data can be really helpful. Ask them to read this data and then respond to the following questions.

- What seems most striking about this data?
- What trends seem to emerge as you read it?
- What additional data might you want access to in order to enrich your understandings?

Then talk with your readers and share your big picture question or the focus that this data suggests for you. Have them read the data against your interpretation to see what they see.

How does this process, this additional perspective, enrich your own thinking about this information and the data you've collected?

2. Sharing and revising

After asking others to review and respond to your data, you will most likely want to revisit your draft. Once you have a nearly complete and revised piece, you will want to share it with readers for input. The following questions should help you get a rich sense of how others are reading your bottom-up argument.

- What argument is this composer making? Where do you find the clearest statement of his or her position?
- What data has the composer used to show how he/she has arrived at that position?
- Does the evidence adequately support the position the composer comes to?
- What further evidence or explanation of the evidence might you like to see?
- Has the composer taken into account the likely shared knowledge of the audience and provided any new needed background knowledge?
- What is the story being told about this data? Does the composer have a recognizable pattern of organization?

- Does the conclusion make a convincing statement of the argument the composer has built? Is there anything else you'd add to it?
- What other advice would you give to this composer?

You might also, in a group, use your peer responses to create a generative rubric to identify key elements of a ground-up argument and to shape a general guide for revising such compositions into a final form. Use both the generative rubric and the specific peer responses you received to prepare a revised version of your composition. And as always, remember to do careful editing and proofreading.

3. Circulating your work to a public audience

By now you most likely have a sense of some online sites, whether within your college or university context or beyond, where you could find an audience for the study you've shaped, where people will be interested in the connections between the big data picture and what your small data study has shown about the literacy practices of the digital world. How are essays presented on the site you chose? As you prepare to post your work, what elements of design and presentation will you take into account? How will you work with the platform you chose to present your own work in the most effective way possible?

Reinventing and Circulating Your Work

As we've seen, infographics have become a popular way to communicate large amounts of data and their relationships in more visual ways. News media sites like *The New York Times* and *The Huffington Post* commonly use infographics with other compositional elements when composing online articles and arguments. Other sites, like infogr.am and Daily Infographic, are sites for creating and sharing infographics.

Another way to place your own work in a larger context is to discover and analyze the infographics that others have created about related topics. You may have drawn on or composed an infographic to support your own study. But finding a number of infographics on a topic can allow you to see both the circulation context for information about the topic and the different ways in which infographic writers have worked with typical elements of information.

Search for infographic images on a topic you've been exploring. Where do they appear, and what audiences do they address? How do they differ in the information presented? In design? And how do the elements of the information presented and the design of that presentation work toward the likely rhetorical purposes of each presentation context? How does the infographic support the argument being made?

As a conclusion to your consideration of big data and what it contributes to our understanding of a digital world, share your infographics and your analysis of how they work with others in your own classroom community and perhaps beyond.

Part 4

Working with Sources

CHAPTER 20

Planning Research in Context

Central Questions

1. How have shifting digital literacy practices reshaped approaches to research?
2. How can we draw on the potentials of networked and mediated digital spaces as we carve out a research project and agenda?
3. How can composing a research proposal help us think through a particular project and imagine its significance to our own learning? How might we, as researchers, see ourselves contributing to a larger conversation through our work?

Chapter Preview

The digital world has had profound effects on the ways in which we search for information, making it easy to find quick answers to questions that arise in daily life. But this ease raises concerns about how we approach more serious and academic research projects. According to a Pew Research Center Report on technology and education, teachers find that "'doing research' has shifted from a relatively slow process of intellectual curiosity and discovery to a fast-paced, short-term exercise aimed at locating just enough information to complete an assignment." This chapter encourages you to resist the immediate pressure of such "just enough" research and helps you develop strategies to foster and extend your own sense of intellectual curiosity as you plan a research project. With this chapter you will articulate a focus for a systematic and contextualized research undertaking, work that you'll build on.

An important part of conducting research is establishing a clear sense of what you want to study, why your project is significant, and how to move through your process in productive and generative ways. While the research process is often messy (much messier than our quick Google searches suggest), taking time to question your intentions (even when they are in response to a fairly specific assignment) can help you think through your process more fully, to go beyond completing an assignment to see your work as a moment for making meaning. In this chapter, we'll ask you to reflect on what you know about doing serious research in a digital context, consider how you can build on the skills you've developed from your ordinary quick online searches to support an extended discovery process, explore what an effective research process looks like in today's academic environment, and to compose a proposal for

a research study that will let you find a foothold in the academic conversation this book has been drawing on.

Exploring: The Research Process in a Digital Environment

In Nicholas Carr's 2008 essay for *The Atlantic*, "Is Google Making Us Stupid?" (in Part II Additional Readings), he describes the advantages he finds, as a writer, to using internet search engines:

> The Web has been a godsend to me as a writer. Research that once required days in the stacks or periodical rooms of libraries can now be done in minutes. A few Google searches, some quick clicks on hyperlinks, and I've got the telltale fact or pithy quote I was after. Even when I'm not working, I'm as likely as not to be foraging in the Web's info-thickets reading and writing e-mails, scanning headlines and blog posts, watching videos and listening to podcasts, or just tripping from link to link to link.

At the same time, Carr cites research showing that online users of major research libraries "exhibited 'a form of skimming activity,' hopping from one source to another and rarely returning to any source they'd already visited. They typically read no more than one or two pages of an article or book before they would 'bounce' out to another site," and he wonders whether, as we spread our attention out across the digital landscape, we are losing the ability to read and think deeply.

Like Carr, and like most people today, you probably use the internet for research frequently in your daily life, using Google and other search engines to find quick answers to questions that arise about current or historical events, about games or movies, about singers and bands, as well as about topics you're exploring for school projects. These quick searches might not actually feel much like research, but they do show us how we relate to information—how we seek it out and how we interpret it.

Inquiry #1: Considering casual research practices

Observe your own uses of the internet for "research" purposes over a 24-hour period. What information do you search for? What search engines do you use (Google, Bing, Yahoo, StartPage, Answers.com)? What search terms do you use for each query? How many of the results do you click on? How do you choose them—by their position in the search results, by the familiarity of a resource or your past experience with it (e.g., Wikipedia), or by other criteria? How often do you move from the first link you click on to other relevant links suggested by the first? How often are you distracted by following links that aren't directly relevant to your initial query (and what gets you interested enough to follow them)? What else

do you observe that you think might be characteristic of your typical informal search behavior?

Observing your casual, everyday "research" process gives you a starting point to think about how you might approach a more intentional and sustained topic-focused inquiry.

Inquiry #2: Stepping into a more focused process

For this inquiry, you'll want to set aside whatever you think might be the "right way" to search online and just do whatever seems right to you at the moment. Begin your exploration by identifying a question related to our inquiry into digital literacies. Trace your process for that inquiry. Does your search behavior change from your casual search practices?

Making notes about your own thoughts as you proceed, try to find two informative and useful blog or website posts related to your inquiry. What do you use as search terms? Once your search generates pages of results, how do you decide which to pursue? As you go to specific sites, make notes about your own interaction with each site and how you decide whether to linger and make the site one of the two you'll choose. What captures your attention? What holds your interest? How does your interaction with the sites in this more focused and intentional search differ from how you looked at sites when searching more casually? What makes you feel that the information on this site might be reliable (or not)?

Then compare notes about your own processes with your classmates', looking for common elements in your search behaviors. What do the patterns you identify tell you about your most-used search practices and skills? What might you build on as you take on a larger academic research project? What might you alter? Did the different focuses and purposes of your searches affect your processes?

Evaluating Site Credibility

In considering your online research practices, you'll want to step back and think about how you interact with content online (Figure 20.1). What did you find that you look for when a casual search lands you at an online site? Do you grab the information and run, or do you linger and poke around a bit, trying to work out how much you can rely on the information you've found? What informal strategies do you use in your everyday searches for information to find online content you can trust? Once you've reached possible sites for information, how do you decide whether to spend time with them or move on? If you do linger, how do you decide whether to trust the information you find there?

Figure 20.1: Evaluating sources

The question of how people find information online they feel they can trust has been of concern to researchers in a number of fields from health care to marketing. There seem to be four elements that contribute to a sense of site credibility:

1. Position in search engine results, with the first results seen as pointing to more credible sites, even when the top links were marked as paid for. (Unfortunately, search result positioning is related to many factors—as can be seen by the controversy that erupts every time Google changes its algorithm for generating these results, and position is not a good determiner of site credibility.)
2. The visual appearance of the website: the interface design, including fonts, organization, and attention to detail.
3. The content: accuracy, relevance, and who posted it.
4. How the information on one site compares to that on others.

Other studies have shown that people searching for information about a particular topic online typically start with a rapid screening of their search results before focusing on a few in more depth. Once some promising sites have been found, searchers use several criteria to decide whether to trust the content. Those searching for medical information, for example, looked for the expertise behind the site (reputable medical organizations), how accessible the information was (FAQs helped foster trust), and whether they could identify personally with what was presented (with familiar language and more personalized content). Other factors may also contribute to your sense of whether a site is to be trusted.

Sidenote:

Researchers have found that searchers for medical information avoided pharmaceutical sites, not trusting that the information was unbiased.[17:5]

Increasingly, websites are tied into a larger textual ecology of linked sites and related social media, and information about both the site and its textual context becomes important to evaluating site credibility. Most university libraries offer information about how to evaluate websites for scholarly purposes, asking questions about audience and purpose, the website's authority (whether it has an institutional home like a university or government agency, for example) and that of any author, the accuracy and objectivity of the content, and its timeliness (look to see if your library provides such a resource). EasyBib, an online application for creating a bibliography, has created a visual guide to determining whether websites are credible (Figure 20.2).

Figure 20.2: EasyBib comments on website credibility

Andrew Walsh, an academic librarian, describes on his website his own additional criteria for evaluation of sites for more casual/personal purposes. He notes three important elements in his evaluation: how the authors introduce themselves; whether (if the author is affiliated with a commercial enterprise) the author's comments come across as "personal, honest observations or recycled corporate sales copy;" and whether and how an author uses social media:

> Also, are there social sharing buttons on the website's individual posts? How many times have they been retweeted, shared on Facebook or Google +1'ed across the web? Is it easy to leave comments, and do the authors respond to their readers?

Inquiry #3: Evaluating online site credibility

How do these ways that others have found to determine site credibility compare with your own informal processes? How important were the following elements to you?

- Position in search results
- Visual appearance and accessibility of information
- Content and apparent expertise
- How information compared across sites
- How much you could personally identify with what was presented

What would you now list as some elements to consider in determining whether to trust content you find online? As you look back at the posts you chose in Inquiry #2, how would you now evaluate their credibility for seeking general information in a casual search? For more focused but preliminary searches related to the research topic you'll pursue? Would you add any elements that you hadn't considered before? Can you create a rubric to guide others' evaluation of this sort of post (or the composer's revision of it)?

Working Systematically and Using a Research Platform

As you move from informal queries to sustained research it becomes important not only to evaluate the credibility of the sites you visit and the information they cover, but also to become systematic in collecting and organizing the information you gather and the resources you use. Considering how to do this from the beginning will help you to keep track of everything you need in the complex process of researching, from thinking about a topic to revising a final paper. It also positions you to be more intentional about your process and how you are thinking about your focus.

A research platform, a central online location like a blog or wiki that helps you organize your process, can support an intentional approach. Before deciding on a platform, you need to consider what you'll do with it. An effective platform should allow you to carry out two main functions.

1. Thinking and meaning-making: reflecting on possible topics, initial questions, how you're proceeding, what you're learning from data you collect and sources you consult, and how your own thinking about the topic changes as you go along.
2. Gathering and organizing relevant information: recording your process and methods, collecting data that can help you answer and refine your initial questions and can show you what others have learned from similar inquiries, taking notes from your sources, keeping track of the important information about those sources.

Both gathering information and thinking/reflecting/making your own meaning from that information are essential aspects of the research process, and researchers often distinguish between keeping a research diary or log for information and data-gathering and a research journal for thinking/reflecting. However, we'll combine both in our discussion of a **digital research journal**—a journal in which you'll move between one function and the other.

You can do all of your note-taking and reflection with paper and pencil, of course (or on the index cards that were traditionally used in such projects), but it makes sense, in the context of our larger inquiry into new literacies and the practices made possible by new technologies, to use a digital platform. There is more information about digital platforms in the Part IV Digital Toolbox, and your class might have access to others that will enhance or constrain your choices. Whatever you use, you'll want to be sure it supports the dual activities of information-gathering and reflection.

As both Nicholas Carr and the Pew Research Center Report we cite in this chapter suggest, slowing down your research is important, and a digital research journal can help you do that by creating a space to collect ideas and materials and reflect on them. This will help you move beyond "just tripping from link to link to link" as you engage "a relatively slow process of intellectual curiosity and discovery."

Inquiry #4: Starting a digital research journal

Consider platforms that are familiar from your earlier work and their strengths and weaknesses for collecting data, recording notes from resources, making key connections/understandings, and reflecting on your process and the information you're gathering. Based on your earlier work, generate a list of questions about what you think you'll want in a digital research journal, and then compare the platforms available to you. How easy might it be to organize your information/reflections using each platform? Does the platform support sharing your work in progress and gathering responses from others? Does it let you upload relevant documents? Is it familiar to you and easy to work with (or not) from your earlier experience with it? You might create a comparison chart for the platforms you're considering, with the features you most value.

While we and our students have used blogs, wikis, Google Docs, and the journaling options in different online course platforms like Blackboard, Canvas, and Moodle, our personal favorite for the sort of collaborative research and writing that went into this book is a wiki because it allows us to upload materials, share and comment easily, while adding new pages and changing the organization as a project takes shape. Here, for example, is a student's project proposal page for a project in one of our courses (Figure 20.3).

Figure 20.3: A student's project proposal page on a wiki

You can see from the sidebar navigation that she has integrated her proposal and her research journal pages with all the other elements of her project, while using the main part of the page to describe her proposal.

Reflecting on Prior Knowledge and New Questions

Although there are many, many questions you could ask related to the themes of this book, it's generally a good idea to follow up on a topic you've already begun to explore through your earlier inquiries. That way, you can build on your own prior knowledge, adding to it as you focus on a new or related question. Whatever process of data-gathering and/or analysis contributed to the understandings you've developed so far, as you further your research, you'll want to take into account what others have learned about the topic. Perhaps the Facebook examples in our early chapters and/or a community profile study that drew on your friends' use of Facebook has made you want to learn more about the use of Facebook among college students, for example. If so, you'll want at this point to consider what you've already learned that's relevant to this topic, what resources you've already found, and what more you want to discover.

Inquiry #5: Preliminary research journal reflection

Consider your own earlier inquiries into new literacies, social media, textual ecologies, and composing in local and global digital environments as you've collected data and composed reflections, analyses, and arguments. Identify one area in which your own work would be enriched by a deeper understanding of what others have discovered about this topic. What new questions have emerged through your earlier research that you might explore through the work of others, as well as, perhaps, through gathering new data? Why do you want to explore this topic? Do you think it will contribute to the knowledge of your larger community? Are others in your classroom community interested in related topics, opening up the possibility of collaborative research where you each explore a common

topic from different angles? Post this first reflection to your choice of research platform.

Considering Common Research Genres: The Ethnographic Study, the Archival Study, the Literature Review

There are many shapes and forms that the design of research and reporting on that research can take. We'll focus on three common genres in the academic world, two of which you've probably been working with in your earlier projects: the ethnographic study, the archival study, and the literature review. As we work through these chapters, we'll draw on an example of a student's community profile project from our Part I readings, "Bookworm Buddies" by Hannah Morgan, showing how Hannah might build on it as she expands her research.

Inquiry #6: Reading as a researcher

Read quickly through Hannah's community profile to get a sense of the online book group she has been studying and what she's discovered thus far about their interactions. How has she collected data? What patterns has she found? What has she learned from this study, and what questions might she explore with further research?

A distinction is often made between primary research, where you are making observations, gathering data, and doing analysis yourself, and secondary research, where you are drawing on and synthesizing the primary research and analysis that others have done. While ethnographic and archival studies are considered primary research, they typically draw on others' research as well, so a brief version of the literature review, surveying earlier research on your topic, is likely to be a component of these first two genres, as well as a stand-alone research genre. Other common methods of primary research (outside of science labs) include observation, gathering artifacts, such as photos, and texts, such as social media posts, interviews, and surveys; if you collect data in these ways, you'll also want to point to the research literature that has been published about your topic.

The ethnographic study

Ethnographic research focuses on the study of communities, the objects that are important to life in a community, and people's roles and relationships, their common activities and practices, ways of interacting, their discourse, their arts—everything that can be observed about their lives. Such research was shaped first within the field of anthropology, where often researchers went, as outsiders, to study distant

cultures in far parts of the world. But gradually the methods of ethnographic research were focused, not just on distant cultures, but on all sorts of communities in the contemporary world—in workplaces, educational settings, prisons, churches, and online gaming communities. And the methods are now shared across the social sciences and in the fields of composition and literacy studies, with the researcher often in the role of an insider participant observer.

Ethnographic research allows us to study the communicative practices of communities in a rich cultural context. For that reason, it has contributed important understandings to the fields of composition and literacy studies and to the study of how people interact in digital environments. Many of the studies you've read and projects you've undertaken, including those of Deborah Brandt, danah boyd, and Nancy Baym, have drawn on ethnographic methods.

If you decide to expand an earlier community profile or begin a new one, you'll want to gather your data on acts of communication in the community in systematic ways.

- Keeping an observation notebook as part of your research journal, noting the **where**, the context, and connecting the details of **what** you observe in any interactions or posts and with your reflections on **how** it's carried out and **why** it takes place in these ways. A double-entry notebook format with one column for observations and the other for reflections, is particularly useful for this purpose.
- Capturing the data of posts and exchanges with screenshots (as Hannah has done) or audio or video recordings. Again you'll want to make notes about the context, the **where**, for these instances, and the **what**, **why**, and **how**, and you'll want to transcribe any audio segments you'll focus on for closer analysis.
- Interviewing. Once you've gathered data and developed some preliminary questions and hypotheses about what's going on and why in your setting, you might want to get the perspectives of participants (or additional participants) in that setting. If you have a way to contact them individually, you might ask them to participate in an interview, online (using FaceTime or Skype) or face to face. You can also ask them to provide written responses to questions, but a real-time exchange allows you to ask follow-up questions or open up more exploratory discourse into related areas you hadn't thought of before.
- Surveying. You can also get the perspectives of participants by asking them to respond to an online survey that you can easily construct with a tool like SurveyMonkey. Surveys aren't flexible like interviews, and they are less connected to the original communicative context, but they can neverthe-

less be a quick way of getting information about the perspectives of a larger group of participants. For Hannah's study of a large online book group, a survey asking questions about when members chose to join in a conversation and why might offer additional support for patterns she's already seen or new possibilities she hasn't thought of.

Archival research

When a community, a group, or an individual gathers materials of any sort (including digital materials), those materials become available as resources to tell us more about past or present ways and meanings. Libraries may be the holders of archival collections of historical documents, the unpublished work and letters of a writer, and collections of historical photographs. Government entities typically have their own archives, such as the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration. and the Library of Congress. Universities often have archives related to their location and mission. University of Massachusetts Boston's Archives and Special Collections, for example, contain a wealth of documents and photographs and oral history interviews related to local community history and culture. Many such collections have been digitized, allowing easy internet access and searching, and the UMass Boston digital collection includes photos and stories shared by ordinary people around the state as part of an ongoing Mass. Memories Road Show. Your own college or university library may have similar collections that can support your own primary research project.

You might also have your personal or family collection of papers and/or photographs that can provide resources for an archival study. A digital collection, such as photos posted to Instagram, Picasa, Pinterest, or Facebook, can also be used as archives. In Chapter 6, we suggested some ways in which such resources could be used to engage in cultural analysis, and we considered José van Dijck's argument that photographs are being used in different ways and have different meanings for young people in a digital age. Materials you may have gathered and questions that may have arisen in that project can lend themselves to a fuller archival study. Or you might have gathered a collection of memes that have circulated in a particular context in your work for Part II and be interested in understanding that collection in relation to other research on memes and why they circulate.

Hannah's interest in her current book group might lead her to shift gears and do an archival study, gathering artifacts related to her own earlier reading experiences that might have involved childhood digital literacy or that might be contrasted to the digital experiences of a younger sibling or acquaintance. She could gather favorite childhood books she might have kept, her own early book-writing efforts for school, book reports she wrote in high school, photos of reading or being read to as a child at home or in a classroom, along with examples of the online reading

activities she or a young friend was involved in as a child. Archival collections often include oral histories, and she might want to record the digital literacy memories of her parents or siblings. Or she might treat her present library (physical or digital) as an archive, exploring the relationship between the fuller representation of her own reading and the portion that's represented in online discussions.

The literature review

When we think of a typical college-level library research project (whether we access materials in the library or online), it's most often the literature review we have in mind. This research genre focuses on discovering what others have learned about a particular topic (research that's secondary to you because you're not collecting the primary ethnographic data or working with the primary documents in an archive), and it involves drawing on their studies to answer your own questions and carry out your own explorations. It attempts to answer the question "What is the current state of knowledge about this topic?" A literature review component that quickly summarizes the most important, relevant recent work is typically included in other research studies, including ethnographic and archival studies. But the literature review often stands alone as well. If you have become interested in a question you might not be able to explore easily through your own primary research, such as how the use of digital media affects young children's development over the preschool years, you'll need to rely wholly on the work of other researchers (starting perhaps with the 2014 Harvard Family Research Spotlight Report: "Families and Digital Media in Young Children's Learning"[17:7]). Almost any question we've begun to explore in the context of this book can lead to a rich literature review study.

If she continues her ethnographic research, Hannah will search for literature related to online book groups, and perhaps other online groups like fan groups (she's already noted that some of the patterns she has observed echo those found by Nancy Baym). An archival study of earlier literacy artifacts might lead her to studies of children's literacy, or a study of her own print/digital library archive might lead her to learn more about what other studies show about why people choose digital or print formats, or about the recent history of changing reading patterns. Or she might become interested in the question of whether online book clubs can support the reading of middle and high school students, a topic she can't gather direct data for at this moment, but can explore with a more extended literature review.

We discuss the **how** of each of these research genres in more detail, but you'll want to consider which will work best for the questions you want to explore as you begin to plan your work.

We've seen several examples of studies using ethnographic methods: Deborah Brandt's study of Genna May's early twentieth century literacy, danah boyd's blog report on how Carmen hides her real concerns from her mother in her Facebook posts, Nancy Baym's study of the interactions of her online fan community in Chapter

8, and Martin Lindstrom's exploration of what children valued that might keep them involved with Legos from Chapter 16. Archival studies including José van Dijck's use of digital and "shoebox" archives of photos to study how uses of such artifacts are changing in a digital age (Chapter 6), and the various archives of Rosie the Riveter, both in the Library of Congress and on various websites and Pinterest boards (Chapter 14), offered a model for curating your own archival collection. Many of the larger books or articles from which we've drawn readings also include literature reviews.

Inquiry #7: Considering common research genres

Consider the features of ethnographic, archival, and literature review approaches and how they might fit your research interests and questions. Are your questions likely to be answered by gathering further data about a group in the ways you've done in many earlier inquiries (the ethnographic study)? Might they be answered by creating and working with a personal or community digital collection/archive of artifacts or by working with a collection held by a library (the archival study)? In each case, consider other examples we've looked at and notice how the writers have brought in other relevant studies, connecting to some of the research literature that already exists on this topic.

Alternatively, can your own questions be pursued wholly by focusing on the existing research literature or by putting that research literature together with data you've already gathered? In that case, you might choose to carry out a more extensive literature review. Explore the advantages and disadvantages of each type of study for answering the tentative questions you want to research.

Inquiry #8: Gathering more primary data

If your study will focus, in part, on primary data you've gathered, you may want to gather more as you begin to see what other research has been done that's related to your topic. Take a few minutes to describe what you've collected from earlier projects about the community and the question you want to study. Are there other sorts of data you might collect to give you a fuller picture?

Addressing Ethical Concerns

In gathering data, whether online or face to face, it's important to protect the identities of those you're studying unless they have chosen to make them public. We've gotten permission from students whose posts or studies we've included in this book, but we've also intentionally used pseudonyms in examples of students'

Facebook or other online posts, and for other writing if a student has requested anonymity. When a large group is included (as in a book group with more than 500 participants), full names aren't given and more personal information isn't shared, so there's less likelihood of a privacy concern. Ethical concerns about the use of online information when the writer doesn't know what he or she has posted might be used outside of the original context have been the subject of much discussion among researchers. We list a useful guide to ethics for social media researchers in the chapter resources.

For your own research purposes and in classroom contexts, it's generally safe to assume you can use material that has been made available to the public, on any platform, as long as you credit the composer of any original material. But sometimes people accidentally post publicly something they had only intended for private sharing, so it's important to check with friends and family members before using material that seems to include anything personal. If you're gathering unpublished writing or photos or friendship circle posts or audio files, you should ask permission to use them, specifying whether they'll be shared only in your immediate research context or perhaps on a blog or website that will be made public, and whether the person would prefer to be identified with a pseudonym.

Inquiry #9: Considering the need for permissions

If you plan to propose an ethnographic or archival study, this is a good time to review the material you've gathered or will gather, to make sure you are in a position to share it. Make a list of any materials for which you might need permissions and add to it as you go along. Create a simple form to use when permissions are needed, specifying what will be used and how. An email response is acceptable. See example in Figure 20.4.

I give permission to (your name) to use my Facebook posts of (dates) or my Instagram photo (description and date) for a course research project. This material may be shared

___with members of the classroom community only.

___on a closed online site within the college or university.

___on a publically accessible site.

I prefer to be

___acknowledged with my real name.

___identified with a pseudonym.

Signed: _____

Date:_____

Figure 20.4: Sample permission form

Making Connections: Locating the Relevant Conversations

Once you've identified a topic you'd like to explore in more detail, considered the type of study that will help you examine your focus in close and careful ways, and have generated some initial questions, you can begin to explore what other

research has been done that might relate to the topic. You'll want to find out where the conversations addressing the topic occur and what general understandings exist about the topic. In Chapter 18, we will focus more on how you can find specific sources of information and evaluate those sources as you consider new perspectives, but this chapter focuses on how you can learn more about your research project by locating your topic in a larger ongoing conversation. As you come to a richer sense of what you want to say, you should work to get an idea of what has been said before.

The Process of Seeking and Finding New Information

We conduct research and collect sources in informal ways quite often. When we meet a new friend, we explore her photos on Facebook; when we want to find a new restaurant to try, we read reviews. And our informal processes of finding information and evaluating what we find offer practice for doing the same in more formal ways in academic contexts.

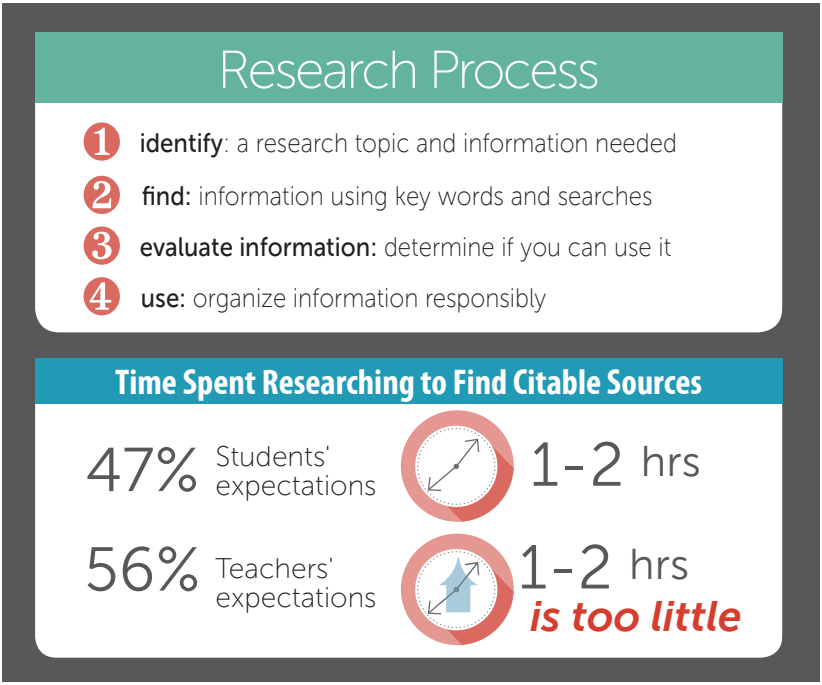
Inquiry #10: Building on your existing research strategies

Go back to your observations of your own "research" at the start of this chapter. What do these informal undertakings show about finding information, coming to a sense of consensus, evaluating sources, and allowing new perspectives to shape your understandings? What moves or strategies can you take from those experiences as you approach a more systematic research undertaking?

We hope you can see that these major moves of research are already part of your daily repertoire outside of the academic world. Nevertheless, it can feel overwhelming at first to make the transition from real-life research, and even high school research, to what's expected within the academic discourse communities of a college or university. Studies of freshman researchers have shown both that they have some useful strategies to draw on as they carry out a research project and that they find some things about their new context overwhelming. Like much else about learning, the experience of students as researchers has been studied, and the following excerpt from a 2013 study of almost 2,000 first-year college students at six different schools offers a sense of their concerns as they work through this process.

Before Reading: "Learning the Ropes"

As you read the following excerpt from the research report, annotate and comment on the elements that represent your own concerns, things you'd like to know more about, and things you feel pretty confident about at this point.



Selection from

"Learning the Ropes: How Freshmen Conduct Course Research Once They Enter College"[17:8]

by Alison Head

Project Information Literacy, December 4, 2013

Here's how the college research process is defined in the report:

The college research process involves interpreting, evaluating, and synthesizing the information sources that have been found. Through this discovery process, students become more knowledgeable about a topic. They are expected to make inferences and formulate an original proposition, argument, or what some students refer to as their "thesis." The expected depth of investigation combined with using primary sources makes college research time-consuming.

A critical part of college-level research setting it apart from high school research is the necessity of "re-researching" a topic. Like photographers, students need to focus on their subject and then adjust and readjust the focus, as needed, as the discovery process unfolds.

The expected depth of investigation combined with using primary sources makes college research time-consuming. It usually takes skill to integrate scholarly sources and infer a broader meaning from them. It takes curiosity and a desire to learn something new. It also takes keen organizational skills to keep track of and document everything that has been found.

And here are some students' reflections on their research process, grouped by the areas of concern the researchers found. If you've been experiencing any of these difficulties, you'll find you are not alone.

Difficulties with the College Research Process

1) Formulating effective and efficient online searches. A large majority said they were challenged by figuring out key words for unlocking the wealth of academic sources available to them through their campus library's portal. Some said they used Google in a two-step workaround. In the first step, these students did a Google search to see what key words popped up, and then they placed some of these terms in a library database's search engine. Others grappled with finding a preconceived idea of a "perfect source" they needed. These students often had trouble translating their perfect sources into key words that met the precise syntax library databases require:

> We had to do a paper about something that affects children in a negative way and I chose how moving affects children and their development and how they socialize with other people. It took me an hour to know what words to use. I was sitting there using my laptop and it was really hard because I was typing 'families that move a lot' and I saw nomads come up, and I thought, maybe nomads would be something, like 'nomadic families,' but that had nothing to do with it. It's that anxiety when you type in words and none of the words match the results and you're like, okay, let me try this, and you have a limited amount of time—that's a problem.

Grinding through endless screens and trying to cull relevant material was another frustrating part of search, according to many of the freshmen we interviewed. These students said if they could "crank down"—narrow—their search queries beforehand, they were more likely to reap useful results. But for many, searching on library database interfaces was entirely new, and it was difficult to figure out how different search engines worked. After spending years defaulting to Google searches for finding information, others said they were lost when it came to incorporating Boolean operators and faceted searching into their strategies:

> You have to really put in the right words into the academic search engine. Sometimes I'd put in a word like I'd do in a Google search and it pulls up things that I'm not looking for. The librarian came to our class and told us how to do this certain search logic, and so when you use that it is a lot easier to find the sources you're looking for. But, I've noticed that if you try to use an academic search engine like you'd use a Google search, it won't work as effectively, so it takes knowing how to different search engines work.

2) Identifying, selecting, and locating sources. A majority of freshmen in our sample said they were overwhelmed by the variety, quantity, and newness of potential sources available through their campus library:

> So, I'd go onto the Internet, click on library, click on e-sources, and, there would be all these different types of subcategories, and I was like, 'What do I use?' Do I use EBSCO or do I use Britannica or all these other things? That is what made it difficult, because I really didn't know which link to click on.

Unlike high school work, college-level research seemed to have an infinite number of ways to find sources, according to the interviewees. First-term freshmen often

described having floors of books, portals full of library databases, and scientific findings and sources from the public Web they could access for college-level research assignments. Some students were confused by the practice of combining familiar sources (e.g., books, Google) with unfamiliar sources (e.g., PubMed, JSTOR).

In other cases, some students had a hard time keeping track of notes, articles, and quotes from the different kinds of online and print sources they had found. In their words, hunting down print sources from a list of citations could be "tedious," "full of surprises," "unpredictable," and "confusing." Even though some said finding sources was easy for them, many often learned otherwise once they tried to locate specific sources:

> One of the criteria was to gather an outside source on your own and then a source that Deborah Tannen cites in her book. So, at first, it was kind of a challenge to go through the whole list of sources and try to find one of the sources here. Some of them were books and some of them were articles. I would find a book but then realize the library has access through some other library on the other side of the state and they could have gotten it but it would have taken weeks, and it wouldn't really help. Then, I found some articles with reviews, but it wasn't the full article, just some review. Some were here, but not here and were at different libraries on campus.

3) Reading, comprehending, and summarizing materials. Once they had some trusted sources in hand, about a third of the freshmen said they floundered with reading different formats and making sense of what they had found. Many had never seen, let alone read a journal article or an abstract before. At the same time, students wrestled with understanding what authors meant, given their lack of familiarity with scholarly language and writing style. A few students mentioned that they used an online dictionary as they read to help them understand the terminology in journal articles...about a third of the freshmen said they floundered with reading different formats and making sense of what they had found.

> It's the reading, deciphering what you've found that's most difficult. So, I used an online dictionary to figure out words meant for my paper on nanotechnology. I mean I read three sentences and I would need to go look up seven words out of those three sentences! It worked for me, I learned a lot from reading like this. It's the only way to understand what they are saying, I mean if you are not reading with a dictionary then you won't be able to get it. It's just what it takes.

Some freshmen we interviewed said they had trouble with selecting meaningful passages and tying it all together. In their words, they had problems "connecting the dots," "figuring out the hook," and "discerning what you're going to use." They purposely selected sources from the results page that had a common thesis or similar interpretation of the same set of facts, as a way of gauging the credibility. As one student explained, "I know if it's printed several places, then it's true and I can use it." In other cases, students had trouble selecting which quotes to include in their papers:

> How do you read a 30-page article and pick out a few meaningful quotes? I mean what is the right, exact quote to select and use? I am just kind of picking from here and picking from here and there for this paper. I just don't know. I mean is the writing I do in my composition course representative of the rest of the writing I do in college? ■

After Reading: Taking stock of your own experiences and understandings

How does the description of the research process offered in this report compare with your own understanding? How has your own prior research experience prepared you for such work? What strengths, understandings, and prior knowledge do you bring to the research you're undertaking, and what more do you hope to learn about the process as you pursue your topic? As you read this report, did you find that some terms, such as "Boolean operators" and "faceted search," were new to you? Generate a group or class list of search process questions and areas in which you'd like more guidance.

Inquiry #11: An informal online exploration

Drawing on one of your new questions about your research topic, begin an informal online exploration of relevant resources, keeping notes in your research journal about your process and strategies.

One way to keep track of relevant resources is to take screenshots of them and save them in a digital folder (which you can upload to your blog or wiki). Once you have taken and filed shots of 10 or 12 possible sources, look back at them. What do they seem to focus on? Who do they seem to address? What can you say about the images they draw on? The points they make? Based on this informal exploration, come to some tentative conclusions about your research focus. What might this suggest about where to turn from here?

Once you have completed and reflected on this informal search, share your findings with your classmates. You could do this by sharing your actual sources or just the notes you took about them. As a group, what conclusions can you come to about the research process after pooling your experiences and resources? What does this suggest about digital research on the free web? What strategies does it push you toward as you begin a more formal and systematic approach to your inquiry?

Chapter 21 will guide you through a more formal search process that involves the scholarly databases that the students in the "*Learning the Ropes*" report were concerned with. But for the moment, focus on your own "discovery process," and approach your research in an exploratory way, drawing first on your own prior knowledge and strategies.

Disciplinary Perspectives: Who Studies Related Topics and Questions?

Scholarly research is mostly discipline-specific. If you're interested in how and why college students use Facebook, for example, you'll find some studies in journals from the field of psychology and other behavioral sciences, some in computer and technology journals, some in journals in the field of education, and some in composition journals. General search strategies can offer useful material, and common resources like Wikipedia and Google can be used critically as a "prere-search" starting point.

Wikipedia offers general background information about a vast array of topics, but rarely for the sorts of combinations you might need to pursue. If you're interested in a question about "college students" and "Facebook," for example, you won't find an entry combining those terms, but you can get a lot of background information about Facebook, as well as a list of suggested related topics that include "social media." The social media entry addresses a number of topics, like loneliness or social media in the classroom, that could potentially be useful to you. Most Wikipedia articles are footnoted with references at the end, and the social media entry includes some sources that are included in our own readings, including the Gladwell essay on social media and revolutions. Such footnotes can offer a starting point for authoritative articles about your topic, even if the entry itself is the product of a more collaborative endeavor that may or may not have such authorities as contributors.

A search on Google using its general search engine (we'll discuss Google Scholar in the next chapter) is likely to bring up more short news articles and blog posts, but often these more popular texts reference academic research studies. A search on college students and Facebook can bring up news articles about students' use of this form of social media (and whether it's declining), about classroom uses, as well as Facebook pages from student groups at different colleges. A 2015 *Huffington Post* article[17:9] reports on a study showing that while college students from different backgrounds spend about the same amount of time on Facebook, those from lower socio-economic backgrounds use it less for connecting and communication. The article links to the original study and points out other relevant research, making even this popular news source a potentially valuable resource for some inquiries. Doing a search for the authors of research articles is also a way of determining how much of an authority someone is likely to be on the topic.

Inquiry #12: Searching the popular web

Use Wikipedia as a starting point for a search related to your topic. What topic searches provide useful background information? Do any entries point you to useful research reports or scholarly articles you might want

to follow up on? With a general Google search do you find articles that suggest where you might find further information? Check on the information you get through Google about one or two of the authors or researchers Wikipedia or your general Google searches point you to. Do you find information that leads you to think that their work might be authoritative and reliable sources for your own study?

Beyond the popular web, you can find an easily accessible search engine for scholars. Hidden behind the "more" tab on Google, you'll find a "still more" tab that will lead you to Google Scholar. (This is true on a computer screen, but not on a tablet, where you'll have to put in the URL scholar.google.com.) Google Scholar is, as its name suggests, is a wonderful resource for scholars, allowing a quick and easy search for a vast array of academic scholarship and research. Many of the articles that a search will bring up will appear in subscription-only journals, but those are often journals your library subscribes to in an online form, and your college or university library may provide a direct link from Google Scholar to those articles when you sign into the library portal.

One tool this search engine provides is the ability to see who has cited a source. This provides a sense of how a piece is situated in the larger conversations that go on around issues. If you were to search the key words "composition" and "circulation" on Google Scholar, you might notice that one of the texts listed—Kathleen Yancey's article "Made Not Only in Words"—has been cited by 129 other pieces or more. From that, you can tell this piece is important to many people's thinking about this topic.

Once you've found some useful articles through any of these resources, you can use the links that appear in them, their lists of works cited and references, and tools like "Cited by" to get a sense of how communities of readers form around topics.

Inquiry #13: Using Google Scholar to consider communities of readers

To explore the community of readers and scholars who might be involved with your topic, conduct a search on Google Scholar and select one source that speaks to your research interest. What other sources are linked to from this source? (If it is a digital text, it might contain links.) Who is cited? By whom is it cited? Does the journal it appears in (and/or the pattern of citations) link it to a particular disciplinary field? Who is invested in this issue? What scholarly community might you be addressing with your own study?

Inquiry #14: Reflecting on possible audiences in your research journal

Based on your investigation thus far, what can you say about the audience you might envision as you work through your research? What communities might be interested in your inquiry? What academic or professional disciplines might you be addressing? Depending on the direction she chooses for her further research, Hannah might imagine an audience of her online book group participants or those who might consider joining, or other researchers of communication in digital environments (including her classmates), or educators interested in supporting the development of literacy in digital environments.

Composing: Research Proposal

Now that you've done some preliminary thinking about what you know and might build on in your own study—the general topic you'd like to pursue and some questions about it—and you've started to see what kinds of research others have done that's related to your topic, you can begin to define your own project more clearly in a research proposal. As a researcher who will propose your own study, you'll want to consider both the type of project you'll undertake and the elements of the proposal genre. In your proposal you'll sketch out **what** you plan to study, **how** you'll go about it (your methods), and **why**—your purpose in carrying out this research and what you hope to learn and contribute to the shared knowledge about this field.

Research proposals are tentative plans of inquiry. Your proposal will offer a preliminary map for the project you are undertaking and contain your starting questions or hypotheses, the methods you'll use in trying to answer those questions, the data you've gathered or will gather, and what others have learned that's related to your inquiry. The typical research proposal includes all of these elements, although they may be addressed in different ways.

Inquiring and Inventing

Although research proposals are often seen as an impersonal genre, you may place yourself, as a researcher, within your research frame. You've chosen a topic that interests you, focusing perhaps on a cultural group or a digital setting or a set of artifacts, such as digital photos or videos; you've conducted a preliminary inquiry or have done some preliminary reading related to your topic in the course of your work for the semester; and you've begun to discover a little about what studies have been done that relate to your topic (and you've been recording your progress

in your research journal). All of that provides a rich foundation for your proposal: the context for its specific details.

1. **Freewriting about your research undertaking**

Before you begin to shape a formal proposal, do some freewriting about its context—about what you already know about this topic, why you want to go forward with this project, what interests you about it, a moment or quotation that led you to some questions, and what you think now that you've begun to find other sources of information. Some of this will most likely make its way into your introduction, but for the moment, just explore these thoughts freely, recording your thinking in your research journal.

2. **Considering your investment in this process**

After you have taken some time to compose some generative writing about your topic, consider what it is you are drawn to about this project in more specific terms. How are you positioned to research and write about your topic? What specialized knowledge or relevant experience do you bring to this project? How might your investment or involvement in this topic be reflected in your writing and design?

Drafting and Shaping

The research proposal has several purposes: it gives you an opportunity to plan and order your research; it gives you a chance to take stock of what you know, where you're going, and how you expect to get there; and it allows you to get feedback and guidance about your plan at an early stage. You'll be doing more extended versions of this work in your major field, and the proposals you write then will be shaped to fit the expectations of that discipline. Here we'll focus on what's common to most proposals.

1. **Compiling common proposal elements**

An introduction (**what**). Here you'll want to create the context, share your initial questions and hypotheses about your topic (which may well change as you carry out further research) and what you know to start, and tell your readers what type of study you plan to carry out.

A statement of purpose (**why**). What are your goals as you carry out this work? What do you hope to learn? Why do you think it might be important? Who might you share it with?

A description of methods (**how**). How do you plan to go about answering your initial questions? Here, if you're drawing on primary data you've already gathered, you'll describe what you gathered and how, and what you'll seek if you gather more. If you will only work with secondary material—with studies that others have already done—your methods will focus only on that effort, but in each case your methods

will include seeking out particular strands of others' research that can help you to answer your own questions.

A preliminary literature review. At this early proposal stage you can't say much about what you'll find as you dig into the scholarly literature on your topic. But you can point briefly to what you've found in your early searching and from any of the semester's readings to say something about what you know at this point.

A conclusion. Here you can say or restate what you hope to learn as you go about this research in these ways.

2. Outlining a proposal

For this highly structured genre, it can be particularly useful to create an outline to work from. Here's an outline for a proposal that Nancy Baym might have written as a student researcher just beginning to study her community of soap opera fans.

- **Introduction.** Background about the soap opera I watch and the online fan site that lets us discuss the story we're following. My questions about why and how people are involved in the site: I've noticed that people join our discussion at first because they're just interested in the topic. But they seem to become friends over time. Do aspects of their online interaction contribute to their becoming friends and forming a community?
- **Purpose.** I hope to learn more about how people form friendships and a community when they can only connect online and not face to face. I think this knowledge will help me to be a more effective member of this group, and it might contribute to general knowledge about how such online fan groups work.
- **Methods.** I've already collected transcripts of many of our interactions on the discussion site. I'll focus on those, and maybe collect some more that seem to show particular moves toward friendship, and I'll analyze them to see what specific moves participants make. I'll also carry out a review of the literature on the topics of fan groups and other online groups. I think there are differences between the ways men and women interact online, and since most soap opera fans are women, I'll see what I can find about those gender differences in communication. And since some of the interactions are negative—"Flaming"—I'll see what I can find about that topic.
- **Literature review.** So far I've found literature related to my topic in a journal on communication, so I'm thinking that I should search for more sources in that field, and maybe in psychology. From my preliminary search, I've found a couple of sources that might be useful. One is an article on "Making Friends in Cyberspace" (published in the *Journal of Communication*[17:10]) that talks about types of interactions that support friendship. The other one is about gender and style in online groups, in which the researchers studied discussion groups and found some differences. (This one, titled "Gender language style in group composition in Internet discussion groups," was published in the *Journal of Computer-Mediated*

Communication[17:11]). I actually hadn't thought about the issue of gender until I saw this article, but now I think it's an important thing to consider.

- **Conclusion.** From my research so far, I think I can learn more about how communication and forming friendships in online groups are related. Now that I see that gender may play a role in this communication, I might revise my initial question to focus more specifically on how women use their communication to build friendships and create community online.

Drawing on the imagined proposal we constructed for Baym, create an outline for your own proposal. Did you have to adapt these elements to fit what you are imagining you'll do?

With a good outline, you should be able to move on through a draft of your full proposal. The full proposal should let you formulate your own plan more clearly and use it to get feedback from peer researchers.

3. Defining your research question or focus

A strong proposal provides readers with a clear sense of **what** is being explored or investigated. As you explain your research focus, you can also work to narrow your topic and, as a result, the scope of your project. It can also be generative to frame your focus as a question you hope to address through your research, whether you are working with primary or secondary data.

4. Nodding to your purpose

Once you have explained your research focus, you should also consider and address the **why** driving this undertaking in your proposal. What do you hope to learn as you work through this inquiry? What new ideas or understandings do you hope to offer your readers? What will your project contribute to what is already known about a topic, setting, or conceptual question?

5. Describing your methods

In your proposal, you will want to give readers a sense of **how** you will address the research question you have articulated. How will you collect data? What kinds of sources will you draw on? How do you plan to arrive at new ideas in this piece? As you describe your methods, you should give your readers a clear sense of how you will move through this research project (though, of course, this plan will most likely change as you conduct your research).

6. Providing a sense of what others have said about this topic

By previewing other sources that examine similar research questions, you will be able to situate your work for your readers. So, by showing what others have said about your topic, you will help define a starting point for yourself. Think of this literature review as a place to say, "Here is what has already been said, and here is what I hope to add to this conversation."

7. Concluding your proposal

Your conclusion is a nice place to explain what you have learned from writing your proposal; it can be a moment when you show how the beginnings of your research process have shaped the plans you are making for this piece. This is also a nice place to point to the significance of your research, to explain why this is an important project, and why it is work worth doing.

Revising and Publishing

As you work on your proposal, you will most likely want other readers to have a look so you can discuss the what, why, and how of your project. Use these questions to guide that discussion.

1. 1nviting feedback

Ask a classmate to read your drafted proposal and comment on it using the following questions as a guide.

- Does the writer offer a clear line of inquiry, addressing all of the proposal elements?
- Does the study seem doable—are the questions defined carefully enough that it can be done in the amount of time available for this project? If not, how would you suggest focusing it more?
- Are there other aspects to the question the writer might want to consider?
- Are there other data or resources that the writer could use?
- What other recommendations would you make to the writer at this point?

2. Revising your proposal

Use the feedback you've received to revise your proposal. This is an opportunity to revisit and refine your plan, although you may want to refine it further as you begin a serious search through the scholarly literature, which will be the focus of the next chapter. You might also have discovered that others are planning to research closely related topics. In that case, you might invite some your classmates to also be co-searchers. Consider drawing on their findings as you revise your own project proposal, or consider working through a multipart project together.

CHAPTER 21

Finding and Evaluating Sources

Central Questions

1. Why and how do college students and faculty use academic databases for research? Now that you have identified a research focus and a conversation in an academic community you might be addressing as you report on your own study, how will you use the tools specific to academic disciplines?
2. What are the best strategies for stepping into the conversations academic sources invite as you read and respond to them?
3. How can you work with these sources to create an annotated bibliography that will prepare you to draw on them effectively in a final research report?

Chapter Preview

As Chapter 17 underscores, we use digital research strategies regularly, often to find information or resources quickly. Academic research, though, demands a different approach to collecting, managing, and synthesizing sources and information. This slow, deliberative process can feel antiquated in this digital age, but it is central to academic work and to careful, critical thinking. Stepping into such a process can feel foreign or overwhelming, especially if this isn't how you are used to conducting research. Students who were interviewed for the "Learning the Ropes" study discussed in Chapter 17 described three major areas of concern: formulating effective online searches, identifying and locating sources—scholarly articles that related to their own topic and questions, and reading and understanding what they found. Their concerns echoed those of many students, and in this chapter, we'll discuss those concerns in more detail.

As you worked through Chapter 17, you used the free web to gather sources in informal ways. In this chapter, we will highlight how you can use the scholarly web to continue this process and extend those skills you have already acquired by examining how to find, store, and analyze the sources you locate when you move through academic inquiries. The questions you're exploring have been studied before, and your own research will bring your work into conversation with the work of others, an academic conversation that takes place within the textual ecology of a scholarly community.

In your research proposal, you articulated what you hope to study and how you plan to collect information about a given topic; in this chapter, we'll investigate the

annotated bibliography as another research tool that will help you make sense of the sources that inform and shape your thinking.

Exploring: The Scholarly Web

The research proposal in Chapter 17 invited you to articulate the basics of a project: what you will investigate, how you will undertake this investigation, why this inquiry matters, and what it might contribute to current shared understandings. Actively working through that research, however, probably won't be as neat a process as your proposal made it sound, and you're likely to adjust your proposed topic as you move through this chapter.

Now that you have an idea of what you hope to discover, you will look to see what others have said about your topic. If you are working through an ethnographic or archival project, you will do this to contextualize your work, to show what others have found when looking at similar communities or artifacts, or to follow up on themes you discover. If you are working through a literature review, this exploration of what others have found will be central to your undertaking. Your goal is to see what has been said before about your topic. This process, though, this seeing what others have said, will most likely shift what it is you are interested in and will most likely help you refine your focus even further.

Seeking Sources: Using Library Databases

The academic libraries of colleges and universities serve as sites of communication about a vast world of knowledge that is accessed through databases. We'll begin to explore their place in the research process by considering what shared knowledge they represent and what shared purposes might be served in guiding you to make use of them, before we turn to more specifics of how to use them most effectively.

What is an academic database?

A database is a collection of information—of data—that's organized so it can be searched, managed, and updated easily. With vast amounts of data being generated and collected in every area of life, electronic databases that manage that information—whether health records or credit card transactions—have become essential to the functioning of modern society. Academic databases focus on the information that's most useful to researchers—particularly the information in scholarly books and journal articles, but also primary documents—and they are organized (often within disciplinary areas, such as the sciences or social sciences) so this information can be searched and accessed by users.

Academic libraries subscribe to databases that collect vast amounts of scholarship across disciplines in a searchable form. Such databases, which are only available to subscribers, form a layer of the deep web as opposed to the free, surface web of the public internet. The infographic in Figure 21.1 offers a visualization of the layers of

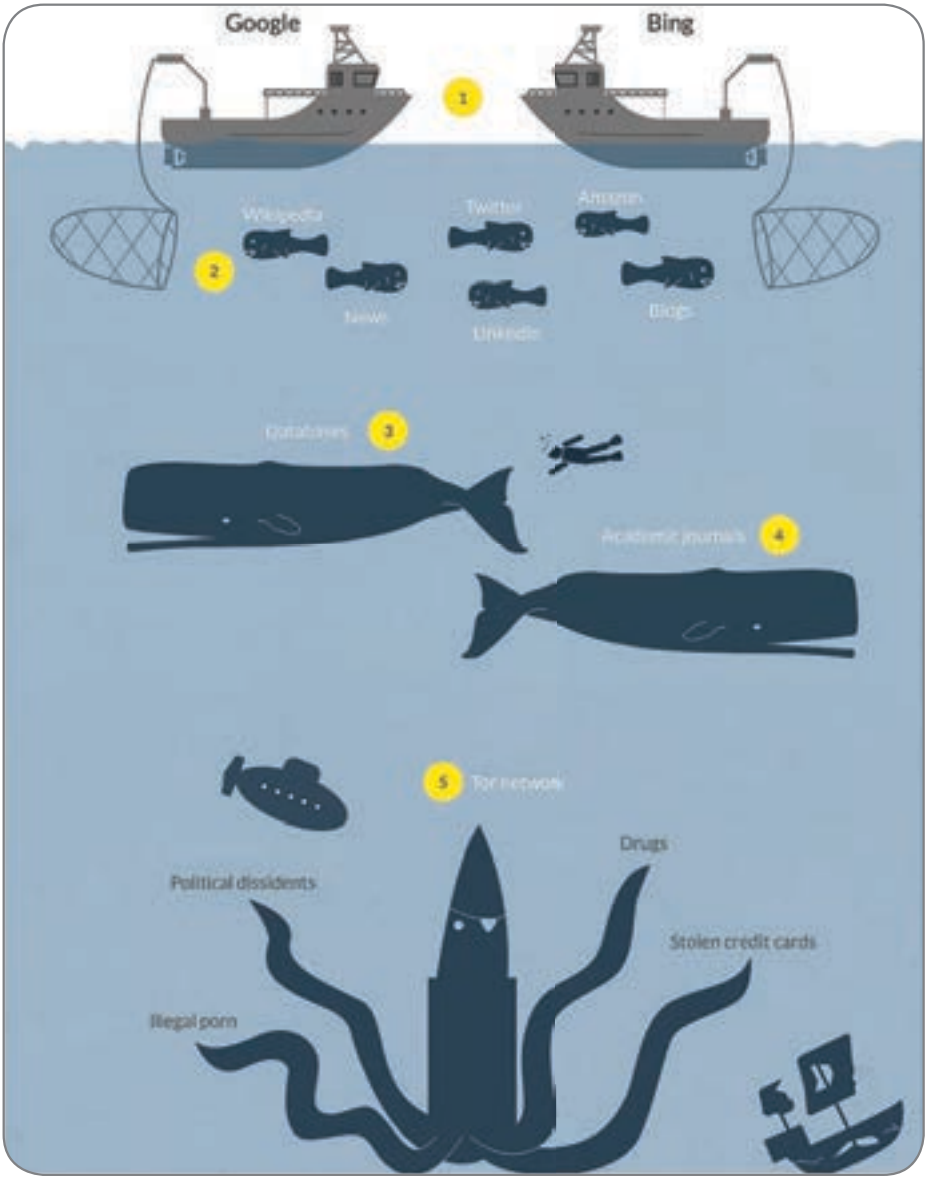


Figure 21.1: A CNN infographic of the deep web

information available on the internet, starting near the surface of the internet and moving down below to the deepest of the deep web.

Databases catalog or index an enormous amount of information that's not easily found on the free web (although Google Scholar points to some of it), and they typically allow paid subscribers to access full articles (Google Scholar can take you only to the access point for a lot of content, where you'll still have to pay). College and university libraries pay for access to these databases and the journals they in-

dex, and they make all of this content freely available to their students and faculty. So the place to start any serious research project is with your own school's library.

On your school library's website you will find links to general academic databases like *Academic OneFile*, or *Academic Search Complete*, and *JSTOR,* as well as more discipline-specific databases, such as *ERIC*, which is used by educators, *PsycINFO* for Psychology, *ProQuest Nursing & Allied Health Source,* or *ScienceDirect* (which includes journals related to computer science and indexes an important journal for us, *Computers and Composition).* Or your library might offer its own academic search engine that takes you to the resources of these databases.

Hannah's search

In Chapter 17, we saw Hannah using the public web to search for information that would contribute to her study of the online community of a book club. The starting place for the next phase of Hannah's search is the library web page at her university (the Kimbel Library at Coastal Carolina University[L18:2]), which supports research by offering an easy entry point called *Discover!* It offers a simultaneous search of the catalog of materials owned by the library, journals the library subscribes to, and databases (typically divided by discipline) that index what's available in these materials.

Your own library's website might have several entry points to these materials, rather than just one, but it should also offer you some guidance about the best way to begin your search from its site.

The *Discover!* search point at The Kimbel Library offers a box to enter search terms, so Hannah can begin her search with the key words "online book clubs," and she'll receive a long list of resources (a whopping 5,902 hits) related to those terms (Figure 21.2).

Image 18.2: A Discover! search on the Kimbel Library's website

Why use a library database?

Why might Hannah turn to a library's database search engine rather than Google at this point in her search, or why might her professor require her to do so?

As college writers, Hannah and her classmates are writing to enter communities of learners—whether they are the communities of students and scholars central to

her university (a community she'll gradually join as she works through composition courses and learns what is expected of that group) or the community central to a given discipline, of biologists, or journalists, or mathematicians. They will become insiders to a group organized around shared interests and ways of learning and talking about those interests. Using scholarly databases, which are usually prominent on universities' and colleges' library websites, brings them into the work of those communities and helps them enter a conversation that those in academic disciplines have been engaged in for a long period of time.

Sidenote:

It might be helpful to map out some of these sources as you consider the fields interested in this line of inquiry and to add to that map as you go along.

The sources included in these databases are typically articles published in academic journals that reflect the ongoing scholarly conversations of various fields. And each academic field is a discourse community in its own right, so these conversations provide a significant sense of the shared knowledge, understandings, and ways that are important to a given field (or a subset of a field). As you become further invested in a given field (and develop a sense of what is expected of and known by insiders to a field), you will most likely come to know its key journals (as compositionists, we often turn to journals like *College Composition and Communication*, *Computers and Composition*, and *Composition Studies*) and will use these as a starting point to see what others in your community have said about a topic or issue.

The first three hits that came up for Hannah's *Discover!* search were pieces published in the following journals: *The Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, *Partnership: The Canadian Journal of Library and Information Practice and Research,* and *The International Journal of the Book*. The first of these journals is from the field of literacy studies, while the next two are from the area of library science. Often a larger topic, like online book clubs, will be approached by scholars from different disciplines, using different methods and pursuing different aspects of the topic. As you collect academic sources, consider the disciplines that seem to address the research topic you are studying by noting the journals publishing this work. That will help you contextualize your topic a bit as you consider who thinks about it and why. You will begin to get a sense of the larger textual ecology related to that topic—the various journals where the topic is being addressed, the fields they're connected to, and some of the specific articles—which will often cross-reference one another.

A search of Hannah's topic in *JSTOR*, a general database that is particularly strong in indexing articles related to the larger general area of language and literature, brings up the same article from *The Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* and two others from library science journals in the top results, but also returns

two articles from *The English Journal* about working with online book clubs in an English class. And the database *Communication & Mass Media Complete,* because it indexes different journals, brings up a different set of articles, including several from *Publishing Research Quarterly,* but also one from a conference of the *International Communication Association* about coercive control in online book clubs. As you conduct your research, use different databases and see what these results can show about disciplinary conversations.

Hannah's Scholarly Search

Initial search term	Library databases used	Journals accessed (sample)	Articles found (sample)
"Online book clubs"	Discover!	*The Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*	"Online Book Clubs: Bridges Between Old and New Practices"
		Partnership: The Canadian Journal of Library and Information Practice and Research	"Book Buzz: Online 24/7 Virtual Reading and What We've Learned About Them"
		International Journal of the book	"Forming Online Innovative Communities in the Book Publishing World"
		The Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy	"Online Book Clubs: Bridges Between Old and New Practices"
	JSTOR	*Middle School Journal*	"Research into Practice: Digital Collaborative Literacy: Using Wikis to Promote Social learning and Literacy Development"
		The English Journal	"Wiki, Wiki, Wiki—What? Assessing Online Collaborative Writing"
	Communication & Mass Media Complete	*International Communication Association*	"Invoking the Power of Book Club: An Investigation of Concertive Control in an Online Community"
		Publishing Research Quarterly	"From Obscurity to Bestseller: Examining the Impact of Oprah's Book Club Selections"
		Information, Communication & Society	"Richard and Judy's Book Club and 'Canada Reads' Readers, Books, and Cultural Programming in the Digital Era"

Not all of these articles will be relevant to Hannah's interests, and she'll want to refine her questions and search terms, but seeing what research might be available can help her see that she's most interested in the social dynamics of these online groups.

Articles published in academic journals like these have most often gone through a peer review process, which is, in many ways, similar to the peer review you have used in your writing course. Scholars compose articles that contribute to a larger conversation in a field and submit them to journals that have published other pieces

focusing on similar lines of inquiry, questions, or methods. After an editor decides that a particular submission would be a good fit for a given journal (and often pieces are rejected because they aren't good fits and the writers need to find a better "home" for them), the draft is then sent on to a group of reviewers—insiders and experts in the field who read the piece and offer responses and revision suggestions for the writer(s). This process grounds these pieces firmly within the conversations of a larger disciplinary-specific discourse community as the reviewers read submissions in light of what has been published before and in light of what a larger group of academics might expect from a piece.

If we look for internet researcher danah boyd's work on teenagers' uses of social media, we'll find that she has published on this larger topic in a number of different journals across several disciplines: those focusing on research about communication and new media (*New Media & Society*[18:2]*),* others focusing on research about young people (*Journal of Youth Studies,*[18:3] *Journal of Children and Media*[18:4]*)*, and still others focusing on legal and policy concerns (*Policy & Internet,*[18:5] *Surveillance & Society*[18:6]*),* among others. In each instance, the journal brings her work into a specific type of conversation, even as she uses her underlying data to address the concerns of that discipline. But her work is most firmly anchored within the larger area of the social sciences, and much of it is available on the *Social Science Research Network* database.

Undertaking academic research, then, is a gradual entry into a research community. As you read more about how others have approached similar threads of inquiry, you will learn more about your topic, but you will also learn how others in the field pose questions, collect data, present results, and position their work in light of what has come before. This kind of research helps you become familiar with the discourse central to an academic community and with the processes central to how that group makes meaning.

Inquiry #2: Exploring a disciplinary database

While your topic might bridge disciplines, you can often find useful resources by beginning with a disciplinary database. Choose a database from a discipline that might be relevant to your topic, and use your same search terms to see what sorts of articles from which journals it shows you. If you have trouble identifying an appropriate database, contact a librarian for help. At many colleges and universities, librarians can be reached over email, by phone, or (at times) over text.

At this point, Hannah might take a few minutes to explore her initial findings before she gets too far along in her research. Maybe she would decide that much of what shows up in this first general search doesn't address her real interest of how new members are welcomed into existing online communities, a topic she also

points to in her earlier community profile of "Bookworm Buddies." So, while the project she outlines in her research proposal might be a bit different than the line of inquiry she actually investigates, she might actually be more invested in the new direction her research has suggested.

As you collect and read sources of information about your topic, you will most likely come to understand the points you want to make in richer ways, but you might also have to rethink your research topic or question in light of what research already exists or doesn't exist. Like the research you engage in on a day-to-day basis more informally, the more academic approach you use when collecting sources for a paper should still be a flexible process. You want to allow what you are finding (or, in some cases, what you can't seem to find) to shape your topic as you continue to refine your project.

Collecting Sources

One of the challenges identified by the students interviewed for "Learning the Ropes" was "formulating effective and efficient online searches."[18:1] Their real challenge was coming up with the key words that would lead them to the kinds of sources they needed. In fact, many of them started with Google to find the key words that would lead to more relevant sources on academic databases. While this might seem like an unnecessary amount of work—searching on Google to find the precise language to build a search around—it was most likely, for some of these students at least, a productive process. While your initial key terms might not be as precise as you might hope (Hannah's search phrase "online book clubs" serves as an example), they can offer a starting point. By refining your key words as you search (by noting how others have named the topic or phenomenon you are considering), you will find new sources as you create the opportunity to reshape the ways you think about a topic. Here are a few useful research strategies.

- **Formulating a research question.** A question or set of linked questions can help you to move beyond your initial broad topic. (e.g., Why do people join online book clubs? How do people communicate in them? How are topics introduced and managed? Do online book clubs share patterns of interaction with other online groups?)
- **Using your question/s to generate some key words.** In this case, "online groups," "communication," and "social interaction." You can pair key words with quotation marks, so that instead of bringing up articles with the key word "online" and articles with the key word "groups," you get only those that combine the two terms. And you can keep adding to your possible key words as you go along.

- **Using quotation marks.** By putting quotation marks around "book clubs" in her initial search, Hannah could have narrowed down her results by about one-fifth (Figure 21.3).
- **Nesting multiple phrases within parentheses and combining terms with the word AND.** For example, search "online groups" AND communication to bring up articles that address both topics. (AND, OR, and AND NOT are referred to as *Boolean operators*. Be sure to capitalize them.) You can learn more about them and other ways of thinking about your search terms with these search tips[L18:3] from UMass Boston's Healey Library. By searching for "book clubs" AND "reading clubs" Hannah can find sources that use either term (see Figure 21.4 on next page).
- **Using the tools provided by the databases themselves.**
  - Using JSTOR to search "online book clubs," Hannah can find 4,181 results (Figure 21.5).
  - By selecting the "Journals" tab, she can narrow those results to 3,754. She could also modify her results by choosing a particular date range for articles, or particular journal names.
- **Seeking help from a librarian to find the best strategies.** Librarians are experts in the discourse of searching, and helping others find information is an important part of their role. You can usually call, chat, or email a question if a face-to-face meeting is impossible.

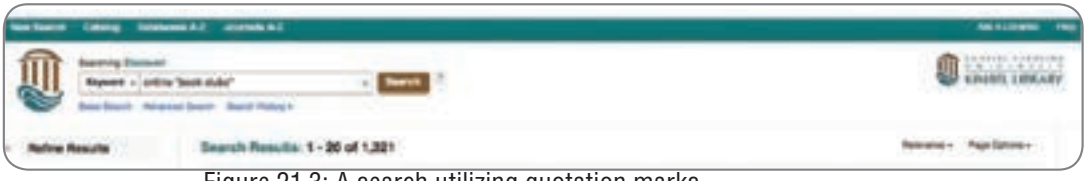


Figure 21.3: A search utilizing quotation marks

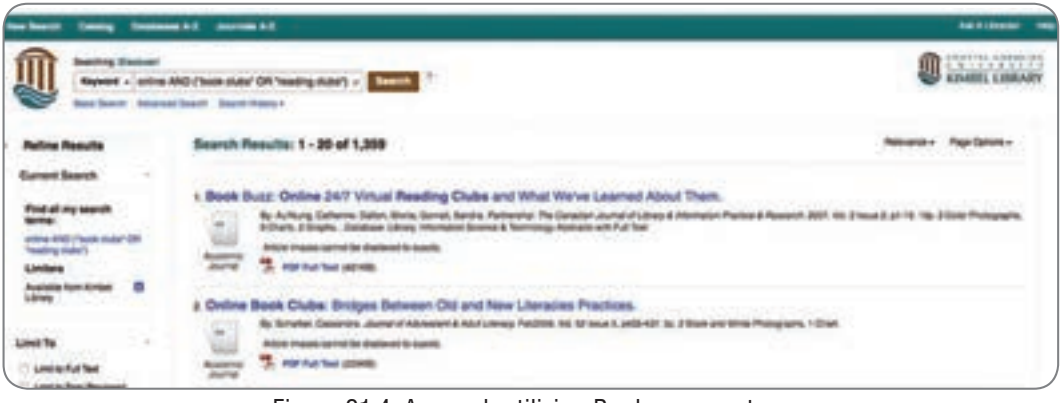


Figure 21.4: A search utilizing Boolean operators

Inquiry #3: Reflecting on your search in your research journal

Use these strategies to further your search, and record each step and the results in your research journal. As you do this, note what you learn about your research topic and about the research process in more general terms.

Evaluating Sources

While the strategies described above should help you find sources that are relevant, you are still going to come across pieces you won't want to draw on in your work. The students surveyed in "Learning the Ropes" talked about being overwhelmed by the sheer number of potential sources a search returned. Remember, Hannah's initial search uncovered more than 5,000 results! While narrowing your key words will help with this, you will still need to evaluate each source you find and decide how much of your attention it deserves.

- Your first step will be to give each of the most promising sources a quick look to see if it is worth saving. Read the title and, if there is an abstract (a brief overview of the article), read that as well.

  Let's turn again to Hannah's initial search of "online book clubs" (Figure 21.6).

Figure 21.6: Discover! search results for "online book clubs"

- Even just after a quick glance, it seems like the first article that initial search returned is promising. The title, "Online Book Clubs: Bridges Between Old and New Literacies Practices," speaks to Hannah's interests in clear ways, and the fact that it is an academic article published in a journal that focuses on literacy also suggests that this is a strong fit for

her interests. The third result, though also an academic article, seems like less of a fit. Hannah is more interested in reading communities than she is in the world of publishing, so she might not want to investigate that source further.

- As you read through abstracts, you will also want to evaluate the relevance and credibility of the sources you have come across. Do this by looking to these elements.
  - **The authors.** Do they seem knowledgeable? Trustworthy?
  - **Site of publication.** Is it reputable?
  - **The information.** Does it match up with the information presented in other sources?
  - **Citations.** Do they cite other relevant sources?

You will also want to question the "authority" represented in your sources. If your article has been published in a peer-reviewed scholarly journal, you can assume that its authors speak with authority about their subject. But you might find potentially useful material that you are uncertain about. By doing a web search on the author's name, you should quickly be able to find more information about his/her background and credentials.

Hannah's source

Hannah can find one potentially useful source, "Invoking the Power of Book Club,"[18:7] on the *Communication & Mass Media Complete* database, but it's a conference paper rather than a published article, so she might be less certain about its authority. Although conference paper proposals are usually peer-reviewed, the process is not as rigorous as it is for articles.

The abstract notes that this is an ethnographic study and that it focuses on the interactions of an online community in which the participants refer to themselves as a book club. The abstract points to familiar types of interaction, and although the "theory of concertive control" is unfamiliar, overall the abstract suggests that the paper will be both understandable and relevant:

> This paper is an ethnographic study that examines the normative control mechanisms that develop in a self-organizing **online** women's community. The findings portray **Book Club** as a close-knit, highly personalized community regulated by a powerful system of informal norms and characterized by concertive control. Members engaged in collective forms of discipline such as pile-ons, reinforcing collective memory through posts about past infractions, building consensus through back-channel communication, and unobtrusive control through ironic appropriations of technology. The findings reveal that the theory of concertive control can be extended to nonwork, **online** contexts and have implications for CMC and **online** community theory as well.

The database link doesn't include the name of the author, but Hannah can do a web search for the paper's title and discover the authors are Jennifer Gibbs and Heewon Kim. A further search on those names shows that Jennifer Gibbs is a professor in the School of Communication and Information at Rutgers University, and that Heewon Kim is a doctoral student there. The site of publication is the conference of the *International Communication Association.* The abstract suggests that the content might fit with what has emerged from other studies of online communities, and a quick skimming of the references at the end of the paper shows that several of the articles cited are by Nancy Baym, the researcher whose study of online fan communities was excerpted in Chapter 8 of this book. So everything points to this as a relevant and reliable source for Hannah to include as she works toward creating an annotated bibliography for her research.

Inquiry #4: Evaluating sources

Using Hannah's steps as a guide, evaluate several of the sources you've found. What can you say about how reliable these sources seem?

Managing Sources

Once you have found some useful and reliable sources, you need to think carefully about how to keep track of them and of what you're learning from them as you mine them for information and organize your research materials. You will be crafting careful summaries of your sources that examine your own thinking, and there are several tools available to you for organizing this sometimes messy process.

➤ **Bookmarking tools.** Delicious, Diigo, and Zotero are resources that allow you to bookmark references you find and might want to come back to. You can use tags to categorize a resource in several ways.

The "Invoking the Power of Book Clubs" paper can be tagged with the words "book clubs," "online communities," "online interactions," and any other terms that might be useful for retrieving the information later.

- **Delicious** lets you share these resources with others.
- **Diigo** allows you not only to bookmark and tag and share resources, but also to annotate the resources you find and to organize your material.
- **Zotero** allows you to do these things and keeps your references in a form that allows you to create correctly formatted bibliographies easily.

All of these tools save your materials in the cloud, so you can access them from any computer.

- **Bibliographic tools.** Zotero, EasyBib, and EndNote are commonly used tools that can help you create citations. EasyBib, as the name suggests, makes it especially easy to enter the bibliographic information for the works you are citing and to generate a correctly formatted bibliography, and the MLA version for the format that's most often used in the humanities is free. Be sure to double-check the citations you create using these tools, though, to be sure they are formatted correctly.
- **Writing and organizing tools.** As you develop your thinking about a project, you're likely to want a tool that lets you keep adding and reorganizing pages as you work. This becomes even more important if you are working collaboratively, researching and writing with a team. Using an organizational tool, like a wiki, to store notes and ideas in a form that's easily shared can help streamline your research process. Wikis, like Wikispaces (Figure 21.7) or the PBWorks wiki, allow you to create a variety of self-designed pages. Using these to organize ideas, possible sources, guiding questions, and digital resources, for instance, can help you organize and reorganize your thinking, either on your own or collaboratively.
- **Document storage and retrieval tools.** You can save Word files on your computer or a memory stick, but it can be convenient to keep them and share them on an online site, like Dropbox.

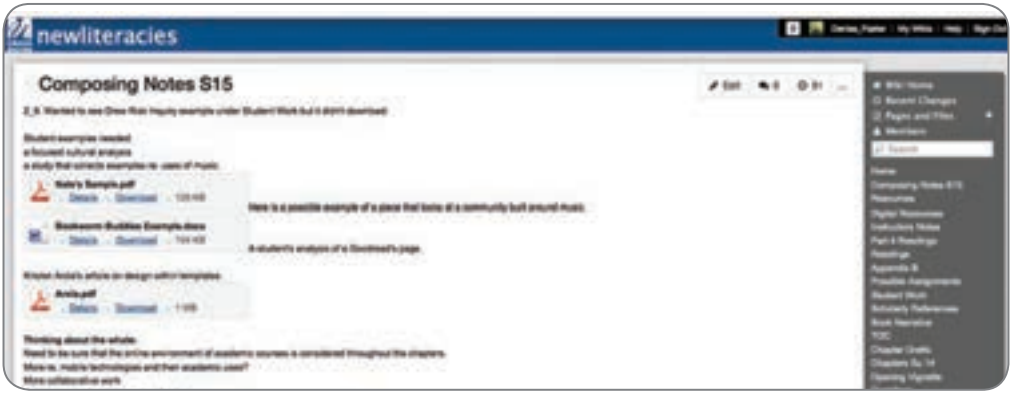


Figure 21.7: An example of process notes shared on a wiki

Avoiding Plagiarism Through Planning and Organization

Colleges and universities are rightly concerned with academic honesty—with making sure that all members of the community make clear when and how they are drawing on others' work in their own and with punishing intentional violations. Here's a typical definition of an academic honesty violation—or plagiarism—from UMass Boston's website.

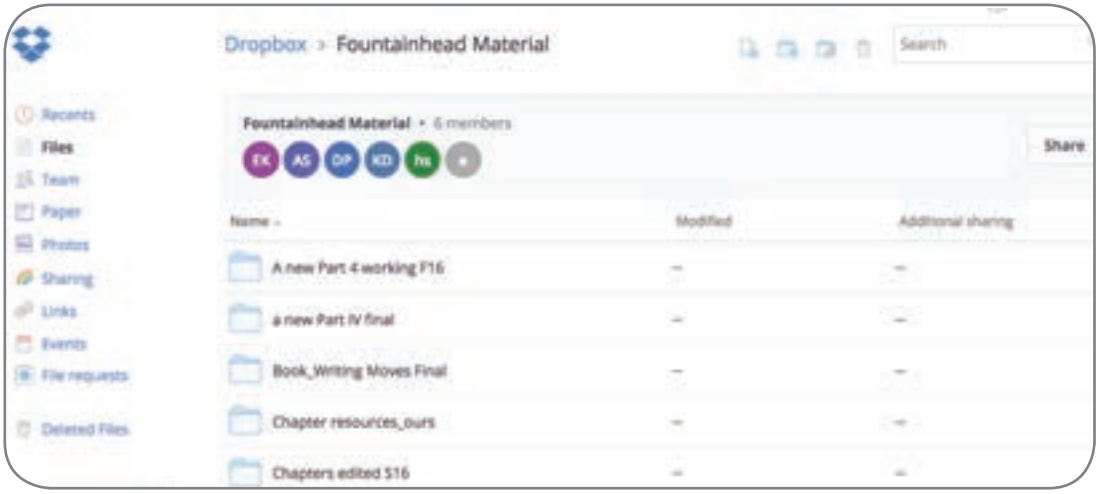


Figure 21.8: Dropbox allows you to create and share folders on the cloud

> Submitting as one's own an author's published or unpublished work (e.g., material from a journal, internet site, newspaper, encyclopedia), in whole, in part, or in paraphrase, without fully and properly crediting the author.

The internet has made the policing of such violations pretty easy. Many teachers now require that you submit your papers through antiplagiarism software, like Turnitin and SafeAssign, which is designed to catch any unattributed uses of others' scholarship (including past student work) or internet sources. Even a quick Google search on a phrase is likely to tell a teacher where that phrase was used before. So intentional plagiarism is increasingly likely to be found.

But much unacknowledged borrowing isn't intentional. Sometimes it's just careless, and there are some specific strategies you can use to avoid accidental plagiarism, working carefully with your sources from the start. Other times it arises from uncertainty about how exactly to integrate others' words and ideas into your own work, and we'll discuss that below. (You can read more about avoiding plagiarism in digital contexts in "Addressing Plagiarism in a Digital Age.")

In the information-gathering stage of your work you'll want to do the following.

- Plan ahead, keeping clear citation information for all sources you think you'll draw on (since writers who are pressed for time are more likely to have gaps where information is missing). Save this information, either in an electronic file or by printing your source pages, along with the URL and the date of printing.
- Keep a separate file for information from each electronic source, putting material you might quote or paraphrase into that file, rather than cutting and pasting information straight into an essay.

- Keep your own writing drafts and the files of information from your sources separate throughout the writing process.
- Keep notes on your own process in a research journal or log. This can serve as a source trail, allowing you to reconstruct your own path from sources, to notes, to drafts, to revisions.

Inquiry #6: Reflecting on strategies for avoiding plagiarism

Reflect on how your organizational tools and strategies will help you to keep track of citation information and the words and ideas that come from your sources. What "best practices" seem most helpful to you as a researcher and writer?

Making Connections: Entering the Conversation

As the students quoted in the "Learning the Ropes"[18:1] study make clear, locating, evaluating, and managing sources is a time-consuming and complex process, but it is well worth your attention because the time you spend with these texts will help you extend and contextualize your thinking about your research topic or question. By seeing how other writers have approached a given topic (by paying attention to the questions they pose, the kinds of evidence they collect and analyze, the language they use to talk about a topic, and the conclusions they come to), you will feel ready to add to this "conversation," to share your own ideas, perspectives, and conclusions. In fact, this process of connecting to and mining sources is central to the construction of new meaning.

Taking on the ways of communicating that are central to a community you are entering or coming to new ideas by critically examining what others have said will not happen unless you question the **what**, **why**, **how**, and **where** of the sources you collect. Most of us are used to quickly scanning texts for information—especially those pieces we read on the screen. But quickly scanning is mostly useful for determining whether or not a source is potentially valuable to your project. Reading for understanding and to make connections takes time and attention.

Reading Research Articles

The students interviewed in "Learning the Ropes"[18:1] noted that "It's the reading, deciphering what you've found that's most difficult." Reading is difficult, in many cases, because students are reading texts written for insiders to communities they are just entering (as, for instance, they write about internet privacy for an ethics class and try to react and respond to texts written by and for accomplished philosophers).

Chances are, you will collect sources that are a bit beyond your grasp. Most academic texts are written for other scholars in a field, and these texts will most likely use terminology and language that can be hard to follow. The authors of these texts might assume a lot of shared knowledge—familiarity with a field that you just don't yet have or references to other studies you haven't read. But even if you struggle with a text, even if you can't follow some sections, you can still read for general understanding of the whole, for connections with your own work, and for links to other resources. What you want to keep in mind is that you are reading to learn more about your topic; you are reading as a writer who is looking for ideas to build on in your own text.

#7: Reading for exploration

Here are some steps you should find helpful as you begin this exploratory reading:

GETTING STARTED. Select one source you have found that seems a bit foreign to you but that you think will be potentially useful. If possible, choose an article that represents the type of research project you are engaged in—an ethnographic study, an archival study, or a literature review—so you can see from the ways in which this article is structured how you might structure your own report. Begin by reading the abstract, if there is one, or the opening paragraphs if there isn't. What do you learn about the focus of this article, the questions being explored, and how the writer(s) will proceed?

MAKING YOUR MARK. As you begin working with this source, decide how you will "mark" it. Will you make notes in the margins? Will you keep notes in a separate notebook or file? Will you insert digital comments (using, for instance, a PDF reader)? You'll want to mark both the points you do understand and might use, and those you need to make sense of, including unfamiliar terms.

LOOKING AT ALL TITLES AND HEADINGS. What do these titles and headings tell you about what is included in this piece? What do they show about how the text is organized? What do these pointers to particular sections suggest about what you, as a reader, might be interested in and might bring to a reading about this topic?

READING THE FIRST PARAGRAPH IN EACH SECTION. What does each initial paragraph tell you about the central elements of this presentation of research? About the progress of the writer's argument? What are the main conclusions the writer brings you to?

FINDING CONNECTIONS. Look at the citations made throughout this text. Do they point to other sources you are familiar with? If so, how does the writ-

er seem to use them? If not, are there any additional sources you should track down to enrich your understanding of this topic?

CONSIDERING EVIDENCE. Now that you have a sense of what this piece is about and the kinds of claims made in it, question how they are supported. What kinds of evidence do the writers use? What points does the evidence support?

MINING THE SOURCE. Return to your source for a careful rereading. What might you use from this source in your own work? Pull out key terms you might draw on and quotations you might use in your own text, and mark them in clear ways. (The double-entry notebook introduced in Chapter 7 is particularly useful for this purpose.) Then comment on these. What do they contribute to your thinking or the points you are being drawn to as you work through your own research process?

Hannah's choice of article

The conference paper on "Invoking the Power of Book Club"[18:7] can be explored with these strategies. It includes an abstract, which gives enough information to suggest its usefulness for Hannah's purposes, including the fact that it is an ethnographic study, like Hannah's own. Following the abstract is a list of key words—terms the writers have selected as key concepts that others might use to have this paper come up in their searches: computer-mediated communication, concertive control, social norms, online communities, unobtrusive control.

The article's title makes it an obvious possibility for inclusion in Hannah's list of resources, and its headings and subheadings show how these writers have structured their presentation. These include the following.

- Introduction (with a review of relevant literature)
- Norms in Online Contexts (with a review of specific studies that address how groups create shared norms for behavior in these contexts)
- Methods (ethnographic with participant observation—becoming a member of the group, and textual analysis—the analysis of the words posted online)
- Findings—including several italicized subheadings that highlight major points or ways in which members of this group work together to exercise control of participants' interactions:
  - Concertive (collaborative) discipline through pile-ons (which they define, on page 24, as "a recurring genre of posts designed to build and reinforce collective memory of a shared history")
  - Building/reinforcing collective memory
  - Building consensus through backchannel communication (communicating through private messages)

- Unobtrusive control through appropriation of technology (e.g. using emoticons)

➤ Discussion
- Theoretical implications (where they focus on "concertive control")
- Limitations and future research directions

Reading the first paragraph of each of these sections gives readers an idea of what will be discussed there. For example, the first paragraph of the section on Norms in Online Contexts points out that researchers saw evidence of shared social norms as a sign that a community had been created, and that earlier studies documented this. Hannah can be pretty sure that the rest of what follows in this section will be a review of these earlier studies.

The writers of this article make a number of points that connect to what Hannah has discovered in her "Bookworm Buddies" study: she has already noticed that the structure of the group might influence its interactions, that group members might or might not be judgmental, and that there are both explicit and implicit rules for interactions. Gibbs and Kim make points that reinforce and provide additional support for what Hannah has found, and they point to new elements, such as some specific ways in which the members collaborate to shape the discourse, which Hannah might look for if she returns to gather more data or do more analysis.

The evidence the writers have offered for concertive control (peer control based on the group's shared understanding of implicit rules and values and ways to enforce them) includes specific examples of the four ways they saw this control being exercised, the four categories of interaction. This evidence not only supports their argument, but also can show Hannah the sorts of interactions she might look for when she returns to her own data.

Finally, there is much that Hannah might pull from this article for her own work. For example:

- She might quote the definition of concertive control, being careful to copy the writers' words exactly and to place them in quotation marks:

  > According to Gibbs and Kim, "Concertive control is a form of peer influence that arises in participatory, flat structures without formal leadership in which members collaborate and work 'in concert' to reach a 'negotiated consensus' on the ideas, norms, and rules that will guide their activity and work processes" (4).

- She might paraphrase Gibbs and Kim's summary of other research about norms in online communities, putting much of what they say into her own words:

ORIGINAL: Although these studies are about online communities in general, they clearly illustrate that social norms emerge through online interaction and play a significant part in building and managing communities. In particular, they describe both newly developed technological norms and existing social norms imported from offline society that are used to control people's behavior online (pp. 7–8).

PARAPHRASE: Studies of online communities have shown that they develop social norms through their online interaction, drawing on social norms from other offline communities and new norms that are shaped by the new technology to control participants' online behavior (Gibbs and Kim 7–8).

She might summarize what the writers say about Baym's integrative model of online community (itself a summary). Like a paraphrase, a summary involves putting the writers' ideas into one's own words, attempting to capture all the main points in a sorter form.

ORIGINAL: The integrative model of online community by Baym (1995, 1998) provides a better understanding of unique aspects of online social norms. First she describes not only explicit but also implicit online social norms as a property of online communities. According to Baym, normative conventions are constructed through group interactions; moreover, norms are continually reinforced by creating structural and social sanctions against people who abuse those norms. Also she argues that norms are manifest in a group's language patterns based on her analysis of agreements and disagreements (Baym, 1996).

SUMMARY: Gibbs and Kim draw on Baym's (1995, 1998) integrative model of online community for understanding online social norms, noting that she describes these communities as having both explicit and implicit social norms, that the norms are constructed through group interactions, that they are reinforced through sanctions, and that they can be identified through language patterns.

She might briefly reference a finding that either echoes or contrasts with what she has found:

In the online book club that Gibbs and Kim studied, members worked together to discipline violators of social norms in ways that were often "quite harsh," with many members "run off" because of their violations. In contrast, the group I studied was consistently welcoming and respectful.

Hannah has already made some of these moves in her earlier "Bookworm Buddies" study. There she has drawn on two sources: danah boyd's "Learning to Hide in Plain Sight," our reading from Chapter 3; and an article she's found by Stacey Koosel, "Ethnographies of Social Networks."[18:9] She *summarizes* Koosel's main point before noting the contrast to what she has found:

"Koosel discussed how people can be reluctant to share their identities and personalities on a social site, for fear of backlash from those who view it."

And, assuming her readers' shared knowledge of danah boyd's article, she points to a contrast between boyd's finding and her own:

"None of the members of this community use any form of steganography in their comments (boyd). While they may at times send each other private messages, usually to let the person who started the thread know that they will not be able to participate in the buddy read, everything that they write in the comments is intended for others to read. What they write is what they mean, there are no hidden messages."

As you work with the sources you've found useful, you'll want to draw on them carefully in these ways.

#8: Working with other texts

Following Hannah's model, interact with some of your own sources in careful ways. Be sure to summarize, paraphrase, and quote from your sources as you show how they intersect with your thinking about your topic.

Mining Sources while Avoiding Plagiarism

When you are entering a new scholarly conversation (by finding and reading a set of sources about a topic), a new field, and a new setting (as you write for college courses), it can be hard to stake your own ground in a text and claim enough authority to write from your own perspective and position. Working with others' words is a necessary step in learning the discourse of a field, and others' words and ideas are essential to your own research as you use those ideas to support or expand your own thinking, or use your own work to challenge what others have said. But bringing others' work into your own writing requires careful attention to how to use them appropriately and how to credit your sources, showing exactly when and how you are building on others' thinking.

One way to think about the process of building on the ideas of others is to use the analogy of music, as Wayne Rhodes has done in his essay, "Love and Theft: Borrowing to Sound More Like Yourself" (in Part III Additional Readings). Rhodes, who is both an English professor and a musician, considers how the blues tradition has worked for musicians like Muddy Waters, who heard songs from the cotton field and songs from other singers until his own song "fell into his head."

The blues tradition or "folk method" Waters describes is what drives creativity and innovation in popular music. Go to YouTube and listen to the Chiffons singing "He's so Fine," and then go to George Harrison's "My Sweet Lord." Listen to "Who's Been Talkin'," by Howlin' Wolf, and then to Carlos Santana playing "Black Magic Woman." For something more recent, listen to Articolo 31's "Come una Pietra Scalciata" which builds a new song around Bob Dylan's "Like a Rolling Stone," or to

The Grey Album, by Danger Mouse, which takes the Beatles' The White Album and remixes it with vocals from Jay-Z's The Black Album.

Clearly, the later songs are influenced by the earlier ones. Yet, each song is distinct, a new creation built upon what came before. Depending upon the artist's skills, the "copy" may be as indispensable as, or even more significant than, the "original." And just as the old song made the new one possible, the new one provides fertile ground for what will follow.

Drawing on the work of Lawrence Lessig (Chapter 9), Rhodes goes on to talk about how a similar process of drawing on earlier work for a new and creative "remix" occurs in other fields—in medicine or especially in law, where legal briefs are built on earlier cases, remixing those prior cases to make an argument that is new—a necessary process for creating new knowledge. He ends by explaining what he wants for his students:

I want my classroom to copy the fashion designers, lawyers, and musicians. I want to tell my students to go ahead—be Woody, sing his songs, stand in his boots, adopt his accent and his biography, smoke his brand of cigarettes, pose like he does in photos. That's not theft—that's love . . .

Later, when student writers have nearly finished their project, before the official release or publication or evaluation, they can see their work as being just like Muddy Waters' blues. Now they can take their Alan Lomax readers on a tour of the cotton field where it all came from, the place where they heard it, learned it, made it. Documentation now takes on new meaning and significance. Let me show you how I did this thing I'm so proud of.

So Hannah can "remix" the ideas she gathers from her sources, mixing a little from here and a little from there (she might now draw on Baym, as well as Gibbs and Kim) and adding her own new understandings, until she has something that builds on the work of others and yet remains wholly her own. But she still has to acknowledge them and her use of them, just as musicians must do, crediting and paying earlier songwriters for the work they cover or the familiar hook they incorporate (and thus avoiding copyright violations). And to be more than a cover band, they must use what they borrow to create something new.

With a mix of quotation, summary, and paraphrase, Hannah can weave the understandings she's gained from her sources into her own work, being careful always to cite those sources and to include them in her final list of works cited or references. Creating an annotated bibliography from the most useful sources she's discovered, in the ways suggested in the Composing section of this chapter, will help her to find the right balance.

In addition, if her school has a license for SafeAssign or Turnitin, she can submit a draft, when she's ready, to see what matches to others' work the software finds—to see whether she's inadvertently used another's phrasing without marking

a direct quote, whether she's relied too heavily on one or two sources, or whether the density of her use of others' words, even if correctly quoted, paraphrased, and cited, outweighs what she's adding to the mix. And she can review the report with others, to see whether the software has highlighted phrases that are common in the field and don't need specific citations, like *discourse community* or *digital literacy*, and what she might want to change or add.

Sidenote

Highlighting common phrases as if they were plagiarized is a frequent problem with plagiarism software.

Inquiry #9: Using plagiarism software as a revision tool

Submit some of your preliminary writing about one of your sources to SafeAssign or Turnitin in draft mode and see what information you get back. Work in small groups to interpret these responses and to think about how to avoid any indications of plagiarism. If your college doesn't subscribe to these tools, work through one another's paragraphs to see what your own examples tell you and where more careful work with a source might be required.

Composing: An Annotated Bibliography

What is an annotated bibliography, and why is it useful to your research? It's a bibliography, a list of citations for books, articles, and other sources, but it goes beyond a simple list; each citation is accompanied by a brief annotation that both describes the content of the work and suggests something about its usefulness in relation to the writer's larger research purpose. It's often used to show that you're familiar with the key research literature about a topic, but it's also a useful way of keeping track of the key points of sources you've found and reminding yourself of how those points might contribute to your own work. Two people's annotations for the same article are likely to differ, depending on their own projects and purposes.

Hannah's Annotation

Here is an annotation Hannah could write about the conference presentation we describe earlier in this chapter. As you read this example, try to name some of the moves Hannah could make while commenting on this source. How does she draw on Gibbs and Kim's ideas and words by summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting? How does she evaluate or critique this source? How does she describe and represent their work? How does she put it in conversation with her own study? With other ethnographies of online communities? How does she question its authority? Comment on its relevance? Also, notice how this annotation helps Hannah think through this source in careful ways.

MLA FORMAT:

Gibbs, Jennifer and Heewon Kim. "Invoking The Power Of Book Club: An Investigation Of Concertive Control In An Online Community." *Conference Papers—International Communication Association,* 2011, pp. 1-30. *Communication and Mass Media Complete.*

APA FORMAT:

Gibbs, J. & Kim, H. "Invoking the power of book club: An investigation of concertive control in an online community." (2011). *Conference Papers—International Communication Association,* 1–30.

This ethnographic study focuses on the interactions of an online community, which the participants refer to as a book club. By examining how the members of this close-knit community establish and maintain community standards, the presenters are able to analyze how this women's message board community functions. In my own study, I plan to question how roles, topics, and relationships are negotiated in an online discussion of books, so this presentation provides me with a rich model as it gives me a clearer sense of the kinds of conclusions other ethnographers arrive at as they study online communities built around an interest in books.

While this is not an academic article (which would have been peer reviewed), the presenters are credible and authoritative sources: Jennifer Gibbs is a professor in the School of Communication and Information at Rutgers University and Heewon Kim seems to be one of her doctoral students.

One of their main findings is that members are shown how to act on this site through "concertive control," which Gibbs and Kim define as "a form of peer influence that arises in participatory, flat structures without formal leadership in which members collaborate and work "in concert" to reach a "negotiated consensus" on the ideas, norms, and rules that will guide their activity and work processes" (4). So, in this online book club, members worked together to discipline violators of social norms in ways that were often "quite harsh," with many members "run off" because of their violations. In contrast, the group I studied was consistently welcoming and respectful. What does it mean that in the online community I am studying "concertive control" was not needed to establish a sense of how to participate in the group?

In addition to conducting an ethnographic study, Gibbs and Kim also provide an extensive literature review in this presentation. In fact, they cite Nancy Baym (whose work we read this semester). They explain that studies of online communities have shown that they develop social norms through their online interaction, drawing on social norms from other offline communities and new

norms that are shaped by the new technology to control participants' online behavior (7–8). This pushes me to question whether the nature of the community I am studying, the "Bookworm Buddies," is a result of its digital nature, or if this online community is extending the shared ways of more traditional book clubs.

Creating an annotated bibliography allows you to pay attention to the conversation you are entering as you read, consider, and write about each of the sources that informs your thinking about your topic and research undertaking. Depending on the size and scope of your project, you'll want to select and annotate at least five to 10 of the most promising sources you've found. You'll want to select sources you think will be useful in showing what work has been done that's relevant to your research, that can complement and further your own understanding, or that you might want to counter with your own work.

Inquiring and Inventing

As we stressed in Chapter 17, an academic research process should allow for time. Instead of jumping quickly from source to source, as we often do while executing more informal research tasks, you should slow down your reading as you carefully question what and how each source contributes to your thinking about your topic. That is, you should "listen" to each source carefully and with intention. To do this, you will want to consider the general goal (or project) central to each source as you narrow in on the particular points or specifics that seem especially meaningful to your own thinking. You can see each of these moves underlying the "Hannah's Source" example above. We can turn to another article that looked promising from Hannah's search to see them more clearly.

Scharber, Cassandra. "Online Book Clubs: Bridges Between Old and New Literacies Practices." *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* 52.5 (2009): 443–437. Discover! Web. 15 June 2015.

1. Articulating the bigger picture

To provide a broad sense of what each source is working to accomplish, comment on the **where**, **what**, the **how**, and the **why**.

- The where: Where was this piece published? What does this publication venue suggest about its intended audience and/or the academic conversation it engages and works to extend?
- The what: What argument, point, or position is central to this piece?
- The how: How was the research carried out, and how does it support the argument, points, or position established? What do you notice about how this piece is composed?
- The why: Why do you think this work is presented in the ways that it is? For what audience and purpose?

As you describe a source's means of distribution (its where) and main focus (its what), nod to how it is composed (its how), and consider its purpose (its why), you will most likely compose a solid summary of it. Including such a summary in each annotation is important, as this is a key way to introduce each of your sources to your readers.

Where: Published in the *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* in 2009, "Online Book Clubs: Bridges Between Old and New Literacies Practices" engages an audience of professionals interested in teaching reading strategies. This fairly recent article's focus on a digital book club helps readers (including teachers) to consider how social interactions around reading can be supported on the web.

What: Scharber argues that book clubs, which promote reading as "social engagement," can encourage a generation that is reading less to read voluntarily (433).

She also suggests that book clubs that occupy digital spaces can use emerging technologies, which are often connected to a decrease in reading, to encourage reading in digital natives.

How: She conducted research on online book clubs hosted by a public library and showed that the participants liked the social activity supported by chats on the site (hosted on the learning management system, Moodle).

Why: She is addressing those interested in adolescent and adult literacy, using what's been learned in public library settings to show the value of online book clubs and to suggest they could support literacy in school settings as well.

2. Tending to the specifics

As you continue to listen to each source, move beyond a general description and pay attention to some of the more focused points made that speak to your research interests and questions. To do this, you might paraphrase particular points by putting them in your own words. When you paraphrase, you pay attention to an idea presented in another's writing as you share that thinking using your own words and voice. You will want to be sure to cite the page number you draw from and to be sure to introduce it (by saying something like, "According to Gibbs and Kim") to make it clear that this is another's idea you are working with.

When you want to maintain the voice, style, or phrasing of one of your sources, you will quote specific points made. By drawing someone else's actual words into your annotation, you can do interesting things with the rhythm and pace of your writing as you move between your voice and another writer's. As with paraphrases, be sure to introduce and cite quotations to move readers in and out of them in smooth ways.

> Scharber found that "The club members did not know one another prior to the club, and they found the chat to be a place to get to know the other kids and make 'e-friends.'" (435)

3. Evaluating each turn in the conversation

Once you have presented both the big picture and discussed more nuanced points through paraphrasing and quoting each of your sources, you will also want to evaluate them. How helpful do you find a source? What hesitations do you have about drawing on it? What seems especially intriguing or interesting about it? Use your annotations as a place to consider the value of each source as you question how each speaks to your concerns, interests, and undertaking as a researcher.

> The book clubs Scharber studied were different in nature from the thread I investigated on Goodreads, but her finding that the preteen girls she studied liked the online chats and became "e-friends" seems to support my conclusions about the welcoming nature of book discussions.
>
> Otherwise, Scharber's study was not as useful as others, because she presented very limited data about this online book group. She gave some examples of the girls' interactions but didn't analyze their exchanges.

Drafting and Shaping

At this point, you have described your sources, considering what they accomplish and how they inform your thinking. To question how they work together to provide you with a larger sense of how scholars, researchers, and academics consider your topic, you will want to think about how they work as a set. So, you'll want to return to each source and consider how it contributes to the larger textual ecology made up of your sources.

1. 1 Synthesizing sources

How do your sources seem to speak to one another? In what ways do they extend one another? Where do they seem contradictory? In what ways can they complicate or enrich points made when they are read together?

At this point, you'll want to return to your annotations and consider what points you might come to by establishing some connections among your sources. How (and where) might you be able to put sources in conversation by looking to intersecting notions, examples, and implications they suggest?

Hannah can find such connections between these new articles, Nancy Baym's study of an online fan group (Chapter 8), and the study by Koosel[18:8] that she cited in her earlier "Bookworm Buddies" paper (Part I Additional Readings).

> Both Gibbs and Kim's and Scharber's studies show that a friendly environment is an important element that keeps people involved in book-club-type spaces. Baym, too, found that the online fan group she studied was maintained in part through a welcoming and friendly atmosphere. Sharing some personal information seemed to help maintain that environment in each case. Koosel found that artists also shared such information online in building a Facebook community.

2. Stepping into the conversation

At this point, you will most likely feel a bit more comfortable speaking with (and possibly back to) your sources. By commenting more on what each source contributes to your developing stance, you can figure out your role in this larger, ongoing conversation you are entering. How does each source shape your thinking about and approach to this topic? How do you see yourself using these sources in your text? In what ways do they fit into the picture of your research?

> Koosel, in her study of how artists negotiate their digital identities on Facebook, found that the artists she interviewed said they changed the way they interacted with others over time: "posting content that was deemed appropriate and fun to share in the beginning, became more censored, less personal and, professionally oriented in the end." So it might be the case that what participants contribute to maintaining an online community over time might be different on different sites, or with different purposes. That suggests a new aspect of the "bookworms buddies" interaction to explore.

Though your individual annotations should focus on your sources, you can also add to your annotated bibliography, using it as a place to begin to tease out the ways in which your thinking is developing and bringing in the connections you see and the questions they might prompt you to ask.

3. Including complete bibliographic information

As you compose your annotations, be sure they follow the conventions of this genre. Have you followed a particular citation style (such as MLA, APA, or Chicago Manual of Style)? Do you introduce and cite all paraphrases and quotations? Have you organized your entries alphabetically? Do you provide all bibliographic information for each source your discuss?

Revising and Publishing

Sharing your annotated bibliography with others provides you with an opportunity to consider additional perspectives, to get a sense of what others might notice about the conversation these sources construct.

1. Following conventions

Before sharing your annotated bibliography, be sure it follows the conventions of this genre. Have you followed a particular citation style (such as MLA, APA, or Chicago Manual of Style)? Do you introduce and cite all paraphrases and quotations? Have you organized your entries alphabetically?

2. Asking for input

As you solicit input, have your classmates consider both the ways in which you present your sources and how you seem to pay attention to the larger conversation they construct.

- Is each source summarized?
- Are specific points considered in careful ways?
- Does the writer move between sources, synthesizing their ideas to see how they speak to one another?
- Is the writer's stance discussed throughout these annotations? Is a sense of how the writer will join and contribute to this conversation provided through annotations?
- What else might this writer need to know about this topic? What might round out the conversation formed by this textual ecology?

3. Final annotation

Here is a final annotation for Scharber's article, with careful attention to the points made in that piece in relation to Hannah's own line of inquiry.

> In this brief article, an entry in the "Digital Literacies" column of the *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, Scharber argues that book clubs, which promote reading as "social engagement," can encourage a generation that is reading less to read voluntarily (433). Further, she suggests that book clubs that occupy digital spaces can use emerging technologies, which are often connected to a decrease in reading, to encourage reading in digital natives. Based on research she conducted on online book clubs hosted by a public library, Scharber argues that the participants liked the social activity supported by chats on the site (hosted on the learning management system, Moodle); she also claims that digital book clubs would work well in school settings. While the book clubs Scharber studied were different in nature from the thread I investigated on Goodreads, she also found that "The club members did not know one another prior to the club, and they found the chat to be a place to get to know the other kids and make 'e-friends.'"(435). This seems to support my conclusions about the welcoming nature of book discussions.

An added reflection on the connections between sources and the new questions they might pose would bring in both the synthesis of what Hannah was finding in #1 of "Putting Sources into Conversation" above and her own entry into the conversation in #2.

This careful conversation with sources will provide the underpinnings for the work of shaping and synthesizing research that we address in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 22

Choosing and Integrating Evidence

Pinpointing Chapter 22

Having explored in Chapters 8, 9, and 10 the various choices writers make in developing, structuring, and designing arguments, Chapter 22 focuses in depth on the hearty substance that drives argument: evidence. The evidence writers choose to advance their arguments, and the ways in which they integrate evidence into their arguments, enable them to accomplish the purposes they set out to achieve with their arguments. To provide you with strategies for *choosing and integrating evidence in transit*, this chapter addresses the following concepts:

- What is Evidence?
- Purposes for Integrating Evidence
- Questions that Shape Integration of Evidence
- Criteria for Effectively Integrating Evidence
- Featured Strategy for Integrating Evidence: the MEAL Plan
- Examples of Integrating Evidence

Chapter 12 will then build on these aspects of evidence by addressing citation practices surrounding evidence. For writers, citation works in concert with the selection and integration of evidence as a way of conveying to readers as robustly as possible a full record of their research and the disciplinary perspective informing their approach.

> I was there entirely alone. Not a soul stood even on the road below.... I was literally astounded. The light began as a thin pencil and widened to a band of about 6 in. There was so much light reflected from the floor that I could walk around inside without a lamp and avoid bumping [against]...the stones. It was so bright I could see the roof 20 ft above me.... I expected to hear a voice, or perhaps feel a cold hand resting on my shoulder, but there was silence. And then, after a few minutes, the shaft of light narrowed as the sun appeared to pass westward across the slit, and total darkness came once more. (Michael J. O'Kelly, 1967)

So describes Professor of Archaeology Michael J. O'Kelly of the moment he confirmed the local legends he had long been hearing about the mysterious illumination that purportedly transpired at Newgrange on each winter solstice. O'Kelly had witnessed

a remarkable event at this Neolithic structure in Ireland where, at precisely, and only on, the winter solstice, for a period of approximately 17 minutes, a swath of direct sunlight enters through an opening in a small "roof-box" and "penetrate[s] down the passage to [fully] illuminate the central chamber." Tourists now flock to Newgrange each December to witness for themselves the annual winter solstice that so brilliantly marks the onset of winter (McKenna-Lawlor; Murphy).

The precise alignment visible each year at the winter solstice demonstrates keen Neolithic astronomical ability. Once thought to be exclusively a burial mound, Newgrange features a large, dome-shaped roof and a striking triple spiral design located at the entrance. Newgrange was constructed over 5,000 years ago, in approximately 3200 B.C.E., by a "farming community that prospered on the rich lands of the Boyne Valley." Nearby, "wattled huts" remain, providing evidence for how these Neolithic settlers and their forebears also hunted salmon, eels, and waterfowl from nearby rivers (McKenna-Lawlor).

Farming and hunting as it turns out, connect deeply to the winter solstice and help explain why those who built Newgrange did so with such archaeoastronomical precision. Some maintain that Neolithic farmers may have honored astronomical events such as the winter solstice and "worshipped…sky power" as a way to curry favor with the Gods and therein "ensure better food supplies."

Other researchers have found evidence attesting to the hypothesis that food might have motivated ancient astronomical alignments (Munson). Archaeologist

Maria Reiche, for instance, has found such evidence at the Nazca Lines in Southern Peru: "The geometric drawings [at Nazca] are directed toward horizon points marking the rising and setting of the heavenly bodies…[They] most likely served to mark the sowing and harvest time, and [guide the more conservative] distribution of food during the dry period of the year." Likwise, the winter solstice illumination at Newgrange may have served as a harbinger of winter for the hunters and farmers, signaling them to prepare for winter, store food, and adjust farming techniques to accommodate the change in season.

Each winter solstice, therefore, the ancient Neolithic people of Newgrange read evidence from the solstice alignment to conclude that the winter had begun. Today the archaeological evidence from Newgrange and the excavations of other such sites yield evidence suggesting that the archaeoastronomical alignments may have been part of ancient traditions affiliated with hunting, farming, and food storage and preparation.

Exploring the evidence surrounding food and the Newgrange winter solstice actually generates a productive lens through which to consider evidence more broadly, as in the context of academic writing. Evidence in this broader context retains a metaphoric affiliation with food: it fuels arguments, sustaining, nourishing, and generating them, and thereby enabling scholars to continue learning and advancing knowledge. Moreover, and resonating with the Newgrange winter solstice alignment, evidence draws connections, sponsors unique alignments, drawing lines between concepts in order for writers to convey, reflect, and shape their insights, ideas, and arguments.

Considering evidence through the metaphor of food helps illuminate several additional and important features of evidence as well. One such feature pertains to the level of depth with which academic writers integrate evidence in their texts. Across and within different writing occasions, academic writers will sometimes examine evidence in an exceptionally in-depth manner, closely reading and analyzing evidence, digesting evidence morsel by morsel, inside and through, as when one bisects an apple. At other times, in ways that seem to more closely resemble a bushel of apples, academic writers will integrate evidence in more sweeping ways, glossing quickly over a large quantity or range of research, or by referencing in a text only in the briefest of ways another's work.

Another way in which food serves as an apt metaphor in an examination of evidence is that evidence should be sandwiched effectively within the writer's ideas. That is, when academic writers integrate evidence, be it charts, images, tables, graphs, quotes, or paraphrases, they should position that evidence within their own argument, providing material before and after the evidence that helps readers understand the purpose of the evidence. The sandwich concept enables evidence to be nested between layers of bread that can effectively frame and

interpret the evidence for readers. The top piece of bread introduces the evidence, helping readers understand why it is being included, what the evidence is, and how it relates to the point the writer is making. The bottom piece of bread further explicates the evidence, highlighting what the writer wants readers to notice. Without these pieces of bread, evidence remains unframed (sometimes referred to as orphaned), and readers may not understand how that evidence is forwarding an argument or participating in the writer's larger aim.

And, variety is a crucial aspect of integrating evidence. Without variety, food would likely be somewhat boring; so too with evidence. Effective academic writing includes a variety of different voices and perspectives and offers readers a sense of the complexity and range of thinking for any particular line of inquiry. Academic writers integrate many different types of evidence, often from many different contexts. The best academic writers also deploy variety in the ways in which they integrate evidence into any given piece of writing, varying where they place evidence in the text and how they frame it.

Write Here

Although most contemporary people probably do not change their food gathering, distribution, or consumption practices across seasons as drastically as these Irish predecessors might have 5,000 years ago, it is likely that you do nonetheless make some such adjustments to your diet. Reflect for 10 minutes in writing on your own food practices as they are connected to the seasons. Do you eat more or less of certain kinds of food in particular seasons? Do you notice an abundance or scarcity of certain kinds of food across the seasons? Do you notice that you crave or desire different kinds of foods across seasons?

What is Evidence?

Evidence is the material academic writers draw from to advance their arguments. Evidence can take many forms, some quantitative (or numerical) and others text-based, field-based, or visual. Fieldnotes, survey responses, interviews, experiment results, photographs, passages from texts, graphs, tables, charts, artifacts, objects, numbers…any of these (and more) might be considered evidence.

Evidence can serve many purposes in an argument, from being that which a writer analyzes, to supporting an argument, or by offering a counterpoint or contrasting view to an argument.

Evidence is situated deeply within disciplinary and publication context. Readers in particular disciplines or in particular publication contexts form cer-

tain expectations—tacit and overt—about what kinds of evidence they expect to encounter and how that evidence is generally integrated into a writing project. Do readers of a particular writing project expect peer-reviewed scholarship or more popular evidence? Does your intended audience prefer long quotes or paraphrase? Are tables and charts customary for a particular context? These are all discourse conventions that shape the ways in which academic writers integrate evidence into academic writing.

The range of evidence from which academic writers draw falls along the kinds of research described in Chapter 2: Research and Writing as a Process. In that chapter, we discussed several different types of research: quantitative, qualitative, mixed-methods, and we also discussed primary and secondary sources. Academic writers choose from among these options and generate evidence for their arguments.

Another area that shapes the evidence from which academic writers draw is the continuum of secondary materials discussed in Chapter 4: Reading. In this chapter, we discussed how academic writers choose what to read, which is essentially their choice about what evidence to develop and consider. Academic writers read primary and secondary materials; secondary materials exits along a continuum ranging from popular and public scholarship to scholarly secondary materials. All of this together serves as the range of evidence from which academic writers draw.

Writer Insights

What kinds of evidence do you use in your writing?

As a historian, I like to employ two different types of "evidence" in my own writing. The first type of evidence I like to use is quotes. Quotes are easy to find and can help me "instantly" build theories in a reliable way. My second favorite type of evidence is anecdotes. When anecdotes are used carefully, they can help illustrate important points in a colorful way. Also, anecdotes help my readers connect emotionally to my scholarly thoughts about the people, places, and things of the past, which is pretty powerful.

~Derek L. Zboran, Writer, Rolla, Missouri, U.S.

Chapters 6 and 7 also play key roles in establishing how academic writers work with evidence. Scholars conduct careful analysis and synthesis on data in order to make use of their evidence. Using these scholarly skills enables academic writers to transform data (text, images, artifacts, numbers) into evidence that forwards an argument or supports a position.

There are several ways in which evidence commonly appears in academic writing across disciplines: quotations, summary, paraphrase, visual evidence, data, and personal evidence.

Quotations

The use of quotations happens most frequently in the humanities and the social sciences. However, writers in the natural sciences also use quotes, especially in the

popular versions of their scholarship. Quotes appear in many different ways, from partial words or phrases to full sentences or paragraphs. Longer quotes, those typically longer than four printed lines of text, are often referred to as block quotes. Shorter quotes are integrated directly into an academic writer's own writing and are referenced using in-text citations (specifically discussed in Chapter 12).

Summary

In Chapter 5, we discussed summary. Summary appears as evidence most frequently as writers provide a literature review of prior scholarship. Summary can serve as evidence for an argument as a writer perhaps summarizes prior research in order to build on ideas or develop new questions.

Paraphrase

Paraphrase involves borrowing the ideas of another and rephrasing them in your own words. Unlike quotations, paraphrases are not the actual language of others' work. Unlike summary, it is a particular moment in a text or work rather than condensing an entire project into less material. Paraphrase occurs throughout all disciplines.

Visual evidence

Visual evidence appears in many forms, from art and photographs and drawings, to charts, tables, and graphs. Visual evidence also includes artifacts of various kinds, either depicted through drawings or photos (as in scrolls) or in the form of objects, as in archaeological evidence. All visual evidence must be integrated carefully into the text.

Data

Data include the results of research, and often take the quantitative forms. Data as evidence can overlap in some ways with visual evidence because data can be represented visually in the form of charts, tables, and graphs. Data, which can include enormous quantities of information, are often interpreted and selected in order to serve as evidence for a particular argument.

Personal evidence

There is considerable disagreement about the use of personal opinion or experience as evidence. Some disciplines rely more extensively on the use of personal perspective, others not at all. Some writing occasions also make more extensive use of the personal, such as in blogs or op-eds, which are forms of public scholarship and academic writing. The personal is also becoming more apparent in schol-

arly writing as well. Composition Professor Candace Spigelman argues about the use of the personal in academic writing:

> Personal writing can do serious academic work; it can make rational arguments; it can merge appropriately with academic discourse. Indeed, this "blended genre" is starting to appear in…professional literature… Nevertheless, the problem of the personal remains controversial.

Interviews are another moment when the personal is relevant, as in historical writing or some social science inquiries. In one well-known example of the use of the personal related to food, documentary filmmaker Morgan Spurlock ate only McDonald's food for 30 days as research for his documentary film *Super Size Me*. Here's a quote from Spurlock citing personal evidence:

> [I]n only thirty days of eating nothing but McDonald's I gained twenty-four and a half pounds, my liver turned to fat and my cholesterol shot up sixty-five points. My body fat percentage went from eleven to eighteen percent, still below the national average of twenty-two percent for men and thirty percent for women. I nearly doubled my risk of coronary heart disease, making myself twice as likely to have heart failure. I felt depressed and exhausted most of the time, my mood swung on a dime and my sex life was non existent. I craved this food more and more when I ate it and got massive headaches when I didn't.

Spurlock's argument, that McDonald's food is unhealthy is also bolstered by other kinds of evidence, but his personal testimony goes far in providing evidence for his claim. From an example like Spurlock's then, we learn three caveats about the use of personal evidence.

Writer Insights

When and why do you use personal forms of evidence in your writing?

My job is to inspire young adults who feel isolated and marginalized. I have found writing from my personal experience lifts the veil of fear and sometimes shocks them into telling their own truth. My life has been a perilous journey that has found merit in their eyes and hearts. Therefore, I use my stories often.

~Beverly Reed Scott, Original Voice® Storyteller, Olympia Fields, Illinois, U.S.

Use with other evidence

Academic writers generally combine personal evidence with other forms of evidence when using them in scholarly work. Because readers vary in their receptivity to personal evidence, it is likely best in most writing occasions to use it in conjunction with other evidence rather than as stand-alone evidence.

Personal evidence is not personal opinion

Instead, personal evidence is drawn from experiences and generally appears as narrative accounts of experience. As we discussed in Chapter 8: Framing Arguments,

academic writers do have personal opinions, and it is important to reflect on and acknowledge opinions in order to understand potential bias or perspective. However, academic writers must ground any opinions in evidence-based research in order to construct arguments effectively. Ideally, scholars also are open to the ways in which the evidence they find might enable them to revisit and possibly change their own personal opinions.

Disciplinary context matters

While disciplinary context matters across many dimensions of academic writing, it bears particular impact on the use of personal evidence. Some disciplines rely very heavily on personal evidence (Cultural Anthropology, History) and others nearly always exclude personal evidence (Engineering, Chemistry). As with all such elements of academic writing, it is best to familiarize yourself with the discourse conventions present in each writing occasion so you can be sure that you are adhering to them or, if you are challenging them, that you are doing so from a position of deliberateness.

Write Now

What kinds of evidence have you used in your academic writing (quantitative, qualitative, popular, scholarly)? How have you presented evidence in your academic writing (quotes, paraphrase, summary, visual, personal)? Are there any other kinds of evidence you have used? Which kinds do you find it easier to work with? Harder to work with? Why?

Purposes for Integrating Evidence

Academic writers use evidence for a variety of purposes, many of which operate simultaneously in any given writing project. Generally speaking, academic writers across disciplines integrate evidence in order to accomplish certain goals.

Build on the work of others

If others have already made particular contributions to an ongoing area of inquiry, then you should integrate their evidence so that you can build on it and make your own contribution. Sometimes your contribution is to apply or extend or replicate, and other times it will be more along the lines of reconsidering or critiquing, or otherwise modifying the work of others.

Situate writing in relationship to existing work

Academic writers use evidence to show that their own work exists within, alongside, and against the work of others. Knowledge does not happen in a vacuum. Sometimes this work of others involves others in the same field, or in other fields. By connecting their work to ongoing conversations they can advance knowledge and also can demonstrate the significance of their research, insofar as it raises questions or speaks to concerns shared by others.

Transform research into evidence

Integrating evidence enables scholars to communicate effectively the research they have conducted. Communicating evidence relies on the author's interpretation, synthesis, or analysis of the evidence. Without interpretation, evidence is not used in the service of arguments; instead, it is what is known as "raw data" or "unprocessed data." Scholars must then analyze, interpret, synthesize, and otherwise do the intellectual work involved with examining evidence and using it to advance knowledge.

Shape, illustrate, and advance arguments

As we discussed in Chapters 8 and 9, arguments emerge from evidence. Evidence enables academic writers to draw conclusions and shape arguments.

Infuse credibility and authority

While personal opinion and personal experience can have a place in academic writing in some disciplines, scholars make use of evidence from research and from others in order to lend credibility and authority to their own work. They can show that they have considered the work of established and respected scholars. Importantly, however, even the most established and respected of scholars also use evidence from others.

Writer Insights

Why does personal experience help you convince others?

Living in Malaysia, my students come from different backgrounds and most of them learn English as a second language. It isn't easy for them to express their thoughts in English so in class I would show them my blog posts or Facebook posts where I write about my experiences in life or at work. Through my writing, I'd like to inspire them to write, starting with themselves and gradually about the people and things around them. A love for writing can be nurtured. Like a gardener tending to his plants, I am committed to unearth the writer within my students with tender loving care.

~Chiew yen Dwee, English Language Teacher, Batu Pahat, Johor, Malaysia

Add variety

Integrating evidence enables academic writers to infuse their writing with the voices of others. Even if these voices appear in the form of summary or paraphrase, it nevertheless adds stylistic variety and diversity to a particular writing project.

Questions that Shape Integration of Evidence

Each writing occasion offers its own particular demands for integrating evidence. This discussion of questions builds on the questions provided for prior chapters, especially for how to critically read, how to analyze, how to synthesize, and how to summarize.

All of these moves together enable academic writers to make sense of their data and research. Integrating it into a particular writing project requires another set of related strategies.

Elements of context that help determine the answers to effective integration of evidence include your primary questions, your arguments, disciplinary context, publication context, and other matters of the rhetorical triangle described in Chapter 4: Reading (purpose, audience, author). Integrating data effectively into your own work will involve your asking and considering certain questions for each particular writing project.

Choose effective evidence

Does your research demand qualitative or quantitative data? Should you draw from more scholarly sources, popular sources, or public scholarship? Do you need fieldwork, images, interviews? Your line of inquiry and the purpose for your writing project will help you determine which kinds of evidence you need to include. Perhaps your evidence is visual in nature. As addressed in Chapter 7: Analysis, scholars often use visual evidence for their arguments.

Explicate evidence accordingly

How much explanation does my evidence require? Some evidence warrants extended explication and analysis, whereas other forms of evidence can be integrated in a quicker way.

Evaluate location of evidence

At which junctures in your argument is evidence necessary? Generally, writers integrate evidence throughout a writing project, but deciding exact locations will also be something necessary. One way of evaluating this is to examine where you make claims or assumptions that need to be evidenced.

Determine appropriate amount of evidence

How much evidence do particular writing opportunities require? Depending on the claim, length of writing project, and your purpose, writers make different determinations about how much evidence is needed. Some writers may have heard about the requirement of three sources. This is an arbitrary number. The amount of evi-

dence you need depends on how much evidence is needed to successfully forward your argument. This varies across context.

Decide how to present evidence

When is it best to use quotes, paraphrases, summary, or visual? Is it preferable to use a table, chart, graph, image? Should you use a long quote or a short quote? Your decision about how to present the evidence is determined by what you hope the evidence accomplishes as well as considerations about the disciplinary and publication context in which you are writing. Sometimes it is advisable to include evidence in multiple forms in order to make that evidence accessible to readers with different learning preferences (visual, aural, written, etc.).

Choose credible evidence

How credible is my evidence? Evidence should be credible. Determining what makes something credible, though, hinges on writing context. If you are writing about the history and reception of a particular restaurant, then posts on a message board from the general public are credible. If, however, you are writing about the state of hunger in developing countries, then more credible evidence will be found in the form of government reports and scholarly, peer-reviewed research.

Choose current evidence

How recent should my evidence be? Some fields develop knowledge rapidly and writers are expected to integrate evidence that is as current as possible. Often this is considered to be evidence from within the past five years, though sometimes even more recent. Many disciplines make use of historical evidence, and the evidence in this case should be historical.

Balance integration of evidence

Do I have the right balance of evidence across my writing project? Effective integration of evidence hinges on having the right amount of evidence (not too much, not too little) especially as seen in relationship to your own ideas. This varies across writing projects. For a synthesis in a literature review, the balance will lean much more heavily toward the work of others. For many kinds of writing in the sciences, writers will also have much space in their writing devoted to the evidence. For some other kinds of arguments, such as an analysis of a text, writers should include evidence but spend more of their writing space articulating their own conclusions and interpretations. But for an original argument, writers often spend more space in their writing with their own arguments.

Criteria for Effectively Integrating Evidence

As with criteria in the other aspects of academic writing across disciplines, what makes effective integration of evidence in one writing context does not necessarily map onto all writing contexts. The National Council of Teachers of English describes the ways in which disciplines impact the efficacy of integrating evidence in a policy brief:

> [T]he assessment of whether evidence "counts" also depends upon how a writer uses evidence to support an argument. Writers carefully select evidence based on their chosen stance, purpose, and audience. Then writers use their chosen evidence to warrant, or justify, their stance. In literary analysis, for example, evidence from a literary text counts when citations include specific details that support a particular argument about the literature and when the writer sufficiently connects the textual evidence with his or her stance. In historical writing, too, determining the quality of evidence is equally about how well the writer analyzes and interprets its significance.

Thus, what counts or what is effective in one context does not necessarily apply to all contexts. Still, although disciplines and writing projects vary widely in the kinds of evidence used and the way that evidence should be integrated, it is possible to identify some important criteria for effectively integrating evidence.

Use evidence accurately

While it's perfectly fine to include only portions of evidence (and in fact we must always make these choices), the portions we include should not be taken out of context. As indicated in Chapter 5: Summary, imagine that the author of the evidence is reading your work. Would he or she agree that you have accurately represented the evidence? If someone examined your entire dataset, would that individual agree that you have, to the extent possible, accurately represented your evidence? Accuracy also means that you have attributed the evidence appropriately and cited it correctly. Accuracy also means that you have not ignored counterevidence or other data that would work against conclusions.

Accuracy of evidence is particularly important because readers rely on your conclusions and arguments by assuming your evidence is correct. Some disciplines, such as science, emphasize with particular significance the importance of accuracy related to evidence:

> Falsification in science is loosely defined as publishing or reporting misleading facts associated with a study, research or experimentation. Scientific falsification can be considered as: Falsifying data; Falsifying

> evidence; Fabricating data; Fabricating evidence; Plagiarism. ("Scientific Falsification")

After explaining more about each of these types of evidence falsification and citing some well-known cases of falsified evidence, the authors of this article offer an injunction against inaccuracy in scientific evidence: "Scientific falsification goes against everything that the scientific method stands for. It is unethical, immoral and dangerous. It is one of the worst acts that anyone in research can commit. It is severely punished."

Select evidence appropriately

Even as we accurately portray evidence, writers must also appropriately select it. We do this by selecting which evidence to include based explicitly on writing goals. A discussion about popular diet plans in the United States, for example, would benefit from including evidence in the form of both scholarly and popular sources to illustrate how much consumer research goes into the creation of diet fads. Such a study would have to especially consider which forms of visual evidence will be most impactful; the writer may have to choose between analysis of advertisements or nutritional science graphs depending on the study's goal. In quotes, we might use brackets, ellipsis, and abridgement to note specific components of a source.

Analyze evidence sufficiently

Evidence relies on a writers' work analyzing, synthesizing, interpreting, and explicating. The intellectual work involved with evidence rests on the extent to which a writer can show readers why evidence leads to a particular argument or conclusion.

Distinguish evidence from opinion

Academic writers certainly have opinions, but their arguments are generated with research-based evidence. Historian Elizabeth Shown Mills, for instance, describes the rigor that historians use as they work with evidence, and why it matters:

> As history researchers, we do not speculate. We test. We critically observe and carefully record. Then we weigh the accumulated evidence, analyzing the individual parts as well as the whole, without favoring any theory. Bias, ego, ideology, patronage, prejudice, pride, or shame cannot shape our decisions as we appraise our evidence. To do so is to warp reality and deny ourselves the understanding of the past that is, after all, the reason for our labor.

Mills' point is that historians, and researchers from other disciplines, must use critical observation, analysis, and synthesis as they consider evidence. Otherwise,

they run the risk of treating evidence erroneously. While all humans have opinions, biases, and subjective perspectives, researchers must try as much as possible to differentiate these from the evidence they are using and be transparent about their own agendas, assumptions, and perspectives.

Contextualize evidence

As much as possible, sandwich your evidence in such a way that readers understand where your evidence is coming from and what the important elements of context are for that evidence. Introduce evidence clearly with what is called a "signal phrase." The Writing across the Curriculum program at Loyola University New Orleans describes signal phrases:

> Effective use of quotations requires that you include quotations in your paper in a way that allows the reader to understand the relevance of the quoted material to your own argument. You should never drop a quotation into your paper unannounced and apparently unrelated to the ideas around it. The quotation must always be embedded into one of your own sentences.

A common way to do this is to use a signal phrase that incorporates the quotation smoothly into your writing and, just as importantly, provides context for the material. Very often a signal phrase will also name the author of the quoted material, thus serving at once to include the quotation smoothly and to attribute the idea to its source. ("Quotations")

Although they connect signal phrases explicitly to quotations, I would suggest that the idea of embedding evidence into a writing project in a way that introduces the evidence and describes its relevance applies more broadly, to paraphrase, summary, and visual evidence as well.

Relate evidence to writing purpose

Evidence must be related to the overall aims and purpose of your writing project. This connection is termed "warrant" under Toulmin's conceptualization of claims, as discussed in Chapter 9: Constructing Arguments. Different writing occasions demand varying approaches to evidence, but in general academic writers must work to explicitly connect evidence through explication, analysis, synthesis, or other interpretation. While it might on occasion be reasonable to add an image or visual without explicitly referring to it, most other forms of evidence (quotes, paraphrase, summary, tables, charts, figures, etc.) must be discussed explicitly as they are integrated into a writing project. Sometimes this means that sources should be recent, sometimes historical.

Attend to discipline and context

Different writing occasions carry different discourse conventions. In scientific papers, for instance, readers are not accustomed to seeing large amounts of quoted text. Similarly, in the humanities, readers might be less familiar with tables and graphs. Neither occasion excludes the use of these, but writers should be aware of the discourse conventions that define the particular writing occasion.

Publication context also impacts the evidence writers use and the ways in which that evidence is integrated. If you are seeking publication in a scholarly journal, you should integrate scholarly evidence, even if you also use personal or popular evidence. By contrast, if you are instead writing a blog post, you might be more authorized to rely exclusively on personal experience. Being aware of discipline-specific and context-specific criteria, however, does not mean that one cannot sometimes challenge convention. Some of the most exciting scholarship is that which brings in new and different kinds of evidence to a question that has previously been primarily addressed through a different angle. Often, though, those who challenge conventions in these ways do so explicitly and by addressing why the other, more discipline-specific and context-specific kinds of evidence have limitations.

Vary evidence appropriately

In an essay for English literature, for instance, one might include some block quotes, some shorter quotes, and some paraphrases. In a sociology essay, a writer might include a review of the literature, as well as more in-depth charts and data depictions.

Manage ratio of evidence to original content

Different writing occasions warrant different ratios between evidence and a writer's own contributions around that evidence. This also means that readers can discern with relative ease which portions of your essay are evidence from research and which are your own contributions and arguments based on that evidence.

Ensure credibility

Often, the writing context will dictate what is or is not credible evidence for a particular writing project. Sometimes personal anecdotes and opinions, on the part of the writer or from his or her research, are credible. Other times, writers need to rely on scholarly evidence that is deemed credible in that it has been published in a peer-reviewed journal or conducted with research methodologies that are valid. Much has been said about the credibility of online sources. Rather than generating a global argument about whether online sources are or are not credible, which is complicated by the question of what constitutes online sources (Online research

databases? Blogs? Online newspapers? Wikipedia?), it might be more fitting to suggest that writing occasion dictates credibility. Read the texts of others who have published in your field and look to see what sources they have deemed credible for their research. It's fine to depart from convention, but always do so with full knowledge that you are making a departure, and explicate why you are doing so.

Featured Strategy for Integrating Evidence: the MEAL Plan

One strategy for integrating evidence is through what is referred to by many writing centers with the acronym MEAL, or more colloquially as the MEAL plan. The MEAL plan (which coincidentally also works perfectly within our ongoing food metaphor) provides a way of organizing paragraphs with evidence. The MEAL plan consists of the Main idea, Evidence, Analysis, and Link.

M: Main Idea

The main idea is the focus of the paragraph. Paragraphs generally have one main idea in order to be considered unified. Paragraphs might be thought of as individual, perfectly proportioned bites of food—enough to chew on and enjoy, and not so much as to be overwhelming or so little as to be frustrating. If a writer puts too many ideas in a paragraph, then readers have a difficult time processing the information. If a writer has one main idea, but hasn't explored that idea effectively, then a reader may be left feeling dissatisfied and the argument will not be sufficiently advanced.

E: Evidence

Evidence, in the MEAL plan, comes after the main idea. This entails the writer sufficiently introducing and framing the evidence, directing readers' attention to the important aspects of the evidence.

A: Analysis

Analysis occurs next, where a writer explicates more fully what is significant or compelling about the evidence.

L: Link

Finally, the Link enables the writer to link the evidence and analysis to the main idea of the paragraph and, more broadly, to the main idea of the larger writing project.

As with many writing guidelines, strategies such as the MEAL plan are meant to be a beginning structure which writers can further develop to fit their own purposes and writing projects. Sometimes, paragraphs have one primary piece of evidence, sometimes multiple; sometimes the analysis and the link are combined. And sometimes several paragraphs in a row will have the same main idea. Some writers will also opt to include in their writing on occasion a paragraph that consists entirely of only one main idea and nothing else. Doing so can, at times and when done so sparingly, be effective at drawing readers' attention to that idea.

One aspect that might usefully be added to MEAL as well is a transition at the beginning of a paragraph, rendering our acronym, more fittingly, T-MEAL. Transition sentences, the first sentence of a paragraph must accomplish several critical aims: to move the reader from what was discussed in the prior paragraph to what is coming in the new paragraph; to provide a topic sentence or overview of the new paragraph; and to connect the new paragraph to the larger claim of the writing project so readers can see how the paragraph is advancing the argument.

As an example of the T-MEAL plan, please see the third paragraph of Example 1, which includes annotations according to T-MEAL.

Examples of Integrating Evidence

This section provides examples of integrating evidence across disciplines. Since evidence is in so many ways like food, it seems apropos to use food as the multidisciplinary anchor to show how academic writers across disciplines select and integrate evidence for their arguments about food. This section contains examples from seven different disciplines.

Example 1: History

The excerpt comes from an article in a peer-reviewed scholarly journal about the use of taste in historical research. The authors, Gerald J. Fitzgerald and Gabriella M. Petrick make the argument that taste helps historians understand culture. The paragraphs show Fitzgerald and Petrick integrating evidence from a variety of sources: primary historical sources and scholarly secondary sources. You will see them using also a variety of formats for their evidence, from block quotes to paraphrase and summary.

Excerpt from "In Good Taste: Rethinking American History with Our Palates"
by G. J. Fitzgerald and G. M. Petrick

Fitzgerald and Petrick here introduce a primary source: Fisher. They provide her full name and her book title as part of their signal phrase. They also show that they are integrating Fisher in order to illustrate their point about how food writing can "spark gustatory imaginations."

Good food writing can make the mouth water, the nose tingle, and the stomach growl. It invites readers to reconstruct a dish or a meal so that they may reflect on or imagine its taste, flavor, and texture. M. F. K. Fisher is probably the best known of the literary gourmands who helped spark gustatory imaginations and linked words to taste. In her book *An Alphabet for Gourmets*, she evokes the essence of a pea. "I watched the headwaiter, as skilled as a magician, dry peas over a flame in a generous pan, add what looked like an equal weight of butter, which almost visibly sent out a cloud of sweet-smelling hay and meadow air." In describing her own perfect garden peas she wrote,

> Small brown roasted chickens, the best ones I have ever eaten, done for me that afternoon…and not chilled since but cooled in their own intangibly delicate juices. There was salad of mountain lettuces. There was honest bread.… But what really mattered, what piped the high unforgettable tune of perfection, were the peas, which came from their hot pot onto our thick china plates in a cloud, a kind of miasma, of everything anyone could ever want from them, even in a dream.[1]

Notice that the authors choose to include one quote that is shorter and a block quote as well. They have inserted ellipses in the text, which indicate that they are omitting certain words that are less relevant for their point. Even though they have omitted words, though, they have not taken the quote out of context or misrepresented the quote.

After the quote, the authors explicate the words, highlighting for readers the exact parts of the quote that offer evidence for their claim. Notice that the quote itself is shorter than the explication of the quote.

What is striking about Fisher's work is that she not only places the reader at the table with her, but engages all the reader's senses to evoke taste. To convey the perfection of the peas, she relies on the readers' previous experiences with the foods (and their imagination of what they could be), conjuring the sensuality of peas freshly picked from the garden, cooked for only the briefest moment in boiling water, and brought steaming to the table with all their vegetal sweetness bursting in our mouths. Although only Fisher and her table mates actually tasted the peas and knew the delight they brought and while her description assumes a universal experience with

From *The Journal of American History* (95.2), 2008.

taste that is unlikely to exist, her vivid descriptions and attention to flavor can evoke a simulacra of the peas based on readers' previous experiences, especially if those readers share a common gustatory heritage. Rather than arguing for some universal or a historical sense of taste, we are suggesting that reading and writing with a sense of taste, one that is both sensitive to context and experience and also infused with historical imagination, can help historians think through the contingent nature of taste and its historical meanings.

As historians of food and taste, we find that we depend on our previous gastronomic experiences to try to taste the past. Whether we are reading a grandmother's cryptic recipes, a technical paper, a cookbook, tasting panel notes, or a dietary survey, when it comes to food, we try to taste it in our minds if we can, and sometimes one of us, Gabriella M. Petrick, even prepares foods to give us a better understanding of the techniques used to produce them and of their flavor.… Tasting allows historians to place the sensory experience in historical context and to utilize an often-ignored analytical tool: the body's senses. Just as historians of art or music use their senses to analyze material, so too can historians of food and taste. However, using the sense of taste to investigate the past has its limits (we will never know what Fisher's peas really tasted like), but exercising historical imagination while attending to how people described past flavor experiences can help us approximate the nature of taste historically.[2]

Transition and Main Idea: The phrase "historians of food and taste" forges a transition from the prior paragraph; the phrase "previous gastronomic experiences" both provides a topic sentence for the paragraph and serves as the paragraph's main idea.

Evidence: This list of details serves as the evidence for the paragraph, along with the evidence of Petrick preparing food.

Analysis: The writers now analyze the evidence, discussing what the tasting affords them as scholars.

Link: Lastly, the writers provide the link here: linking the evidence to their overall claim and to the paragraphs main idea.

In short, to understand a culture, past or present, we should endeavor to understand how a society feeds itself. It is the ubiquity and everydayness of eating that makes understanding it historically so important. The taste and flavor of food play an important part in social relationships, and a food's taste can embody meanings well beyond what is put into the mouth. It is only within the past ten years or so that food history—and the access it allows us to the history of taste—has become a field of inquiry. Many of the books written before the 1990s were popular

Here the authors summarize the relevant literature that is mentioned again in a footnote at the end of the text. The sentence makes a claim about pre-1990s histories and the footnote provides evidence for that claim.

Since they are building on Mintz's work more deliberately than on the work of the other scholars they mention, they take time to quote his argument.

histories tracing the origins and dissemination of dining rituals, culinary traditions, and foodstuffs.[3] Historians who wrote academic texts about food in the 1980s, including Sidney W. Mintz, Harvey A. Levenstein, and Warren J. Belasco, asked complex questions about food's relationship to industrialization. In *Sweetness and Power*, Mintz explored the nexus between the metropolis and the colony through Britain's desire for sweetness. By focusing on sugar as an export commodity, Mintz examined how political and economic power was wielded in interactions between the colonial West Indies and Britain from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries. According to Mintz, the rise of the British factory system reinforced Caribbean sugar production. He explained that "cheaper sugar came at a time when its increased consumption was guar anteed not by the sugar habit itself, but by the factory world and machine rhythms which were the background of its use." Mintz concluded that readily accessible cheap calories (in the form of sugar) fueled industrial economies. Furthermore, this proliferation of sweetness ultimately transferred control over the foods workers ate to large corporations, thus transforming not only the British working-class diet but also the country's palate by separating the source of food production from the locus of its consumption.

[1] M. F. K. Fisher, *An Alphabet for Gourmets* (New York, 1949), 135, 138-39.
[2] For a critical examination of sensory history, see Mark M. Smith, "Producing Sense, Consuming Sense, Making Sense: Perils and Prospects for Sensory History," *Journal of Social History*, 40 (Summer 2007), 841-58.
[3] Good examples of the pre-1990 popular literature are Margaret Visser, *Much Depends on Dinner: The Extraordinary History and Mythology, Allure and Obsessions, Perils and Taboos of an Ordinary Meal* (Toronto, 1986); and Reay Tannahill, *Food in History* (New York, 1973). Notable popular food histories from the early 1990s include Raymond Sokolov, *Why We Eat What We Eat: How the Encounter between the New World and the Old Changed the Way Everyone on the Planet Eats* (New York, 1991); and Martin Elkort, *The Secret Life of Food: A Feast of Food and Drink in History, Folklore, and Fact* (Los Angeles, 1991).

Write Now

Fitzgerald and Petrick, like many academic writers, use footnotes in multiple ways. In the example, readers see them using footnotes as a form of citation (see Chapter 12) as well as a space to provide additional scholarship for readers to consider. Reflect on your experiences encountering footnotes. Do you often read them? Under what circumstances are you more or less inclined to read them? What kinds of readers do you think are interested in reading particular footnotes?

Example 2: Biology

The excerpt comes from an article in a peer-reviewed scholarly journal that is investigating the question, "What causes food hoarding in animals?" The authors have written a review of the literature, a synthesis of prior research, in order "to integrate what is known about the neuroendocrine mechanisms" related to food hoarding and food foraging. They make use of several published secondary scholarly sources and, in keeping with the purpose of a historical review of scholarly literature, they begin with sources that are from earlier in the twentieth century.

Excerpt from "Physiological Mechanisms for Food-Hoarding Motivation in Animals"
by E. Keen Rhinehart, M. J. Dailey, and T. Bartness

Since Wallace Craig is the person who has initiated the field of inquiry, the authors devote more space to his work, not only summarizing it, but also outlining several of his contributions.

Ingestive behaviour has a long history of study and currently has a place in the fields of animal behaviour, learning and memory, psychology, physiology and neuroscience. In 1918, Wallace Craig, an animal behaviourist, coined the terms 'appetitive' and 'consummatory' for the two-part sequence of behaviours required for eating, drinking and reproduction (Craig 1918). More specifically, he defined appetitive behaviours as motivated, species-specific behaviours involved in seeking a goal object (e.g., food, water, a mate), ultimately bringing the animal into physical contact with the goal object (Craig 1918). By contrast, the consummatory behaviours (from consummate not consume) are reflexive, stereotyped and are the final act once the goal object has been obtained (Craig 1918), in the case of ingestive consummatory behaviour—eating.

In this series of sentences, the authors cite prior studies that have researched various kinds of animals, such as the five studies of laboratory rats cited here.

The primary purpose of this review is to focus on the appetitive ingestive behaviour of food hoarding, and to a lesser extent, food foraging, and attempt to integrate what is known about the neuroendocrine mechanisms controlling these behaviours.… More specifically, we will focus our review on the offspring of wild trapped animals that are considered 'natural food hoarders' because they are documented hoarders in nature, but have been studied in the laboratory, such as Syrian hamsters (Mesocricetusauratus; Murphy 1985) and Siberian hamsters (Phodopus sungorus). Occasionally, we will supplement this information with studies of laboratory rats, which are not natural hoarders (Pisano & Storer 1948; Calhoun 1962; Lore & Flannelly 1978;

From *Philosophical Transactions: Biological Sciences* (365), 2010.

Takahashi & Lore 1980; Whishaw & Whishaw 1996), but instead carry food from the source to a safe place to eat. A paper by Wolfe in 1939 (Wolfe 1939) opened the door to the laboratory study of food hoarding by demonstrating that it was quantifiable. Several years later, Morgan et al. (1943) generated a 'deficit hypothesis' that continues to guide many hoarding studies today. The deficit hypothesis proposes that animals hoard owing to a growing energetic deficit that eventually reaches a threshold that triggers food hoarding (Morgan Stellar & Johnson 1943).

As earlier in the excerpt, when the authors refer to a groundbreaking study, they spend more space, introducing the study directly in the text and summarizing in more detail the research.

Example 3: International Development

This excerpt comes from a scholarly book that is investigating the question, "How [will we] feed a growing global population in the face of a wide range of adverse factors, including climate change?" In the excerpted section, Gordon Conway, a Professor of International Development at Imperial College London, is examining what hunger is and how it is calculated. Specifically, he is discussing the spike in food costs from 2007-08. He cites the work of Anthony Young who has critiqued data that suggests arable land is increasing. Notice also how Conway integrates visual evidence into his argument, positioning it alongside his own ideas and explicating it carefully for readers.

Excerpt from *One Billion Hungry: Can We Feed the World?* by G. Conway

Yet these [data about expansions in arable land and crops] seem to be overestimates. The results have been trenchantly criticized by Anthony Young, who has a long and extensive experience of soil and land surveys.[58] He believes the estimates suffer from the following flaws:

Conway is building on the work of Young, showing that, like Young, he believes the earlier estimates about the growth of cultivable land are in error.

- Overestimation of cultivable land (not accounting for features such as hills and rock outcrops when the maps are reduced in scale)
- Underestimation of presently cultivated land (illegal land occupation; e.g., forest incursions, not recorded)
- Failure to take sufficient account of land required for purposes other than cultivation (underestimates of human settlements and industrial use)

A more recent [Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)] analysis in 2000 accepts these criticisms [about flawed estimates of cultivable land] as possibly valid and acknowledges that much of the cultivable but uncultivated land is

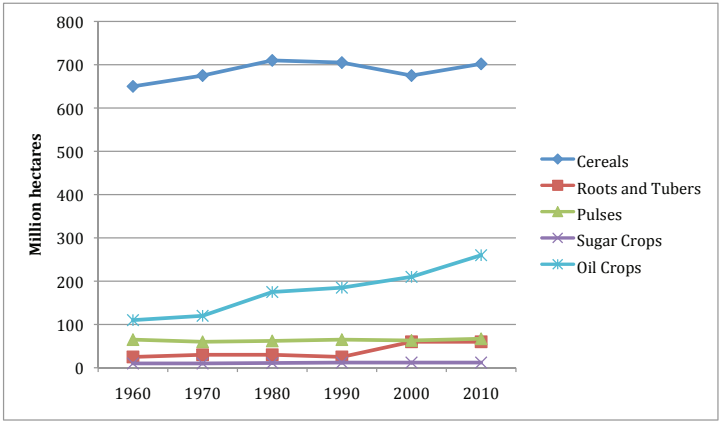
From *One Billion Hungry: Can We Feed the World?*, 2012.

under rainforest or needed for purposes such as grazing land and ecosystem services. [59]

Here, Conway adds his own evidence to the evidence from Young, drawing on FAO reports.

Probably the most telling data is the area harvested over time. Total cropland has increased by only 10 percent over the past fifty years, while population has grown by 110 percent. [60] Given the pressures to increase food production, we would expect to see much greater land expansion if it were readily available. The only exceptions are for oil crops (Figure 1.7). Soybeans and oil palms have each increased by over 300 percent in area and by over 700 percent and over 1,400 percent, respectively, in production over the past fifty years. Presumably this is a result of clearing the Cerrado in Brazil and rainforests in the Amazon, Africa, and Southeast Asia. Permanent meadows and pastures (the land used to grow herbaceous forage crops) have increased somewhat, by nearly 9 percent in an area from 1961 to 2008. [61]

In this paragraph, Conway continues to build the evidence he is using to show that cultivable land has not grown. He introduces the chart next.



Conway has preceded this chart with an explication of some of the figures, even explaining the one anomalous line.

Figure 1.7 Trends in harvested area for selected food cropss, million hectares.[62]

Following the chart, Conway continues to discuss the prospect of creating more cultivable land. What follows are the footnotes citing the sources Conway uses as evidence in this section.

More land could be brought into cultivation by clearing tropical rainforests, but this would be at the expense of biodiversity and would add considerably to greenhouse gas emissions…A further factor in the equation is the large amount of land being degraded as a result of erosion, loss of fertility, and desertification.

[58] Young, A. 1994. *Land degradation in South Asia: Its severity, causes and effects upon people*. FAO World Soil Resources Report 78. Rome: FAO
Young, A. 1998. *Land resources: now and for the future*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
Young, A. 1999. "Is there really spare land? A critique of estimates of available cultivable land in developing countries." *Environment, Development and Sustainability* 1:3-18.

[59] FAO. 2000. World soil resources report 90. Land resource potential and constraints at regional and country levels. Based on the work of Bot, A., Nachtergaele, F., and Young, A. Rome: FAO
[60] Heldt, M. 2010. Science and innovation can help farmers meet global challenges. Presentation given at Investing in Science. London: Chatham House, 22 November
[61] FAO. 2009. Statistical yearbook, 2009. Rome: FAO
[62] FAO. 2010. FAOSTAT

Example 4: Engineering

The preceding example shows an author integrating a graphic and explicating it in detail. In Chapter 7: Analysis, we saw Anita Helle closely analyzing several photographs as evidence. Scholars also integrate evidence as a form of illustration, as in the example excerpted here, which is from an engineering article written by Parisa Pouladzadeh, Shervin Shirmohammadi, and Rana Al-Maghrabi. In this article, the authors are proposing a food imaging system that can use an image of food to identify how many calories and other nutritional elements are in the food. This is part of a larger inquiry into how technology and imaging can facilitate healthier living.

Excerpt from "Measuring Calorie and Nutrition From Food Image"
by P. Pouladzadeh, S. Shirmohammadi, and R. Al-Maghrabi

Fig. 6. SVM module verifies with the user the type of foods it has determined [18].

The authors use the image as an example, or illustration of how the interface will look to users. Demonstrating the interface as being user friendly and effective is key for the authors since this is a proposal argument. Notice that they refer to Fig. 6 in the text and describe it, so the image is a crucial component that works in concert with the text.

In our proposed method,… the feature vectors of each food item, extracted during the segmentation phase, will be used as the training vectors of SVM. For increasing the accuracy, after the SVM module has determined each food portion type, the system can optionally interact with the user to verify the kind of food portions.

For instance, it can show a picture of the food to the user, annotated with what it believes are the portion types, such as chicken, meet, vegetable, and so on, as… shown in Fig. 6. The user can then confirm or change the food type.…

From *IEEE Transactions on Instrumentation and Measurement* (63.8), 2014.

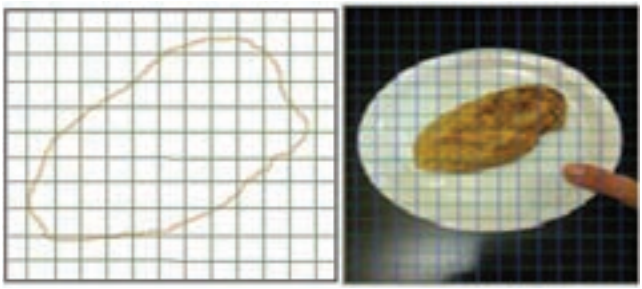


Fig. 7. Methodology for food portion area measurement.

To calculate the surface area for a food portion, we propose to superimpose a grid of squares onto the image segment so that each square contains an equal number of pixels and, therefore, equal area. Fig. 7 shows an example with an actual food portion. The reason for using a grid is twofold. First, compared with other methods, the grid will more easily match with irregular shapes, which is important for food images because most of the food portions will be irregular.… Second, depending on the processing capabilities of the user's mobile device…, we can adjust the granularity of the grid…

Here too the image plays a crucial role as a behind-the-scenes demonstration of the food imaging system's grid methodology. Again, the authors refer directly to Fig. 7 in the text so readers can toggle between reading the text and viewing the images. The images are also clearly labeled, though, so that readers can see which images is under discussion at a given moment in the text as well as to make it easier for readers who are interested only in the images to skim through the text.

Example 5: Literature/Women's Studies

The excerpt comes from a scholarly article that is investigating the question, "In what ways did community cookbooks shape and reflect cultural mores?" In the excerpt, Ferguson is conducting an analysis of a primary source, a community cookbook from 1878 in some depth, selecting particular portions of the text to provide evidence for her argument.

Excerpt from "Intensifying Taste, Intensifying Identity: Collectivity Through Community Cookbooks" by K. Ferguson

Ferguson first outlines the claim that these community cookbooks "reinforce various class boundaries." Then Ferguson introduces in detail, with contextual information, the cookbook that will provide evidence for this claim.

One aspect of class difference is woven into the very egression and distribution of recipes. The sale of such cookbooks often served to raise funds for the impoverished and destitute, but the cookbooks themselves were aimed at those with the resources to make new, even unusual, foods (the main culinary attempts for which one needs direction). They thus create and reinforce various class boundaries, both in their purpose and in their instruction. One early community cookbook, written in 1878 not by a large community but by a committee of three women, epitomizes this ironic juxtaposition. Profits from *The Home Messenger Book of Tested Receipts,* the first page announces, benefited the Detroit Home of the Friendless. The authors warn, however, that in using the recipes, the lady of the house should "*stand by* her cook, to see that she follows them" (Steward, Sill, and Duffield 1878, ii, iv). [14]

The authors follow this with a notional dialogue:

Do you understand how to make muffins, Bridget?

I do that, mum. I makes illegant muffins; they're just as loight, as loight, etc. (iv)

This (conspicuously Irish) cook's muffins may be "loight," the authors warn, but this is likely because they are "poisoned with baking powder, and they taste like saw-dust and overeffervesced soda water" (iv). One must, they repeat, "stand by" one's cook to make sure she performs each step correctly; this, more than cooking itself, is the proper role of the lady of the house.

Ferguson explicates in the next two paragraphs the quoted material in depth to show readers how this evidence proves her claim.

What is being instructed, here? Not the cooking itself, although it is presumed that a supervisor should always be able to do the menial task being overseen. Instead, it is the proper way to engage and to assign one's servants—to keep them properly in line. Although this cookbook, like others of the time, is made up mostly of food recipes, these textual instructions are surrounded by a reticulation of authority and propriety; how to oversee and how to delegate are often presented as more important than how to cook.

[14] Italics in original. The title page also notes that the recipes therein apportion "TOTAL ABSTINENCE." Stewart, Isabella G. D., Sally B. Sill, and Mary B. Duffield, comps. 1878. *The Home Messenger Book of Tested Receipts*. 2nd ed. Detroit: E. B. Smith.

From *Signs: Journal Of Women In Culture And Society* (37.3), 2012.

Example 6: Sustainability, Environmental Research Organization

The excerpt comes from a magazine article printed in a Worldwatch Institute publication and reposted on their website. Worldwatch Institute is an environmental research organization. Their mission statement as quoted on their website specifies their goals:

> Through research and outreach that inspire action, the Worldwatch Institute works to accelerate the transition to a sustainable world that meets human needs. The Institute's top mission objectives are universal access to renewable energy and nutritious food, expansion of environmentally sound jobs and development, transformation of cultures from consumerism to sustainability, and an early end to population growth through healthy and intentional childbearing.

This excerpted article investigates the question, "What is the Slow Food Movement and what is its impact?" Brian Halwell uses primarily personal evidence from his visit to a diner to help define Slow Food and why people adhere to it.

Excerpt from "The Argument for Local Food" by B. Halwell

Stop in at the Farmers Diner in Barre, Vermont, and you have landed in the middle of a revolution, although you might not see it at first glance.… Twelve green vinyl stools line the white linoleum countertop in this 60-seat eatery.… A pass-thru window to the kitchen frames the cooks as they flip omelettes and pancakes and push burnt bits of hash-browns and bacon towards the grill's gutter. Not too different from the original diner that opened in this long and narrow building 70 years ago.

The place has its early morning regulars—a retired farmer, a couple of state highway maintenance workers, electricians, plumbers, and other assorted craftsmen—who on this gray winter morning are already cradling their bulky white coffee mugs by 7 a.m. Booths are illuminated by 1930s style pendent lights.…

Linger a bit longer, though, and you find that this isn't any ordinary diner. The milk in the blenders and dispenser is certified organic, which means the cows it came from weren't given shots of antibiotics, and weren't given feed grown with chemical fertilizers and pesticides. It's also from a local dairy, which means it didn't arrive in a tank truck from a place most of the folks in Barre have never seen.

From *World Watch Magazine* (16.3), 2003.

Notice that because this is a popular publication, Halwell does not provide citations for his evidence about how far most of the "food that Americans eat travels."

The eggs in the omelettes are local too. The berries and flour in the muffins and pies are from local berry patches and wheat fields. The diner cuts all its own French fries and grinds all its own hamburger meat—the beef too coming from local farms. In fact, while most of the food that Americans eat travels at least 1,500 miles from farm to plate, most of the food served in this place was grown within 50 miles, and Murphy's goal is 100 percent.…

I notice that the menu covers feature pictures of the farmers who supply the food. (Who would have thought that the food you eat in a restaurant could come from individual people?) The plastic place-mat reads like a Who's Who of radical thought on the state of the modern food system, which is decidedly not about individually responsible people. I chuckle at the quote from Columbia University nutritionist and suburban homesteader Joan Gussow: "I prefer butter to margarine because I trust cows more than chemists." There is Wendell Berry's famous declaration that "eating is an agricultural act." And there's a quote from Murphy himself: "Think Locally, Act Neighborly." He tells me he won't hold it against anyone for acting or thinking globally, but it seems too complex to him. "Acting neighborly is something we know," he says.

Halwell invokes the use of the personal voice here, using "I" and relaying his experience and conversations. Again, Halwell does not cite the quotes on the placemats because this is a popular publication format.

Write Now

Halwell's article makes use of personal evidence. What impact does the use of personal evidence have on you as a reader? What other kinds of evidence might Halwell need to include and integrate alongside (or instead of) the personal evidence in order to influence your perceptions about the Slow Food movement?

Example 7: Anthropology

Ethnography is a research methodology that is a subset of Anthropology. As a discipline interested in individual cultures and their customs, personal evidence is often utilized as a component to ethnographers' research. Ethnographer Brian Hoey describes the ways in which ethnographers use the personal as follows:

> Ethnographers generate understandings of culture through representation of what we call an emic perspective, or what might be described as the "insider's point of view." The emphasis in this representation is thus on allowing critical categories and meanings to emerge from the ethnographic encounter rather than imposing these from existing models.

The excerpt comes from an article, an ethnography, of Alaska, specifically of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Ganapathy pursues the questions, "What is the role of place in culture?" and, "What role does the Arctic Refuge play in understanding the culture of the people who engage with it?" Ganapathy discusses food as a particular aspect of her ethnography. Notice how Ganapathy blends personal evidence with critical perspective and other forms of scholarly secondary evidence.

Excerpt from "Imagining Alaska: Local and Translocal Engagements with Place" by S. Ganapathy

In August of 2010, during the course of fieldwork in the village of Vashraii K'oo, Alaska, I was casually speaking to Jeanie—a Gwich'in Athabascan woman whose family I was staying with—about our recent berry-picking endeavors.[1] On the previous day, I had joined Jeanie and four other women to pick wild blueberries from the expanses of tundra surrounding the village. To access the most productive patches, we arranged for someone to ferry us across an adjacent river and then hiked for about a mile over rough terrain, picking plump berries along the way. Jeanie and I chatted about the previous day's outing, our bountiful harvests as well as the unfortunate berry-picking injuries I had sustained: sore knees, achy ankles, and an eye nearly swollen shut from a poorly placed mosquito bite. Jeanie also recounted stories from her youth of berry picking and being out on the land and mentioned that she now tries to encourage young people in village to maintain these activities.…

Ganapathy provides personal evidence in the form of a narrative anecdote about berry picking. Where she could have instead offered a statistic about how many blueberries are picked by Gwich'in Athabascan women, Ganapathy instead depicts the scene more vividly.

Ganapathy uses the personal evidence as a way into formulating her claim, and she also begins to insert relevant secondary materials as additional evidence for how landscapes in Alaska hold "cultural, spiritual, and economic significance."

This brief anecdote serves as a starting point to further examine the concepts of "space" and "place" as well as processes of place-making from afar—and, more specifically, to consider how "local" populations engage with places that are, in large part, translocally constituted.

From *American Anthropologist* (115.1), 2013.

Alaska is an ideal location for examining concepts of space and place across multiple scales. For Native communities in Alaska, surrounding landscapes have long been imbued with cultural, spiritual, and economic significance (Catton 1997; Nelson 1973; Peter 1981; Thornton 2008).… The Arctic Refuge is one case in point. Adjacent Native groups, specifically Gwich'in Athabascan communities located to the south and west of the refuge and Inupiaq Eskimo settlements along the northern coasts, have engaged with surrounding landscapes for millennia in the pursuit of customary subsistence activities, seasonal migrations, trade, and sociability (Burch 1998; Chance 1990; McKennan 1965; Nelson 1972, 1973; Peter 1981).…

The Arctic Refuge exemplifies a place of translocal contestation.… The Arctic Refuge is sometimes portrayed as "America's Serengeti" (evoking colonial fantasies of distant exotic landscapes) or a place that is "too special to drill." The Gwich'in are presented through essentializing (albeit strategic) tropes as one of the last surviving subsistence cultures, whose members depend on the Arctic Refuge for food, clothing, and meaning in their lives. These narrative framings of the Arctic Refuge and the Gwich'in circulate widely. For instance, while at muliticulturalism festival in Stevens Point, Wisconsin, in May of 2011, I attended a featured lecture and photo presentation about a local resident's recent travels through the Arctic Refuge and his Arctic Refuge environmental activism. The striking images, descriptions of rugged landscape and encounters with bears, and portrayals of the Gwich'in as authentically traditional Native Americans captivated the attendees and enabled them to connect to a place and cause that would otherwise be well outside their frames of reference. Such narrative framings, in conjunction with extensive lobbying, have been successful in forestalling development for over 20 years.

Ganapathy again draws on personal evidence to show how the Arctic Refuge is often framed as a place that the Gwich'in people rely on for "food, clothing, and meaning."

[1] The majority of my ethnographic vignettes derive from fieldwork conducted in Alaska between 2005 and 2010.…

Transferring Evidence

As with many aspects of academic writing, integrating evidence affords academic writers across disciplines a wide variety of choices. Prior chapters examined these choices from the perspective of argument—why we argue, how we argue, how we construct arguments, and how we design arguments. But even the most efficacious decisions in these domains would be hampered without also making keen decisions regarding evidence.

Evidence, as with these other aspects of argumentation, is also one of the most varied. Writers can choose from numerous potential sources for evidence, from data and visual images to prior scholarship, primary evidence, and personal evidence. Amidst this great variety of options for what evidence to choose and how to integrate it, one habit of evidence writers can transfer across writing occasions is to always base those decisions on careful discernment of what you are claiming, how you are structuring that argument, and the format which you are using to shape that argument. Doing so will help your evidence be as effective as possible for whatever the particular context is in which you are currently arguing.

This consideration of how to choose and integrate evidence, though, would be incomplete without also examining the practicalities of how writers cite evidence. Citation practices, then, will be the area of focus for Chapter 12.

Chapter 22 Key Terms

Integrate	Evidence	Quotations
Sandwiched		MEAL plan

Write Away

This activity asks you to work together in a small group with a round-robin of evidence integration so you can consider how you will transfer the art of choosing and integrating evidence across diverse writing occasions.

Form a small group, consisting of approximately four people.

Collaborate to create an argumentative claim. Together with your group members, collaborate on an argument that you can set forth, perhaps even one about an aspect of food (sustainable food practices, hunger and food, dietary trends, health and food). It might be the case that not all members of the group fully agree with the argumentative stance, but that is fine. Your task is merely to develop a claim for the purposes of this Write Away.

Refine the argument according to disciplinary perspective and writing occasion. Together determine a disciplinary perspective for the argument and decide details about the writing occasion. What is the publication context? What format are you using? What disciplinary perspective is informing the argument? These decisions are critical for the next step since they will impact the kinds of evidence you and your group members choose.

Assign each group member a different form of evidence to choose and integrate. Each group member should be responsible for choosing and integrating evidence towards that argument, but each group member should do so with one primary form of evidence. For example, one person could use personal evidence, another visual evidence, and another previous scholarship.

Using the MEAL plan as a format, each group member composes one evidence-based paragraph. Using the MEAL plan and the assigned form of evidence as determined by your group, each group member develops a paragraph of evidence. This will include choosing the evidence for that paragraph and integrating it as effectively as possible. For example, if one group member is responsible for including personal evidence, he or she will decide what kind of personal evidence to draw on (which experiences, how much, what sorts, etc.) and create a paragraph that advances the argument by integrating that personal evidence.

Repeat the entire cycle one or two more times. Using different arguments and rotating the forms of evidence each group member is responsible for, repeat the cycle one or two more times so that every group member gains experience with a few different kinds of evidence and a few different arguments.

Reflect on evidence and transfer. Reflect for ten minutes about the process of choosing and integrating evidence across contexts: What did you learn about choosing evidence and how it is nested within the disciplinary context and writing occasion? What forms of evidence seemed easier or harder to find and integrate? In what ways did the MEAL plan apply across writing occasions? Did you find it necessary to modify your approach in any ways? If so, describe these modifications.

CHAPTER 23

Citing Resources

Pinpointing Chapter 23

Chapter 22 focused on how writers choose and integrate evidence into their writing. Chapter 23 continues addressing evidence by providing specifics for how writers cite the evidence they have chosen and integrated. Far from being a logistical afterthought, citation actually makes it possible for writers to pursue questions, advance arguments, and offer credit to those who have contributed prior research to any given field. To provide you with strategies for *citation in transit*, this chapter addresses the following concepts:

- What is Citation?
- Purposes for Citation
- Questions that Shape Citation
- Criteria for Effective Citation
- Examples of Citation across Disciplinary Perspectives
- Citation Practices in the Twenty-First Century: Digital and Visual Formats and Materials
- Citing Your Own Work
- Crafting Acknowledgments

With this final chapter of *Writing in Transit*, which builds on the features of writing in transit explored in the preceding chapters, you will now be equipped to continue strengthening your acumen with writing transfer as you embark on your own academic explorations, engaging with the work of others, contributing your ideas to ongoing conversations, and advancing knowledge within and about the world around you.

Beijing, China, features two exceptional archaeoastronomical sites: the Ancient Beijing Observatory and the Forbidden City.

The Forbidden City, also known as the Imperial Palace or the Purple City, emerged during the Ming Dynasty in 1404 C.E. designed to signify an alignment between astronomical power and imperial power:

> the Forbidden City…was approached along the meridian, directly toward the north celestial pole, which was seen as the very heart of the heavens…. [S]ubjects permitted to visit the emperor…were required…to approach his throne—the center of the earthly realm—from due south.

Mirroring the Forbidden City's meticulous alignment, the Ancient Observatory, built during the fifteenth century, yielded such accuracy that lead astronomer Guo Shou Jing could "establish the length of the tropical (seasonal) year with an error of only twenty-six seconds" ("Chinese Astronomy").

Curiously, these Beijing sites stand apart in some ways from the dominant Western framework often invoked to categorize archaeoastronomical research: the "'green' v. 'brown' methodological debate," so named in reference to the different colored covers binding two separate volumes of research papers delivered at the 1981 Oxford archaeoastronomical conference (Carlson, et al.; Ruggles).

According to the green/brown debate, green archaeoastronomers research European sites and, since these sites often lack robust historical and cultural records, tend to focus on statistics and mathematics. Brown archaeoastronomers, meanwhile, research sites in the Americas and, since these sites often have more extensive records, tend to rely on ethnography and historical evidence (Ruggles, "Lecture 7"; Dalgleish).

Because Beijing is neither located in Europe nor the Americas, sites such as the Forbidden City and the Ancient Observatory exemplify how alignments can be not only divisive and unifying, but also exclusionary. Where and with whom

would those researching Beijing archaeoastronomy align their methodological approaches?

The answer, likely, is that archaeoastronomers probably move with more flexibility across methodological lines than the green/brown debate would suggest, and that categories nearly always have seepage. But, considered from this perspective, these Beijing sites are noteworthy not only for their astronomical alignments but also because they raise important questions about research and alignment: When scholars cite evidence, whom do they align themselves with—and why? How do they make those alignments visible? What are the implications? Who gets included? Who gets excluded?

These questions signal the underlying, complex power dynamics that often motivate academic writing citation practices. Too often, citation seems a matter of rules, indicating how writers should format a document or whether they should use endnotes or footnotes. Fortunately, though, learning citation is not so much about memorizing rules (many resources are available to help with the rules). Instead, learning about citation demands a conceptual understanding of why writers cite, why citation styles vary across disciplinary and publication context, and why decisions about citation can have high stakes.

Scholars decide with each writing occasion whom to cite and how to cite, and in so doing align themselves with particular discourse communities (and differentiate themselves from others). Contrary to what the green/brown debate might suggest, scholars actually have numerous different discourse communities from which to choose and blend, and therefore can also select from among many different citation styles. Each of the acronyms and names depicted here, in fact, represents a different citation style.

These citation styles, though, and the choices writers make about which citation style to use for any given writing occasion, are not arbitrary. Rather, the values and priorities within a discourse community shape citation styles. Writers deploy a particular citation style so their readers can clearly discern the key bibliographic information they will need in order to extend, challenge, or otherwise modify the arguments they encounter.

While some writers may often write within one particular discourse community or citation style, most writers move among discourse communities, and thereby also use different citation styles for different writing projects, depending on the disciplinary and publication context of any given writing occasion.

Although citation styles and discourse communities can at times create division, as suggested by the green/brown debate, they can also be much more productive. Deployed in the most effective ways, citation enables academic writers to reach out, connect with others' research and writing, forge new intersections, and disrupt

unproductive alignments as they explore instead those alignments that might be more illuminating and enriching for their research and writing.

Write Here

Locate a peer-reviewed article on the Forbidden City or the Ancient Observatory. Looking only at the references, hypothesize whether the article would be categorized as "brown" or "green" archaeoastronomy, as a mixture of the two methodological approaches, or as something different altogether. What scholars and prior research are being cited? What disciplinary frames do you see motivating the author's approach in the article?

What is Citation?

Citation involves attributing the words of others in academic writing. Different disciplines typically use different strategies for citation; these strategies are referred to as citation styles, citation guides, or schools of citation. While there are many citation styles, and disciplines do not map rigidly into particular citation styles, review some of the more often-used citation styles, along with the disciplines with which they are commonly affiliated.

Modern Language Association (MLA)
Often used in English, Literary Studies, Performance Studies, and Art

American Psychological Association (APA)
Often used with social sciences such as Public Policy, Sociology, and Psychology

American Anthropological Association (AAA)
Often used with Cultural Anthropology

American Sociological Association (ASA)
Often used with Sociology

Council of Science Editors (CSE)
Often used in Health Professions

American Chemical Society (ACS)
Often used with Chemistry, Physics, and Biology

Institute of Electronics and Electrical Engineers (IEEE)
Often used with Engineering

Chicago Manual of Style (CMS)
Often used with Economics, History, and some social sciences

Although each citation style offers unique guidelines for how to cite, all generally provide guidelines for these three aspects of academic writing: document format, bibliographic citations, and in-text citations.

Document format

Matters of document format include specifications about where to put page numbers, title, author name, margin size, font size, placement of appendices, etc. It also determines what a writer calls the resources section (references, works consulted, bibliography, works cited, etc.).

Bibliographic Citations

Bibliographic citations are the materials that appear as footnotes or endnotes, or sometimes as a separate bibliographic section.

In-Text Citations

In-text citations are the occasions within the actual text (as opposed to the references section) when academic writers integrate evidence, quoting or paraphrasing others, or summarizing relevant research. Whenever this occurs, academic writers cite where the information came from in order to make their research trail visible to readers. Some citation styles rely on author last name and page number (i.e., Comer 220), others require author last name and year of publication (i.e., Comer, 2014). In-text citations are connected to the bibliographic citations; readers use in-text citations to quickly recognize the attribution without getting distracted from what they are reading, and then they can go to the bibliographic section to learn the full bibliographic information, should they need or want it.

Citation styles are developed and maintained by members of varying governing organizations of disciplines. For instance, in the case of the MLA citation style, a committee of individuals involved with MLA, likely academics from a broad range of institutions, will periodically examine and, as needed, modify, the MLA citation style. They then publish these guidelines in a guide called the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. These citation styles are updated as research and writing practices change, and new, updated editions emerge periodically. For instance,

Table 23.1: In-text Citation Comparison

Modern Language Association (MLA)	David Bartholomae illustrates the challenges students face with writing in the disciplines: "Every time a student sits down to write for us, he has to invent the university for the occasion" (273).	Ken Hyland conducted research on citation practices across disciplines: "Writers in the humanities and social sciences employed substantially more citations than scientists and engineers, and were more likely to use integral structures, to employ discourse reporting verbs, and to represent cited authors as adopting a stance to their material."
American Anthropological Association (AAA)	David Bartholomae argues, "Every time a student sits down to write for us, he has to invent the university for the occasion" (1986:273).	As Ken Hyland notes, "Writers in the humanities and social sciences employed substantially more citations than scientists and engineers, and were more likely to use integral structures, to employ discourse reporting verbs, and to represent cited authors as adopting a stance to their material" (1999:1).
American Sociological Association (ASA)	Students "invent the university" each time they write. (Bartholomae 1986:273).	"Writers in the humanities and social sciences employed substantially more citations than scientists and engineers, and were more likely to use integral structures, to employ discourse reporting verbs, and to represent cited authors as adopting a stance to their material" (Hyland 1999:1).
American Psychological Association (APA)	According to David Bartholomae (1986), "Every time a student sits down to write for us, he has to invent the university for the occasion" (p. 273).	According to Ken Hyland (1999), "Writers in the humanities and social sciences employed substantially more citations than scientists and engineers, and were more likely to use integral structures, to employ discourse reporting verbs, and to represent cited authors as adopting a stance to their material" (p. 1).
Council of Science Editors (CSE)	David Bartholomae (1986) outlines the challenges students face as they write in the disciplines.	Ken Hyland (1999) identifies different citation practices across the humanities, social sciences, sciences, and engineering.
American Chemical Society (ACS)	Students face many challenges trying to figure out how to write within disciplines (Bartholomae, 1986).	Scholars in different disciplines deploy different citation practices (Hyland, 1999).
Institute of Electronics and Electrical Engineers (IEEE)	Students face many challenges learning how to write within disciplines [1].	Disciplinary discourse conventions shape citation practices [1].
Chicago Manual of Style (CMS)	David Bartholomae illustrates the challenges students face writing in the disciplines.[1]	Ken Hyland's research demonstrates divergences in citation practices across disciplinary context.[1]

older editions of the *MLA Handbook* had very little guidance on how to cite electronic references because, at the time, few academic writers used websites or electronic versions of articles. Now, of course, guides such as the *MLA Handbook* have large sections on how to cite electronic sources.

The rules, conventions, and guidelines for citation and formatting, however, are not arbitrary. Instead, they are deeply embedded in the knowledge-making practices that shape disciplinary inquiry. For example, scholars in Biology may use the CSE citation style, which asks for author last name and year of publication to be included in the text whenever a source is referenced. In biology, it is of crucial importance to know what year a study was published so readers can discern how current the research is.

Writer Insights

What is important about citation in your discipline?

Switching my career from finance to stress management, I felt something was missing. I didn't know what.... Instead of figures, I write words now, and I learned to write psychological and neuroendocrine research in a clear way. I became such a fan I plan to spend a lot more time on writing about stress management. Therefore, I gladly invested many hours on the APA school of citation.

~Karin de Wulf, Health Coach, Fabas Ariège, France

By contrast, scholars in English Literature often use the MLA citation style, where references in the text usually include a quote, followed by the author last name and page number specified in the parenthetical citation. While the year of publication matters, and is included in the works cited at the end of a paper, scholars affiliated with MLA are often interested in language and words, and therefore emphasize quotation and page numbers. Moreover, scholars in biology do not normally include quotations in their academic writing; it is much more customary for them to summarize others' research findings and then include the author last name and year of publication.

To briefly illustrate in-text citation and how it shapes knowledge making, Table 12.1 offers the same two sentences as they might appear in several different citation systems.

Please note that Table 12.1 offers only a general sense of in-text citations. Citation styles shift across time, and particular contexts change the ways in-text citation looks. Some publishing houses also create "in-house" citation styles that are geared toward either simplifying or standardizing citations across multiple texts. Writers should also become familiar with citation style guidelines for block quotes (defined differently according to citation style, but essentially larger portions of quotes). And, in-text citations in MLA, as another example, change with or without signal phrases and depending on whether a citation is the first or a subsequent reference to a particular resource (see Questions that Shape Citation for more discussion about this). Finally, individual writers may choose from a variety of options for how to frame a citation, even within a citation style.

Still, as these examples illustrate, citation styles are quite varied and emerge from a set of practices that reflect the way knowledge is created among various disciplines.

Write Now

Which citation styles have you used for your research and writing? What do you find challenging about citation? In what writing occasions have you found citation to be most valuable?

Purposes for Citation

Chapter 11 discussed why academic writers integrate evidence; this chapter extends those ideas by discussing why academic writers cite that evidence. The purposes for citing the work of others all enable academic writers to advance knowledge.

Map for other scholars

Academic writers read others' research so they can build, expand, adapt, modify, reconsider, or otherwise make use of it for their own research. As academic writers read others' research, they rely on those academic writers to provide bibliographic and citation information so that they too can then build, respond, counter, or modify those ideas as well. Sometimes readers use your citations in order just to get a fuller sense of the shape of research in a particular field.

Writer Insights

What is the importance of citation in your field?

[W]riting academic papers [are] essential in my career.... I [have recently] realized the importance of proper citation and different type[s] of citation format: MLA, CSE, and APA. I found that I have paid so little attention to bibliographies before, while I have a totally different attitude towards it now.

~Xinyan Xie, Student and Physician, Tianjin, China

Citations can reveal a considerable amount about your project; they can communicate to readers what disciplinary perspective you are using. They also, in a collective way, work to bring certain research into more prominence than other research. If enough scholars cite a particular person's research or a particular research paper, then that person and his or her work become more central to research in that field. After time, one notices that, if a scholar is working on a certain subject, he or she is likely to cite a particularly prominent scholar or important research. Some disciplines refer to this as impact, meaning how significant the impact of that particular research has been. Higher impact means that more people have cited that scholar's work.

Some research databases even provide statistics on how many others have cited a particular text.

Consistency for readers

Adhering to a sanctioned citation style, one which readers are likely accustomed to, enables readers to process the research more readily. It would be highly distracting for readers if they had to learn a new style of citation when they encountered each new text. Busy researchers come to recognize what citations look like and they can quickly find what they are looking for in others' research.

Acknowledge others' work

When you cite properly, you are acknowledging the work of others. Most people want to be recognized for the work they have done, and in research that is no different. Citing the work of others enables you to engage ethically by awarding them credit and recognizing their contributions. In the same way, when others cite you, they will be recognizing your contributions.

Avoid plagiarism

Plagiarism is using the work of others without attributing it. This includes words, ideas, images, visuals, audio recordings, music—anything that is the work of someone else. Academic writing is reliant on creating a community of high ethics so that researchers build on the work of others rather than steal from the work of others. Citing properly enables academic writers to attribute what is the work of others and to differentiate that from their own research contributions. Improper or absent citation is plagiarism—stealing. It carries with it severe consequences, including academic suspension or expulsion at many campuses. In academic communities, plagiarism also has severe consequences, including professional loss of career and public humiliation.

Write Now

Imagine a circumstance where you learned that someone else had plagiarized your writing. How would you feel about someone using your work without attributing it to you? What impacts do you think plagiarism has on authors?

Differentiate others' ideas from your own

Citations within the text signal to readers that you are using the work of others. That which is not cited is understood to be your contribution to research. Scholars want to differentiate their ideas from others' ideas so that it is clear how their writing projects are building and advancing knowledge.

Questions that Shape Citation

Don't believe you need to memorize the specific rules for various styles of citation—there are too many specifics and they change so frequently that it would be challenging to stay up to date. However, gaining a familiarity with schools of citation will help you approach citation in your own academic writing. Beyond that, these questions will help you determine which style of citation to use for a particular writing project.

Disciplinary context

What is the disciplinary context of your project? Some disciplines use multiple citation styles, while some rely primarily on a single style. As you encounter writing projects in a discipline, familiarize yourself with citation styles commonly deployed in that discipline. Most libraries affiliated with postsecondary education provide guides that specify which disciplines typically follow which citation style.

Writer Insights

Why is citation important in your field?

As a technical writer, I rely heavily on style guides to ensure that my writing is interchangeable with the writing of others on my team. When our writings are merged together into one user manual, our styles, grammar, and voices need to appear as one. This may sound difficult to achieve, but its success lies in the preparation. The technical writing field frequently relies on the Chicago Manual of Style, and each project will then set additional style guidelines relevant to the company or industry we are working with (healthcare, manufacturing, etc.). These additional style guides may address acronyms and their use or colloquial terms.

~Stacey Wagner, Software Technical Writer, Seattle, Washington, U.S.

Publication context

What is the publication context within which you write? Publication context impacts the citation style as well, in part in terms of how popular or academic the context is. Editors of scholarly journals will also tell authors which citation style to use; these are often found in a section on the journal website labeled author guidelines or submission guidelines. Some journals even create individual citation styles.

Citation style

Has a citation style been specified for your project? Most professors will let you know what citation style you should use for a particular writing project. If you are unsure, just ask.

Resources

What kinds of resources are you citing? Each citation style provides guidelines for how to cite print resources, digital resources, and visual resources. They also often provide guidelines for citing a variety of other kinds of resources, such as performances, archives, interviews, and surveys. Be aware that each different type of resource usually carries with it a slightly different citation structure. As you work with different types of resources and evidence, review the citation styles for those specific types of resources.

Citation guides

What citation guides do you plan to use? Once you know which citation style to use, you'll want to locate one or more resources to use in following that citation style. There are numerous resources available for citing the works of others, and more continue to emerge.

Citation style guides

Each citation style has an official style guide, often in print and online. MLA, for instance, publishes its guidelines in the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. The Chicago citation style publishes its guidelines in the *Chicago Manual of Style*. These style guides provide the most current and official guidelines. Be sure, though, to secure the most recent edition of the style guide since that will include the most up-to-date and accurate information.

Library and writing center websites

Most libraries and writing centers offer guidelines for citing the work of others; many of these are available publicly online. Beware that not all websites are updated, though, to reflect new editions of citation styles, so as you use these resources, look to see when the site was updated and try to discern how reliable the site is. For more on the reliability of sources, see Chapter 11: Choosing and Integrating Evidence.

Research and library databases

Many research databases (i.e., JSTOR, Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, etc.) will have an icon on the page near an article that enables a citation pop-up and provides options for various styles of citation, which you can then copy and paste into your document. Beware, however, that not all research databases provide accurate citations, so be sure to proofread them in consultation with a more official citation style guide.

Citation management software

These software programs enable you to enter bibliographic information into the program so that it stores your sources in an organized manner. Many of these programs, such as Endnote or Zotero, can also generate citations in the citation style you specify. As with research and library databases, these programs are not always accurate with the citations they generate; sometimes they do not include pertinent information, and other times, since they are reliant on user input, they include inaccurate information. Always proofread if you use a bibliographic citation manager.

Amount of referenced material

How much material from a particular reference are you citing? If you are quoting a larger portion of text, you would use what is termed a block quote. Block quotes are defined differently across citation style. For instance, in ASA, block quotations are any quotation longer than 40 words. ASA asks writers to set block quotes apart from the text and single space them. MLA, however, defines block quotations as more than four lines of prose or three lines of verse. MLA asks writers to indicate block quotations by indenting the block quote one inch from the margin and double spacing it along with the rest of the text.

The amount of material you cite also impacts whether you will use a particular page number for a citation (if you quote or paraphrase from one page), or if you are summarizing an entire article, in which case you instead refer to the entire reference without a page number.

Signal phrases

Have you included an appropriate signal phrase before a citation? Some citation styles provide different guidelines for in-text citation depending on whether you use a signal phrase when you integrate a reference within the text. Signal phrases, as discussed in the Fitzgerald and Petrick example in Chapter 11: Choosing and Integrating Evidence, explicitly name the author and/or the text within the framing material.

> **MLA In-Text Citation, with Signal Phrase**
> David Bartholomae illustrates the challenges students face with writing in the disciplines: "Every time a student sits down to write for us, he has to invent the university for the occasion" (273).

However, writers sometimes choose not to use a signal phrase, and in these cases the in-text citation must therefore include the author and page number in the parenthetical citation so readers can still identify the resource.

> **MLA In-Text Citation, without a Signal Phrase**
> Students face many challenges when writing. Among them is that they need to "invent the university for the occasion" (Bartholomae 273).

In some disciplinary and citation style contexts, it is exceedingly rare to use signal phrases. Please review the discourse conventions for the context in which you are writing to get a sense of how writers handle signal phrases.

First and subsequent reference

Is this citation the first time I've referenced this source, or is it a subsequent reference? Some citation styles shift guidelines depending on whether it is the first or a subsequent reference to a resource. For instance, in MLA, the first time a writer refers to a resource, he or she uses the resource's first and last name.

MLA In-Text Citation, first reference to a resource
David Bartholomae illustrates the challenges students face with writing in the disciplines, explaining, "Every time a student sits down to write for us, he has to invent the university for the occasion" (273).

However, the signal phrase looks different if a writer has already referred to the reference at some point in the text. In this case, the writer refers to Bartholomae only by last name (unless the writing project includes multiple resources by authors with the same last name, and the first initial is needed in order to avoid reader confusion).

MLA In-Text Citation, second or subsequent reference to a resource
Bartholomae illustrates the challenges students face with writing in the disciplines, explaining, "Every time a student sits down to write for us, he has to invent the university for the occasion" (273).

In some disciplinary and citation style contexts, it is exceedingly rare (or even forbidden) to use author first names. Please review the discourse conventions for the context in which you are writing to get a sense of how writers handle multiple references to the same resource within a text.

Criteria for Effective Citation

While the previous chapters often included several criteria regarding efficacy, there really are only two criteria for effectively citing resources.

Accurate

Whichever style of citation you choose, be sure you are using it accurately. Check and double check, and allow time for it. Avoid waiting until the end of a writing project to cite things because you may forget where you located certain information.

Accurate citations should include the correct scholar, bibliographic information, and text. Find out for certain what the year of publication is and make sure you are spelling the author's name correctly. Be sure to attribute ideas to the correct author.

The correct format according to the citation style, including location of the citation for in-text citations, must be utilized. While you may think it shouldn't matter whether a comma appears inside quotes or whether the year of publication appears after an author's name or at the end of a reference, these matters are important in helping provide consistency among a community of researchers so they can read one another's work without being distracted by how to find the information they need.

Appropriate for the writing occasion

Make sure you have chosen a style of citation that is appropriate for the given context of the writing project. Your professor will likely tell you what style of citation to use. If not, choose one that matches similar writing in that field. The importance of attending to discourse conventions in the context in which you are writing is further illustrated in the next section, which discusses citation practices in online publication platforms.

Examples of Citation across Disciplinary Perspectives

To illustrate how citation styles vary and the impact they have on academic writing, this section provides examples of citation styles, many of which cross disciplinary contexts:

- Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), Physics
- American Psychological Association (APA), Information Science
- Modern Language Association (MLA), English Literature
- Chicago Manual of Style (CMS), History of Science
- American Chemical Society (ACS), Chemistry
- American Anthropological Association (AAA), Archaeology
- American Sociological Association (ASA), Sociology
- Chicago Manual of Style (CMS), with Digital Resources Art
- Chicago Manual of Style (CMS), with Images, Art

As you explore these different examples, keep in mind that citation guidelines may have shifted since the time when a particular author was preparing his or her manuscript. Thus, these examples are not necessarily intended to show you how to cite so much as to help you learn why people cite, what citation entails, and how to locate the resources that will enable you to accurately and appropriately cite the work of others. Keep in mind as well that hardly any citation style is exclusively connected to one particular discipline. For example, Chemists might often use ACS, but they are also likely to use other citation styles as well, such as APA or CSE. Consider these examples, then, as a beginning point for you to consider how academic writers approach citation and how citation looks across contexts and disciplines.

Example 1: Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), Physics

In this example, Physicist Sidney Redner is pursuing the question, "how often is a paper cited?" He examines the impact factor of citation, and how that impact, or frequency of citation, is calculated. Faculty gain more prestige if they have an article that is distributed and cited more widely, so Redner is researching how papers get distributed and what the implications are of that popularity. He is using the IEEE citation style, primarily because he is publishing it in a journal that asks for that citation style, but also because he is a faculty member in Physics, which makes use of IEEE at times.

Excerpt from "How Popular is Your Paper? An Empirical Study of the Citation Distribution" by S. Redner

Redner uses brackets with the numbers 1 and 2 to show that he is referring to research in references 1 and 2, as indicated in his references section. If readers want to read that research, they can then go to the references section and find items 1 and 2.

Redner names the study and the author in a signal phrase. Notice that Redner includes citations right after the author's name, a feature of IEEE.

I consider a question which is of relevance to those for whom scientific publication is a primary means of scholarly communication. Namely, how often is a paper cited? While the average or total number of citations are often quoted anecdotally and tabulations of highly-cited papers exist [1,2], the focus of this work is on the more fundamental distribution of citations, namely, the number of papers which have been cited a total of x times, N(x). In spite of the fact that many academics are obliged to document their citations for merit-based considerations, there have been only a few scientific investigations on quantifying citations or related measures of scientific productivity. In a 1957 study based on the publication record of the scientific research sta at Brookhaven National Laboratory, Shockley [3] claimed that the scientific publication rate is described by a log-normal distribution. Much more recently, Laherrere and Sornette [4] have presented numerical evidence, based on data of the 1120 most-cited physicists from 1981 through June 1997, that the citation distribution of individual authors has a stretched exponential form, $N(x) \propto \exp[-(x/x0)\,\beta]$ with $\beta \approx 0.3$. Both papers give qualitative justifications for their assertions which are based on plausible general principles; however, these arguments do not provide specific numerical predictions. Here, the citation distribution of scientific publications based on two relatively large data sets is investigated [5].

Notice that the references from the end of Redner's paper include some discursive information as well as citations. Citations appear with the author's first initial and then the last name.

IEEE does not call for article titles, and it makes extensive use of abbreviations. For instance, item 3 is citing an article written by William Shockley titled "On the Statistics of Individual Variations of Productivity in Research Laboratories." It appeared in the proceedings of the IRE (Institute of Radio Engineers).

[1] See e.g., Science Citation Index Journal Citation Reports (Institute for Scientific Information, Philadelphia) for annual lists of top-cited journals and articles (web site: http://www.isinet.com/welcome.html).
[2] For example, current lists of top-cited articles in high-energy physics are maintained by the SPIRES High-Energy Physics Database at SLAC (web site http://www.slac.stanford.edu/find/top40.html).
[3] W. Shockley, Proc. IRE 45, 279 (1957).
[4] J. Laherrere and D. Sornette, cond-mat/9801293.
[5] The PRD data was provided by H. Galic from the SPIRES Database. The ISI data was provided by D. Pendlebury and H. Small of the Institute for Scientific Information. These two data sets and related citation data are available from my web site http://physics.bu.edu/~redner.
From *The European Physical Journal B-Condensed Matter and Complex Systems* (4.2), 1998.

Example 2: American Psychological Association (APA), Information Science

Michael Levin and his team examine here how large research databases learn to differentiate between authors of the same name, known by the phrase "author disambiguation." The authors use APA citation style.

Excerpt from "Citation-Based Bootstrapping for Large-Scale Author Disambiguation" by M. Levin, et al.

The authors include a footnote for the Web of Knowledge, a research database. They choose not to include it in the references section at the end because it is not a research study, but a database.

Large bibliographic databases often fail to distinguish authors with similar names. Consider "J. Lee," attributed with over 56,000 articles in Thomson Reuters' Web of Knowledge[1], or "Kim, J.H.," with over 11,000. Clearly there is not just a single J. Lee or J.H. Kim who published all of these articles. But although distinguishing the different authors with similar names is important for any research that makes use of networks of scientific publications, the task is quite difficult. Publication databases are huge, requiring methods that can scale up to millions of articles, and methods must be capable of handling partial and conflicting metadata. …

The first line of the second paragraph has another footnote; though it is citing a study, it is also communicating additional information, so the authors chose to include it as a discursive footnote, and they also include the study in the references section.

The authors name several studies that refer to "supervised machine learning train classifiers" and their year of publication. Notice that APA calls for a list of multiple authors to include a comma and an ampersand before the final name in the list, followed by the year. According to current APA guidelines, if there are one to five authors, they are all named; if there are six or more, the citation includes just the first author's name plus the phrase et al. (and others).

There have been three classes of algorithms for author disambiguation.[2] Methods relying on supervised machine learning train classifiers (support vector machines, random forests, etc.) on a hand-labeled training set containing pairs of articles where similarly named authors are identified as being the same or different persons (Han, Giles, Zha, Li, & Tsioutsiouliklis, 2004; Huang, Ertekin, & Giles, 2006; Kanani, McCallum, & Pal, 2007; Chen, Kalashnikov, & Mehrotra, 2007; Culotta, Kanani, Hall, Wick, & McCallum, 2007; Yang, Peng, Jiang, Lee, & Ho, 2008; Treeratpituk & Giles, 2009). Supervised algorithms require large handlabeled training sets, especially for huge databases like MEDLINE or Web of Knowledge that contain

On the bottom of the page in the publication appear what are known as discursive footnotes. As opposed to bibliographic footnotes, discursive footnotes add extra information to what appears in the text itself. They are almost like parenthetical asides that direct readers to additional literature or to further explain points. Writers generally decide what can or cannot go in a discursive footnote based on how central the information is to the actual argument. These can also sometimes be organized as endnotes, which appear at the end of a text, instead of footnotes at the bottom of pages.

[1]http://www.webofknowledge.com/
[2]See Smalheiser and Torvik (2009) for a comprehensive summary of this literature.

From *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology* (63.5), 2012.

tens of millions of articles. Such large quantities of manually annotated training data are not easily available, would be hard to make representative, and would be expensive to collect. For this reason, supervised algorithms may not be the best solution for such databases….

Although these previous studies have shown that high precision features may be useful for bootstrapping, a number of open issues remain. It is not clear how effective feature based bootstrapping is on large-scale collections—only Torvik and Smalheiser's (2009) study was large scale, and they combined feature-based bootstrapping with additional hand-labeled training data, so it is not possible to see the effect of feature-based bootstrapping alone. It is also unknown whether existing findings about feature-based bootstrapping will hold with very large datasets—for example, contrasting with the work of Bhattacharya and Getoor (2007) and Ferreira et al. (2010) on smaller datasets, our results will show that coauthorship is not effective for bootstrapping author disambiguation on Thomson Reuters' Web of Knowledge.

Here, the authors focus on specific studies, naming them within the body of the text as they hold more important findings relevant for their research. The Ferreira study, because it includes et al., indicates that that study included six or more authors.

This is partial listing of the references, which illustrate that APA asks for references to have the last name, followed by the first initial, then the year. Titles capitalize only the first letter, and this citation style includes more publication information than does the IEEE. Notice that references appear with a "hanging indent," whereby the second and subsequent lines of each entry are indented. This is so that busy readers can quickly scan through the names to find the reference they are looking for. Notice that references are alphabetized rather than appearing in chronological order of publication or of when they appeared in the text.

References

Andrew, G., & Gao, J. (2007). Scalable training of 11-regularized log-linear models. In *Proceedings of the 24th International Conference on Machine Learning (ICML '07)* (pp. 33–40). New York: ACM Press.

Bagga, A., & Baldwin, B. (1998). Algorithms for scoring coreference chains. *Recall*, 5(1), 2.

Banko, M., & Brill, E. (2001). Scaling to very very large corpora for natural language disambiguation. In *Proceedings of the 39th Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics* (pp. 26–33). Stroudsburg, PA: Association for Computational Linguistics.

Bhattacharya, I., & Getoor, L. (2006). A latent dirichlet model for unsupervised entity resolution. *In Proceedings of SIAM International Conference on Data Mining* (pp. 47–58). New York: ACM Press.

Bhattacharya, I., & Getoor, L. (2007). Collective entity resolution in relational data. *ACM Transactions on Knowledge Discovery from Data*, 1(1), 5.

Example 3: Modern Language Association (MLA), English Literature

In this example, Amy Robillard poses the inquiry, "how do scholars make use of student writing in scholarship about writing studies and what are the implications?" Robillard uses the MLA citation style; she is publishing in a journal called *College English*.

Excerpt from " 'Young Scholars' Affecting Composition: A Challenge to Disciplinary Citation Practices" by A. E. Robillard

In their article, "When Peer Tutors Write about Writing: Literacy Narratives and Self Reflection," Heather Bastian and Lindsey Harkness demonstrate that composition scholars have constructed "an image—a critical image—of students," and that such critical images of students are further supported by the type of student the discourse community of composition chooses to discuss in their essays. Struggling or poor writers remain the focus. The preoccupation with "poor" and "struggling" students establishes these writers as the norm and disregards other students, such as competent college writers (81).

Robillard provides a signal phrase here by naming the full article title and the authors' first and last names. She includes a parenthetical citation at the end of this section, indicating to readers that all the sentences preceding the citation are from Bastian and Harkness's article. She combines paraphrase with quotation, all from page 81 of their article.

Bastian and Harkness suggest that students ought to be provided opportunities "to engage in the rhetoric of the composition field, so that they can create more accurate representations of themselves" (91), a suggestion that makes sense when one considers the extent to which composition studies—unlike, say, astronomy or biology or economics—has relied upon student writing as the subject of so much of its research.… In WPA-L listserv discussions, Doug Downs, Christina Fisanick, and Elizabeth Wardle advocate a focus in first-year composition courses on the very questions underpinning composition studies itself—especially student empowerment. This small trend represents a shift in the central question of composition studies, as John Trimbur notes in his article "Changing the Question: Should Writing Be Studied?" In the 1960s and 1970s, the central question of composition studies was "Can writing be taught?" (16). The process movement, in what

Here, Robillard continues to cite their article, this time with a longer quotation from page 91; notice that she includes the parenthetical citation directly after the quoted material, even though it is not the end of the sentence. This signals a shift from the ideas of Bastian and Harkness to her own ideas. The material after the parenthetical citation is Robillard's analysis. MLA does not call for year of publication in the in-text citation.

Robillard now turns her attention to another scholar whose work applies to her research: John Trimbur. Again, Robillard names him and includes the full title of his article.

From *College English*, 2006.

Throughout this paragraph, as with the former one, Robillard includes page numbers after quotes and names authors and their works within her sentences. Notice how much more frequently Robillard addresses particular quotes and passages in the texts she's citing. This is characteristic of research in MLA citation style.

Trimbur calls "a kind of trickster operation," revised the question to "How can writing be learned?" shifting the subject of the question from teacher to student and leading to "a proliferation of answers with no end in sight" (22). The question that seems now to be at the forefront of composition studies is "Should writing be studied?" and the answer that the process movement, with the writing workshop at the center of undergraduate writing instruction, seems to be providing is a resounding "no" (22). Trimbur cites the pedagogical imperative—on the part of not just teachers but also students who expect to become better writers through classroom practice—as the reason the question "Should writing be studied?" has met with such negative responses. The pedagogical imperative fixes writing as a verb, whereas Bastian and Harkness's work—and the publication of *Young Scholars in Writing* more generally—forces us to see writing as a noun, an object of study for students as well as for teachers. More recently, Nancy Dejoy argues in her book, *Process This: Undergraduate Writing in Composition Studies*, that engaging students in the questions of composition studies is essential to reconceiving students' current positions as consumers of composition's disciplinary knowledge and seeing them as participants in and contributors to such knowledge.

MLA asks for a Works Cited section instead of References or Bibliography. Each entry has a hanging indent, and the full name of each author (rather than an initial) is included. Traditionally, MLA Works Cited pages are double spaced.

Works Cited

Bardies, Roland. "The Death of the Author." *Image, Music, Text.* Trans. Stephen Heath. New York: Noonday, 1977. 142-48.

Bastian, Heather, and Lindsey Harkness. "When Peer Tutors Write about Writing: Literacy Narratives and Self Reflection." *Young Scholars in Writing* 1 (2003): 77-94.…

Example 4: Chicago Manual of Style (CMS), History of Science

Yves Gingras explores in this article how scholars define "impact" regarding a scientific publication. Gingras writes in the CMS style.

Excerpt from "Revisiting the 'Quiet Debut' of the Double Helix: A Bibliometric and Methodological note on the 'Impact' of Scientific Publications" by Y. Gingras

In the field of the history of molecular biology we have observed, over the past ten years, a tendency to "revisit" the dominant narrative that made the double helix papers of 1953 by Watson and Crick a crucial event that transformed modern biology. Soraya de Chadarevian recently wrote: "it is now widely accepted that James Watson and Francis Crick's model of the structure of DNA did not make immediate impact"[1] Though the term "impact" is not defined, her statement is backed by a reference to a brief paper by Robert Olby published in *Nature* on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the publication of the DNA structure and to the author's own previous work where she argued, on the basis of interviews, press coverage and archival documents that the discovery of the DNA structure was not considered important until the 1960s. She writes, for example, that "a letter addressed to the secretary of the MRC by Bragg at the end of the 1950s confirms the relative oblivion surrounding Watson and Crick's work on the double helix."[2]

Gingras includes quotes, but CMS has the citations as footnotes. These footnotes indicate the pages where the quote appears.

Though it may be true that DNA was not a big thing in Bragg's laboratory, one can hardly generalize from such a local reaction to the whole community. In the same vein, Robert Olby titled his contribution "Quiet debut for the double helix." Its headline stated that "the historical record reveals a muted response by the scientific community to the proposal of [the DNA's] structure in 1953."[3] Three months later another historian, Bruno Strasser, repeated the same message that "we usually think that the double-helix model acquired immediate and enduring success" but that "on the contrary, it enjoyed only a 'quiet debut,'" the author then referring the reader to Olby's piece.[4] Finally, a few years later, biologist Peter A. Lawrence, in an opinion piece criticizing "the mismeasurement of science" based on citation analysis, took that new wisdom as a fact and wrote that "the most

Gingras makes use of signal phrases here but most often includes only the author's first and last name, omitting the titles of the works.

In CMS, footnotes usually have the full bibliographic citation the first time a resource is cited. This journal has modified CMS slightly (which journals often do) and includes only an abbreviated reference here.

Footnotes appear at the bottom of each page and are used with superscript numbers.

[1] de Chadarevian, 2006, p. 707.
[2] de Chadarevian, 2002, p. 243, our emphasis.
[3] Olby, 2003, p. 402

From *Journal of the History of Biology* (43.1), 2010.

important paper of the 20th century was cited rarely for the first ten years" again send was cited rarely for the first ten years" again sending the reader to Olby's piece in Nature for the "proof of that assertion.[5]

References

de Chadarevian, S. 2002. *Designs for Life: Molecular Biology After World War II.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

---- 2006. "Mice and the Reactor: The 'Genetics Experiments' in the 1950s Britain." *Journal of the History of Biology* 39: 707-735.

Olby, Robert. 2003. "Quiet Debut for the Double Helix." *Nature* 421: 402-405.

Whereas the footnotes contain the individual page citations, or in-text citations, the References section contains full bibliographic information. The year appears directly after author name. As with the other citation styles, books and journal titles appear in italics. In this citation style, articles appear with quotation marks.

[4] Strasser, 2003, pp. 803-804, our emphasis.
[5] Lawrence, 2007, pp. R584-R585, our emphasis.

Example 5: American Chemical Society (ACS), Chemistry

This fifth example comes from an editorial section of the *Journal of Medicinal Chemistry*. Editors Georg and Wang are discussing plagiarism as it relates to their journal. In the sciences, plagiarism can be complicated since many researchers publish multiple papers based on one large research project. These editors are clarifying the question, "what is self-plagiarism?"

Excerpt from "Plagiarism" by G. I. Georg and S. Wang

At the *Journal of Medicinal Chemistry*, the annual number of suspected plagiarism cases is very low, which we credit in part to the thorough reviews of our Associate Editors and reviewers but most especially to the self-vigilance of our authors. We are pleased that our authors remain upstanding scientists and are being careful to avoid such egregious errors.

As Editors of the *Journal of Medicinal Chemistry*, we wish to provide our readers, authors, and reviewers with some guidance. Plagiarism is defined as the "wrongful appropriation or purloining and publication as one's own, of the ideas, or the expression of the ideas ... of another".[1] Many instances of plagiarism are committed because of authors' unfamiliarity regarding what constitutes plagiarism. It is on this topic we wish to provide additional information, specifically on self-plagiarism.

From *Journal of Medicinal Chemistry* (56.1), 2013.

The *Journal of Medicinal Chemistry* publishes original research; therefore, authors should not include lengthy discussions of their prior work. Authors should include only as much material as necessary to make the reported work clear and understandable.

Georg and Wang quote the Oxford English Dictionary definition of plagiarism and include a footnote for the reference.

(1) Whereever possible, new language should be used to present material rather than copying from previous publications.
(2) Partial or whole sentences taken from a prior publication should be placed in quotes and the reference given. This does not mean that large amounts of information should be repeated from other publications.
(3) It is acceptable to reuse figures as long as permission and acknowledgment has been received from the copyright owner. If the American Chemical Society is the sole owner, permission is not needed to publish in an ACS journal as long as credit is given to where the figure originally appeared in the ACS journal. If credit is given to another source in the figure caption, permission must be obtained from that source.
(4) As it is di cult to create unique ways to describe procedures and equipment, it is acceptable to reproduce language for these items in the experimental section.
(5) If you are in doubt as to whether or not material would be considered self-plagiarism, it is best to reword the text.

Because of the serious nature of the plagiarism, we continue to take all suspected cases very seriously. Allegations of plagiarism are thoroughly investigated according to established best practices (http://publicationethics.org/resources/guidelines). When we have reasonable concern, we ask authors to respond. If a satisfactory response is not forthcoming and there is adequate evidence to establish that self-plagiarism or plagiarism has occurred, we proceed per definitions and guidelines stated in the Ethical Guidelines to Publication of Chemical Research, American Chemical Society.[2]

Here, the editors refer to another text and again include a footnote for the reference.

References

(1) *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed.; Oxford University Press, Oxford, U.K., 1989.
(2) Ethical Guidelines to Publication of Chemical Research; American Chemical Society: Washington, DC, 2012; http://pubs.acs.org/userimages/ContentEditor/1218054468605/ethics.pdf.

In these references, the authors do not include page numbers, but they do include all the other relevant citation information.

Example 6: American Anthropological Association (AAA), Archaeology

This example comes from Scott Hutson, an Archaeologist, who is writing an inquiry into gendered citation practices in archaeological journals. Hutson makes the argument that "citations serve as a measure of structural inequalities, but may also act to reproduce or transform such structures." He examines citations spanning 10 or more years in four academic journals in his field, finding that in several of the journals, women are cited less frequently than men, and that this "under-referencing of women might imply a devaluation of women's archaeological labor."

Hutson also makes the important point that some citation systems make gender inequities less visible than do others: "Because patterns in citations can be subtle, not easily detectable without tally sheets and statistics, they can operate below the level of awareness." For instance, in the AAA citation style in which Hutson is writing, first names are not included in the references, but only initials. While it is not possible to detect gender from first names all the time, sometimes one can, and omitting first names reduces the level of awareness of the gender of those who are cited.

Excerpt from "Gendered Citation Practices in American Antiquity and Other Archaeology Journals" by S. R. Hutson

Personal networks might also be expected to affect the frequency at which women are cited. For example, Margaret Nelson (1994:201) reports that female archaeology graduate students "do not form peer groups that include women within their graduate departments"…and, therefore, "feel isolated and unable to gain answers to professional, nonacademic questions." Roundtable discussions for women at the SAA annual meetings and at other conferences allow women to gain a network of female colleagues that might be reflected in their citations (e.g., also Ford 1994:72). Of course, other forms of networking, such as that which occurs between one's peers and professors at graduate school, have significant though not always gendered effects

Hutson includes in the parentheses the year of Nelson's text, a colon, and the page number from which the ensuing quote comes. Notice that AAA calls for the page number prior to the quote rather than after.

From *American Antiquity* (167.2), 2002.

on citation (see Kehoe 1992 on citing circles). The existence of citing circles reminds us that citation is also a form of communication. By citing certain writers and not others, authors communicate, consciously or unconsciously, their alliances, alignments, and scholarly self-identities. Furthermore, citation may obliquely flatter...or affront.

In the parenthetical citation of Ford, Hutson is paraphrasing something from page 72 of Ford's text. When Hutson refers to Kehoe, he uses only the year because he is summarizing the entire publication on citing circles rather than a specific idea on a specific page.

References Cited [abridged]

Ford, A.
1994 Women in Mesoamerican Archaeology: Why are the Best Men Winning? In *Women in Archaeology*, edited by C. Claassen, pp. 159-172. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia.

Kehoe, A.
1992 The Muted Class: Unshackling Tradition. In *Exploring Gender through Archaeology*, edited by C. Claassen, pp. 23-32. Prehistory Press, Madison, Wisconsin.

Nelson, M. C.
1994 Expanding Networks for Women in Archaeology. In *Equity Issues for Women in Archaeology*, edited by M. Nelson, S. Nelson, and A. Wylie, pp. 199-202. Archaeological Papers of the American Anthropological Association No. 5.

In these references, the page numbers are included for the entire article, not just the particular page from which the citation was pulled.

Example 7: American Sociological Association (ASA), Sociology

In the example, authors Nina C. Heckler, David R. Forde, and C. Hobson Bryan examine how assignment design potentially reduces the likelihood of plagiarism among students, specifically in digital environments. They use a combination of print and digital sources, and are writing in the ASA citation style.

Excerpt from "Using Writing Assignment Designs to Mitigate Plagiarism" by N. C. Heckler, D. R. Forde, and C. H. Bryan

In sum, faculty have the most important role in mitigating plagiarism in higher education (Van Gundy et al. 2006). To the topic of this research, the first line of defense for faculty is course design. In fact, some authorities maintain that faculty can and should be "designing out" plagiarism (Gannon-Leary, Trayhurn, and Home 2009:446).… Numerous researchers point to course design as a potentially important factor in preventing plagiarism (e.g., Compton and Pfau 2008; Gannon-Leary et al. 2009; Parameswaran

From *Teaching Sociology* (41.1), 2013.

and Devi 2006; Samuels and Bast 2006). Among the most integral elements of course design are assignment strategy and structure. Specific strategies include designing assignments for collaborative work (Hart and Friesner 2004; Kasprzak and Nixon 2004; McCord 2008; Pedersen 2010), having students turn in the actual sources used in research assignments (McCord 2008; Samuels and Bast 2006; Sterngold 2004), collecting students' field notes (Pedersen 2010), having students submit work through plagiarism detection software (Batane 2010; Gannon-Leary et al. 2009; Walker 2010), having students turn in progressive work products for large projects (Gibson et al. 2006; McCord 2008; Samuels and Bast 2006), varying the nature and frequency of assignments (Batane 2010; Bernardi et al. 2008; McCord 2008; Sutherland-Smith 2008), and developing assignments that require evaluation and reflection of material rather than collation of materials (Batane 2010; Howard and Davies 2009; Sutherland-Smith 2008).

ASA calls for the author-date form of in-text citations; notice in the Gannon-Leary, Travhurn, and Home citation that the authors have included a specific page number because they quoted a phrase directly from the text as opposed to just referring to it generally.

References [abridged]

Gannon-Leary, Pat, Deborah Trayhurn, and Margaret Home. 2009. "Good Images, Effective Messages? Working with Students and Educators on Academic Practice Understanding." *Journal of Further and Higher Education* 33(4):435-48.

Gibson, Jane Whitney, Charles W. Blackwell, Regina A. Greenwood, Ingrid Mobley, and Raquel Whitney Blackwell. 2006. "Preventing and Detecting Plagiarism in the Written Work of College Students." *Journal of Diversity Management* 1(2). Retrieved March 20, 2011 (http://journals.cluteonline.com/index.php/JDM/ article/view/5033).

McCord, Alan. 2008. *Improving Online Assignments to Deter Plagiarism*. Paper presented at the Proceedings of the 12th Annual Technology, Community & Colleges Worldwide Online Conference. Retrieved April 12, 2011 (http://etec.hawaii.edu/proceedings/2008/ McCord2008.pdf).

Van Gundy, Karen, Beth A. Morton, Hope Q. Liu, and Jennifer Kline. 2006. "Effects of Web-Based Instruction on Math Anxiety, the Sense of Mastery, and Global Self-Esteem: A Quasi-Experimental Study of Undergraduate Statistics Students." *Teaching Sociology* 34(4):370-88.

Several of the sources are from electronic versions, noted by the inclusion of websites in the references. In Gibson, the authors write "retrieved" and include the database from which they retrieved the article; in McCord, the website is the address where the papers are available.

Example 8: Chicago Manual of Style (CMS), with Digital Resources Art

The excerpt appears in an article documenting "how The Phillips Collection, a small museum of modern and contemporary art [in Washington, D.C.], desired to share its reputation as a welcoming and comfortable environment with remote audiences by launching a grassroots-style blog." The author, Sarah Bender, describes the deliberations involved in deciding about citation practices for the blog. They use Chicago style of citation, but notice how many different kinds of resources they are citing in this section, from conference papers and published papers to blogs, emails, and even a personal conversation.

Excerpt from "History, Identity, and Twenty-First Century Skills: Experiments in Institutional Blogging" by S. O. Bender

The blogs that served as a model for the Phillips Collection were the Los Angeles County Museum of Art's Unframed, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art's Open Space,[9] the Brooklyn Museum's blog, and the Smithsonian American Art Museum's blog Eye Level.[10]

Bender cites the blogs that informed their approach to blog development. CMS requires footnotes, so the actual blogs are cited in the footnotes according to the standards laid out in the *Chicago Manual of Style* for blogs.

Based on this research, contact was made with fellow museum professionals who oversaw some of the blogs on the spreadsheet. Amy Heibel, then director of Web and Media Strategy for LACMA, provided generous insight and support.[11] She emphasized the value of staying non-promotional in building an authentic relationship with readers, especially art critics and bloggers who would be likely to promote blog content if it offered a fresh perspective, but not if it echoed

Bender cites a conversation she had with Heibel, again, using CMS guidelines.

9. See Rebecca Nath, "Social Media Tool Case Study: The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art's Blog, Open Space" (paper presented at the California Association of Museums Conference, San Jose, California, March 3–5, 2010), http://www.calmuseums.org/_data/n_0001/resources/live/FINAL_RNathSFMOMA.pdf.

10. See Jeff Gates, "Case Study: New World Blogging within a Traditional Museum Setting," in Museums and the Web 2007: Selected Papers from an International Conference, ed. Jennifer Trant and David Bearman (Toronto, Ontario: Archives & Museum Informatics, 2007), http://www.archimuse.com/mw2007/papers/gates/gates.html; Jeff Gates, "Clearing the Path for Sisyphus: How Social Media is Changing Our Jobs and Our Working Relationships," Museums and the Web 2010: Selected Papers from an International Conference, ed. Jennifer Trant and David Bearman (Toronto, Ontario: Archives & Museum Informatics, 2010), http://www.archimuse.com/mw2010/papers/gates/gates.html; Jeff Gates, "Confessions of a Long Tail Visionary," Life Outtacontext (blog), consulted August14, 2013, http://outtacontext.com/articles/confessions/.

The Gates article, though published in a collection of papers, was retrieved by Bender from archimuse.com, a website called *Archives and Museum Informatics,* which provides resources for members of those fields. CMS asks for the full website to be provided.

CMS specifies that references appear as footnotes at the bottom of the page on which the citation appears. In this article, there is no separate references section at the end of the document.

11. Amy Heibel (vice president, Technology, Web, and Digital Media at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art), in discussion with the author, October15, 2010.

From *Art Documentation: Journal of the Art Libraries Society of North America* (33.1), 2014.

Bender cites an email from Gates. Since Bender is not using quotation marks, this indicates that she is paraphrasing his ideas rather than quoting.

marketing materials. … Jeff Gates,[12] lead producer of New Media Initiatives at the Smithsonian American Art Museum and managing editor of its blog, was also a valuable resource, offering two gems of wisdom in particular. In response to concerns, chiefly from curatorial staff, regarding citations on the blog, Gates clearly distinguished the venue of the blog from that of a scholarly publication. On the blog, the content is more conversational, and simply noting a source's title is sufficient. If a point needs a more detailed citation, it is an indication that either the post's tone is inappropriate for the blog or the content is better suited to a more formal article or essay. Regarding the intention to make the Phillips Collection blog media-heavy and low on article-length posts, Gates alleviated concern over access to enough quality photography. He said that images on the blog didn't necessarily have to be "beautiful"; what was important was that they be "interesting."[13] This straightforward perspective was liberating and inspiring on many levels related to content creation (72).

Citing another conversation, Bender now uses quotation marks, indicating that these were Gates's words.

CMS specifies exactly how to cite a conversation and an email, as well as many other kinds of resources that academic writers might use in their scholarship.

12. Jeff Gates (lead producer, New Media Initiatives at the Smithsonian American Art Museum, and managing editor, Eye Level), in e-mail message to the author, February 2, 2011.

13. Jeff Gates, in conversation with the author, October 21, 2010.

Example 9: Chicago Manual of Style (CMS), with images, art

The final example of this segment will offer you a glimpse of citation with images. Citation with images depends on the context in which the image is included. Often, if the image is included as an illustrative figure, then authors will attribute the image source near the actual image, but not necessarily include the image in the References section. The example demonstrates this mode of citation with images. Here, Alexander Watkins is arguing for the citation tool Zotero as a strong tool for image resource management, which can help users organize, manage, and cite their personal image collections.

Excerpt from "Zotero for Personal Image Management" by A. Watkins

Each different type of item in Zotero has its own metadata schema, though many fields are shared between item types. Zotero's artwork item type has fields for the most important image data (Figure 2). The ability to document images fully makes the program much more than a way to store and view images. It becomes a place to keep important information, generate citations, and make the data available for analysis. Zotero's metadata for images is strong compared to other image-management software programs, but it is less robust than full-featured digital asset management systems. It lacks the complexity of a schema like VRA Core or the ability to integrate vocabularies (305-6).

Figure 2. Artwork item type metadata in Zotero.

Watkins includes a screen shot of Zotero, and labels it as a Figure. He does not include a bibliographic citation for the image, but earlier in the article he did have a footnote directing readers to the Zotero website: "1. Readers unfamiliar with using Zotero as a citation manager can get a quick introduction here: "Quick Start Guide [Zotero Documentation]," https://www.zotero.org/support/quick_start_guide."

From *Art Documentation: Journal of the Art Libraries Society of North America* (32.2), 2013.

Citation Practices in the Twenty-First Century: Digital and Visual Formats and Materials

It is useful to keep in mind that citation practices have evolved considerably over the last twenty years to integrate the increasing prevalence of digital formats for academic writing and the increasing preponderance of digital and visual materials.

Most scholarship in the twentieth century emerged in either print or verbal formats, and relied on print resources. Since so much academic writing now appears in digital formats, from webpages and op-eds to online journals, aca-

demic writers need to be particularly attuned to citation practices related to these digital environments. Moreover, with increased access to digital materials of all sorts, writers must likewise be savvier at learning how to cite across many different kinds of materials.

Digital materials

All evidence and resources must be cited, including digital materials. Each citation style provides guidelines for how to cite a variety of kinds of materials, from an email or listserv posting to a photograph, whether it appears in an archive, a blog, or a website.

Still, because online contexts develop more quickly than the regular update cycles for citation styles, you should be prepared to encounter a resource at some point that a citation style does not address or does not fully address. In this case, you will need to adapt citation style guidelines to fit the resource. Do this in consultation with your professor and other writing-related resources, such as your institution's writing center, similar writing in that field, and/or reliable, official online writing guides.

Publishing online

Academic writers must use citation whether they are publishing in a peer-reviewed journal, a blog, or a website. Still, the specific strategies for citation can shift across these various platforms.

Some digital platforms, for example, cite by using weblinks instead of standard academic in-text citation formats. In the excerpt, from an article titled "The Play's The Thing," published in the online journal *Hybrid Pedagogy*, author Sarah Heidebrink-Bruno embeds several links, reprinted here in blue, in much the same way that they appear in the online article (though without the live link).

> When reading aloud in class, always do the voices. I know, you don't want to be "that teacher," but trust me, do the voices. Do you remember the first time someone read to you, or you listened to an audio book, and you heard a voice so wonderful, so adaptable that it made the storytelling come alive for you? Chances are, so do your students. If they haven't had that moment yet, create it for them. Be their Alan Rickman.

The first of the links brings readers to a YouTube video featuring an audio book: *The Hobbit,* read by Nicol Williamson (Haamurabi). The second link takes readers to a YouTube video featuring Alan Rickman reading Shakespeare's Sonnet 130 (Kedavra). Heidebrink-Bruno is providing examples of strong reading voices.

In a print journal, these citations may have instead appeared as discursive footnotes where Heidebrink-Bruno might have offered readers examples of strong reading voices with something along the lines of:

> For examples of the power generated from strong reading voices, see Alan Brickman's reading of Shakespeare's Sonnet 130 and Nicol Williamson's reading of *The Hobbit*.

Then, in her works cited or references, Heidebrink-Bruno would have included full bibliographic citations for these two audio texts. However, because Heidebrink-Bruno is publishing in an entirely digital platform, she instead opts to link out directly to these sites.

Heidebrink-Bruno's article also illustrates another feature of academic writing in digital platforms through its approach to citation more broadly. While, as indicated earlier, many online peer-reviewed journals maintain the same discourse conventions for citation as in print publications, using one of the citation styles exemplified in the section toward the end of this chapter, some online publication formats require a modified approach to citation. *Hybrid Pedagogy*, in particular, adopts citation practices that might seem more characteristic of a blog, web-based article, or a more popular print article. That is, Heidebrink-Bruno does not include bibliographic citations at the end of her text. Instead, any resources she uses are attributed through embedded links in the text.

As an example of her modified approach to citation, Heidebrink-Bruno discusses at one point a photographic image as an instance of how students will enjoy examining and creating captions for visual images as a writing activity. Heidebrink-Bruno includes the image along with a caption (Figure 23.1).

"In 1937, two women caused an accident by wearing shorts in public for the first time."

FIGURE 23.1 Example of an image and caption.

Importantly, Heidebrink-Bruno does not include a text-based citation for the photograph. She instead includes a live link embedded within the image leading readers to the source where she found the image (a *Tumblr* blog titled *stability. tumblr.com*, run by blogger and photographer Nick Avallone).

In this case, the original photograph is an archival image located in the City of Toronto archives. The *Huffington Post* reported on the photograph, documenting that it went viral after a blogger posted it with the caption on *Reddit* because of the way the caption blames the women instead of the driver. Heidebrink-Bruno includes the photograph, but her embedded link does not take readers to the City of Toronto archives, nor to the initial *Reddit* posting, nor even to the *Huffington Post* article discussing the photograph. Instead, the link takes readers to another blogger on *Tumblr* who had reposted the photograph. This kind of networked approach to citation reflects the discourse conventions present in some (not all) digital environments and contrasts with citation practices in print-based scholarly contexts.

Photo credits in online platforms provide another distinctive feature of citation practices when publishing online. Heidebrink-Bruno includes another image in her article, with the following photo credit, again with embedded links (depicted in blue here): "[Photo, Minimalism outside by 55Laney69, licensed under CC BY 2.0.]" This approach enables Heidebrink-Bruno to attribute her resources, but not necessarily in accordance to any specific citation style as enumerated by, for instance, MLA, CMS, or APA.

By contrast, the bibliographic citations, excerpted from an article by Anita Helle (also excerpted in Chapter 7: Analysis), show how photographs are cited in a print-based scholarly format:

> Lange, Dorothea. Doctor examining children in trailer clinic. FSA (Farm Security Administration) mobile camp, klamath County, Oregon. Washington, DC: Library of Congress. http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/fsa2000005393/PP/ (accessed September 9, 2011).
>
> ———. Fifty-seven year old sharecropper woman. Hinds County, Mississippi, 1937. Washington, DC: Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, LCDIg-fsa-8b32018.

Despite the different citation approach illustrated in Heidebrink-Bruno's article, though, she is still attributing her resources; she is just doing so from within the established discourse conventions of the context an in accordance with the editorial guidelines of that journal.

Write Now

Find an online publication context and examine the citation approach. How is the author attributing and referencing resources in this online format?

Transfer Hub: Share your ideas and see what others have written at fountainheadpress.com/transferhub.

Citing Your Own Work

Though it may seem surprising, if you borrow ideas from work that you have previously produced, you need to cite yourself. This is alternately termed self-citation or self-reference. Citing yourself achieves the same purposes as citing others: it awards credit, offers a bibliographic trail for readers to follow, and enables academic writers to situate their current writing project within a larger, ongoing conversation. In educational settings, if students draw from prior writing projects they have produced, they must cite their prior writing projects (citation style guides even provide guidelines for citing unpublished writing).

An example of self-citation can be found within the article by David Corso on video games. Corso uses an idea from another of his writing projects, and therefore cites it:

> If we maintain a holistic approach when dealing with video game play, we can investigate these effects and provide instruction on their implementation, i.e. incorporate less violence in video games while maintaining competition or making the player cognizant of these violent effects (Corso, 2013).

From the references section included with the article, readers learn that the work Corso cited was his honors college thesis:

> Corso, D. (2013). Holistic gaming: Using the physical and psychological effects of video games to better our lives. (Unpublished Honors College thesis). The University of South Carolina, Columbia.

Citing your own prior work is in many ways a positive strategy. Academic reputations with regard to publications can be in part determined by how many other articles have cited a particular publication. The more your text is cited, the more reputable it is (for more discussion about this phenomenon, known as impact factor, and the ensuing complexities, see Example 1). In scientific disciplines, where writers often publish multiple articles from one research project, the necessity for citing your own work becomes more complex. Citing their own work ensures that each publication has an original contribution rather than repeating the ideas of other prior publications.

Crafting Acknowledgments

Many academic texts include an acknowledgments section as well as a references or works cited section. These sections enable academic writers to acknowledge the ways in which others around them have shaped the text, even if they might not have done so explicitly as in the case of evidence and actual works cited. Writers will often use this space to acknowledge, for instance, feedback they have received from readers, editorial suggestions from editors, research assistance from librarians or archivists, and also funding support from grants or organizations.

Example 1: Acknowledgments

Excerpt from "'It's Medically Proven!': Assessing the Dissemination of Religion and Health Research" by S. M. Frenk, S. L. Foy, and K. G. Meador

Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank Joe Mann, Director of the Rural Church Division at The Duke Endowment, Mary Piepenbringin, Director of the Health Care Division at The Duke Endowment, and Gene Cochrane, President of The Duke Endowment for financial support of the Caring Communities Health Ministries Assessment from which these data are drawn. The authors would like to thank Alexis T. Franzese and Whitney Arroyave for their assistance with the Caring Communities Health Ministries Assessment Project and Wendy Cadge, Linda K. George, and Harold Koenig for reviewing the manuscript. Finally, the authors thank the congregations that participated in the study. The content of this article is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not reflect the views or opinions of The Duke Endowment.

The authors thank the people at the various sites they studied for their field research as well as the funder of their research. They also thank those who reviewed the manuscript.

From *Journal of Religion and Health* (50.4), 2011.

Example 2: Acknowledgments

Excerpt from "Responding to the Work of Others: There's a Better Way for Us to Live" by D. Wong

Acknowledgments

I'd like to thank Joav and Zach for their comments on my draft. Their input was very helpful in my revision. Their feedback on how I should add in a second rewrite at the end of the piece was insightful, and their encouraging comments gave me more confidence in writing my final draft. They did a very thorough reading of my second draft, so I really appreciate their hard work. I'd also like to thank Timothy Wright from the Writing Studio, who gave me valuable feedback on ways I could improve my draft, especially with regard to my introduction.

Wong, an undergraduate when he published this article, expresses appreciation for his peers who read the draft, as well as a writing center tutor.

From *Deliberations* (9), 2008.

Example 3: Acknowledgments

Excerpt from "History, Identity, and Twenty-First Century Skills: Experiments in Institutional Blogging" by S. O. Bender

Acknowledgments

I wish to express my gratitude to Amy Heibel and Jeff Gates who, as is evident in this article, provided early and essential guidance and support to this project. My unending thanks go to former public relations manager Cecilia Wichmann who, by bringing her blog idea to me, forever enhanced my relationship to my colleagues and my institution, and changed my belief in social media and its power to tell stories worth sharing.

Bender thanks those who contributed intellectual inspiration and support to her project and those who influenced her thinking.

From *Art Documentation: Journal of the Art Libraries Society of North America* (33.1), 2014.

Transferring Citation

Citation practices build on the concepts covered in nearly all the preceding chapters. Citation makes it possible for writers to pursue questions, engage with the texts they read, develop arguments, and integrate evidence. While it may be true that accurate citation practices enable scholars to avoid plagiarism, a more productive approach to citation involves considering citation as a way of demonstrating your knowledge and of helping other researchers (your readers) build knowledge as well.

Transferring citation practices across writing occasions acknowledges that citation contributes to and reflects academic writing culture more broadly. Citation also has high political implications, due to its power to establish, reinforce, or damage reputations across disciplines. Transfer is the essence of citation since citation practices exemplify the dynamic nature of academic writing.

Chapter 23 Key Terms

Citation styles	Document format	Plagiarism
Citation guides	Bibliographic citations	Signal phrase
Schools of citation	In-text citations	Self-citation

Write Away

Because you will be called upon throughout your undergraduate education and beyond to cite within different contexts, you should gain familiarity with how to transfer citation practices across writing occasions. This activity invites you to do so by transferring citation styles for the same text across disciplines and formats in order to reflect on citation and transfer.

Choose a two-page segment from a peer-reviewed text that includes citations. Choose a text you can use as an original citation starting point. The text you choose can be from any disciplinary perspective, and in any citation style. Once you have selected the text, choose a two-page segment of it that you can use to transfer citations.

Identify the text's current citation style. Using a library resource, citation guide, or authoritative online resource, identify which citation style the article is currently adopting. Be careful as some citation styles look similar to one another, and you might have chosen one that is a journal-specific citation style (which is fine). To discern citation style, look at both in-text citations and bibliographic information.

Choose two to three additional citation styles you can use for the transfer. Select two or three citation styles different from the one currently being deployed in the text you have chosen. If your text is using a journal-specific form of citation, just choose two or three other citation styles that look quite different from the current one. Aim to secure a mix of citation styles that ask you to examine citation from several different perspectives.

Transfer the citations across citation styles. Transfer the citation style from the original version to the other citation styles, one at a time. First, transfer all the citations in that two-page segment (in-text and any related bibliographic entries) into one of the other citation styles you have selected. Then, repeat that transfer for the second citation style, and the third if you chose three. You may find that in the process of transferring citation styles you will be called upon to reduce quoted material or change the style of signal phrases. Use a library resource, citation guide, or authoritative online resource to make sure you are citing as accurately as possible.

Transfer citations to a citation style for a weblinked blog. As a final transfer move, paraphrase the two-page segment of text as though you were posting the paraphrase to an online blog. As would be customary in that setting, opt as much as possible for weblinks instead of full in-text citations. Be sure to also cite that you are adapting/paraphrasing an article so that your own citation attribution is accurate.

Reflect on citation and transfer. Reflect in writing for ten minutes on what you learned about citation and transfer from having completed this activity. Which citation styles seemed more difficult for you? Which ones fit better with the kind of disciplinary perspective you were using? What elements of citation carried over from one version to another? Which elements were drastically different?