The Corequisite Support Workbook for

Writing Today

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Preface for *The Corequisite Support Workbook for Writing Today*

The Corequisite Support Workbook seamlessly integrates with *Writing Today*, providing additional scaffolded learning for all of your First-Year Composition students—and especially for those enrolled in corequisite courses.

Here you will find nine Workshops that target learning areas that first-year writing students sometimes struggle with. In each one, you will find a variety of activities that will help them master specific writing skills. They cover a range of topics, from grammar to invention to "doing college," to develop various skills, from critical reading to writing stronger sentences to doing research to support writing. And *The Corequisite Support Workbook* has been added to the Pearson+ version of *Writing Today* at no extra cost to your students.

Corequisite Education: Removing Obstacles to Success

College can be confusing and daunting, especially for students who are first-generation, second-language learners, or are from under-served communities or historically underrepresented backgrounds. Their educational experiences may not have fully prepared them for college, or possibly they just don't learn in the same ways as so-called "traditional" students do. These students often don't have family or friends to turn to for advice or support. Many may even question whether they really belong in college. (One of our authors, Professor Johnson-Sheehan, was a first-generation student, so he knows this first-hand).

Whatever their situation and background, their desires for college success and getting ahead in life are as earnest and hopeful as they are for any other new college student. They have earned their way into college, and they deserve to be educated as equals, but at times the obstacles to their success may be high.

An abundance of research shows clearly that traditional models of developmental education have sidetracked the aspirations of many less-prepared students (CCRC, 2014). A recent meta-analysis of many empirical studies concluded that "with a few notable exceptions, developmental education has mostly null and sometimes negative effects on student outcomes for students near the cutoffs. A null result indicates that no statistically significant effect was found in the analysis, suggesting that students spent time and tuition on courses that may have made no discernable difference in their ability to succeed in college" (CCRC, p. 4). Requiring students to take extra non-credit-bearing courses can make college harder, not easier. In some cases, students are required to spend a year going through developmental courses before they reach the college starting line, which puts them at greater risk for dropping out. Also, these students are fully aware of the stigma attached to developmental education courses, which reinforces their concerns about belonging.

Statistics gathered and analyzed over decades and across the country reveal that one-third of students assigned to remedial or developmental courses could have earned a B or better in college courses (Scott-Clayton, 2018). Far from giving these students access to higher ed, the extra courses can be roadblocks in their pathways to success.

Corequisite Models for First-Year Composition

Recently, a variety of corequisite models have been adopted at hundreds of colleges and universities, with each school shaping corequisite strategies to best meet their students' needs and their school's constraints. Corequisite models are designed to give students the extra help and encouragement they need without delaying their progress or making them feel labeled, and these courses are proven to double the rate of students who succeed in English courses (Vandal, 2015). That means your students are more likely to succeed in your class and move forward with their college studies.

The Advantages of *The Corequisite Support Workbook*

We're very excited about this new companion text to *Writing Today*, and we jumped at the chance to develop it. Designed to be used alongside *Writing Today*, the workshops in this workbook provide scaffolded support for corequisite students. Indeed, they can help you clear a

path to success for *all* of your students. *The Corequisite Support Workbook* has been added to the Pearson+ version of *Writing Today* at no extra cost to students.

- First, this workbook is designed to work seamlessly with *Writing Today*. Fully integrated into *Writing Today* and with an identical design, these Workshops are complementary to the main textbook. Regardless of how your First-Year Composition courses are structured, all of your students will find a consistent approach in both their texts.
- Second, the seamless integration means your students can draw on these additional resources as they need them or as you assign them. For example, one of your students may be able to write strong sentences but might need help with paragraphing. You can assign Workshop 6, "Revising Paragraphs," to provide that additional learning on-demand, when it is needed.
- Third, *The Corequisite Support Workbook* comes at no extra cost for all your students, giving you the flexibility to assign these activities or not, as you feel they are needed.
- Fourth, if you're teaching a "bridge" or "stretch" course before the regular semester starts, this material can give your students a rolling start into using *Writing Today*. When the bridge or stretch course finishes and they begin writing at the college level, your students will already be familiar with *Writing Today*. They won't have to pay for or familiarize themselves with a new textbook.
- Finally, *any* student can improve reading and writing skills with these lessons and activities. Even your most prepared students can benefit by seeing materials presented in a different way, specifically with a focus on active learning.

We know, too, that students struggle with issues outside of the course that pose challenges to their learning process—such as financial or family stressors and balancing work and school. Workshop 1, "Getting Your Edge," offers strategies for succeeding in college that your students will find helpful, such as time management, getting help on your campus, note taking, cultivating self-efficacy, and more.

College writing can be challenging. Why not give your students this extra support?

Instructor Support

There are a variety of challenges and rewards in teaching corequisite courses, and we believe in supporting instructors as well as students. Therefore, the extensive *Instructor's Resource Manual* for *Writing Today* has been expanded and updated to include extra help for integrating *The Corequisite Support Workbook*. In addition, we offer an *Instructor's Resource Manual* for the *Workbook*, with walk-throughs for every Workshop and each Activity, including Answer Keys. A separate Answer Key is also available.

We all want what's best for our students. We want them to succeed in college and in life. *Writing Today* with *The Corequisite Support Workbook* will help you help your students realize their goals and dreams.

References

Scott-Clayton, J. (2018). Evidence-based reforms in college remediation are gaining steam—and so far living up to the hype. Brookings Institute. Retrieved from https://www.brookings.edu/research/evidence-based-reforms-in-college-remediation-are-gaining-steam-and-so-far-living-up-to-the-hype/

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Charles Paine, University of New Mexico

Workshop 1
Getting Your Edge

In this workshop, you will learn how to do these things:

- **1.0** Identify the reasons why college students succeed.
- **1.1** Develop time management skills for succeeding in college.
- **1.2** Devise reading strategies that help you "read smarter, not harder."
- **1.3** Reproduce lectures by taking good notes in class.
- **1.4** Manage stress by using good stress and minimizing bad stress.
- **1.5** Assemble people into an effective study group.
- **1.6** Prepare yourself to discuss your ideas and assignments with your instructors.
- **1.7** Identify places where you can get help on your college campus.
- **1.8** Develop the discipline to succeed in an online or hybrid writing course.

HELPFUL HINT: You can use material in *Writing Today*'s Chapter 1, "Writing and Genres" to help you complete this workshop.

Why Do People Succeed in College (and Some Don't)?

1.0 Identify the reasons why college students succeed.

There's an old saying that "half of success is just showing up." That's especially true in college. You will hear stories about students who skipped classes or who believed that they had better things to do. You may even hear myths about students who never went to class and still earned all A's. The reality is that those kinds of students usually end up learning little, wasting their time, or failing out. Most of them didn't meet their potential. Listen, you're spending a great amount of time and money going to college—be there!

You've probably heard that success means being in the right place at the right time. In college, if you're not there, you aren't learning, and you aren't getting involved. You aren't growing as a person, and you're not preparing yourself for a successful future.

People who are successful in college show up, arrive in class on time, stay active in class, and turn in their work on time. If they run into problems, they communicate with their instructors and get help from the Writing Center, tutors, mentors, and sometimes psychological services.

In this module, you will learn how to get an edge on college with some easy-to-learn habits and tools. Each of the worksheets in this module will help you work smarter, instead of harder.

Activity 1.0.1

Think About This

More than likely, you're early in your college career. Write 250 words in which you describe what you hope to get out of college and your future career. What are 3–5 ways in which being a strong speaker and writer will help you get ahead and reach your dreams?

Managing Your Time

1.1 Develop time management skills for succeeding in college.

You will never feel like you have enough time as a college student. You need to balance your classes, study for tests, go to your job, and manage your social life. That's a lot. Honestly, finding that balance is something you will need to do for the rest of your life. So, college is a good time to figure out how to manage your time.

Step 1: Figure Out Your Weekly Schedule

The first thing you need to do is create your weekly schedule and post it near your desk, on your fridge, on your folder, and other places. Many online apps will help you create this kind of weekly schedule (Figure 1.1).

Fill in the Weekly Schedule with the following items:

- Your Classes and Labs
- Your Job
- Your Zone: Studying and Writing Times
- Your Social and Relaxing Time

Once you fill out your Weekly Schedule, you will see that you have some time left over. That's good. You don't need to fill in the whole schedule. Leave yourself some "down time" to catch your breath and maybe hang out with friends.

Figure 1.1 Making a Schedule

My Weekly Schedule

Time	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
8:00 a.m.							
9:00 a.m.							
10:00 a.m.							
11:00 a.m.							
12:00 p.m.							
1:00 p.m.							
2:00 p.m.							
3:00 p.m.							
4:00 p.m.							
5:00 p.m.							
6:00 p.m.							
7:00 p.m.							
8:00 p.m.							
9:00 p.m.							

Figure 1.2 Making a Task List

My Task List: September 15

Study for algebra test
Use library Web site to find books and articles for research paper
Read Chapter 3 in American history textbook
Complete online quiz for Sociology 134
Do laundry
E-mail Sheila at Pizza House about taking weekend off in October
Buy soap at Qwik Shop
Pay credit card bill
Call Jim Garrett (my advisor!) about dropping physics class

Step 2: Create Your Task List

Sometimes a simple list is the best way to keep your life from getting out of control. A *task list* is a tool you can use to keep track of what you need to do (Figure 1.2). It can also help you decide what's most important to do each day and what you should do next.

To create your task list, make a list of all the items that you need to do. As much as possible, your list should include concrete things, like "Use library Web site to do research" and not hazy stuff like "Do research."

You can write your task list on your phone, in an online application, or just write it down on a piece of paper or in a notebook. Do whatever works for you. You will want to keep your task list with you as much as possible, so you can get things done when you have time and keep it up to date.

Step 3: Star or Underline Your Three "Top Tasks" on Your Task List

Some of the items on your task list will be more important than others. Find your three top tasks and star or underline them. Your most important priorities should be ranked high on your list. You will want to do those things first.

Another good idea is to "do first things first." Ask yourself, "What task do I need to finish first?" Do that one. What task do you need to do next? Do that one next. This first-things-first approach will help you gain momentum because you will feel like you're getting things done.

Step 4: Get in Your Zone!

Your zone is when you're at your peak. It's when you feel most alert and ready to get things done. Some people are morning people who work best from, say, 6:00–10:00 a.m. Others are night owls who work best from 8:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m. Figure out your zone and mark those times off on your schedule, even if you don't have other things scheduled for those times.

You should also do your most difficult tasks when you're in your zone. That's when you are probably ready to tackle the really challenging items on your list.

Step 5: Block Out Those Distractions

We all have our favorite distractions: checking social media, texting, chatting on the phone, watching television, surfing YouTube videos, raiding the refrigerator, etc. You need to block these distractions so they don't keep you from getting stuff done.

Put your phone on silent mode. Don't watch television or videos as you work. Stop going to the fridge. Stay in your seat.

A good idea is to set a time limit on your work. Tell yourself that you will work for an hour and then go do something fun. You will be surprised at how much you can get done in one hour without distractions.

Also, multi-tasking is a myth. A little background music is fine, but psychologists have shown that the human brain really cannot concentrate on more than one thing at once.

So, when you're trying to do two or three things simultaneously (writing, watching videos, checking your phone), you are really just switching your attention to each separately, one at a time. That means you're not really concentrating on any of them long enough to be productive. You may feel like you're busy, but you're really doing a poor job on two or three things rather than a good job on one.

Step 6: Reward Yourself

Sometimes college can feel overwhelming. You have so much work to do, and you're afraid of missing out on all the other fun stuff going on. So, pick out a reward for yourself. When you get your work done, do something fun like watch your favorite show, have some chocolate, or hang out with friends. Or, you can tell yourself that as soon as you get a draft of your paper finished, you can take a break or watch something on Netflix. If you don't get it done, though, no reward!

Reading Smarter for Classes

1.2 Devise reading strategies that help you "read smarter, not harder."

Workshop 2 in *The Edge* gives you more extended advice for reading, but here are a few quick tips.

A big part of going to college is getting your reading done for class. In high school, your teachers probably covered all the material you needed to learn in class. In college, your professors' lectures may only go over a third of what you need to know. You will need to learn the rest on your own by reading the textbook and assigned articles! Answering the "Five-W and How Questions" in Activity 1.2.1 can help.

Reading for class is something you need to train yourself to do—it's a discipline thing. In college, there are always other fun things to do and people to hang out with. But you need to set aside time each day to read for your classes. That way, you will know what you need to know so you can succeed on tests, write your papers, and finish your projects.

Activity 1.2.1

Getting My Reading Done for My Classes

What do I need to read by tomorrow? By the end of the week?

Where am I most comfortable reading?

When is the best time for me to read each day?

Why exactly am I reading each book or articles for class?

How should I read each book or article? Skimming? Light reading? Close reading?

Who do I need to avoid in order to get my reading done for class?

Taking Good Notes in Class

1.3 Reproduce lectures by taking good notes in class.

Your professors are going to throw a great amount of material at you in your classes, especially in those large lecture courses. You will notice that some people sitting with you are writing or typing notes, some are staring mindlessly at the front of the room, and others are looking at their phones. Don't be a mindless zombie in class! Take notes! Taking notes will help you learn the material, keep track of what you are doing, write your papers, and study for tests.

Many professors will give you copies of the slides, usually through their course Web site, and larger lecture courses often make videos or audios of each lecture. You can take good notes *and* use these slides and videos/audios to study. That's the best way to lock that material in your brain.

Here, we will describe two approaches to note-taking: the *outline system* and the *concept map system*. Hint: Don't try to write down everything the professor says in class. You won't be able keep up, and you will spend so much time copying the lecture that you won't be really listening and learning in class. Concentrate on the main points, not everything the professor says.

Outline System

The outline system is pretty simple. You will create an outline of the professor's lecture, copying down any announcements and the major points (see Figure 1.3).

Write Down the Announcements. For a typical lecture, your professors will usually start with a few announcements about the upcoming test, paper, or project. They will tell you the readings for the next week and give you any homework assignments. Write all of that down.

Figure 1.3 Taking Notes with the Outline Method

My Lecture Notes

Date of Lecture:
Announcements

1. Major Topic:
   a. Important point
   b. Important point
   c. and so on . . .
2. Major Topic:
   a. Important point
   b. Important point
   c. and so on . . .
3. Major Topic:
   a. Important point
   b. Important point
   c. and so on . . .
4. Final "Most Important" Point
5. Questions: What questions do I have right now?

Turn the Lecture into an Outline. Typically, professors will cover about 3–5 major topics in each lecture. Each time you hear them make a major shift, start a new number. (You don't need to use Roman numerals, by the way.) Figure 1.3 gives a sample outline that you can follow.

A few times in each lecture, professors will say something like, "This is really important" or "Here's something I want you to remember." You should underline those items or put a star next to them. When professors say something like that, they are basically signaling "This is going to be on the test" or "I'll be looking for this in your paper." Your professor is basically rewarding you for being in class and taking good notes by essentially giving you one of the answers.

At the end of the lecture, your professor may also say something like, "If you remember anything from this lecture. . . ." Yeah, that's going to be on the test or on the rubric for the paper. Write that down and double underline it or put it in bold.

The end of the lecture is also a good time to think forward to the next lecture or reading. Ask yourself questions like these:

- What's the most important question I have right now?
- What point is still unclear?
- What ideas are most interesting?
- How do the ideas covered today relate to my own experiences?

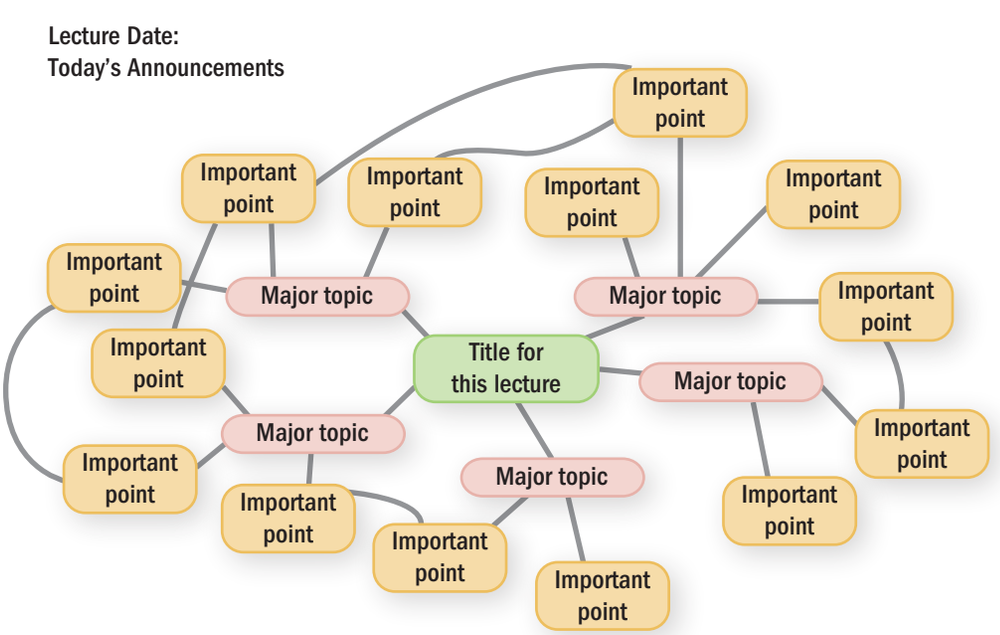
Concept Map System

The concept map system tends to work better for people who are visual thinkers. Instead of making an outline, you create a map out of your professor's lecture. This is similar to the outline method, but the concept map system helps you put major ideas into clusters of ideas. That way, you can see how those ideas work together.

Here's how it works. In your notebook, write the professor's announcements at the top of the page (see Figure 1.4). Then, put the title of the lecture in the middle of the paper or your screen. Circle it.

Each time your professor starts a new major topic, write it down, circle it, and draw a line to the title of the lecture. Then, around each major topic, write the 3–5 most important points, circle them, and draw a line back to the major topic.

Figure 1.4 Using Concept Mapping to Take Notes



Then, each time you see a connection among the important points in the lecture, draw lines to connect them together. You can then use your map to study and connect smaller ideas into larger themes.

Coping with Stress in College

1.4 Manage stress by using good stress and minimizing bad stress.

In college, as in life, you will experience both "good stress" and "bad stress." Good stress in college actually has some benefits. It can prepare you for handling stressful situations in the future when the stakes are even higher than they are in college. Stress can also raise your awareness and excitement level. It can even help you stay more focused on your work.

Bad stress is not productive and causes anxiety. It keeps you from concentrating and finishing your work. It causes you to feel grouchy or even angry. When you're dealing with bad stress, you may even feel sick, achy, or have a persistent headache. Sometimes bad stress causes you to have trouble sleeping or just calming down. While in college, you should work on managing and reducing this kind of bad stress, so you can learn to handle stress in college and the rest of your life.

It's also important to recognize when you're dealing with a mental health issue that goes beyond managing your bad stress. Going to college can trigger times of anxiety, chronic depression, relationship problems, and substance abuse. College is also a time when underlying mental health issues might emerge or become apparent, such as Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), bipolar disorder, anorexia or bulimia, self-injury, and schizophrenia.

Usually, you can manage your bad stress yourself, but sometimes you need some help, especially if you are dealing with mental health issues. So, even if you aren't experiencing mental health issues right now, you should be prepared to get help if you do. A good way to prepare for college stress is to note which stressors are good ones that you can use and which are the bad ones you need to manage (see Figure 1.5). Your college or university will have professional mental health experts whom you can talk to. You should identify them in case you need help.

Figure 1.5 Techniques for Using Good Stress to Your Advantage and Managing Bad Stress

Using Good Stress	Managing Bad Stress
• Looking forward to challenges like taking tests and writing papers • Using energy from stress to fuel exercise or other physical activities like walking • Staying optimistic by focusing on the positive rather than the negative • Being more outgoing and assertive in class and with your friends • Being creative as a way to channel your stress into something positive • Organizing yourself as a way to be prepared for the unexpected • Increasing your brain power by learning to focus on what you need to do • Innovating to come up with new strategies to handle challenging situations	• Setting regular sleeping hours, usually 7–9 hours, to regenerate your mind and body • Getting regular exercise, at least an hour every other day • Managing your time with a schedule and daily task list • Knowing your stress triggers, so you can anticipate those moments • Eating healthy food and getting enough water • Limiting your use of caffeine to a couple drinks a day • Reaching out to friends, family, and mentors to discuss stressful situations and how to manage them • Using relaxation techniques, like meditation, yoga, or mindfulness

Activity 1.4.1

Managing Stress and Getting Help If I Need It

My Five Best Ways to Use Good Stress to Motivate Myself

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

My Five Best Ways to Manage Bad Stress and Handle Tough Times

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Five Ways I Can Get Help on Campus if I Need It

- ☐ Phone number for my campus's student health care and counseling services: _____
- ☐ Phone number for the Dean of Students on campus: _____
- ☐ Phone number for my dorm's resident assistant: _____
- ☐ Phone number for my local or campus crisis line: _____
- ☐ Places to discuss or report situations of sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, and stalking: _____

Starting a Study Group

1.5 Assemble people into an effective study group.

One way to succeed in college (and meet some new friends) is to start a study group with other students. Some study groups focus on one subject area or class, such as math, science, or writing. Other kinds of study groups are groups of friends who meet regularly to keep each other on track in all their classes.

The best time to form a study group is at the beginning of a semester. Other people in your class are a bit anxious, too, so they will be looking for people who want to team up. Just ask around for people who want to start a study group. You might also be able to find people in your class on social media.

Step 1: Decide Who Is in the Group

If you're new to college, you might be nervous about forming a study group. Other people are nervous too. So, use social media to reach out to people in your dorm, your classes, and the full campus. Just make it known that you are looking for about four other people who would like to form a study group for a particular class or in your major. You don't need to accept everyone who responds.

Ask each person to tell you something about themselves, their goals, and their study habits. You can choose the four people who seem most compatible with you. Then, ask the people you didn't choose if they would like you to share their names and e-mail addresses with each other, so they can form their own groups.

Once in a while, one of your study group members will get too busy or start skipping the meetings. That happens. You can tell that person to either come to the study group or drop out of it. You can always find new people to join your study group if one of the existing members starts to disappear.

Step 2: Decide Where and When You Are Going to Meet

Study groups tend to meet once or twice a week. Usually, they will meet in a common place like the campus library, the student union, or a local café for coffee or treats. Many dorms have common rooms or study tables where people can study together. You should set regular times each week to study together, so people can put the meetings on their calendars. A regular day, time, and place will help your study group stay together.

Step 3: Decide Who Will Be the Organizer

Your group should pick one person who can keep the group organized. The organizer will send out reminder texts, posts, or e-mails. The organizer might also create a list of topics that the study group will discuss each week. Something to remember is that the organizer is not the "boss" or even the leader of the study group. Instead, this person's job is to remind people to show up and figure out what people want to study each week.

As your study group begins its work, you can decide on the roles and responsibilities of each member. These roles shouldn't stay fixed. Instead, each time your group meets, each member should take on different roles and responsibilities.

Step 4: Set the Ground Rules

Your study group should come up with a list of rules for staying in the group (Figure 1.6). Here are some of the kinds of rules you should set when the group forms:

Figure 1.6 Making Ground Rules for Study Groups

The Ground Rules for Our Study Group

- ☐ Decide when group members can use their phones to text or make calls during the study group.
- ☐ Decide when our meetings will occur and how long they will last.
- ☐ Agree about what it means to be "on time" for your group meetings.
- ☐ Agree to allow only one person to talk at a time and complete their comment before someone else talks.
- ☐ Use only constructive criticism with no insults, put-downs, teasing, or name-calling.
- ☐ Determine the amount of socializing and off-task discussion allowed at each meeting.
- ☐ Set limits on how frequently people can miss or come unprepared before they are dropped from the group.

Step 5: Decide What You Will Discuss and Study Each Week

Online document sharing sites like Google Docs and Microsoft Office Online can be very helpful for keeping study groups on track. You can create a Google Doc for your study group to use for planning and sharing information.

Each week, the organizer of your group can send out a text or e-mail that reminds study group members to update the group's common document. Each person can contribute items that need to be studied. Your group can also use this common document to split up what needs to be studied. By working together through this common space, your group can figure out who is responsible for each meeting.

Talking to Your Instructors

1.6 Prepare yourself to discuss your ideas and assignments with your instructors.

Students are often reluctant or nervous about talking to college instructors, especially professors. You shouldn't be. Teaching is a big part of their job, so your instructors do want to see you outside of class. That said, you will get a more positive response from your instructors if you ask yourself a few questions before contacting them:

Is My Question Answered on the Syllabus or Course Web Site? At the beginning of each semester, your instructors will usually give you a syllabus with their policies and a course calendar. These materials will also usually appear on the course Web site or Learning Management System (LMS). So, check the syllabus or the course Web site first before contacting your instructor. Your questions about late papers, absences, formatting, and grades will probably be answered in those places.

Is My Question Answered on the Assignment Sheet? If you're writing a paper, chances are good the instructor gave you an assignment sheet describing what was expected and when it is due. Read the assignment sheet carefully, looking for instructions about what you should

do. The assignment sheet will also usually include information about deadlines, formatting the paper, the purpose of the assignment, and possibly a rubric that will be used for grading.

Can I Ask a Teaching Assistant This Question? Larger lecture courses will usually have teaching assistants, many who run their own "recitation" sections for the class. They usually have the answers you are looking for, and they might even give you some insight into what a professor will ask about in tests or projects.

What Are My Instructor's Office Hours? All instructors should have a few office hours set aside each week when you can visit in person. Those are usually walk-in times when the instructor will be available to answer your questions and discuss the assignments or tests. Some instructors, however, will prefer you to make an appointment to visit during their office hours. Just send a courteous e-mail requesting a day and time.

Can I Use E-Mail to Ask This Question? E-mail is usually fine for asking questions, and it's even preferred by most college instructors. Keep in mind, though, that your instructors are probably very busy, so they may not respond quickly. And, sometimes, e-mails slip through the cracks. If you don't hear back within 24 hours, you might send a follow-up e-mail to see if the instructor has an answer to your question.

How Should I Frame My Question(s) To Get the Answers I Need? When you contact an instructor, be specific about the kind of information you are seeking. You need to do more than say you're "uncertain" about what the assignment is asking for or that you're "confused" about what is being asked of you. Instead, explain as concretely as possible what you don't understand. The more specific you are with your questions, the better the answers you will get back from the instructor. The left-hand column in Figure 1.7 lists questions that are vague. The right-hand column offers suggestions for framing those questions more specifically.

You should keep a couple of things in mind before asking your instructor questions:

- College instructors put a great amount of thought into what they are lecturing about. So, if they are going over the material in class, they consider it important and there's a good chance it will be on the test. Meanwhile, if you missed a class, you are responsible for getting the notes from someone else.
- Hard work is the secret to getting top grades and learning the material. There are no shortcuts. Your instructors really do want you to read and do everything assigned. College instructors know you're going to skim some parts and read more closely in others. That's fine. But, make sure you read through all the material.

Figure 1.7 Questions You Shouldn't Ask College Instructors (and a Few Better Ones)

Don't Ask This!	Try This Instead
Will this be on the test?	Can you highlight the 3–5 most important concepts in today's lecture?
Will I/Did I miss anything important?	What should I read or do to make up for my absence?
Why are we doing this assignment?	What will this assignment teach us to do?
What do I need to do to get an A?	What are some things I can do to write better, study better, or excel on this project?
Is this really important in the real world?	How will this information, assignment, or project help us prepare for our careers?
Do we need to read everything you assigned?	Can you highlight a few places in the readings where we should pay special attention?

It's true that bad college professors and instructors do exist. Yes, not every instructor is good at teaching or even communicating with students, and that can be frustrating. A professor or instructor who is not great at communicating probably has strengths in other areas, such as research, laboratory work, creativity, or administration. Good questions (and some patience from both you and your instructor) will help you learn what you need to learn.

If you do decide to contact your instructors via e-mail or by going to their office hours, you should do so professionally. Students are often too casual in e-mails to their instructors. Figure 1.8 lists some dos and don'ts that you should keep in mind when interacting with your instructors.

Figure 1.8 Dos and Don'ts for E-mailing Your Instructors

Don't Do This!	Do This Instead
Don't refer to a professor or instructor by their first name.	That's a bit too casual unless they specifically told you to call them by their first names.
Don't address your professor as Mrs. or Mr.	Most professors have earned their Ph.D. and should be called "Dr." or "Professor."
Don't send an e-mail with a blank or vague subject line.	Be exact in the subject line about what you need. Remember, your instructors are busy, too.
Don't send an e-mail without a greeting.	Start out your e-mail with a "Hello," "Good morning," or "Dear Professor. . . ."
Don't leave typos, misspellings, and grammar errors in your e-mails.	Use the spellchecker and grammar checker for your e-mail. Trust them. Proofread your e-mails before sending them out.
Don't use sloppy punctuation.	Use standard punctuation and capitalization, even if that's not normal in your personal e-mails or texts.
Don't ask the instructor to solve a problem you can solve yourself.	Do a little searching around on your own before asking the instructor how to solve a problem.
Don't sound angry, uncaring, or arrogant.	Start out with something positive, like the weather or mentioning something you like about their class. Be respectful.
Don't send multiple e-mails when one will do.	Think carefully about what you want to say or ask, and send one well-organized message.

Getting Help on Campus

1.7 Identify places where you can get help on your college campus.

There are many resources available to help you with your classes, course scheduling, and health issues. Get to know what and where they are! If you are unsure how to find these services on your campus, ask your instructor. You could also go to your college Web site and look for a tab with a name such as "Student Services," "Resources and Services," "Academic Resources," or "Student Life Resources."

Seeking help with your work is one of the secrets to success in college. You don't have to be struggling in a class to tap into the tutoring, advising, and mentoring opportunities on your campus. Unfortunately, many students don't even know that these services exist. A quick search on the school Web site will usually help you find them.

The Writing Center. Writing centers (also called "writing labs") are available on most college campuses. These writing centers have tutors or editors who can help you with your papers for classes. You will probably need to set up an appointment, but some writing centers will let you drop in.

Tutoring Centers. Universities will often put all their tutoring services in one tutoring center. These tutoring centers can offer you help in your math, English, science, languages, and other classes. Appointments are usually required.

Academic Advisors and Advising Centers. When you start college, an advisor or team of advisors will be assigned to you. Your advisors will usually help you do your scheduling for each semester, but they can also help you solve other problems with instructors, financial aid, roommates, and courses. They can help you plan your career, develop your academic skills, manage your money, and reach out to mental health experts.

Student Health Services. On most campuses, if you're a registered student, you can take advantage of healthcare that is very low cost and sometimes completely free. Most student health services offer convenient walk-in or same-day appointments for injuries, sudden illness, or existing health issues that are getting worse.

Counseling and Psychological Services. Your campus has counselors who can help if you have mental health needs or you're struggling with a crisis or your emotions. These counselors are typically available to meet one-on-one with you, but they may also recommend that you participate in group discussions with other students.

Campus Housing. If you are new to college, you are probably living in a dorm on or near campus. If you need help or information, you should contact the Resident Assistant (your RA) for your dorm floor. (*Hint:* Your RA can also help with roommate problems.)

Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office at your university will offer a variety of services. The office has advisors who can help you with family, academic, and financial situations. If you are concerned about another student, like someone on your dorm floor, you can file a "student of concern" report at the Dean of Students' Web site to get that person help.

Career Centers. The earlier you begin thinking about your career, the better. Almost all universities and colleges have a career center with advisors who can help you plan for your future.

Accessibility/Disability Resource Centers. If needed, you can receive an "accommodation" for a wide variety of disability-related barriers to learning. Some barriers, such as sight or hearing impairments, are obvious. Others, such as test anxiety, are not as visible. But all students who have such issues deserve accommodations. In fact, federal law requires that colleges and instructors provide them. If you think you are eligible for an accommodation, visit your resource center.

There will be someone on your campus who can help you solve just about any problem. Your university's or college's Web site is a good place to search for the right person. However, if you're having trouble finding help, just call or e-mail an office that is closest to what you are looking for. More than likely, the person you reach will be able to help you find the person you need to talk to.

Activity 1.7.1

Finding Help on Campus

The school Web site is your best place to find help on campus. Write down the name, phone, and e-mail contacts for each of these offices at your university:

☐ The Writing Center: _____

☐ The Tutoring Center: _____

☐ My Academic Advisor: _____

☐ The Student Health Center: _____

☐ The Counseling and Psychological Services: _____

☐ The Dean of Students: _____

☐ Accessibility/Disability Resource Center: _____

Succeeding in Online and Hybrid Writing Courses

1.8 Develop the discipline to succeed in an online or hybrid writing course.

Online writing courses are becoming more popular in college. Of course, there are pros and cons with online learning. The positives include the ability to learn when you're ready to learn, not when the class is scheduled to meet. You also have the opportunity to review lectures and work back and forth with an instructor on your papers. The challenges of online learning include the need to discipline yourself in order to learn what you need to learn. If you're a procrastinator or you have trouble motivating yourself to get your work done, online learning can quickly turn those problems into failures.

Here are some tips for succeeding in online writing courses:

Follow a Consistent Schedule

Online learning still means you need to have a daily schedule. You will still need to set aside a couple of hours each day to go through the lecture, work on assignments, take quizzes, and draft and revise your papers.

Use Your Calendar and Task List to Keep Track of Your Projects and Tests

At the beginning of this workshop, you learned about using a calendar and task list to help you complete your work. These tools are even more important for online learning, because your instructor won't be physically present to remind you.

Set Goals for Each Day

Identify the 3–5 items on your task list that you need to complete today and move them to the top of the list. Remember, it's usually smart to face the biggest challenges when you're in your zone.

Do Something for Each Class Each Day

If you wait until the last minute to do the reading and writing for your classes, you won't do a good job. Rope off an hour or two each day to do some work for each class. That way, you will absorb and master the material gradually, rather than cramming it in at the last moment—which just doesn't work that well anyway!

Learn the Material Before the Lecture

You will learn a lot more from your classes if you do the readings before each lecture. Your instructors will assume you have done the reading, so they can concentrate on expanding on what you already know. If you learn the material before the lecture, you can use your instructor's lecture to fill in the gaps.

Don't Multitask

Multitasking won't work while you're trying to learn something for class. A little background music is fine, but you cannot watch videos or text with friends while trying to read or study for your classes. You may think you can multitask, but scientific study after study show that humans can only concentrate on one thing at a time. So, if you're trying to do two or three things at the same time, you're not really concentrating and learning. You're just being distracted. So, focus on doing one thing at a time. Turn off all the other distractions.

Schedule Your Breaks

Give yourself a regular break, or your brain will have a hard time focusing. Breaks can be scheduled a couple of ways. You can decide that you will take a longer break each hour with a walkaround break every half hour. Or, you can tell yourself that you can have a break when an item is crossed off of your task list.

Get Your Work Finished on Time

One of the downsides of online and hybrid learning is that your instructors won't know you as well on a personal level. So, if you're late with a paper or project, you're just late and your instructor will take off points or not accept it. If you don't show up for a test—too bad. They'll just give you a zero and probably won't be as sympathetic to your excuses for being late—even if you have a good one. Getting your work done on time is especially important in online and hybrid courses.

Online and hybrid learning take some self-discipline, but that's a good thing. By learning how to discipline yourself, you will be preparing for your career. Your future supervisors won't accept late work, and they will expect you to stay focused and get your work done. So, practice showing up and getting your tasks done on time right now. With more and more work going online, that's really important.

College is a good time to develop lifelong skills for working in an online environment.

The QSG

Ahem, it's a Quick Start Guide.

Here are the Top 10 things you should have learned in this workshop:

1. To be successful at college, you need to show up, arrive at class on time, stay active in class, and turn in your work on time.
2. As a college student, you need to balance your classes, your studying, your job, and your social life.
3. Time management tools like a weekly schedule, calendar, and task list will keep you on track.
4. When reading something, you can use the Five-W and How Questions to read smarter, not harder.
5. The outline system and the concept mapping system are two great ways to take notes in class.
6. In college (and life) you will experience "good stress" and "bad stress."
7. You can use good stress to give you energy and focus your efforts. Bad stress will make you anxious and keep you from getting your work done.
8. One way to succeed in college (and make some friends) is to start a study group.
9. Talking to your instructors about an assignment is a good way to understand what you are being asked to do.
10. Other sources of help are available on campus, such as the writing center, tutoring, advising, psychological services, mentoring, and other accommodations.

Workshop 2

Reading to Strengthen Your Writing

In this workshop, you will learn how to do these things:

- **2.0** Explain what "mindful" reading is and why it is important in college.
- **2.1** Preview a text to get the big picture and note your first response.
- **2.2** Annotate a text to understand it and record your responses.
- **2.3** Analyze a text by playing the Believing and Doubting game.
- **2.4** Evaluate evidence for reliability.
- **2.5** Evaluate the validity of an author's reasoning.
- **2.6** Respond to a text by comparing your first response to your later response.

HELPFUL HINT: You can use material in *Writing Today*'s Chapter 4, "Reading Critically, Thinking Analytically" to help you complete this workshop.

What Is Different about College Reading?

2.0 Explain what "mindful" reading is and why it is important in college.

Hey, you're already a frequent and flexible reader. Think about the different kinds of reading you're already doing on a regular basis. Sometimes, you read just to get information, as you do with bus schedules, billboards, or shopping lists. Other times, you read because you enjoy it. You catch up with friends and family. You want to know what's happening with the activities that interest you.

In other words, you are already reading different kinds of texts across a variety of media and genres. Whether you consciously think about it or not, you have different purposes for each of these texts, and you use different strategies for different kinds of reading.

Activity 2.0.1

Think About This: My Reading this Past Week

Use this worksheet to take stock of some of the recent reading you've done just in the past week. For each one, write down what you read, what you wanted to get done (purpose), and how you read it (strategies).

	What I Read	My Purpose (what I wanted to achieve)	My Strategies (how I read to achieve my purpose)
Reading I did just because I wanted to (self-sponsored reading).			
Reading I did for my college courses (academic reading).			

Develop Reading Strategies for College

To develop strong reading skills for college, you'll need to use different reading strategies at different times. For a reading process to be reliable, it also needs to flexible and adjusted to the specific purpose you want to achieve.

There is no single reading process that will work for every situation. Think about the reading you always do. For instance, you read social media or a novel differently than your college textbooks. With social media, your purpose is catching up with friends and family and maybe entertainment. When reading a textbook, your purpose is understanding new ideas and information—as quickly as possible.

For your reading in college and beyond college, you'll need to develop a flexible set of reading processes, each with its own combination of strategies.

Understand that Strong Reading Is Related to Strong Writing

Strong readers develop several different reading strategies. Like strong writers, they choose their strategies *mindfully*, adjusting their strategies when the context or their purpose changes. Strong readers master a reliable and flexible reading process that allows them to meet the needs of each situation.

Becoming a strong reader has a lot in common with becoming a strong writer. Proficiency in reading and in writing are like the two sides of the same coin. Just as there are many ways to write texts, there are many ways to read them.

This workshop describes a range of reading strategies. Give them a try here and then keep using them so that you can manage the texts you read in college courses and in the workplace beyond college.

Use "Looking *At*" and "Looking *Through*" Strategies

We can lump reading strategies into two basic categories: "looking *through*" texts and "looking *at*" them. When choosing to look *through* a text, your purpose is fairly simple, trying to figure out *what* the authors are saying, including the content of a text. Sometimes, this simple strategy is all you need. For instance, when reading a bus schedule, billboard, or shopping list, your only purpose is to extract details and facts.

When choosing to look *at* a text, you're taking on a more critical and analytical stance, noticing the rhetorical choices authors have made. In this more critical stance, you're poised to notice and evaluate authors' techniques and strategies. When doing this kind of critical reading, you'll also need to understand the details and facts.

Choose Your Strategies Mindfully

Throughout your reading process, you should remain mindful about how *you yourself* are reacting. You should ask questions like these:

- "How does this make me feel, and why do I feel that way?"
- "Is anything here confusing, and if so, why does it confuse me?"
- "What's new, interesting, surprising, infuriating, or confusing?"

Activity 2.0.2 will help you figure out how to make your reading for college easier. Give it a try!

Activity 2.0.2

Think About This: What Makes Reading Hard and Easy?

For this reflection, think about two reading experiences you had in high school or in college. First recall an experience when reading was especially difficult; then recall an experience when reading was especially enjoyable. Then respond to the writing prompts below.

What Makes Reading Hard?

Write for a few minutes explaining the following:

1. The situation and how you felt (who was involved, what you were reading, where it was, why you were reading, etc.).

2. Why the reading was especially unpleasant, frustrating, confusing, tedious, or boring.

What Makes Reading Easier and Enjoyable?

Write for a few minutes explaining the following:

1. The situation and how you felt (who was involved, what you were reading, where it was, why you were reading, etc.).

2. Why the reading was especially enjoyable, engaging, fun, illuminating, or boring.

Previewing a Text

2.1 Preview a text to get the big picture and note your first response.

Previewing a text takes a little bit of time up front, but it saves time in the long run. It also makes your first reading of the text much easier and helps you gain a stronger and deeper understanding of the text. Previewing is especially important with difficult texts and those that you'll be asked to analyze at a deep level. When previewing, you skim through the text, notice its features and organization, and ask yourself questions about it.

Because previewing will help you see the "big picture" first, you should usually *begin* with this strategy. Having a sense of this big picture, you can then mindfully choose the most appropriate strategies for reading more closely.

Make Guesses as You Preview

During each previewing stage, ask yourself questions and make guesses about possible answers:

Topic. What is the text about?

Author. Who wrote it? Can you find out more about the author or authors? Is this person an expert on this topic?

Readers. Who is the author writing for? Is the author writing for a general audience, or is this intended for a professional discourse community (scientists, engineers, lawyers, healthcare workers, etc.)? Do you know anyone in this discourse community?

Purpose. What is the author trying to achieve? Is the purpose to persuade readers to consider a certain position, to entertain them, to share knowledge?

Genre. What do the features of the text suggest about the genre? What do readers usually expect to find in these genres? Is this a new genre for you?

Get the "Big Picture" First

Rather than jumping right into the first sentence, then the next, all the way to the last, get a sense of "big picture" by quickly looking for these features:

- Flip through the text to see how long it is and note its features, such as citations or references.
- Read the title quickly.
- Notice and read chapter titles and headings.
- Read the first paragraph.
- If the text has an abstract, read that.

Get a Closer Look

Now that you have a sense of the big picture, scan a little more carefully, looking for answers to those questions about topic, author, readers, purpose, and genre.

- Read the title *carefully*. Read it a couple of times and make a guess about the topic and purpose.
- Read chapter titles and the section headings.
- Browse through visuals, such as photographs, drawings, charts, and graphs.

Notice Your First Response

Now it's time to stop and take some time to notice your first impression. Ask and answer these questions:

- Is this text similar to other texts that you have read?
- What do you know already about this topic?
- What about this topic is most interesting or attention grabbing?
- What are you curious or confused about?
- Do you think you'll agree or disagree with the author?
- What will probably be most challenging for you as you read?
- What strategies and resources will you turn to for help when you face those challenges?

Let's try this out. In Activity 2.1.1, you can practice previewing an article. If you get good at this, you will save time and learn faster.

Activity 2.1.1

Previewing a Text

For this activity read "The Importance of Exploration," which appeared on the website of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). Or, you can use a text recommended by your instructor.

First, Get the Big Picture and then Skim for a Closer Look and Ask Questions

Take about five minutes to (1) skim quickly through the text and then (2) skim a little closer and give a brief answer to these questions:

Topic—What is the text about?

Author—Who wrote it? Can you find out more about the author or authors? Is this person an expert on this topic? For instance, can you search the Web to find out more about the author? HINT: Typing "Steven J. Dick NASA historian" into a Web search engine will point you to a variety of resources, including a Wikipedia entry and several videos featuring the author.

Readers—Who is the author writing for? Is the author writing for a general audience, or is this intended for a professional discourse community (scientists, engineers, lawyers, healthcare workers, etc.)? Are you part of this discourse community?

Purpose—What is the author trying to achieve? Is the author aiming to persuade readers to consider a certain position, to entertain them, to share knowledge?

Genre—What do the features of the text suggest about the genre? What do readers usually expect to find in these genres? Is this a new genre for you?

Note Your First Responses

Now take another five minutes and write down your first responses, asking and answering these questions:

Is this similar to other texts that you've read?

What do you know already about this topic?

What's most interesting or attention grabbing about this topic?

What are you curious or confused about?

Do you think you'll agree or disagree with the author?

What will be most challenging for you as you read more closely?

To understand this essay at a deeper level, what resources or strategies might you turn to next?

The Importance of Exploration

Editor's Note: This is the first in a series of essays on exploration by NASA's Chief Historian, Steven J. Dick.

Is space exploration really desirable at a time when so much needs doing on Earth? It is an often-asked and serious question that requires a serious answer. One could present many arguments, from jobs and education to technology development and national security, for undertaking a robust space program. In an ideal world only one argument is necessary, though in the real world some would argue it is not sufficient. That argument is exploration, and that we should undertake it for the most basic of reasons—our self-preservation as a creative, as opposed to a stagnating, society.

Three Ages of Exploration

The concepts of "discovery" and "exploration" are frequently found throughout space literature, most recently in the new Vision for Space Exploration, billed as "a renewed spirit of discovery," enunciated by President Bush in January, 2004. The same concepts are emphasized in the Aldridge Commission's Report on the Implementation of United States Space Exploration Policy, titled "A Journey to Inspire, Innovate and Discover." The question "should we explore" must be seen in deep historical context, not in the context of present-day politics or whims.

Historians have distinguished three great Ages of Exploration—the Age of Discovery in the 15th and 16th centuries associated with Prince Henry the Navigator, Columbus, Magellan and other European explorers; the Second Age in the 18th and 19th centuries characterized by further geographic exploration such as the voyages of Captain Cook, underpinned and driven by the scientific revolution; and the Third Age beginning with the International Geophysical Year and Sputnik, primarily associated with space exploration, but also with the Antarctic and the oceans.

America enters the Third Age of Exploration. William Pickering (left), James Van Allen (center), and Wernher von Braun (right) hoist a model of Explorer 1 in celebration, after it became the first American satellite to orbit Earth in 1958.
Photo credit: NASA/JPL

The United States both affected and was affected by the Second and Third Ages of Exploration, but the important point is that each of those ages of exploration was the product of specific decisions of certain cultures: the Europeans (and briefly the Chinese) for the first Age, the Europeans and Americans for the second Age, and the Soviet Union—soon joined by the United States, then Europe and other countries—for the third Age.

As historian Stephen J. Pyne has argued, "Exploration is a specific invention of specific civilizations conducted at specific historical times. It is not . . . a universal property of all human societies. Not all cultures have explored or even traveled widely. Some have been content to exist in xenophobic isolation."

Ming China

There is a value judgment in that last sentence—that xenophobia and isolation are bad, but that they are in fact bad, I think, is borne out by history. The case most often cited for a societal decision not to explore—with generally recognized bad effects—is Ming China in the 15th century. You will find this case, for example, made in Bob Zubrin's books on Mars, and before that made by NASA Administrator James Beggs. Is it hype, or is it history?

The historical facts are quite clear. Historian Daniel Boorstin—the recently deceased Librarian of Congress—pointed out that in the early 15th century the biggest Chinese ships were up to ten times the size of Columbus's later in the century. While Columbus had 17 ships and 1500 men on the largest of his four expeditions, the Chinese Admiral Zheng He had 317 ships and 27,000 crewmen on the first of his six expeditions. Following a maritime tradition stretching back to the 11th century, from 1405–1433, these ships plied the seas of Southeast Asia, sailed to India, the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea and down the East Coast of Africa. (And yes, these are the voyages that Gavin Menzies addressed in his book *1421: The Year China Discovered America*, although in my view that claim is not supported by good evidence.)

But what is important is this. Although Chinese state revenues were probably 100 times Portugal's, after the 1430s the Ming emperors had other priorities, and it was the Portuguese and other European countries that led the way in exploration. As Boorstin noted "When Europeans were sailing out with enthusiasm and high hopes, land-bound China was sealing her borders. Within her physical and intellectual Great Wall, she avoided encounter with the unexpected. . . . Fully equipped with the technology, the intelligence, and the national resources to become discoverers, the Chinese doomed themselves to be discovered."

In their recent world history, historians J. R. and William McNeill come to the same conclusions, and historians in general tend to agree that the Chinese chose poorly in the mid-15th century. By the 1470s, the McNeills wrote, even the skills needed to build great ships were lost. Boorstin called the withdrawal of the Chinese into their own borders, symbolized by the Great Wall of China that took its current form at that time, "catastrophic . . . with consequences we still see today." The parallel with what is happening now, despite renewed attempts at space exploration, is striking. Some day historians will be writing about whether or not WE chose wisely, not only to make a proposal to explore, but also to fund it.

American Exploration

Exploration is certainly part of the American character, and Federally funded exploration has been a significant part of American history—from land exploration beginning with Lewis and Clark, to the U.S. Exploring Expedition headed by Charles Wilkes from 1838–1842, the latter the subject of a colorful book by Nathaniel Philbrick, *Sea of Glory: America's Voyage of Discovery.*

The exploration of the American West during the 19th century by the likes of John Wesley Powell is another prime example of American exploration. Of course the Western frontier was limited, a cause for worry according to historian Frederick Jackson Turner, who argued in the late 19th century his frontier thesis—that many of the distinctive characteristics of American society, including inventiveness, inquisitiveness and individualism, derive from the existence of a frontier.

The Western frontier closed about 1890, but Americans found a new one in space. Even though some historians do not agree with the so-called "frontier thesis" as the sole, or even the primary, source of these characteristics in the United States, space as a new frontier has always been a driver of the U.S. space program, and I think rightly so.

To Explore . . . Or Not to Explore

Of course, even those who say we should explore in principle, for whatever reason including new frontiers, face the hard reality of funding. This brings us to an essentially ethical question: is it ethical to explore when there is so much that needs to be done on Earth?

Apollo 11 Lunar Module Pilot Buzz Aldrin climbs down the Eagle's ladder to the surface of the Moon, as America fulfills the first vision for space exploration.
Photo credit: NASA

This is a public policy question, but I would point out that it is always tempting to sacrifice long-term goals for short term needs. It is an astounding fact that the expenditure for the 15 U.S. naval expeditions from 1840–1860 approached one quarter of the annual federal budget, by far exceeding even the Apollo commitment. But I don't think we have cause to regret either the 19th century expeditions or the Apollo program.

Today there are ample reasons one might give not to continue space exploration. 2001—supposed to be the year of Arthur C. Clarke's "Space Odyssey," will forever be remembered instead for the events of 9/11. We do have to deal with the reality of world events, but surely we should not let terrorism set the agenda. H. G. Wells said many years ago that "Human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe."

We are still in that race today, and surely an international cooperative venture into space—with all that implies—strikes a blow against catastrophe, and a victory for civilization. Great things were achieved in the past in the name of competition—the Apollo program would never have happened without Cold War competition. It now remains to be seen whether great things may be done in the name of international cooperation, even in the midst of great unrest in the world.

For its part, the United States has much at stake. Pulitzer Prize winning historian William Goetzmann saw the history of the United States as inextricably linked with exploration. "America has indeed been 'exploration's nation,'" he wrote, "a culture of endless possibilities that, in the spirit of both science and its component, exploration, continually looks forward in the direction of the new." The space exploration vision must be seen in that context.

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Highlighting and Annotating

2.2 Annotate a text to understand it and record your responses.

By highlighting and annotating a text, you help yourself remember the questions and insights you had while reading. You can then find and re-examine key passages later when discussing the text in class or writing about it.

Highlighting and annotating happen together but they serve different purposes.

- **Highlighting** draws your attention to *what* seems important and interesting. Highlighting can help you recall those moments and the information presented in them.
- **Annotating** takes a step beyond just highlighting by recording your reactions. When annotating, you're recording *what* is important and also making notes about *why* it seems important. As you read, write down brief notes that record your comments, reactions, and questions.

You can use highlighting to draw your attention to the key ideas in a text. That way, when you return to the text, you can quickly find the most important parts.

Annotations can provide you with things to talk about in your classes, which is what you will be asked to do throughout college. By annotating a text, you are developing the habits of critical reading, asking questions, noticing what a text says and what it does, noting your own reactions.

Highlight and Annotate while Reading

While reading, keep a pencil or pen in your hand. Underline, highlight, or put a star beside the passages that seem important. Then you can follow up by writing brief notes to yourself about your observations and questions. If you are reading on-screen, you can highlight and annotate digitally.

Highlight and Annotate for Different Purposes

"Looking *through*" annotations describe what the text *says.* These annotations include

- Summarizing a paragraph or section in a few words or a phrase.
- Restating a key point of a sentence or paragraph in the margin or your notes.
- Underlining words or terms you didn't know and jotting down their definitions in the margin.

"Looking *at*" annotations describe what the text is *doing* and how it *works*. These annotations note the moves and strategies used by the author, and could include

- Identifying the rhetorical patterns an author has chosen: narrating, describing, defining, contrasting or comparing, classifying, stating cause and effect.
- Noting a stylistic or design choice—using metaphors, writing especially clearly or unclearly, using colorful language, using inflammatory language.
- Remarking on a notable word choice that is interesting, important, or surprising.
- Identifying an argumentative strategy (*ethos*, *pathos*, *logos*).

"Responding to" annotations note your reactions as you read. These annotations include

- Disagreeing or agreeing with an author's point or with the example used.
- Making a connection to a personal experience, another text, or another section of the text.
- Noting what surprises, intrigues, angers, or delights you.
- Jotting down that a passage is confusing, and briefly explaining why you find it confusing.

Try looking *through*, looking *at*, and responding to a reading in Activity 2.2.1.

Activity 2.2.1

Annotating a Text

Read through "The Importance of Exploration," written by NASA's chief historian Steven J. Dick. Read it three times, each time annotating as follows:

1. Make two "looking *through*" annotations (summarizing, restating, defining a term).

2. Make two "looking *at*" annotations (patterns, style, tone, argumentative strategy).

3. Make three "responding to" annotations (questions, connections, agreement or disagreement, what's surprising or interesting).

Playing the Believing and Doubting Game

2.3 Analyze a text by playing the Believing and Doubting game.

You have probably had this frustrating experience: You really wanted someone to understand your point of view and agree with it, but that person seemed incapable of seeing the issue from your perspective.

All people, at least sometimes, find it difficult to understand and evaluate texts that argue for positions that are opposed to their own. All too easily, they can unfairly dismiss an opposing argument because they just cannot *see* its valid points. In the same way, they find it difficult to see the weaknesses in texts that support positions they do agree with, because those flaws are invisible to them.

The Believing and Doubting Game is a good way to see a text from different sides and engage with that text more deeply and critically. It is important to develop this ability because your college professors will expect you to see issues from both sides. Even when writing about a position you disagree with, you will need to be able to explain that position fairly and thoroughly.

Play the Believing and Doubting Game

To play, you adopt two roles while reading. First, you play the "believer," reading the text and annotating all of its strengths. Then read a second time in the role of "doubter," this time annotating all its faults. The final step is writing a "synthesis" that summarizes your thinking after playing both roles (Activity 2.3.1).

Activity 2.3.1

Playing the Believing and Doubting Game

You can do this game with Steven J. Dick's "The Importance of Exploration." You could also use a text chosen by your professor or by you. If you are choosing, select something that you either agree or disagree with wholeheartedly.

Believer's Summary

As you read and annotate the text, play the role of someone who believes (1) *what* the author says is completely sound, interesting, and important and (2) *how* the author has expressed these ideas is amazing or brilliant. You want to play the role of someone who is completely taken in by the argument in the text, whether you personally agree with it or not. Annotate the evidence and reasoning that is strong. What aligns well with your own experience? What additional evidence would support the author's claims?

When you've finished, write a brief summary from the believer's stance.

Doubter's Summary

Now pretend you are a harsh critic, someone who is deeply skeptical or even negative about the author's main points and methods for expressing them. Search out and highlight the argument's factual shortcomings and logical flaws. Look for ideas and assumptions that a skeptical reader would reject. Repeatedly ask, "So what?" or "Who cares?" or "Why would the author do *that*?" as you read and re-read.

When you've finished, write a brief summary from the doubter's stance.

Synthesis

Once you've done that, write a summary of your thinking right now. Are you leaning toward believing or doubting?

- If you're leaning toward the believing side, describe the insights you came up with as if you were writing the doubter's summary.
- If you're leaning toward the doubting side, describe insights you came up with as if you were writing the doubter's summary.

See if you can identify some of the assumptions of each side.

Analyzing the Reliability of an Author's Evidence

2.4 Evaluate evidence for reliability.

To evaluate the claims of an author, you need to carefully examine the evidence that supports those claims. A text's evidence can include information such as the following:

- **Factual information:** proven facts, physical evidence, artifacts, data, photographs, etc.
- **Authoritative testimony:** the statements of experts in the subject, eyewitness accounts of believable people, etc.
- **Personal experience:** the testimonials of the author or of other non-experts.

Use the STAR Method to Evaluate Evidence

What counts as *trustworthy* evidence will vary from genre to genre and from context to context. Solid evidence, however, must be *sufficient*, *typical*, *accurate*, and *relevant* (which spells STAR).[1]

S: *Is there a **sufficient** amount of evidence?* Do you think the author has enough evidence to support the claims? Has the author collected evidence from a variety and adequate number of sources?

T: *Is the evidence **typical**?* We say that people have "cherry picked" evidence when they choose only the evidence that supports their claims while ignoring evidence that contradicts the claim. Did the author present evidence from a variety of sources? Can you think of any facts that might challenge the author's claims? If you're not sure, annotate the text with a question mark and state the reasons you think the evidence may be "cherry picked."

A: *Is the evidence **accurate**?* Can you tell if the source of information is trustworthy? If a source's methods are unsound or questionable, then the information may not be accurate. Can you identify the source of the evidence—the source from which it came? If authors don't explain their information-gathering methods at all, then you should be highly skeptical of their so-called evidence. If you're not sure, annotate the text with a question mark and state the reasons you doubt its accuracy.

R: *Is the evidence **relevant**?* Is the evidence relevant to the overall topic and thesis statement? Also, is it current, or is it out of date and therefore not relevant? Some evidence might seem cool and even fascinating but may not be directly relevant to what the author is trying to prove. As much as possible, evaluate whether the evidence is "need-to-know" evidence. If you're not sure, annotate the text with a question mark and state the reasons you doubt its relevance.

Try this out! Activity 2.4.1 will give you a chance to see how the STAR method works. This is an easy way to analyze the evidence in a reading.

[1]This approach is adapted from Richard Fulkerson's STAR approach in *Teaching the Argument in Writing* (NCTE, 1996).

Activity 2.4.1

Analyzing Evidence

Read through "The Importance of Exploration" by NASA historian Steven J. Dick. Use the STAR method to analyze the evidence in the text. You can also use a text that your instructor provides to you.

1. Highlight at least six places where the author gives evidence and annotate with "fact," "authority," "personal experience," or "can't tell."
2. When you've done that, use the STAR method to write a 100-word response that evaluates the essay's evidence and suggests ways to strengthen it.

Evaluating the Validity of an Author's Reasoning

2.5 Evaluate the validity of an author's reasoning.

Almost all texts are argumentative in some way because most authors are directly or indirectly making claims they want you to believe. These claims are based on *proofs* that the author wants you to accept. Even if you agree with the author, you should challenge those claims and proofs to see if they make sense and are properly supported.

Arguments tend to use three kinds of proofs: appeals to reason, appeals to authority, and appeals to emotion. Rhetoricians often refer to these proofs by their ancient Greek terms: *logos* (reason), *ethos* (authority), and *pathos* (emotion).

Evaluate the Author's Reasoning (*logos*)

Analyze the author's use of logical statements and examples to support their arguments. Logical statements use patterns like *if x then y; either x or y; x causes y; the benefits of x are worth the costs y;* and *x is better than y*.

The use of examples is another kind of reasoning. Authors will often use examples to describe real or hypothetical situations by referring to personal experiences, historical anecdotes, demonstrations, or well-known stories.

Evaluate the Author's Use of Authority (*ethos*)

Look at the ways the author draws on her or his own experiences or the authority of others. The author may appeal to specific credentials, personal experiences, moral character, the expertise of others, or a desire to do what is best for the readers or others.

Evaluate the Author's Use of Emotion (*pathos*)

Pay special attention to the author's attempts to use emotions to sway your opinion. He or she may promise emotionally driven things that people want, such as happiness, fun, trust, money, time, love, reputation, popularity, health, beauty, or convenience. Or the author may use emotions to make readers uncomfortable, implying that they may become unhappy, bored, insecure, impoverished, stressed out, disliked, ignored, unhealthy, unattractive, or overworked.

Activity 2.5.1 will show you how to find and evaluate proofs in texts.

Activity 2.5.1

Recognizing and Identifying Proofs

Read through "The Importance of Exploration" by NASA historian Steven J. Dick. You can also use a text that your instructor provides to you.

1. Highlight at least four proofs (*logos*, *ethos*, *pathos*).
2. Annotate the type of proof the author has used with *logos*, *ethos*, or *pathos.*
3. On a scale of 1–10, rate whether you found the proof persuasive.

Now, write a brief response to the text, explaining whether you thought the proofs were persuasive enough to believe the author's argument.

Responding to a Text by Reflecting on Your Reading Process

2.6 Respond to a text by comparing your first response to your later response.

In the beginning of this workshop, you learned that strong writers have developed various reading strategies. Strong readers consciously choose the strategies and processes that best suit each situation. That means you need to start choosing your reading strategies *mindfully*, adjusting your strategy to your purpose and the context.

Practice Self-Monitoring and Self-Regulating

Self-monitoring and self-regulating are "habits of mind" that describe the way all of us strive to adapt to new learning situations. We can adapt when we set reasonable goals, choose appropriate strategies to meet them, and continuously monitor and self-evaluate our progress. *Self-monitoring* simply means paying attention to what you're experiencing, asking yourself, "What are the strategies I am using, and how well are they working for me?" *Self-regulating* means adjusting your processes accordingly.

Practicing self-monitoring and self-regulating will help you expand your reading strategies, and it also helps you figure out what works best for *you*. These mindfulness habits will help you become a more *flexible and versatile reader* of the challenging texts you will encounter in your college courses.

So far, you've learned about and practiced five strategies to critically analyze a text:

- **Previewing** to get the big picture and make some initial guesses about the text.
- **Highlighting and annotating** to note what seems important and why it seems important.
- **Playing the Believing and Doubting Game** to see the text from different perspectives.
- **Analyzing the evidence** to evaluate whether the author's claims are adequately backed up.
- **Analyzing the proofs** that an author has used (*logos*, *ethos*, or *pathos*).

Activity 2.6.1 will help you practice using all of these reading strategies together. See if you can do it!

Activity 2.6.1

Responding to a Text by Reflecting on Your Reading Process

Now, use all five of these critical reading methods to analyze "The Importance of Exploration." Respond to the questions below that seem most relevant to how you interpreted what the author was doing in this essay written for the NASA website. Your instructor may give you another text to analyze.

Which of the five strategies was most successful? Why do you think you found it successful?

When you previewed the essay quickly and predicted what the text was and how you would react with close reading, were your guessed predictions correct, or has your final reaction to the text changed as you used other strategies?

When you highlighted and annotated the text, did you note the passages and terms that turned out to be the most important or interesting?

When you played the Believing and Doubting Game, were you able to see the essay in new ways, from both sides?

When you analyzed its evidence, did that raise other questions or lead to insights you had not yet considered?

When you analyzed the author's proofs (*ethos*, *pathos*, *logos*), did you identify fallacies and assumptions that the author failed to note?

The QSG

Ahem, it's a Quick Start Guide.

Here are the Top 10 things you should have learned in this workshop:

1. For reading in college, you will need to develop and use different reading strategies at different times, depending on your purpose and the situation.
2. Strong readers develop several different reading strategies.
3. Strong readers also develop the habit of reading *mindfully*: They consciously choose the strategy that best fits their purpose and situation.
4. Previewing a text helps you to see the big picture.
5. Highlighting and annotating texts allows you to find important information and record your reactions.
6. Highlighting a text simply notes *what* is important, while annotating notes *why* you feel it is important.
7. Playing the Believing and Doubting Game allows you to see a text from different perspectives and discover an author's hidden assumptions and your own hidden assumptions.
8. The STAR method is useful for evaluating the evidence that supports an author's claims, figuring out if it is *sufficient, typical, accurate*, and *relevant.*
9. Looking for proofs based in *logos* (reasoning), *pathos* (emotion), and *ethos* (authority) is useful for evaluating the validity of an author's argument.
10. To become a person who reads mindfully, it is important to self-monitor what's working for you and to self-regulate by adapting strategies to better suit the needs of the situation.

Workshop 3

Inventing Ideas Before You Write

In this workshop, you will learn how to do these things:

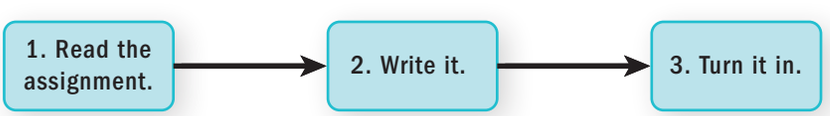
- **3.0** Develop your writing process.
- **3.1** Analyze rhetorical situations to understand readers, purpose, and context.
- **3.2** Use prewriting techniques to generate content for a college paper.
- **3.3** Generate ideas visually with a concept map.
- **3.4** Compose your ideas with freewriting.
- **3.5** Use brainstorming to create a list of ideas.
- **3.6** Gain insights by using the Five-W and How Questions.

HELPFUL HINT: You can use material in *Writing Today's* Chapter 2, "Topic, Angle, Purpose," and Chapter 16, "Inventing Ideas and Prewriting," to help you complete this workshop.

What's Your Writing Process?

3.0 Develop your writing process.

Now that your professor has given you a writing assignment, what's your next move? Should you sit down and starting drafting? Would your writing process look like this?



Maybe this kind of process worked in high school, where the papers were usually short and the expectations weren't as high as in college. For college writing, however, this process won't work as well, especially as the papers become longer and more complex. And, after college, when you're starting your career, this kind of writing process will usually lead to shoddy work. Now that you're in college, you need to develop a reliable writing process that will help you write longer papers about complex topics.

The first step in your writing process is called "invention"—figuring out (inventing) your ideas and what you want to say about them. In this workshop, you will practice using several "invention strategies." These strategies will help you see your topic from new perspectives. They will also help you generate new ideas and explore your topic in more depth.

This is one of those "work smarter, not harder" kinds of things. When you develop your own writing process, you can write faster and better. You will get much better results for the same amount of work. That means better grades in your courses and more recognition at your job.

Develop a Writing Process that Fits Your Personality and Work Habits

Here's why you need to develop a writing process—*your* own writing process. Think of something you are good at. Maybe you play a musical instrument, you excel in a sport, or you enjoy doing a hobby. At first, it was probably difficult. But, a teacher, coach, mentor, or parent showed you the process for doing it. Eventually, you figured out a process that worked for you. Now, you're good at it.

Ask yourself:

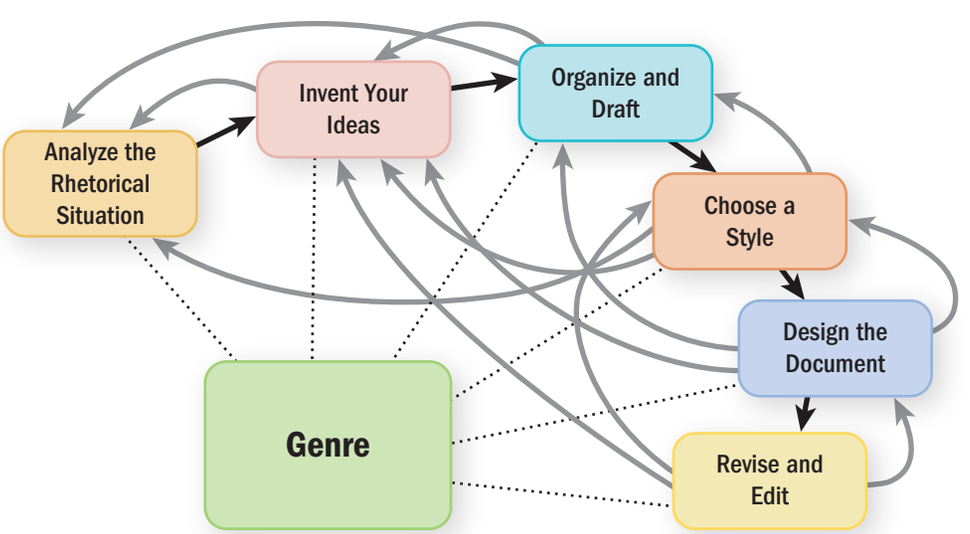
- How did you learn to do it?
- How do you do it in your own way?
- Why does this process work so well for you?
- What makes the process a reliable one?
- How do you adjust the process for different situations?

There's no one "correct" writing process, just like there's no one correct way to play an instrument or a sport. The writing process that works well for you may not work well for someone else. To become a strong college writer, you need to develop a process that fits your personality, interests, and work habits.

Figure 3.1 illustrates a process that is flexible and can be adapted to fit a variety of writing projects. Each step in the process will move you toward getting your paper done. The process shown in Figure 3.1 isn't your writing process, though. It's just something for you to try out until you figure out what works for you.

You will see that each of these steps in the writing process blend together and overlap. You shouldn't move rigidly from one step to the next. Instead, you should go back and forth among the steps while you are researching, drafting, revising, and designing your paper.

Figure 3.1 A Starter Writing Process



Activity 3.0.1

Think About This: My Writing Process for a Past Project

Think about the papers you wrote for high school. For this reflection, think about an especially *memorable* writing project. It could be memorable because it was an awful experience or a successful one.

1. Make a numbered list of the steps in your writing project. What came first, second, third, and so on? Try to include everything, including what happened before you made your first draft. How did you come up with your ideas?

2. Answer the "Five-W and How Questions" to fill in as much detail as possible.
   - **When** did you write—all in one sitting or over several days in stages?
   - **Why** were you writing—for a class, for yourself?
   - **Who,** if anyone, helped you or made it difficult?
   - **What** happened while you writing that helped or got in your way?
   - **Where** did you write?
   - **How** were you writing (on paper, computer, a combination)?

3. Evaluate what worked well and what didn't in that process. Describe what went well and *why* it went well. Describe what did not go well and *why* it didn't.

4. Finally, write about 50 to 75 words about how your writing process might be stronger. What would make writing easier for you and help you write better?

Analyzing Your Rhetorical Situation

3.1 Analyze rhetorical situations to understand readers, purpose, and context.

The term *rhetorical situation* may be new to you, but it's not complicated. When you talk, text, or use social networking, you already instinctively size up the "situation" and figure out what you need to say. Without even thinking about it, you know that each situation needs you to adjust *how you communicate*. For example, when you tell a funny story to a grandparent, you're probably going to speak differently than when you tell the same story to your friends.

In college, you will need to deal with situations you've never seen before. Before responding, you need to learn how to size up (analyze) the situation, so you write and say things the way you want. Here are five things you need to figure out:

Topic—What exactly am I writing about? What is inside my topic area, and what is outside my topic area? Your topic is what your instructor asked you to write about. If your instructor is letting you choose your own topic, what are you interested in writing about?

Angle—What's new or has changed recently about this topic? What makes this topic interesting right now? New topics are rare, but there are always new angles on existing topics. Your topic may be new to you, but someone has probably written about it before. So, think about what has happened recently that makes this topic fresh and worth writing about again.

Purpose—What are you trying to accomplish in this paper? What do you want to say or prove to the readers? Think about the one thing you want your readers to remember about your paper when they are finished reading it. That's probably your purpose.

Readers—Who will be reading this? Who are your readers and why are they reading what you have to say? Your primary readers are the people who you most want to understand what you're saying or agree with you. If they can say yes to your ideas, they are probably your primary readers.

Context of Use—Where, when, and how will readers use your document? Are your readers in an office, at home, or on a bus? Are they trying to get something done? Think about how these places will affect their interpretation of what you want to tell them.

If you take a few minutes to think about these five elements of the rhetorical situation (topic, angle, purpose, readers, and context of use) you will have a good idea of what ideas and information you need to collect to draft your paper. Activity 3.1.1 is a worksheet that will help with the paper you're probably getting ready to write. This worksheet will help you identify the five elements of the rhetorical situation.

Activity 3.1.1

Analyzing Your Rhetorical Situation

All right, let's try this out. You're probably getting ready to write a college paper right now. Well, let's figure out the rhetorical situation.

Topic—Spend 2–3 minutes making a brainstorming list in which you write down everything you know or can think of about your topic.

Angle—Look over your brainstorming list. Then write down three things that are new or have happened recently about this topic. What makes it interesting right now?

1. New thing about this topic:

2. Something that's changed recently about this topic:

3. Why it is interesting right now:

Purpose—In one sentence state the purpose of your paper. Finish this sentence: "The purpose of my paper is to . . ."

Readers—List out three people or types of people who would find your topic interesting.

Reader 1:

Reader 2:

Reader 3:

Context of Use—For each of these readers or types of readers, write down where you think they will read your paper.

Reader 1:

Reader 2:

Reader 3:

OK, that's it for now. That wasn't too hard. But now, you should have a better idea of what you are writing about and what you need to do. We will use this work to do the rest of this workshop.

Using Prewriting to Get Ideas Out of Your Head

3.2 Use prewriting techniques to generate content for a college paper.

Prewriting is the creative part of writing. That's why it's fun and sometimes a little frustrating. Even though you're being creative, it can be hard to come up with new ideas!

Some prewriting techniques work for some people and not for others. Some writers like to do their prewriting with pen and paper. Others prefer using a computer word processor or other app. You can also prewrite by dictating (talking) into your phone or computer and letting it turn your words into written text. Later in this workshop, you will learn more about using computers to write down your ideas.

Here are a few things to remember as you are prewriting:

Be Creative and Have Fun!—You like to be creative, don't you? Well, here's your big chance. Just let those ideas flow out of you onto the page or screen. Open up your mind and see what comes out.

Don't Criticize Yourself!—Hey, prewriting is for you, not anyone else. Don't worry about how good your ideas or words are. Blow off being correct about spelling, grammar errors, and doing things the right way. You can do that later when your ideas are all out there. Once you've got your ideas down on paper or screen, then you can go deeper with your ideas and get stuff right.

Do It Over and Over!—The term *prewriting* seems to suggest that you do these creative things only *before* you start writing. That's not true. You can use prewriting any time, especially when you're stuck or want to think more deeply about something.

Let's get started by going over concept mapping, freewriting, brainstorming, and using the Five-W and How Questions.

Concept Mapping (or Mind Mapping)

3.3 Generate ideas visually with a concept map.

You may have learned how to use concept mapping (or mind mapping) before. If you're a visual thinker, you probably like this approach because it lets you break away from those sentences and paragraphs and see how your ideas fit together. Concept mapping helps you visualize how your ideas can be arranged into patterns. Using this technique, writers sketch out their ideas by organizing them in a diagram or drawing.

To make a concept map:

Step 1: Put your topic in the middle of a piece of paper or your screen.

Step 2: Circle your topic.

Step 3: Write down any words or phrases that you can think of around the topic.

Step 4: Circle these words and phrases.

Step 5: Draw lines that connect related words and phrases into clusters.

Step 6: Keep writing down more words and phrases.

Step 7: Draw some more lines to connect them together.

Listen, don't overthink concept mapping. You're just getting your ideas out there. No one except maybe your instructor is going to see this.

Figure 3.2 Melisa's Example Concept Map

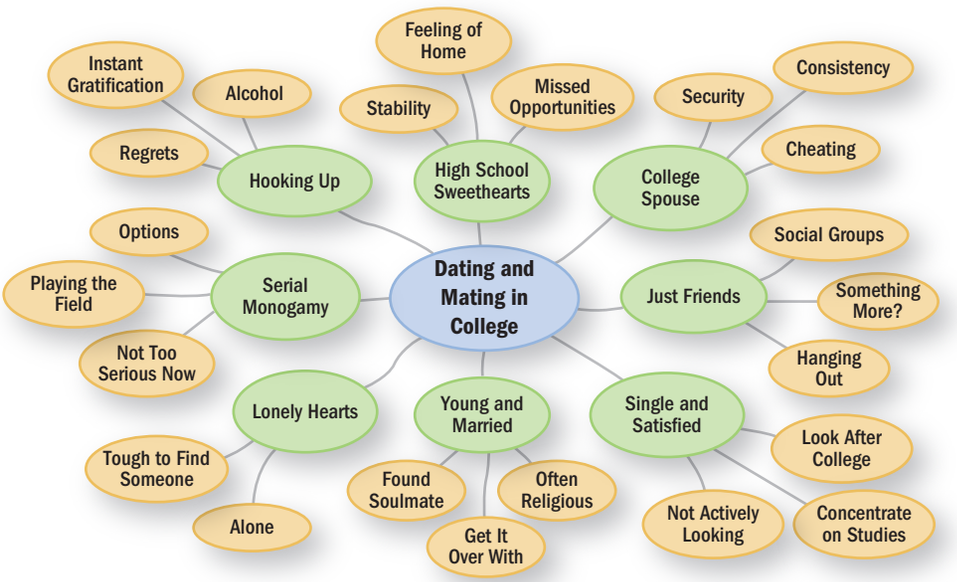


Figure 3.2 is a concept map a college student, Melisa, made about "Dating and Mating in College" (also seen in Chapter 2 of *Writing Today*). First, she wrote her main topic in the center of her workspace, and circled it. Then she wrote down eight subtopics (immediately surrounding her main topic), circled them, and connected them to her main topic. Finally, she wrote down other ideas, examples, or questions related to the subtopics, circled them, and connected them to the relevant subtopic.

Melisa's concept map is kind of wild and even a bit edgy, isn't it? That's great. She's just getting her ideas out where she can see them. Some of this material will be in her paper. And, some of it is just recording the ideas as they come to her. She's being creative. That's the idea.

One More Thing: Did you know there are many concept mapping or mind mapping software tools on the Internet? They're pretty cool, and they can make this all happen much faster than putting your ideas on a piece of paper. Type "concept mapping" or "mind mapping" into an Internet search engine if you want to find them.

Ready to give concept mapping a try? The worksheet in Activity 3.3.1 will explain step-by-step how to do it.

Activity 3.3.1

Making Your Own Concept Map

All right, you try it. Make a concept map for your next paper.

Step 1: Put your topic in the middle of a piece of paper or your screen.

Step 2: Circle your topic.

Step 3: Write down any words or phrases that you can think of around the topic.

Step 4: Circle these words and phrases.

Step 5: Draw lines that connect related words and phrases into clusters.

Step 6: Keep writing down more words and phrases.

Step 7: Draw some more lines to connect them together.

Freewriting

3.4 Compose your ideas with freewriting.

OK, maybe concept mapping isn't for you. Maybe you just don't think that way. Instead, you're eager to get some words and sentences on the screen that might actually end up in your paper.

Freewriting might be for you, and it's easy. When freewriting, you open a blank page on your computer. Then type as much as you can for five minutes, writing down anything that comes into your mind. These thoughts may be incomplete ideas, phrases, or sentences, so don't worry about grammar, spelling, or paragraphs.

If you get stuck—

- Try finishing phrases like "What I mean is . . ." or "The point I want to make is . . ." or "The problem I'm concerned about is . . ."
- Ask yourself a question like, "Why do I think that . . ." or "The reason I think this is important is . . ." or "Why should someone . . ."

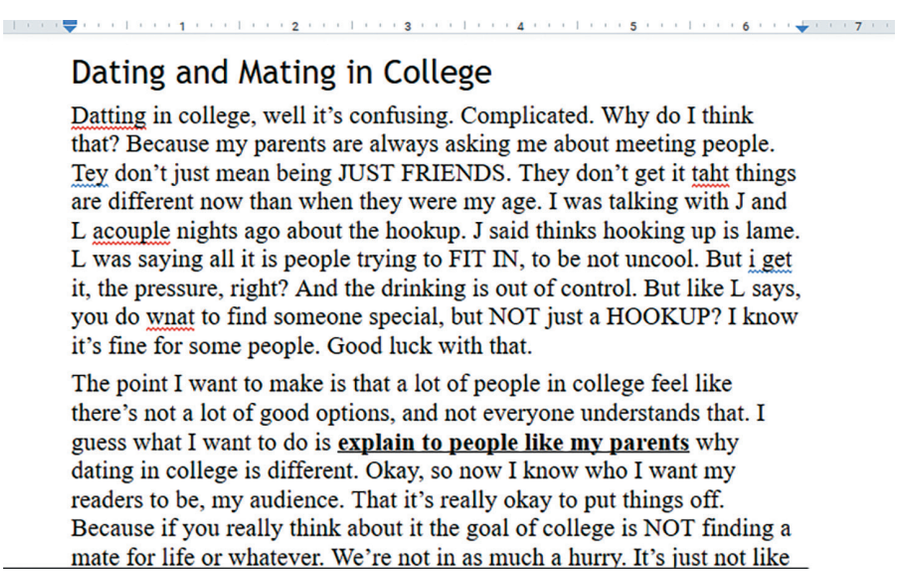
Whatever you do, keep the words flowing. Just keep writing! Don't stop! Don't correct or change anything!

You might also find it helpful to turn down the brightness of your computer screen, so you can't read what you're writing. That will keep you from going back and getting nit-picky about the stuff you wrote. Then, after five minutes, you can turn the brightness back up. You will be surprised at how much material you wrote on your screen in five minutes.

Let's go back to Melisa's topic about dating and mating on campus. After making her concept map, she decided to use those ideas to freewrite about her topic. Figure 3.3 shows the results. She just opened up a document in her word processor (MS Word or Google Docs is fine) and let the ideas flow for five minutes. As you can see, Melisa didn't stop to fix typos or spelling.

Her results were messy and a bit chaotic, but that's okay. She's letting her emotions do some of the talking. That's okay, too. There's plenty of time for Melisa to fix things up while drafting and editing. The good news is that she now has some material to work with. Some of these words and sentences (or cleaned-up versions of them) will probably end up in her final paper. Some won't. Either way, she has plenty of material to work with already, and she's only been writing for five minutes!

Try doing some freewriting of your own in Activity 3.4.1.



Dating and Mating in College

Datting in college, well it's confusing. Complicated. Why do I think that? Because my parents are always asking me about meeting people. Tey don't just mean being JUST FRIENDS. They don't get it taht things are different now than when they were my age. I was talking with J and L acouple nights ago about the hookup. J said thinks hooking up is lame. L was saying all it is people trying to FIT IN, to be not uncool. But i get it, the pressure, right? And the drinking is out of control. But like L says, you do wnat to find someone special, but NOT just a HOOKUP? I know it's fine for some people. Good luck with that.

The point I want to make is that a lot of people in college feel like there's not a lot of good options, and not everyone understands that. I guess what I want to do is **explain to people like my parents** why dating in college is different. Okay, so now I know who I want my readers to be, my audience. That it's really okay to put things off. Because if you really think about it the goal of college is NOT finding a mate for life or whatever. We're not in as much a hurry. It's just not like

Figure 3.3 Looking at Melisa's Freewriting

Activity 3.4.1

Using Freewriting to Get Your Ideas Flowing

Let's do some freewriting. Below, write down the topic of the paper you're working on. Set a timer on your computer for 5 minutes. Then, turn down the brightness on your computer screen as low as it can go. Hit the start button and get typing. Remember, don't stop, and don't fix anything. Just type until the timer goes off. Then, turn up the brightness on your screen to see what came out.

Do a Loop Back

Once you've had a chance to look over what you put down in your freewriting, you can do a "loop back." Pick out a few ideas from your freewriting that you really liked. Then, do a quick freewrite on each of them separately. This will help you really pull some great ideas out of your mind and deepen your thinking about them.

Try Freewriting on Your Phone, Tablet, or Computer Apps

There are other ways to freewrite. You can always do an audio freewrite, too. If you have a smartphone and an idea hits you as you're walking across campus or doing laundry, you can record your freewrite. Maybe you could write a poem or rap about it.

You can also search for freewriting apps on the Internet. They can do the timing for you and help you focus on the things you are most interested in.

Brainstorming Lists of Ideas

3.5 Use brainstorming to create a list of ideas.

Maybe you're a person who likes to make lists. If so, brainstorming is for you. Brainstorming a list is probably the simplest prewriting technique. That's why many writers like to start with a brainstorm and then move on to other prewriting techniques.

To make a brainstorming list, spend about five minutes listing out all the ideas and questions you have about your topic. Yeah, that's pretty basic, but it really works. Just keep listing things out—whatever comes into your head. If you get stuck, look at some of the items you already listed, and you will see some other ideas that you can list with them. Put at least 30 things on your list.

Try this. People who like brainstorming will often fold a piece of paper in half lengthwise, or they will set up two columns on their screen.

Step 1: In the left column, list out everything you can think of about your topic for five minutes.

Step 2: Take a 5-minute break.

Step 3: Underline or star your best three ideas in the left column.

Step 4: Brainstorm another list in the right column on just those three ideas for five minutes.

When you're done with this *two-column brainstorm* you will discover that you have narrowed and deepened your ideas quite a bit. This second column may be a better start on your first draft because you have a more focused topic, and you have thought more deeply about the kind of argument you want to make.

Let's look at a two-column brainstorming list created by a college student, Deshawn, who wants to write about the topic of "Reforming the Police" (Figure 3.4). The items in the left column were a good start, but the topic was too broad. So, he took a break, underlined a few of his best ideas, and made the second brainstorming column on the right. You will see that the brainstorming list on the right side is much more focused and shows Deshawn's deeper thoughts on the topic.

In the right column, Deshawn is coming up with a much more focused idea of what his argument will be. The material in the left column is too broad to handle in a college paper. But, the brainstorming list on the right is helping him choose the things he really wants to write about. Plus, his argument will be easier to make because it's more focused.

Give two-column brainstorming a try. Activity 3.5.1 has a worksheet that you can use.

Figure 3.4 A Two-Column Brainstorming List

My Brainstorming Lists

Reforming the Police	The Need for Black Cops
Too many Black men getting shot	Police forces should reflect the population
Getting stopped for just being a Black guy	Diversity would allow different voices
Cops assume we're violent, even when we're not	Police cultures need to confront racism
Cops assume we're hiding something	I would like to be a police officer
Yelling first, talking at the station	I would like to serve people
Taking away our freedom to be outside	Black cops may see other signs
Need to be held accountable	The public may be more cooperative
Transparency is necessary	They can see the other side
Body cameras?	Maybe I'm being naïve here
Better training is needed	There are good and bad cops of all backgrounds
More Black cops are needed	Cops are human
Cops are good people too	They can be influenced by the loudest voices
Just a few bad cops, but they ruin it for others	Some of those voices are racist
We need cops, just more Black cops	Other voices can counter that racism
Yes, drugs are an issue, but not everything	Even Black cops can believe racist stuff
Homelessness is an issue	Being a cop is noble work
Black Lives Matter	It's important work
There are some bad people out there	We need a balance of people
There are bad White people too	People need to see people like themselves
Economic problems	Black youth would be more trusting
Police can't just jump to conclusions	Minimize the us vs. them feeling along racial lines
Tough on crime	More Black leadership in police would help
Getting arrested	Body cameras as a way to see what happened
The cuffs are used too quickly	There is a legacy of racism in police work
Being put into the squad car	This might help pull that apart
Make someone look like a criminal, even when they're not	Hiring Black cops isn't enough
Using dogs to intimidate	But it's a start
I support cops and want to be one	The police culture needs to change too
Choke holds aren't necessary	That needs to be part of the training
Underlying racism is a problem	Diversity alone won't do it
History of responding to Black men with violence	Trust is the most important thing
	Let's reduce violence all around

Activity 3.5.1

Using Brainstorming to Make a List of Ideas

Let's give this brainstorming thing a try. Below are two columns. Write your topic at the top of the left column and spend 5 minutes brainstorming a list of everything you know about that topic. Then, underline your best three to four items in the left column. In the right column, write a narrower topic based on the underlined items in your left column. Then, spend 5 minutes brainstorming a list about that topic.

Original Topic:	**Narrower Topic:**

Using the "Five-W and How" Questions

3.6 Gain insights by using the Five-W and How Questions.

Sometimes called the "Journalist's Questions," this technique is a "question–response" discovery tool that journalists have been using for centuries. Ask yourself these six questions and then respond to each as fully as you can.

Who was involved?

What happened?

When did it happen?

Where did it happen?

Why did it happen?

How did it happen?

This technique is more structured than concept mapping, freewriting, or brainstorming, but you can combine those other prewriting methods with this one. You can freewrite or create a brainstorming list for each of these questions. You can even make a small concept map for each of them.

You will find that your answers to these questions will give you the basic story that you are trying to tell about your topic. That's how journalists use these questions. Once they have written out the who, what, where, when, why, and how, they generally have a core idea of the article they will write.

Figure 3.5 shows how Deshawn could use the Five-W and How Questions to think about his paper on "The Need for More Black Cops."

When you are answering the Five-W and How Questions, avoid just writing down simple responses. Instead, respond as if you're having an "inner dialogue" with yourself, offering as many details and insights as you can.

Figure 3.5 Looking at Deshawn's Five-W and How Questions

My Five-W and How Questions

"The Need for More Black Cops"	
Who was involved?	Black people, especially young men. Police officers. The media. New recruits to police academies.
What happened?	A series of police killings of young Black people that has caught the media's attention. Most of the police were White, but not all. The protests against those killings, a few of them turning violent. The use of racist dog whistles from the Trump Administration. Courts not willing to bring charges or convict police.
When did it happen?	This has been happening for over a century. However, the media seems to be noticing more. It's happening mostly at night.
Where did it happen?	Usually urban areas, often on the streets. Occasionally, it happens when police are trying to find someone who they want to arrest.
Why did it happen?	I think systemic racism in police ranks is the basic problem. However, it's also probably because police forces don't tend to have many Black officers. So, it becomes an us (Black citizens) vs. Them (White officers) conflict. Another reason why is the number of video cameras on phones, police equipment, and security systems. People are actually able to see how Black people are sometimes mistreated by police.
How did it happen?	Normal interactions sometimes escalate. Both sides are sometimes at fault, but the police have the guns. When a Black person doesn't comply or challenges the police, the police's reaction is a shooting, tasering, chokehold, or knee on the back or neck.

If you cannot answer a question thoroughly, you can respond in some of these ways:

- **Take your best guess:** Use a starter phrase like, "I don't know the answer, but it could be that . . ." or just "The basic facts of the matter are . . ."
- **Identify what you would need to know and how you might find that evidence:** Use a starter phrase like "I would need to do some research into . . ."
- **Explain how you could narrow your topic:** Use a starter phrase like, "So what I want to write about is . . ." or "The question I'm really after is . . ."

Sometimes prewriting does not lead to answers but instead helps you ask the right questions and make a plan for your next steps.

That's what happened for Deshawn. Responding to the six questions, he realized that most people agree with the basic facts about his topic (Figure 3.5). They differ about how those facts are interpreted. So, he realized that he needed to use these facts as part of his evidence for his argument. The main point of his argument would argue for more Black police officers. His thesis would offer that solution to the problem. You can do it too. Try using the Activity 3.6.1 worksheet to answer the Five-W and How Questions for your next paper.

Activity 3.6.1

Using the Five-W and How Questions

This activity will give you the chance to use the Five-W and How Questions for the paper you are writing. Spend 2–3 minutes answering the questions below. Remember, you can use freewriting, brainstorming, and even concept mapping to answer these questions.

Your Topic

Who was involved?

What happened?

When did it happen?

Where did it happen?

Why did it happen?

How did it happen?

The QSG

Ahem, it's a Quick Start Guide.

Here are the Top 10 things you should have learned in this workshop:

1. College and workplace writing require a more complex writing process than the one used in high school.
2. The best writing process is one that fits your personality and work habits.
3. The rhetorical situation includes the following five elements: Topic, Angle, Purpose, Readers, and Context of Use.
4. The easiest and best prewriting techniques are concept mapping, freewriting, brainstorming, and answering the Five-W and How questions.
5. Concept mapping is especially useful for visual thinkers who like to draw things out and connect ideas into clusters.
6. Freewriting is great for people who want to get writing and put some words and sentences onto the screen.
7. Brainstorming is for writers who like to make lists of ideas, and a double-column brainstorm is a great way to narrow and deepen a topic idea.
8. The Five-W and How questions are used by journalists to gather the basic facts of a story.
9. Two different techniques of prewriting, when used together, can really pull out different ideas and angles on the topic.
10. Try not to overthink while prewriting. The best prewriting happens when you're letting your ideas flow out on the page or screen.

Workshop 4

Writing a College Paper

In this workshop, you will learn how to do these things:

- **4.0** Organize a college paper with an introduction, body, and conclusion.
- **4.1** Compose an introduction with five basic moves.
- **4.2** Construct an effective and focused thesis statement.
- **4.3** Organize the body of your paper.
- **4.4** Compose a conclusion with five basic moves.
- **4.5** Structure your paper with effective headings.

HELPFUL HINT: You can use material in *Writing Today*'s Chapter 1, "Writing and Genres," and Chapter 17, "Organizing and Drafting," to help you complete this workshop.

How Should You Put Your Paper Together?

4.0 Organize a college paper with an introduction, body, and conclusion.

OK, you have been doing some brainstorming, freewriting, and other pre-writing activities. You have your ideas out on the screen or a piece of paper. What's next? It's time to begin drafting and organizing your paper. Writing a college paper is hard work, but if you know a few organizational tricks, the job gets much easier.

In this workshop, you are going to learn some ways to write the introduction, body, and conclusion of a typical college paper. The worksheets and activities in this workshop will show you how professional writers sort out their ideas and put information in the right places. You will also learn how to use headings to organize your writing.

Here are a few points to keep in mind as you start drafting and organizing a college paper.

1. **A college paper needs a beginning (an introduction), middle (body), and an end (conclusion).**
2. **Tell them what you're going to tell them. Tell them. Tell them what you told them.**
3. **You need to have a point and figure out a new angle.**

These three simple sayings will save you lots of time and effort. Writing a typical college paper is never easy, but these sayings do make it easier. We will refer to these three sayings throughout this workshop.

Activity 4.0.1

Think About This: Public Speaking or Death. Which Is Scarier?

Organizing a paper is almost the same as organizing a speech. In a speech, you should tell the audience what you're going to tell them, tell them, and then tell them what you told them. Funny thing, but surveys show that most people fear speaking in public more than they fear death. Why do you think that's true? Why are people so scared to give a speech? And, how can learning to write well make someone like you a better public speaker? For five minutes, freewrite about your fears of public speaking and how you think learning to write and speak better can help you succeed in your future career.

Writing Your Introduction (*Tell Them What You're Going to Tell Them!*)

4.1 Compose an introduction with five basic moves.

You have probably been told, "Never write the introduction of a paper first." That's usually good advice, because you will need to come back to finish your introduction later in the process. But it's actually hard to write the rest of your paper if you don't know how the paper will start. So you should begin by figuring out what will go into the introduction. Then you can write the body of your paper.

The introduction tells your readers what you are going to tell them in the rest of the paper. You're going to say, "Readers, here's what I'm trying to explain or prove to you." You're basically setting up your paper right from the start.

An introduction of a college paper makes some predictable moves that will help you get started. Your introduction will do some or all of the following:

- Tell your readers your *topic* (the thing you are writing about).
- Give some *background information* on that topic (a little history about it).
- Explain why your topic is *important* to your readers.
- State the *purpose* of your paper (what you are trying to do).
- State your *main point* (your thesis).

These five moves can be made in just about any order, but the order in the list above is a good start. Also, these moves can be combined. For example, your purpose and thesis statements might be in the same sentence. Or your background information might also explain why your topic is important to your readers. The worksheet in Activity 4.1.1 will help you get started on your introduction.

Have you finished your introduction when you're done answering these questions? No, of course not. But you will know what your introduction will include. That will allow you to begin writing the body of your paper.

After you finish writing the body of your paper, you can return to this worksheet and draft your introduction. Just take your answers to the questions in the worksheet and turn them into sentences. Then make a paragraph out of those sentences.

Of course, as you draft the body of your paper, you will probably want to change some of your answers to these questions. That's fine. In fact, that's how good writing works. As you write various parts of your paper, you will want to re-work other parts of the paper so everything fits together.

Activity 4.1.1 will help you practice making these five moves. You are probably working on a college paper right now. Try using this worksheet to help you create the content of your paper's introduction.

Activity 4.1.1

The Five Moves in an Introduction

My Introduction

Write down answers to each of these questions. When you are finished, you will have the content of your introduction written out.

What is my topic? What is my paper about? (one sentence)

What is some background information about my topic? (2–3 sentences)

Why is this topic important, especially to my readers? (one sentence)

What is the purpose of my paper? (Finish this one sentence)

The purpose of my paper is to . . .

What is the main point (thesis) that I want to support or prove in this paper? (one sentence)

My point in this paper is that . . .

Writing Your Thesis Statement

4.2 Construct an effective and focused thesis statement.

You may have learned about writing a thesis statement in high school. And, if you're like most people, you probably discovered that it can be challenging to figure out what your paper's thesis should be.

Let's simplify what a thesis is. Your thesis statement is the *main point* that you want to support or prove. That's it. There are two kinds of thesis statements:

Informative Thesis Statement

This type of thesis statement tells your readers that you are going to explain or describe a topic to them. Usually, the keyword in an informative thesis is something like *inform, describe, define, review, notify, advise, explain,* or *demonstrate.*

> In this paper, I will explain what hip-hop is and why young people still like it.
>
> This essay describes what a typical day in my neighborhood looks like.
>
> This paper demonstrates how a utility tractor is used on a farm.

An informative thesis isn't really making an argument or saying something controversial. It's just telling your readers what you're going to do.

Argumentative Thesis Statement

This type of thesis statement tells your readers you are trying to persuade them to believe or do something. Usually, the keyword in an argumentative thesis is something like *persuade, convince, argue, recommend, advocate, urge, defend, justify, support*.

> In this paper, I will argue that hip-hop, which began in the early 1970s, is one of the most influential genres of music in the world.
>
> This essay defends the police in my neighborhood, but I also recommend that they listen to young people before jumping to conclusions about what they think is happening.
>
> Because utility tractors are so vital to farming, this paper recommends that the government should provide no-interest loans to new farmers to buy their first tractors.

An argumentative thesis is a statement that your readers can agree with or disagree with. They can say "yes" or "no" to an argumentative thesis.

Where Should You Put the Thesis Statement?

In most college papers, you should put your thesis statement at the end of the first paragraph (your introduction paragraph). That's a guideline, not a rule. Your thesis statement can appear just about anywhere in your introduction, and your introduction may have more than one paragraph. *However, most college instructors will expect your introduction to be one paragraph long with the thesis statement at the end of that paragraph.*

Activity 4.2.1 will help you write your thesis statement. Keep in mind that the thesis statement that you write here is just your first version of the one that will actually appear in your paper. When you have finished drafting your paper, you will probably revise your thesis to better suit your purpose.

Activity 4.2.1

Coming Up with Your Paper's Thesis Statement

What Is the Thesis of My Paper?

This work will help you write the thesis of your paper. Use the key words on the right to describe what you want to do in your paper.

Informative Thesis (Finish the following sentence using one of the keywords on the right.)

In this paper, I will _____

_____.

Now rewrite your thesis without the "In this paper, I will" starter phrase.

_____

_____.

explain
describe
show
teach
define
tell
demonstrate
review
advise

Argumentative Thesis (Finish the following sentence using one of the key words on the right.)

In this paper, I will _____

_____.

Now rewrite your thesis without the "In this paper, I will" starter phrase.

_____

_____.

persuade
convince
argue
recommend
urge
defend
justify
support

You have written an informative thesis and an argumentative thesis for your paper. Which one best matches the purpose of your paper? Explain why you think it fits better.

_____

_____.

Organizing the Body of Your Paper (*Tell Them*)

4.3 Organize the body of your paper.

The body of your paper is the middle part between the introduction and conclusion. In most college papers, your introduction will be one paragraph long, and the conclusion will be one paragraph, too. Usually, the body of a short to medium-sized college paper will have about three to five paragraphs. The body of a longer college paper can have five to ten paragraphs. Your instructor will probably give you a word count or page count that will help you figure out how much information needs to go into the body. If not, you should ask your instructor to tell you what length the paper should be.

A good way to organize your paper's body is to look at the genre diagram we have provided at the beginning of each genre chapter (Chapters 6–15) in *Writing Today.* At the beginning of each genre chapter you will see a diagram that shows the typical parts of that kind of paper. Each of these parts isn't necessarily a paragraph, but they could be.

Activity 4.3.1 will help you sort the content of your paper into organized "bins." Using the appropriate genre diagram, put a label on each part, or "bin." Then start filling in the bins with the information you have for that part of your paper.

For example, the diagram of a Review assignment in Chapter 8 shows that the body of this kind of paper usually has four parts (bins). These bins include

1. the description of the thing you're reviewing,
2. the strengths of the thing you're reviewing,
3. the weaknesses of the thing you're reviewing, and
4. weighing the strengths against the weaknesses.

Each of these parts gets at least one bin in the diagram.

Once you have labelled the bins, start filling them up with words, phrases, and sentences. At first, you might just cut and paste material from your brainstorming list, your freewriting, or the words from your concept map. Sort each idea into the bin where it fits best. Just pour your ideas in!

After sorting your ideas into the bins, turn each bin into at least one paragraph (or possibly two or three paragraphs). You should see your paper taking shape.

For now, don't worry about the introduction paragraph or the conclusion paragraph. You already know what will go into the introduction paragraph because you finished Activity 4.1.1. You will do similar work to help you write your conclusion. For now, just concentrate on the body of your paper.

Also, remember that the genre diagrams at the beginnings of Chapters 6–15 in *Writing Today* are meant to guide you. They aren't rules. Sometimes you will need to bend or change the genre to fit what you want to do in your paper. Your instructor can help you figure out how the genre diagram should be adapted to fit the unique needs of your paper.

Activity 4.3.1

Writing the Body of Your Paper by Sorting Your Ideas into Bins

Following the genre diagram of the kind of paper you are writing, label the bins below according to each part of your paper. Write in information that will appear in each part.

Introduction (Don't Write Anything Here Right Now)

Bin 1: _____

Bin 2: _____

Bin 3: _____

Bin 4: _____

Bin 5: _____

Bin 6: _____

Conclusion (Don't Write Anything Here Right Now)

Writing Your Conclusion Paragraph (*Tell Them What You Told Them*)

4.4 Compose a conclusion with five basic moves.

After you have figured out what will go into your introduction and body, you will usually have all the information you need to write a really good conclusion paragraph.

Here's a tip: The introduction and conclusion paragraphs include basically the same information, with a few minor changes.

In your introduction, you told your readers five things:

- Your *topic* (the thing you are writing about)
- Some *background information* on that topic (a little history about it)
- Why your topic is *important* to your readers
- The *purpose* of your paper (what you are trying to do)
- Your *main point* (your thesis)

In your conclusion paragraph, you will make five similar moves:

- Use a *transition* to signal that you are concluding.
- Restate the *purpose* of your paper.
- Restate the *main point* (thesis) of your paper.
- Explain why this topic is *important* to your readers.
- Say something about the *future* of this topic.

Your conclusion will repeat much of the same information that was in your introduction, just in different words. You don't want to say the exact same thing over again. That's boring. But you can rewrite those words in a new way that will bring your readers back to the beginning of your paper. In your conclusion you're telling your readers, "See, I proved my main point."

In many ways, the introduction and conclusion contain the same information, like the purpose of your paper, your main point (thesis), and the importance of the topic. The main difference is that the conclusion will often briefly discuss the future of the topic. Professional writers often call this a "look to the future."

Just remember that your paper's introduction and conclusion work together. In the introduction, you will "tell them what you're going to tell them" and in the conclusion you will "tell them what you told them." Activity 4.4.1 will help you figure out what you will put in your conclusion.

While you are answering these questions, you may realize that you have new information to add to your paper. If so, put that new information in a body paragraph, not your conclusion. Your readers will be annoyed if you begin talking about something new at the last second. The only new information in your conclusion should be the one to two sentences about what will happen in the future with this topic. Even then, though, you don't want to go off in a new direction.

Once you have answered the questions in Activity 4.4.1, convert these answers into a paragraph. Keep in mind that you may answer two of the questions with only one sentence. For example, the purpose and main point of your paper might be restated together.

Your conclusion paragraph can arrange the information in various ways, but you will usually find that the order of the questions in the worksheet is a good one to follow.

For almost all college papers, your conclusion should be one paragraph—at most two paragraphs. You want to keep things short and make your point. Once you signal that you are concluding the paper, your readers won't be patient with a long conclusion.

Activity 4.4.1

The Five Moves in a Conclusion

My Conclusion

Answer the questions below to figure out what will go into your conclusion paragraph. When you have finished, you will know what you need to include in that final paragraph.

What is a good transitional phrase to signal that I'm concluding this paper?

In conclusion	*To finish up*
To sum up	*Overall*
To wrap up	*Ultimately*
In closing	*As a whole*
Put briefly	*On the whole*
Finally	(or use your own phrase)

What is the purpose of my paper? (one sentence)

What is the main point (thesis) of this paper? (one sentence)

Why is this topic important, especially to my readers? (one sentence)

What will or should happen with this topic in the future? (one to two sentences)

Using Effective Headings in Your Papers

4.5 Structure your paper with effective headings.

In high school, you probably didn't use headings in your papers. A heading is a word, phrase, or question that signals when you are starting a new section in your paper. They are similar to the title of your paper, just smaller.

Usually a heading is in bold or italics, and it's often a little larger than the text that follows it. Sometimes it helps to think of headings as mini-titles for each of the sections in your paper.

The most boring headings are ones that only use one word each: "Strengths," "Weaknesses," "Comparison," "Conclusion." Yawn. Surely you can come up with something better. You might try out headings that are phrases or questions, like the phrase headings and question headings in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1 Headings as Phrases and as Questions

Phrase Headings	Question Headings
Summary of the Movie *Black Panther*	What is the Movie *Black Panther* About?
The Awesome Features	Why Do People Love this Movie?
A Few Weak Spots	What Are a Few Problems with the Movie?
My Final Take on *Black Panther*	What Is My Final Take on *Black Panther*?

Hint: Unless your instructor tells you to include a heading for the introduction of your paper, you don't need it. The title of your paper is already doing that job.

Whatever type of heading you choose, stay consistent. Don't mix and match phrases and questions. Use one or the other. If you use phrases, they should all be similar in length and style. If you use questions, ask questions that your readers would ask themselves.

In the end, your readers should be able to glance at the headings of your paper to see how your information is arranged. The headings will signal to them what each section is about. Activity 4.5.1 will help you come up with some useful headings for your papers.

Activity 4.5.1

Writing Great Headings

My Headings

Let's come up with some headings for your paper. Start out by writing down some single-word headings. Then, turn those single words into phrases. And finally, turn those phrases into questions. When you're finished, choose the headings that you think will work best for your paper.

Single-Word Headings

Introduction: (No Heading)

Heading 1: _____

Heading 2: _____

Heading 3: _____

Heading 4: _____

Heading for My Conclusion: _____

Phrases for Headings

Introduction: (No Heading)

Phrase Heading 1: _____

Phrase Heading 2: _____

Phrase Heading 3: _____

Phrase Heading 4: _____

Phrase Heading for My Conclusion: _____

Questions for Headings

Introduction: (No Heading)

Question Heading 1: _____

Question Heading 2: _____

Question Heading 3: _____

Question Heading 4: _____

Question Heading for My Conclusion: _____

The QSG

Ahem, it's a Quick Start Guide.

Here are the Top 10 things you should have learned in this workshop:

1. Your paper should first tell readers what you are going to tell them. Then, tell them. Finally, tell them what you told them.

2. The introduction of your paper will typically make five moves: Identify the topic, offer background information, explain why the topic is important, state the purpose, and state the main point.

3. An introduction sets up your paper by telling the readers what you are going to tell them.

4. Your paper will usually include an *informative* thesis statement or an *argumentative* thesis statement.

5. The thesis of your college papers will usually appear at the bottom of your first paragraph or at the top of your second paragraph.

6. The body of a medium-sized college paper will be about three to five paragraphs. Longer college papers can include five to ten paragraphs in the body.

7. The genre diagrams at the beginnings of Chapters 6–15 in *Writing Today* are very helpful for figuring out the organization of your paper.

8. The conclusion of your paper will usually make five moves: Include a transition, restate your purpose, restate your main point (thesis), explain why the topic is important, and say something about the future of the topic.

9. Headings are a good way to show the structure of your paper.

10. You can add energy to your paper with *phrase headings* and *question headings.*

Workshop 5
Writing Stronger Sentences

In this workshop, you will learn how to do these things:

- **5.0** Recognize why some sentences are difficult to read.
- **5.1** Identify the doer and the main action in a sentence.
- **5.2** Move the doer into the subject of a sentence.
- **5.3** State the main action of the sentence in the verb.
- **5.4** Transform passive sentences into active sentences.
- **5.5** Demonstrate how to make a sentence breathing length.
- **5.6** Combine sentences to slow down the pace of a text.

HELPFUL HINT: You can use material in *Writing Today*'s Chapter 18, "Choosing a Style," to help you complete this workshop.

Why Is This Sentence So Hard to Read?

5.0 Recognize why some sentences are difficult to read.

Sentences are the building blocks of all writing. You've been writing sentences since you were about six years old, so sentences are nothing new to you. In fact, sentences are so common that you probably haven't thought about them for a long time.

But these building blocks, just like bricks in a building, are really important. If they aren't used properly, your whole paper will be weak and difficult to read. So, let's spend some time refreshing and strengthening your sentence-writing skills.

All right, let's start with a few basics. The purpose of a sentence is to state a complete thought. Sentences can be used to make a statement, ask a question, issue a command, or make an exclamation.

A basic sentence needs at least two things: a *subject* (underlined in the samples below) and a *verb* (in bold below).

Kylie **ate.**

The car **swerved.**

The protesters **marched.**

Most sentences will also include an *object* (underlined and in bold in the examples below), which is the thing that the subject is acting upon. For example,

Kylie ate **a piece of cherry pie.**

The car swerved **into oncoming traffic.**

The protesters marched **to the state capitol.**

If all sentences were simple like these examples, writing clear sentences would be easy—and really dull! As sentences get more complex, they become harder to write and read.

Let's look at a complex sentence. Why is the following sentence hard to read?

> When crossing the street toward the grocery store near our housing complex and trying to navigate the same intersection in which speeding automobiles, crisscrossing bikes, and a variety of other vehicles are also traveling unpredictably in several directions, there are numerous ways in which pedestrians can suddenly discover themselves getting into conflicts and even situations that are dangerous.

1. **Hey, that sentence is way too long.** The punctuation mark *period* means a "period of breath." So any sentence that you cannot say out loud in one breath will also be hard to read. Yes, you usually aren't speaking the words out loud, but mentally you still feel like you are running out of breath.
2. **Um, the subject of the sentence is really hard to find.** In the long sentence above, the word "there" is in the subject slot of the sentence, but "there" is not what the sentence is about. So, you need to figure out what the sentence is about for yourself. Is the sentence about the street, grocery store, cars, pedestrians? Who knows?
3. **So, what's actually going on?** The verb of the sentence is "is." That doesn't describe what's happening. So, you need to make guesses about what is actually going on (the action) in this sentence.
4. **Why don't they get to the point!** The introductory phrase is really long. As a result, you need to hold all those words in short-term memory before you arrive at the subject of the sentence (which is unfortunately a vague "there").

You're probably thinking, "people don't actually write long sentences like that, do they?" Yes, people write these kinds of awful sentences all the time! On the Internet you can find many Web pages with painfully funny complex sentences that were found in college student papers.

In this workshop, you will learn how to write stronger sentences that aren't boring or too hard to understand. Each activity in this workshop will give you a tip or trick that you can use. These activities go with the guidelines in Chapter 18, "Choosing a Style," in *Writing Today*.

Activity 5.0.1

Think About This: How Is Texting Different from Normal Writing?

When you are texting or using social networking, your sentences are probably different than the ones you would use in a college paper. Let's imagine you are trying to explain to an older family member how sentences used in texts or social networking work and how they are different than ones you would use in school or work. List out 3–5 differences and explain them here in about 250 words.

Finding the Doer and the Main Action of the Sentence

5.1 Identify the doer and the main action in a sentence.

Let's go back to talking about basic sentences. The core of any sentence is the subject and verb. These elements tell the readers who or what the sentence is about (the subject) and what that subject is doing (the verb). The best subjects to use in sentences are usually "doers" (i.e., people or things that are doing the main action). Sentences that don't have a doer and an action are usually hard to read.

In Activity 5.1.1, find the subject (the doer) and the main action (what the doer is doing) of the sentence.

After completing the Activity, look back at what you underlined. You will find that the sentences where the subject and verb are hard to identify are hardest to understand. No surprise there. You will also notice that sentences are easier to read when the doer is the subject.

Activity 5.1.1

Finding the Doer and the Main Action

Highlight or underline the subject and the verb in these sentences. In the sentences that have two subjects and verbs, highlight or underline both. Then, find the doers and the main action in each sentence. Sometimes, you will notice, the subject and verb aren't always the doer and the action in the sentence.

1. Jose cruised around town on his longboard.

2. The cedar trees on campus cause my allergies to flare up each spring.

3. The food courts here at Bristol College need more options for vegetarians.

4. Instead of partying this weekend, my roommates drove to Chicago for a Cubs game.

5. If you want to do well in your classes, you should go to class!

6. Calculus was easy in high school, but it's much harder in college.

7. When Steph yells at her dog Bella, the poor thing sulks in her crate for hours.

8. The cause of Anita's success is tenacity.

9. The entire pizza was eaten by my Saint Bernard, but Christina did not think that was as funny as I did.

Putting the Doer of the Main Action in the Subject of the Sentence

5.2 Move the doer into the subject of a sentence.

One way to write clearer sentences is to make sure the "doer" is also the subject of the sentence. In Activity 5.1.1, you may have noticed that sentences are easier to read when the doer is the subject of the sentence.

When you are looking for the doer, pay attention to who or what is taking action. Who is doing the action? Then, look for the word that includes that action. What is the doer doing? That's how you figure out the doer in a sentence. For example, in this sentence, Martina is the doer, but her action is hidden in the word "solution":

The solution to the puzzle was easily accomplished by Martina.

First, "Martina" is the doer, so she should be made the subject of the sentence. Then find the main action by asking yourself what Martina did. Now turn that main action into a simple verb.

Martina easily solved the puzzle.

Notice how the sentence is shorter and much easier to read.

Now it's your turn. In Activity 5.2.1, underline the person or thing that is "doing" something (taking action). Then, revise the sentence, making the doer the subject of the sentence.

Activity 5.2.1

Revising Sentences to Put the Doer in the Subject Slot

Rewrite the sentences with the specified doers in the subjects of the sentences.

1. The Frisbee was caught by the dog. [Make *the dog* the doer and subject.]

2. The driver's swerving was caused by the icy roads. [Make *the driver* the doer and subject.]

3. My cookie had been eaten by my roommate, which made me very angry. [Make *my roommate* the doer and subject.]

4. There are a variety of ways that Julie could have said that better. [Make *Julie* the doer and subject.]

5. It is difficult to work with Jamie when he's hungry, Juwan realized. [Make *Juwan* the doer and subject.]

6. The tree was blown over by the storm. [Make *the storm* the doer and subject.]

7. My high school's football team was often ranked highly by the *Chicago Tribune*. [Make the *Chicago Tribune* the doer and subject.]

8. After a rough test, taking a dip in the hot tub is what some students really enjoy. [Make *some students* the doer and subject.]

9. Making new friends in college is harder than it looks, Caleb realized. [Make *Caleb* the doer and subject.]

10. It is always fun when my friends and I run out for ice cream at midnight. [Make *my friends and I* the doer and subject.]

Stating the Main Action of the Sentence as a Verb

5.3 State the main action of the sentence in the verb.

Another way to write clearer sentences is to figure out the "action" in the sentence and turn that action into the verb of the sentence. In hard-to-read sentences, you will find that the action is often hidden in a verb that has been turned into a noun. These nouns are called "nominalizations." Often, they end with *-sion*, *-tion*, *-ment*, or *-ence*. Here are a few examples:

Verb	Nominalization
solve	solution
present	presentation
enjoy	enjoyment
lose	losing
recover	recovery
realize	realization
laugh	laughter

A sentence with too many nominalizations slows readers down and makes your writing hard to understand. By putting the action of the sentence in the verb, you will make the sentence more energized and clearer for your readers.

In this first sentence, the main action is a noun, which makes it dull and hard to read.

Last semester, there was an investigation into the students' conduct by the Dean.

But here, the action is a verb:

Last semester, the Dean investigated the students' conduct.

Sometimes the same word is used for both the verb and the noun. That can make nominalizations a little hard to spot:

Today, there was a lecture on the Civil War by my history professor.

The word "lecture" can be both a noun and a verb. Still, changing the action to a verb makes the sentence read more smoothly:

Today, my history professor lectured on the Civil War.

In Activity 5.3.1, underline the word that includes the main action of the sentence (usually what the doer is doing). Then, revise the sentence, using the verb of the sentence to state the main action.

Activity 5.3.1

Revising Sentences to Put the Main Action of the Sentence in the Verb

Highlight or underline the word that states the main action of each sentence. Then, rewrite the sentence so that the main action is in the verb slot. The first three have hints for making those changes.

1. The police did an investigation of the burglary. [HINT: Change "did an investigation" into a single-word verb.]

2. The team was in a state of confusion because of the coaches' confusing directions. [HINT: Change 'confusion" and "directions" into verbs.]

3. When diving underwater, it is important that you save enough breath to get back to the surface. [HINT: You can change "it is important that you" to "you should" or "you must."]

4. There is always competition between the two work crews to be done first.

5. He made a confession to breaking the window accidentally.

6. The admission of a mistake is something Elise didn't like to do.

7. Hosting parties at his house was something Yusaf did.

8. My dog was having an obsession about the lost ball.

9. An analysis of the data was presented by the scientists in their report.

10. The conclusion we reached is that Nutella is really good when mixed with peanut butter.

Turning Passive Sentences into Active Sentences

5.4 Transform passive sentences into active sentences.

Someone may have told you not to use passive sentences. In a passive sentence, the subject (the doer) does not perform the action in the verb. For example, here is a sentence written in the passive voice and then the same sentence written in the active voice.

Passive: The car was washed by Hector every Saturday.

Active: Hector washed his car every Saturday.

Honestly, passive sentences are fine in some cases. They are grammatically correct, and they make complete sense. So, why is passive voice so bad?

One problem with passive sentences is that readers need to work harder to figure out who is doing the action. In both sentences above, Hector is the doer. In the passive sentence, Hector is hidden in the middle of the sentence, but in the active sentence, he's out in the front of the sentence washing the car. That's why the second sentence is easier to read.

Another problem is that passive sentences tend to be longer and wordier than active sentences.

Passive sentences are usually harder to read, and they tend to hide who or what is doing the main action in the sentence. That said, passive sentences aren't wrong, and they can be useful in some situations. (You will learn about good uses of passive voice in Workshop 6 on paragraphing.)

So, keep a lookout for passive sentences and consider changing them to active sentences. One of the major tip-offs to identifying passive sentences is the use of *is*, *was*, and *were*. Passive sentences will also use verbs like *has been*, *have been*, *will be*, and *will have been*. For example, the tip-off words for passive voice are underlined in these sample sentences:

Passive: That statue was pulled down by the protesters.

Passive: That statue had been pulled down by the protesters.

Passive: That statue will be pulled down by the protesters if it's not removed.

In an active sentence, the doers (protesters) are doing the action (pulling).

Active: The protesters pulled down the statue.

Here's our advice. When you're writing the first draft of a paper, don't worry about passive sentences. Just get your ideas onto the screen. Writing passive sentences while drafting is normal. Then, when you're finished drafting, go through your paper and change most of the passive sentences into active sentences.

Some passive sentences won't sound right as active sentences, so don't change them. But, you will find that turning most of the passive sentences into active sentences will make your writing clearer and stronger. Why? Your readers will know who or what is doing the action, and your sentences will be shorter and less wordy.

Let's practice editing some passive sentences into active sentences in Activity 5.4.1.

Again, there is nothing wrong with these passive sentences. They are grammatically correct, and the readers will understand them. They are just harder to read than necessary, because the doers are harder to find. These passive sentences are also longer and wordier than the active versions of the same sentence.

By changing most of your passive sentences into active sentences, you will make your writing clearer and stronger.

Activity 5.4.1

Changing Passive Sentences into Active Sentences

Each of these sentences is written in the passive voice. Find the doer of the sentence and put it into the subject slot of the sentence. Then, move the main action of the sentence into the verb.

1. The trees were perched on by colorful parrots.

2. The video game, *Thor's Revenge*, was completed by Jeremy in only three hours.

3. The students' concerns were addressed by the principal a few days too late.

4. The soundtrack from *Hamilton* is still the one I like best.

5. The trade agreement was signed by the presidents of China and the United States.

6. Last Friday, a house in our neighborhood was destroyed by a tornado.

7. After leaving the harbor, the sailboat was steered by its captain to Cuba.

8. The food pantry was stocked overnight by two volunteers, Gina and Lars.

9. The football game was attended by several people from my family.

10. After the half marathon was over, the granola bars were gobbled up by the runners.

Making Sentences Breathing Length

5.5 Demonstrate how to make a sentence breathing length.

The punctuation mark for "period" originally signaled a period of breath. Long ago, books were written to be read out loud, so periods were used to signal "take a breath" to the reader. Today, of course, people tend to read silently, but they still take a mental break (a pause) when they see the period.

For this reason, really long sentences make your readers feel like they are running out of air as they are reading. After about 25 words, they are mostly trying to figure out when the sentence is going to end, not what you're trying to say.

So, here's a tip: Don't smother your readers by using too many words in your sentences!

If you're not sure if a sentence is too long, here's a simple trick. Try reading it out loud to yourself. If you run out of breath as you read, the sentence probably needs to be shortened or cut into two or maybe even three sentences. Activity 5.5.1 has some sentences that are beyond breathing length. Try shortening them or cutting them into two sentences.

While doing this activity, you may notice that other punctuation marks, like commas and semicolons, often signal where you can cut a long sentence into two shorter sentences. So, if you run into a long sentence, look for those commas and semicolons. They often help you figure out how you can revise sentences to be breathing length.

Activity 5.5.1

Making Long Sentences Breathing Length

Each of these sentences is too long! Rewrite each one in a shorter version, or cut it into two sentences.

1. The history of rapping can be traced back for centuries to the African continent where chanting stories musically was common, but the hip-hop movement began in the streets of America as young Blacks were trying to break out of the restrictive boundaries that controlled the pop, soul music, and rhythm and blues genres that dominated urban music.

2. Coming down from a thunderstorm cloud with wind speeds of about 300 miles per hour, a tornado is a rotating column of air that typically forms when warm moist air and cool dry air meet in a way that causes a spinning movement in the atmosphere below the cloud and sends an updraft through the tube to the cloud itself.

3. Perhaps the reason why people are so fascinated by zombie movies is that they reveal weaknesses that we perceive in our societies and political systems, but they do so in a way that is clearly fictional with zombified people collectively walking (or maybe running) around looking for brains or human flesh in a mindless and relentless way.

4. As a kid growing up in small town Idaho, playing soccer and being a passionate fan meant that I was out of step with most of the people in my town who tended to follow the major sports like football, basketball, and baseball, so I always found it challenging to explain my favorite sport, which is the most followed around the world, to people who tend to think of the sport as boring or even confusing.

5. With a smile, people in my Puerto Rican New York neighborhood often remember our tito's obsession with pizza, because even though he still had a strong Puerto Rican accent he was always known to make some of the best Neapolitan pizza in the south Bronx and even my Puerto Rican friends somehow thought he was Italian.

Combining Sentences

5.6 Combine sentences to slow down the pace of a text.

Short sentences are often easier to read, but putting too many short sentences together can sound strange to the readers. Again, a period was originally used to signal "take a breath" when reading a book out loud. So, if you use lots of short sentences together, you're signaling to the readers: Take a breath, take a breath, take a breath, take a breath, and so on. Mentally, they are breathing quickly, like they're running or nervous.

That's fine if you want your writing to sound intense or you want your readers to feel anxious. But, if you want your writing to sound calmer or restrained, then you can combine shorter sentences into medium-length or even longer sentences.

When combining sentences, try these techniques:

Use a conjunction (or, and, but, so), as underlined in the second sentence below.

Cruz likes pizza for dinner. Gina would rather have fish.

Cruz likes pizza for dinner, but Gina would rather have fish.

Use a subordinating conjunction (before, after, because, unless, until), as underlined in the second sentence below.

Alma decided to go to the park. She went after she ate lunch.

Alma decided to go to the park after she ate lunch.

Use a relative clause, as underlined in the second sentence below.

Brad is a nurse. He is especially interested in emergency medicine.

Brad, who is a nurse, is especially interested in emergency medicine.

Activity 5.6.1 will help you practice combining sentences. Try using conjunctions and relative clauses to reduce the number of sentences.

When combining sentences, look for ones that are expressing similar ideas. You can often put these sentences together, usually with a conjunction. You will notice that short sentences can cause the reading to feel choppy. By combining these short sentences into medium-length or longer sentences, you can make the reading feel smoother and less intense.

Activity 5.6.1

Combining Short Sentences to Make Them Breathing Length

Each of these sentences is too short! Rewrite them, using a conjunction or a relative clause to combine sentences.

1. Henri went to the store. He needed to buy some milk.

2. Bike commuting is great. It's good for the environment. It's also good for your health.

3. Wolves are amazing animals. They are often misunderstood. Many myths about wolves are wrong.

4. Country music and the blues are similar. The lyrics are similar. Both types of music tend be about loss and love. They also tell stories about working-class struggles.

5. Zoos are unethical. They keep animals in cages. These animals need to have freedom. They need to roam. Maybe we should put people in cages. They can see how that feels. Then, they will understand.

6. The beach is great. People are always having fun at the beach. They like to play beach volleyball. They like to lie out in the sun. They wade and swim around in the water. My favorite thing to do at the beach is watch other people.

7. An earthquake can be dangerous. It shakes the building around. Stuff falls off shelves. You need to move as quickly as possible. Get under a desk. Look for a doorway. Stay calm during an earthquake.

8. I needed to make a choice. The decision was between basketball and affording college. I love basketball. I was good enough to play at a Division III college. But, these colleges don't offer scholarships for sports. I decided to go to a state university. It was cheaper. I couldn't make the basketball team. I'm still happy with the choice I made.

9. Hunting is fun. I'm a woman. I like to be with my father and brothers. Few women hunt. They might like it. It's outdoors. Hunting helps you respect nature. It helps you understand how animals live and think.

10. The Covid-19 pandemic was a wake-up call. The government was not ready. People did whatever they wanted. They didn't take it seriously. It went on much longer than it should have. People died. Many people who died could have survived.

The QSG

Ahem, it's a Quick Start Guide.

Here are the Top 10 things you should have learned in this workshop:

1. Some sentences are hard to read because they are too long, their subject is hard to find, it's not clear what's going on, and the point is buried in the sentence.
2. To make a sentence clearer, start by identifying the doer (who is doing something) and the main action (what they are doing) in the sentence.
3. Whenever possible, put the doer in the subject of the sentence, and state the main action of the sentence in the verb.
4. Passive sentences aren't wrong, but they are often harder to read than active sentences.
5. If something sounds better as a passive sentence, then don't change it to an active sentence.
6. Sentences should be "breathing length," which means you should be able to say each one out loud comfortably in one breath.
7. If a sentence is too long, you can cut it into two or even three sentences.
8. A period signals to the readers that they should "take a breath."
9. Sentence combining is a good way to slow down the intensity of your writing.
10. You can combine sentences with conjunctions and relative clauses.

Workshop 6
Revising Paragraphs

In this workshop, you will learn how to do these things:

- **6.0** Explain how paragraphs are used to break up large blocks of text into smaller groups of sentences.
- **6.1** Identify the topic sentence of a paragraph.
- **6.2** Construct a paragraph with support sentences.
- **6.3** Use a transition word or phrase to make a bridge between two sentences.
- **6.4** Use a transition word, phrase, sentence, or question to make a bridge between two paragraphs.
- **6.5** Identify the various types of paragraphs and use them to construct a college paper.

HELPFUL HINT: You can use material in *Writing Today* Chapter 21, "Developing Paragraphs and Sections," and Chapter 22, "Using Basic Rhetorical Patterns," to help you complete this workshop.

What Do Paragraphs Do?

6.0 Explain how paragraphs are used to break up large blocks of text into smaller groups of sentences.

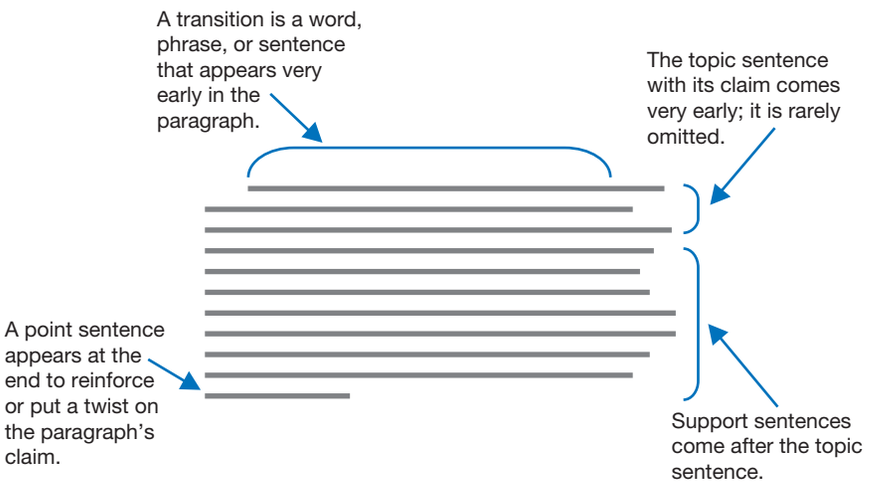
A paragraph is a group of sentences that support or prove a major point. Paragraphs are not simply breaks in the written text to make it more readable. Instead, each paragraph will usually start out with a statement or claim that the rest of the paragraph will support or prove.

Paragraphs divide your writing projects into building blocks of ideas, so your readers can quickly understand how you have organized your major points and structured your paper. They signal that the sentences inside the paragraph go together and that each paragraph builds upon a central topic, idea, issue, or question.

In this workshop, you will learn about the four kinds of sentences that can be included in a paragraph: a *transitional sentence*, a *topic sentence*, *support sentences*, and a *point sentence*. The diagram in Figure 6.1 from *Writing Today* shows where these kinds of sentences usually appear in any paragraph. Minimally, a paragraph should have a topic sentence and support sentences. In each paragraph, you should use the topic sentence to make a statement or claim that the support sentences will support.

When you are revising your college papers, you can strengthen your paragraphs by using these four kinds of sentences.

Figure 6.1 The Shape of a Paragraph



The paragraph below describes how children's brains have not yet fully developed and why that results in the tendency for them to be engaged in risky behavior. It has the following features:

1. The paragraph begins with a *transitional sentence* that makes a bridge from the previous paragraph.
2. The second sentence is the *topic sentence* that the paragraph will prove.
3. Several *supporting sentences* explain these brain changes.
4. A final *point sentence* drives home the main point.

Watch how these four types of sentences work together in a paragraph:

> Additionally, designers of alcohol abuse programs need to keep something else in mind (*transition sentence*). The adolescent brain is maturing quickly, but teens do not think like adults (*topic sentence*). Most teens' pre-frontal cortexes won't be fully mature until their early 20s (*support sentence*). Therefore, they can be more emotional because the socio-emotional part of the brain becomes more dominant after humans reach puberty (*support sentence*). That's why young people tend to respond more emotionally to intense events as very pleasant or painful (*support sentence*). As a result, their reactions to alcohol can be stronger than adults' reactions because alcohol artificially enhances those good feelings and relieves pain (*support sentence*). Teens are also more likely to take risks because doing risky things tends to be more emotionally exhilarating (*support sentence*). So, when abusing alcohol, teens are doubly rewarded by the risk-taking and the enhancing effects of the alcohol (*support sentence*). For these reasons, designers of alcohol abuse programs need to always remember that the teenage brain works differently than the adult brain and plan accordingly (*point sentence*).

A basic paragraph does not need all four types of sentences, only the topic sentence and the support sentences. Try this: In the paragraph above, cross out the transition sentence (the first sentence) and the point sentence (the last sentence). You will see that the paragraph still works fine because the topic sentence and support sentences still achieve the purpose of the paragraph.

Activity 6.0.1

Think About This

In the past, you may have been told some ridiculous things about how paragraphs should work. Maybe you've been told they need to be five lines long (why?) or they must be seven sentences (again, why?). Spend three minutes brainstorming a list of "The Things I've Been Told About Paragraphs." When you're done, compare your list with two to three other people in your class. Discuss which of these statements about paragraphs are true and which are "ridiculous."

Identifying the Topic Sentence of a Paragraph

6.1 Identify the topic sentence of a paragraph.

The purpose of a topic sentence is to announce the paragraph's subject and make a statement or claim that the rest of the paragraph will support or prove. Here are some examples:

> Sociologists have noted that even after the global pandemic ended, many of the practices adopted by Americans became permanent behaviors.
>
> We should take these steps to improve the general education requirement at Newell College.
>
> There is no greater threat to democracy than a dictator who claims to be benevolent.

You should put your topic sentence early in the paragraph, usually in the first or second sentence. This way, your readers will be able to identify the paragraph's key statement or claim. Then, as they read the paragraph, they can evaluate whether your supporting sentences sufficiently back up your claim or statement. Activity 6.1.1 will give you an opportunity to practice working with topic sentences in paragraphs.

In special situations, you might choose to place the topic at the very end of a paragraph. For instance, if you are telling a story or are leading up to a surprising or controversial point, you might want to delay the topic sentence until the very end. In these cases, make the topic sentence prominent by placing it at the very end of the paragraph, not near the middle.

Activity 6.1.1

Identifying Topic Sentences

The following paragraphs about grizzly bears have topic sentences that are strong but misplaced. They are placed in the middle, but they should instead be placed prominently near the beginning to help readers quickly see what the paragraph will show. Read through the sentences in these paragraphs and do the following:

1. Find the topic sentence in each paragraph and underline or highlight it.
2. In each example, move the topic sentence to an early place in the paragraph.

Paragraph 1:
Larger than the black bear, male grizzly bears stand about 7 feet tall and weigh from 300 to 600 pounds (and occasionally more than 800). Females are smaller, usually weighing between 200 and 400 pounds. Unlike the black bear, the grizzly bear has a rather concave face, high-humped shoulders, and long, curved claws. It is easy to distinguish grizzlies from black bears as the physical features of the grizzly are noticeably different. The grizzly's thick fur, which varies from light brown to nearly black, sometimes looks frosty, hence the name "grizzly," or the less common "silvertip." Finally, the grizzly has shorter, rounder ears than the black bear.

Paragraph 2:
Some grizzly bears are accidentally killed by hunters who mistake them for black bears, which are legal game. More commonly, grizzlies may become food-conditioned because of the availability of human-related "attractants," which include garbage, pet foods, livestock carcasses, and improper camping practices. Food-conditioned bears seek out human use areas for these foods and can become dangerous. Although the loss of habitat poses a significant threat to the grizzly, it is human activity that poses the greatest threat to their survival. Bears can also become habituated to people when they lose their normal avoidance response. An example of habituated bears are road-side bears feeding on natural foods that do not flee when vehicles stop. This can eventually lead to conflicts between people and bears and to grizzly bear mortality—not only in human-populated areas of the grizzly's range but if attractants are not stored properly also at back country recreation sites.

Adapted from U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, "Grizzly Bear" (https://www.fws.gov/home/feature/2007/GBFactSheetr.pdf).

Using Support Sentences in Paragraphs

6.2 Construct a paragraph with support sentences.

Usually, *support sentences* make up most of the sentences in a paragraph. These sentences usually come after the topic sentence (underlined in the examples below). They provide examples, details, reasoning, facts, data, narrations of events, definitions, and descriptions. These support sentences support or prove the paragraph's topic sentence.

Let's look at a couple of smaller paragraphs to see how support sentences work:

Paragraph 1: According to *Biography.com*, Neil deGrasse Tyson grew up in New York City and became fascinated with astronomy in grade school. When he was nine years old, his interest in stars and planets was sparked by a school field trip to the Hayden Planetarium, and he soon had his own telescope. After graduating from high school, he went to Harvard, where he earned his bachelor's degree. In 1991, he earned his doctorate in astrophysics from Columbia University. He was hired by the Hayden Planetarium in 1994 and became the director in 1996.

Paragraph 2: Diabetes mellitus and diabetes insipidus share the first word of their name and some of the same symptoms, but that's where the similarities end. Diabetes mellitus is more commonly known simply as *diabetes*. It's when your pancreas doesn't produce enough insulin to control the amount of glucose, or sugar, in your blood. Diabetes insipidus is a rare condition that has nothing to do with the pancreas or blood sugar. Instead, it happens when your kidneys produce an excess of urine. Normally, they filter your bloodstream to make about a quart or two each day. When you have diabetes insipidus, it's more like 3 to 20 quarts, and it's mostly water. This dramatic loss of fluid makes you really thirsty.

In these examples, you can see how the topic sentence (the underlined sentence) in each paragraph makes a statement or claim that the rest of the paragraph will prove or support. Then, the support sentences use examples, details, reasoning, facts, data, narratives, definitions, and descriptions to support the statement or claim in the topic sentence. Activity 6.2.1 will help you figure out how to use support sentences to fill out a paragraph.

Activity 6.2.1

Using Support Sentences

Here are two topic sentences. For each of these topic sentences, use an Internet search engine, like Google, to find five support sentences that could be used in the paragraph that follows them.

The Covid-19 pandemic challenged the United States in several ways.

Excessive debt from college, especially student loans, can cause people in their 20s to struggle financially.

Using Transitional Words and Phrases to Bridge Sentences

6.3 Use a transition word or phrase to make a bridge between two sentences.

As you progress from one sentence to the next in a paragraph, you can use transitional words and phrases to make a smooth bridge between them. In this section, you'll learn about and practice using transitions to improve the flow—or "cohesion"—across sentences within a paragraph.

Sometimes, it helps to think of transitions as traffic cops, directing the flow of traffic. Each transition signals the direction of the next sentence. For example, the underlined transitional phrases in the examples below make a bridge between sentences and direct the flow.

> Going to that concert is a bad idea because we won't be back until three in the morning. Plus, the last time we did something like this, your brother forgot to pick us up, and we spent the night sleeping in a Waffle House.
>
> I can't stomach another one of those stupid horror movies that come out around Halloween. Instead, I propose we read the reviews on *Rotten Tomatoes*, choose some classic slasher flicks, and host a Halloween film festival in the dorm lounge.

Here are some useful transitions and how they direct the flow of sentences:

Additional information: *additionally, also, in addition, furthermore, equally important*

Similarity: *in the same way, similarly, likewise, in the same way*

Contrast or difference: *however, in contrast, instead, nevertheless, still, on the other hand, even though, although, regardless*

Example or illustration: *for example, for instance, to illustrate*

Emphasis: *in fact, indeed, surely, most important*

Time or a sequence: *first, second, next, after a while, simultaneously, in the past, in the future, before, during, meanwhile, eventually, later on, lastly, finally*

Space: *behind, on top of, next to, below, within sight, surrounding, in the background, nearby, inside of, close, further ahead*

Restatement: *in other words, that is, in a nutshell*

Effect or consequence: *thus, consequently, as a result, this resulted, because, since, so, due to*

Conclusion or summary: *all in all, in conclusion, to summarize, on the whole, as I have argued*

Activity 6.3.1

Bridging Sentences with Transitional Words or Phrases

For each of the paragraphs below, try out transitions from the list to see how you can use them to bridge sentences. There isn't a correct answer, but you will see that some transitions sound better than others when bridging two sentences.

Sentence Set 1

Transition List:	*Indeed*	*In addition*	*Consequently*	*Therefore*	*For example*

We cannot accept cash or credit card payments. _____, if you wish to contribute, please ensure that the payee on your check or money order reads, "U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service." _____, please designate which of the Conservation Funds is to receive your donation so it is used according to your wishes.

Sentence Set 2

Transition List:	*Therefore*	*For example*	*In contrast*	*Similarly*	*In other words*

For some people, the flu vaccine may pose a rare but possible danger. _____, people with egg allergies may experience an adverse reaction. _____, people who have a history of severe egg allergy should be vaccinated in a medical setting, supervised by a health care provider who is able to recognize and manage severe allergic reactions.

Sentence Set 3

Transition List:	*In contrast*	*Similarly*	*For instance*	*In other words*	*If necessary,*

The single best way to prevent seasonal flu is to get vaccinated each year. _____, good health habits can help stop the spread of germs and prevent respiratory illnesses like flu. _____, there are antiviral drugs that can be used to treat the flu if a person gets infected.

Sentence Set 1 was adapted from https://www.fws.gov/international/pdf/factsheet-donations-2008.pdf.

Bridging Two Paragraphs with Transitions

6.4 Use a transition word, phrase, sentence, or question to make a bridge between two paragraphs.

Transitional phrases and transitional sentences can also be used to make bridges between paragraphs. Most often, you can use transitional words or phrases at the beginnings of your topic sentences. Sometimes, however, when you want to *emphasize* that you're making a turn in the argument, you can use a transitional sentence to make that bridge.

A transitional phrase or sentence will usually pull an idea forward from the previous paragraph and use it at the beginning of the next paragraph. Consider these two paragraphs, which could be linked with a transition.

Paragraph 1: The Endangered Species Act (ESA) was enacted to protect and recover imperiled species and the ecosystems upon which they depend. An "endangered species" is defined as "any species which is in danger of extinction." They are automatically protected by prohibitions of several types of "take," including harming, harassing, collecting, or killing. The Kemp's ridley sea turtle, for instance, is listed as an endangered species throughout its range of the Gulf of Mexico and entire U.S. Atlantic seaboard. This protects its habitat from destruction.

Paragraph 2: A threatened species is defined by the ESA as "any species that is likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range." Threatened species *may be* protected by some or all of the prohibitions that apply to endangered species, but they are not *automatically* protected by them. The elkhorn coral, for instance, is listed as a threatened species throughout its range.

To make a transition between these two paragraphs, write an entire transition sentence, like these:

Use a Transitional Word: Similarly, . . .

Use a Transitional Phrase: Much like the Kemp's ridley sea turtle, . . .

Use a Transitional Sentence: A "threatened" species is similar to one that is "endangered," but they are not yet in danger of extinction and may be protected by fewer prohibitions.

Use a Transitional Question: What is the difference between a species that is "endangered" and one that is "threatened"?

Activity 6.4.1 will give you some practice with using these kinds of transitions to bridge the gaps between paragraphs. The trick is to use these kinds of transitions to smooth out the flow between two paragraphs.

Activity 6.4.1

Bridging Paragraphs with Transitions

Read the two sets of paragraphs below and choose the transition that makes the smoothest bridge between them.

Paragraph Set 1:

The ESA protects endangered and threatened species and their habitats by prohibiting the "take" of listed animals and the interstate or international trade in listed plants and animals, including their parts and products, except under Federal permit. Such permits are, generally, available for conservation and scientific purposes.

Which of these transition sentences best bridges these two paragraphs?

1. **Indeed, "taking" an animal is prohibited.**
2. **To clarify, the terms "take" and "harm" are defined in the following ways:**
3. **In contrast, "taking" and "harming" have different meanings.**

_____. The term *take* is defined as "to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect or attempt to engage in any such conduct." Through regulations, the term *harm* is defined as "an act which actually kills or injures wildlife. Such an act may include significant habitat modification or degradation where it actually kills or injures wildlife by significantly impairing essential behavioral patterns, including breeding, feeding, or sheltering." Listed plants are not protected from take, although it is illegal to collect or maliciously harm them on Federal land. Protection from commercial trade and the effects of Federal actions do apply for plants. In addition, states may have their own laws restricting activity involving listed species.

Paragraph Set 2:

There are several reasons why someone might get flu symptoms even after they have been vaccinated against flu. One reason is that some people can become ill from other respiratory viruses besides flu. The flu vaccine only protects against flu, not other illnesses. Another explanation is that it is possible to be exposed to flu viruses, which cause flu, shortly before getting vaccinated or during the two-week period after vaccination that it takes the body to develop immune protection. This exposure may result in a person becoming ill with flu before protection from vaccination takes effect. Finally, flu vaccines vary in how well they work and some people who get vaccinated still get sick. In short, some people who get the flu vaccine may not be *fully protected.*

Which of these transitional words and phrases should lead the second paragraph to bridge the two paragraphs?

1. **To illustrate**
2. **In contrast**
3. **Nevertheless**
4. **Simultaneously**
5. **As a consequence**

_____, the flu vaccine can often reduce the severity of symptoms. Several studies have shown that vaccination can reduce the severity of illness in vaccinated people who still get sick. For instance, a 2017 study showed that flu vaccination reduced deaths, intensive care unit (ICU) admissions, ICU length of stay, and overall duration of hospitalization among hospitalized flu patients. Another recent study showed that among adults hospitalized with flu, vaccinated patients were 59 percent less likely to be admitted to the ICU than those who had not been vaccinated. Among adults in the ICU with flu, vaccinated patients on average spent 4 fewer days in the hospital than those who were not vaccinated.

Adapted from https://www.fws.gov/endangered/esa-library/pdf/ESA_basics.pdf.
Adapted from https://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/misconceptions.htm.

Types of Paragraphs

6.5 Identify the various types of paragraphs and use them to construct a college paper.

There are also several different types of paragraphs that you can use to draft out the body of your paper. In this part of this workshop, you will learn how to draft various paragraphs that you can use in the body (the middle) of your paper.

Paragraphs often follow specific patterns that allow you to make a specific kind of move:

Narrative—Use a story pattern to explain what happened.

Description—Describe a person, place, object, or event.

Definition—Define something and elaborate on that definition.

Classification—Divide objects or people into groups that can be explained separately.

Cause and Effect—Explain the causes and effects of something that happened.

Comparison and Contrast—Describe how two or more things are similar and different.

In high school, you may have learned about these patterns as structures for essays. For example, you may have learned how to write a *cause and effect essay* or a *comparison and contrast essay*. These patterns are also very helpful for structuring paragraphs.

You can use these types of paragraphs as building blocks to put together your paper. Figure 6.2, which is from *Writing Today*, describes some different kinds of body paragraphs.

Figure 6.2 Types of Body Paragraphs

Narrative Paragraph	Description Paragraph	Definition Paragraph
Topic Sentence. Set the scene. Introduce a complication. Characters evaluate complication. Characters resolve complication. State your point.	Topic Sentence. What it looks like. What it sounds like. What it feels like. What it smells like. What it tastes like.	Topic Sentence: Sentence definition. Origin of word. Examples of its usage. What it isn't. How it can be divided. Similarities to other things.
Classification Paragraph	**Cause and Effect Paragraph**	**Comparison and Contrast Paragraph**
Topic Sentence. All items in the class. How it can be divided into groups. Description of Group 1. Description of Group 2. And so on.	Topic Sentence. A first cause of it. A second cause of it. And so on. A first effect of it. A second effect of it. And so on.	Topic Sentence. The ways in which two things are similar. The ways in which two things are different.

You can learn more about how to write about these kinds of paragraphs in Chapter 22 of *Writing Today*. For now, let's look at how you can stack them together to outline your paper.

Imagine you are writing a review of a local restaurant near your college campus or your home. You could quickly outline a rather solid review by simply stacking up the types of paragraphs that will probably appear in the body of your paper:

I. **Introduction Paragraph**
II. **Description Paragraph**—Describe the restaurant.
III. **Classification Paragraph**—Sort the restaurants near campus into groups.
IV. **Comparison and Contrast Paragraph**—Compare and contrast the restaurant with ones that are similar to it.
V. **Narrative Paragraph**—Tell the story of a time when you ate at the restaurant.
VI. **Conclusion Paragraph**

That was easy! You just came up with an outline of your paper by thinking about the kinds of paragraphs you will likely need in your paper. You will, of course, need to adjust these paragraphs to fit the genre you are using (i.e., a review). But, the content you will need is already in these paragraphs. The structures provided by these paragraph structures will help you draft out your paper. Activity 6.5.1 will let you practice stacking paragraphs.

Activity 6.5.1

Stacking Paragraphs to Create a Paper

All right, let's see if you can stack up paragraphs to create a paper. Let's imagine you want to write about the pros and cons of living on campus (dorms, fraternities, sororities) or off campus (apartments, houses, with your parents). In the boxes on the left below, write down what kinds of paragraphs you could use to make that argument. Then, on the right side, take some notes about what you will say in each paragraph.

Introduction Paragraph

What I will say in this paragraph

_____ Paragraph

_____ Paragraph

_____ Paragraph

_____ Paragraph

Conclusion Paragraph

The QSG

Ahem, it's a Quick Start Guide.

Here are the Top 10 things you should have learned in this workshop:

1. Paragraphs, if anything, break up text into smaller building blocks for the readers.

2. A paragraph can have four types of sentences: a transition sentence, a topic sentence, support sentences, and a point sentence.

3. In paragraphs, a topic sentence and support sentences are needed. Transition sentences and point sentences are optional.

4. There are two types of topic sentences: *statement topic sentences* and *claim topic sentences*.

5. When revising, make sure your topic sentence appears near the top of the paragraph, not in the middle.

6. Support sentences offer examples, details, reasoning, facts, data, narrations of events, definitions, and descriptions.

7. A transitional word or phrase is used to make a bridge between two sentences.

8. Transitional words or phrases are like police directing the flow of traffic by signaling which way to go.

9. Transitional phrases and sentences can also be used to bridge the gap between two paragraphs.

10. Knowing the types of paragraphs and what each type does can help you use them to create a solid outline of your paper.

Workshop 7

Doing Research and Citing It

In this workshop, you will learn how to do these things:

- **7.0** Explain why people do research.
- **7.1** Determine whether a source is fake news.
- **7.2** Rewrite a research question to make it more focused.
- **7.3** Convert a research question into a working thesis or hypothesis.
- **7.4** Apply triangulation to test the reliability of evidence.
- **7.5** Produce an in-text citation in MLA or APA style.
- **7.6** Construct a full bibliographic citation in MLA or APA style.

HELPFUL HINT: To help you complete this workshop, you can use material in *Writing Today*'s Chapter 25, "Starting Your Research"; Chapter 26, "Finding Sources and Collecting Evidence"; Chapter 27, "Citing, Quoting, Paraphrasing, and Summarizing Sources"; Chapter 28, "Using MLA Style"; and Chapter 29, "Using APA Style."

Why Do Research?

7.0 Explain why people do research.

In many ways, doing research is like a scavenger hunt. You have a list of information to find and some clues and hunches about where to find that information. Each time you find something, you pick up a few more facts that support or challenge what you believed.

While writing, research allows you to explore and learn about different topics so you can write about them with more authority. It also allows you to consider other points of view, some of which may even challenge your own beliefs. Research, like writing, is a process with many steps, but each step brings you to a better understanding of your topic.

In *Writing Today*, Chapters 25–29 are all about doing research and properly citing it. In this workshop, you will do some activities that help you practice some of the important skills in those chapters. Regardless of the assignment you're working on, these skills will help you find reliable sources and tell your readers where you found them. Citing your sources properly shows your readers that you've done your research and know what you're talking about!

You will learn the key steps for doing research. To get started, you'll learn how to create and focus a research question. Then, you'll learn how to find and use sources to help you answer that question fully and with authority. You'll also learn about how to incorporate those sources in your writing. Using sources effectively will make your writing stronger.

Activity 7.0.1

Think About This: Do Your Research!

The tagline “Do your research!” has become a meme on social media. You have probably seen an uninformed person like or repost something that’s probably false or even fake news. Then, they add the tagline “Do your research!” Or, they might say, “I did my research and here’s what I’ve found.” Clearly, though, they only looked for posts and Web sites that confirm what they already believe. In your comment below, describe the difference between doing traditional research (going to the library, consulting reputable Web sites, and doing experiments, interviews, or surveys) and using social media to forward posts that already agree with your existing opinions. How can you avoid being one of those uninformed people passing along false or fake posts?

Is This Real News or Fake News?

7.1 Determine whether a source is fake news.

Social media platforms like *Twitter, WhatsApp, YouTube, Snapchat, TikTok, Facebook,* and *Instagram* can be really helpful and entertaining. They are a good way to keep up with what your friends are doing and with what is happening in the world. But these platforms also have a dark side. As you know, a good amount of the "news" that's coming through these social media apps is not true. Some of it is misleading, and some of it is just fake. Some of that fake news is meant to be satirical or funny, but much of it is designed to confuse and mislead people like you.

What is fake news? First, it is *not* news that simply annoys you or that presents opinions you disagree with. Instead, fake news includes events, data, and quotations that are false, misleading, exaggerated, or even invented out of thin air. Sometimes these untruths are simple mistakes, but more often they are created to deceive the public deliberately.

How can you figure out what is real and what is fake? Doing good research can help you spot fake news. Research will allow you to identify sources that are fake and writers who are trying to deceive you. Better yet, doing good research will allow you to use real facts to fight against fake news.

The fact-checking Web site, *FactCheck.org*, offers some strategies for spotting fake news (Keily and Robertson). Here are eight steps they recommend to help you figure out whether a news source might be fake:

1. **Dig Deeper into the Source**—Usually, fake news is thin on substance. So, if you dig even a couple layers down, you will find that the source of this "news" is made up or doesn't even exist. Always check on the source. Who originally published the story? What is the stated mission of that source of information? Do they cite other reputable sources? Do they ever consider other sides of the story?
2. **Go Past the Headline**—The headlines on fake news stories are designed to catch your attention and get you to click on them. It's clickbait, and the source makes money for every click. OK, fine, you clicked on it. Now, read through the story closely. Often, the headline says something that makes you angry, but the real story is much different than you expected.
3. **Check the Author's Background**—Any news story should have an author's name attached to it. Search that person on the Internet. If this person has a history of writing inflammatory or sketchy stories, they probably can't be trusted. If they've lied before in articles, chances are good they are lying to you in this story too. A reputable author is someone who is writing a variety of stories that explain all sides fairly.
4. **Look at the Supporting Facts**—Writers of fake news usually claim to be "impartial," "factual," and "truthful," while suggesting you're not hearing the truth from other sources. So, check their facts. Often, when you dig one or two layers deep into the facts, you will find that fake news begins to fall apart. Sometimes the sources are being distorted and don't actually back up what the story is saying. Maybe the "facts" are really just opinions from another disreputable source. Or, the so-called sources don't even exist at all. Fake news often cites sources that don't really exist, because the authors assume you won't check.
5. **Keep an Eye on Dates**—Fake news can play fast and loose with dates. Something that happened years ago is now being presented as happening recently. Or, photos from events in the past are being re-used to "prove" that something just happened. If a story claims something outrageous happened, but you don't see this event being repeated in other news sources, then check the dates of the event. You may find that something that happened 5, 10, or even 20 years ago is being presented as a new story now.

6. **Was It Once a Joke or Satire?**—In some cases, fake news starts out as a joke or satire. A celebrity or politician makes a joke that was funny at the time. But with the context stripped away, a quote or joke might sound ugly or hateful. In other cases, satirical Web sites, like *The Onion*, will publish stories that are clearly designed to be funny. Writers of fake news might cite those satirical sources as factual.
7. **Check Your Own Biases**—Hey, we all have our own beliefs and opinions. That's fine. We might not like certain people or kinds of people. We think some ideas are just wrong. So, we're willing to believe the worst about other people, social movements, and some kinds of events. Check your own biases and try to see why other people might reasonably believe something you disagree with. Are you angry or dismissive because of who said something or maybe their gender, ethnicity, clothing, or faith? If you answer yes, maybe ask yourself whether you're just being biased against information for unfair reasons.
8. **Ask Experts to Verify Facts or Evidence**—On any college campus, there are usually experts in the area you are writing about. For example, the librarians on your campus are experts on detecting fake news. Reach out to them and other experts with an e-mail. Or, check with trusted sources like NASA, Mayo Clinic, Smithsonian, National Archive, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Now it's your turn. Activity 7.1.1 gives you a chance to challenge a news story that you think might be fake news. Go through Keily and Robertson's eight steps to figure out whether the story is fake or not.

Source: Keily, Eugene and Lori Robertson. *How to spot fake news*. 18 November 2016. <https://www.factcheck.org/2016/11/how-to-spot-fake-news/>.

Activity 7.1.1

Spotting Fake News

It's your turn. Let's see if a source is fake. This activity will help you figure it out.

Begin: Find a news story that you think is fake.
Copy the title and URL here:

Step 1: Check its three to five major sources. Are they trustworthy sources? Which ones do you think are kind of sketchy or maybe even false?

Step 2: Read beyond the headline. Does the headline distort in any way what the article actually says?

Step 3: Check the author's background with an Internet search. What are three other articles that this person has written in the past? Do they seem biased or sketchy to you?

Step 4: Run Internet searches on three factual claims in the story. Are these factual claims supported by other reputable sources? Are these claims distorted in any way to fit what the author wants you to believe?

Step 5: Check out the dates of the events and images in the story. When you run Internet searches on any quotations or photos from the event, have those dates been changed or left out of the story? Do the photos actually come from the event, or were they added later?

Step 6: Check if the story started as a joke. If you put a quotation from the story into an Internet search engine, can you find the original source? If so, was the person joking when they said it?

Step 7: Check your own biases. Does this story make you mad? Could you be a little too ready to believe the worst about a person or people in the story because you don't like them or their ideas? Do you think you understand the other side enough to present their positions in a way they would agree is fair?

Step 8: Check with experts. Using an Internet search engine, can you find the name of a person on your college campus who could be an expert on the topic of this news story? Write their name here.

All right. Now that you have done all this background research, do you think the story is fake news or not? Explain why.

Focusing a Research Question

7.2 Rewrite a research question to make it more focused.

A research question is what you want your research to answer. The problem with many research questions is that they are too broad. For example,

> How did the invention of the computer change society?

That's a really big question! How many possible answers come to mind? If you said a lot, you're right! It is a broad question with many answers, and it's likely too broad for a college paper. You could write a whole book or even a few books on that topic alone.

That said, it's not a bad start. You want to write something about the history of computers and how they have changed society. Now you can begin to narrow your research question down to something you can handle in hundreds or maybe a thousand words.

Let's start by being more specific with words in the original question:

> How did the invention of the iPhone change American society?

OK, that's getting more specific, but we can narrow it down even more:

> How did the invention of the iPhone change education in America?

That's pretty good, but let's get even more specific:

> How did the invention of the iPhone change how American college students study, socialize, and behave in class?

If you're starting with a too-broad research question, one of the best ways to fix it is to make the topic narrower and use more specific words. This will focus your work and make your research project easier to manage and complete.

Use the sequence in Activity 7.2.1 to help you complete these steps with your own research question.

Activity 7.2.1

Focusing Your Research Question

Write your starting research question.

Look at the main topic of your research question (probably the most prominent noun in the question). Make it more specific and rewrite the question.

Who are the people affected by or involved with your topic? Rewrite your question to add them into it.

When and where is the topic of your question? Narrow your question down to the past, present, or future. Then, put your topic in a specific place.

Why is or was this topic important in a specific time and place? Rewrite your research question to identify why this question should be important to your readers.

Turning a Research Question into a Working Thesis or Hypothesis

7.3 Convert a research question into a working thesis or hypothesis.

You have your research question. You're ready to start your research . . . but there's one more step. Before diving in to find your sources, you need to write down what *you* think is the answer to the question—your best guess right now.

Wait, isn't that cheating? Shouldn't you do your research first, get the facts, and then answer the question? Yes and no. Of course, you want to keep an open mind and let the facts lead you to the answer. But professional researchers will tell you that it's usually a good idea to start out with a "working thesis" or a "hypothesis" that makes a good guess about the likely answer. That guess will give your research some direction.

Plus, it's just recognizing the obvious. You already have some ideas about how you're going to answer the question. Let's just get that out there.

Here's the point to keep in mind: As you research, your working thesis or hypothesis will probably change, and that is fine. You want your research process to be open-ended and allow for new directions. It's normal for a working thesis or hypothesis to evolve as you find more information. You probably won't change your mind completely—though it's possible. But, you may find that some of the things you thought were true might not be true after all. You might also come across some information you didn't know about, which will help you shift or clarify what you believe.

Activity 7.3.1 will help you turn a research question into a working thesis or a hypothesis. Give it a try. Once you have that working thesis or hypothesis figured out, doing research becomes much easier.

Activity 7.3.1

Creating a Working Thesis or Hypothesis

What is your research question?

What is your best guess right now about how you will answer that question?

State your best guess at a working thesis or hypothesis.

My working thesis is . . .

My hypothesis is . . .

What are five types of sources that would help you determine whether your working thesis or hypothesis is true?

Triangulating Sources

7.4 Apply triangulation to test the reliability of evidence.

Imagine the following happens to you: Your roommate wakes you up and says your early morning class is cancelled. If your roommate is the only person talking about it, would you believe it, or would you double-check with others? So, you check your phone and you see messages from a few other classmates are saying the same thing. Do you believe them? You think about it: It's possible that your roommate and the others all got this information from an unreliable source. So now you check your e-mail. You find an e-mail from your instructor saying that class is cancelled. Do you believe your roommate now?

In this situation, would your own biases change how much fact-checking you did? If you *wanted* that early morning class to be cancelled, you might have just believed it and slept in a few more hours. But if you were disappointed that class might be cancelled, then you probably would have been more motivated to check out other sources.

And, if you didn't believe your roommate right away, you already know a little bit about *triangulating* sources. We use triangulation to verify evidence that we find in sources. If you can find multiple sources that confirm the same data or information you're researching, that's a good sign you're working with reliable sources. *Triangulation usually is most effective when you can verify information in at least three different ways.*

Triangulation is useful for showing your instructors that you're using a variety of sources in your research. It's also a good way to show yourself that you're not letting your own biases cause you to quickly accept or reject a source. After all, it's easy to only use the top Web sites you found with Google or Yahoo, especially if those Web sites support your own opinion. But be careful! Always seek out other kinds of sources to doublecheck even those sources you trust and agree with.

To ensure that the sources you work with are reliable, look for the three types of sources: electronic sources, print sources, and empirical sources.

Electronic Sources—Web sites, podcasts, videos, DVDs, listservs, television, radio, and blogs.

Print Sources—books, journals, magazines, government publications, reference materials, microform/microfilm

Empirical Sources—personal experiences, archives, field observations, interviews, surveys, case studies, and experiments

Note: Remember that a "print" source can appear in an electronic form on the Internet. A print document is one that is in paper form, originally designed to be read in print, or designed so that it can be printed out.

Then, you can determine whether your evidence is reliable:

Probably reliable—A reliable fact or piece of evidence is one that you can find in all three types of sources: electronic, print, and empirical. One thing to check, however, is that these three sources are unrelated. Sometimes they may all be reporting the fact by drawing from the same source.

Somewhat reliable—A fact or piece of evidence is somewhat reliable if it can be found in two different types of sources, perhaps an electronic source and an empirical source, such as confirmation by an expert.

Unreliable—A fact or piece of evidence is not reliable if it tends to be one you can only find in one kind of source, like electronic sources. That doesn't mean it's false or fake. It simply means you should probably dig a bit further with your research to confirm that fact or evidence with another kind of source. And, if you cannot confirm it, maybe it's not one you should be using in your paper.

Activity 7.4.1 will help you triangulate your facts and evidence to determine if you are finding reliable information from your sources.

Activity 7.4.1

Triangulating Sources

Use the chart below (or create it on your own) to help you determine whether you have triangulated the facts or evidence you have collected for your paper. On the left side, write down a fact or piece of evidence that you found in one of your sources. Then, write down that source in the appropriate column to the right.

Fact or Evidence	**Electronic Source**	**Print Source**	**Empirical Source**

Using an In-Text Citation

7.5 Produce an in-text citation in MLA or APA style.

Whenever you use a quote, fact, or evidence from a source, you should cite that source with an in-text citation. An in-text citation will usually include the author's last name, the date of the source, and the page number of the source on which that quote, fact, or evidence appeared. For example, in Chapter 27 of *Writing Today* about "Citing, Quoting, Paraphrasing, and Summarizing Sources," you can see the following table that shows the format of in-text citations.

	MLA Style	APA Style
Single Author	(Mitchell 93)	(Mitchell, 2010, p. 93)
Two Authors	(Lopez and Green 72–75)	(Lopez & Green, 2014, pp. 72–76)
Three Authors	(Johnson et al. 23)	(Johnson, Baker, & Han, 2001, p. 23)
Corporate Author	(NRA 23)	(National Rifle Association [NRA], 1998, p. 23)
Unknown Author	("Frightening" 23)	("Frightening," 2009, p. 23)

These are called *in-text citations* because they are used inside your work to tell your readers where you found a quote, fact, or evidence. These in-text citations are connected to the list of sources in your "Works Cited" or "References" list at the end of your paper. The MLA Citation Style and the APA Citation Style are the two most popular ones, but many citation styles are available.

Creating an In-Text Citation

Creating an in-text citation is easy. You can do it yourself, or you can let your computer do it for you.

To begin, you need the source. Let's say your paper is about hurricanes. You find a great book on hurricanes called *When the Sky Fell* by Michael Deibert. On page 14, he writes, "On a meandering path, along the coast from the capital, San Juan, we had passed through scenes of biblical devastation." You want to quote his phrase "scenes of biblical devastation." Here's how you would do that:

MLA Style: (Deibert 14)

APA Style: (Deibert, 2019, p. 14)

In this case, the in-text citation would appear at the end of the sentence.

All right, you find another good source on hurricanes, a Web page titled "Hurricane Safety Tips and Resources" from the National Weather Service, a U.S. government agency. The Web page says, "On average, 12 tropical storms, 6 of which become hurricanes, form over the Atlantic Ocean, Caribbean Sea, or Gulf of Mexico during the hurricane season, which runs from June 1 to November 30 each year." An in-text citation for this source would look like the following:

MLA Style: (NWS)

APA Style: (National Weather Service [NWS], 2020)

With in-text citations for Web sites, you usually don't need to include page numbers, because Web sites don't typically have them.

When your readers see the in-text citation, they will know that they can look at the end of your paper for the "Works Cited" or "References" where you will have included a list of your sources. Then, they can look up that source in the library or on the Internet.

Using a Citation Generator to Make In-Text Citations

Here's a helpful tip. More than likely, if you are writing your paper on a computer, your word-processing program has a *references generator* that will create in-text citations for you. Both MS Word and Google Docs have citation generators built into them, and they are easy to use. You can also generate in-text citations with Internet-based references generators like *EasyBib*, *Citation Machine*, *Scribbr*, or *Cite This For Me*.

These programs are not difficult to use, but they are only as good as the information you put into them. Garbage in means garbage out. So, you need to put in accurate information if you want them to generate accurate in-text citations.

Let's get some practice with generating in-text citations. Activity 7.5.1 has a number of sources in the left column and a page number in the second column. Use that information to create in-text citations in MLA and then APA styles. If you like, you can use the citation generator on your word processor (e.g., MS Word or Google Docs) or an Internet citation generator.

Activity 7.5.1

Generating In-Text Citations

Now it's your turn. Use the following references to create in-text citations, including the page numbers in the second column.

Reference	Page Number	MLA In-Text Citation	APA In-Text Citation
Abel, Daniel and Grubbs, R. Dean. *Shark Biology and Conservation*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2020.	52	(Abel and Grubbs 52)	(Abel & Grubbs, 2020, p. 52)
Armstrong, Sue. "Great White Sharks Defy Hollywood Image." *New Science*, 144, 1994: p. 16.	16		
Benchley, Peter. "Great White Sharks." *National Geographic*, 197(4), 2000: pp. 2–29.	15		
Broad, William J. "Uncovering the True Nature of a Great White Hunter." *National Wildlife*, 37, 1994: pp. 48–51.	48-50		
Klimley, A. Peter. "The Predatory Behavior of the White Shark." *American Scientist*, 82, 1994, pp. 122–133.	125		
Monterey Bay Aquarium. "Sharks." Montereybayaquarium.org, https://www.montereybayaquarium.org/animals/animals-a-to-z/sharks#siteWrapper. Accessed 15 Sept. 2020	No page number		

Creating a List of Works Cited or References

7.6 Construct a full bibliographic citation in MLA or APA style.

Now you're ready to create your *Works Cited* list or your *References* list. The in-text citations you created within your paper will tell your readers that they can find each source at the end of your paper. That list will be called "Works Cited" if you are using MLA bibliographic style and "References" if you are using APA style.

Each item in your Works Cited or References list is called a "full bibliographic citation." For a book, this citation will include the author's name, the title of the book, the publisher, and the date it was published. For an article, it will include most of this information, but it will also include information about the magazine or journal (sometimes referred to as the "container"), and the page numbers. You should read Chapter 28, "Using MLA Style," or Chapter 29, "Using APA Style," to learn how to create these full bibliographic citations for sources.

In this workshop, we are going to show you how to use online tools to create these full bibliographic citations. Then, you can put them together to create the full list of Works Cited or References.

The first thing you need is a citation generator. If you're using MS Word or Google Docs to write your paper, you're in luck. These programs already have citation generators built into them.

In MS Word: Find and click on "References" in the top menu. You will see a "Citations" icon which will help you generate citations.

In Google Docs: Find and click on "Add-ons" in the top menu. The citation generator will pop up on the right-hand side of your document. You may need to download the citation generator as an "add on" program for free.

These citation generators will tell you what information they need to create the citation for your Works Cited or References list. They will also help you generate the full bibliography for your paper. That's kind of cool, and it will save you a lot of time.

Important: There are online tools that can help you generate your citations for your Works Cited. These tools can be helpful, but use them with caution! You should always double-check that the citations generated include all the required information.

All right, let's imagine you've decided not to use a citation generator. What now? You need to gather the information for the citation and type it out yourself. That's a bit more work, but you can do it. Here are some steps to follow and you can use the helpful information in Activity 7.6.1.

Step 1: Gather Information About Your Sources

You've already been researching your project, so you've already started this step. Use the checklist in Activity 7.6.1 to make sure you have all the information you need for each source you're citing in your work.

Activity 7.6.1

Generating a Full Bibliographic Citation on Your Own

Answer these questions to find the information you need to generate your own citations for your bibliographies. Use this process for each citation.

Information Needed to Generate a Citation	
What is the **title** of my source?	
What **type of source** is this? (Check a box)	☐ Book ☐ Book Chapter ☐ Academic Article ☐ Web site ☐ Online Video ☐ Image ☐ Other: _____
Who is (are) the **author(s) or creator(s)** of my source?	☐ Author(s): _____ ☐ No author listed
In what **year** was the source published?	
What **company or organization** published this source?	
Does my source have **other contributors**? If so, who?	☐ Editor(s): _____ ☐ Translator(s): _____ ☐ Other: _____
(If you're just using a chapter or an article) What are the **page numbers** of my source?	
Is this a work that is published within a group or collection of items (some citation guides call this a *container*)? What is the title of that larger source?.	☐ In the book _____ ☐ In the journal _____ ☐ On the Web site _____ ☐ In the podcast, TV series (or other) _____
What **volume/issue/edition** is the source in?	☐ (Articles) Volume and Issue: _____ ☐ (Books) Edition: _____
Did you find the source online? If so, what is the **URL**?	☐ URL: _____

Step 2: Find Your Citation Style

Usually in college, you will either use MLA or APA bibliographic style. Refer to your assignment sheet from your instructor to figure out what citation style is required. If your instructor does not tell you MLA or APA (or another style), ask them what style is most appropriate for the kind of paper you are writing.

Once you know the bibliographic style you need to use, find the guidelines on the expectations of this style.

If your instructor wants you to use a different bibliographic style, you can usually find descriptions of those styles online. The Purdue OWL (owl.purdue.edu) is a good Web site for finding information on using MLA and APA citation styles. If you are not able to find Web site that describe how to use a bibliographic style, speak with your instructor directly to ask where you can find that information.

Step 3: Build Your Citations

For each source, use the information you gathered in Step 1 to start building each citation. Most citation styles ask for similar information, but they tend to put the information in different places. For example, MLA bibliographic style puts the year of the publication at the end of the citation, while APA bibliographic style puts it right after the name of the author.

The type of source you are using can change the kinds of information required in the citation. Books, academic articles, and Web sites will all look a little different from each other.

Now, for MLA style, go to Chapter 28 in *Writing Today* to see how to write out a citation. For APA style, turn to Chapter 29.

Step 4: Create Your Works Cited or Reference List

After you create each bibliographic citation, add it to your Works Cited or References list. In both MLA and APA bibliographic styles, your list will be in alphabetical order. The citations will also use a hanging indent, which means the first line is on the left-hand margin, and the rest of the lines are slightly indented.

Your Works Cited or References list should be on a separate page at the end of your paper. You can type "Works Cited" or "References" at the top of the page. Most people center and bold this heading on the page.

Activity 7.6.2

Fixing a Works Cited Bibliography

Are you ready to practice using a Works Cited or References list? This activity includes 10 citations in MLA style. However, one or more things are wrong with each of them, and they are not in alphabetical order. Edit this list so it's correct. You will need to use Chapter 28 in *Writing Today* to complete this activity. You can also use a citation generator to help you fix these bibliographic citations.

Works Cited

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The QSG

Ahem, it's a Quick Start Guide.

Here are the Top 10 things you should have learned in this workshop:

1. While writing, research allows you to explore and learn about different topics so you can write about them with more authority.

2. Solid research will allow you to identify sources that are fake and writers who are trying to trick you.

3. The first version of your research question will probably be too broad, so you should work on narrowing it down to something you can handle in a college paper.

4. If you're starting with a too-broad research question, one of the best ways to fix it is to make the topic narrower and use more specific words.

5. It's usually a good idea to start out with a "working thesis" or a "hypothesis" that makes a good guess about the likely answer to your research question.

6. As you do your research, your working thesis or hypothesis will probably change and that is fine.

7. If you can find multiple sources that confirm the same data or information you're researching, that's a good sign you're working with reliable sources.

8. To ensure that the sources you work with are reliable, look for the three types of sources: electronic sources, print sources, and empirical sources.

9. An in-text citation will usually include the author's last name, the date of the source, and the page number of the source on which that quote, fact, or evidence appeared.

10. At the end of your paper, you will include a list of Works Cited or References that has full bibliographic citations of your sources.

Workshop 8

Fixing the Dirty Dozen Grammar Errors

In this workshop, you will learn how to do these things:

- **8.0** Explain why using proper grammar is important in college and your career.
- **8.1** Recognize a comma splice so it can be fixed.
- **8.2** Identify why a sentence is a fused sentence.
- **8.3** Recognize a fragment error.
- **8.4** Explain why a sentence has a subject-verb disagreement.
- **8.5** Recognize pronoun-disagreement errors.
- **8.6** Identify when an apostrophe is being used incorrectly.
- **8.7** Recognize misused commas.
- **8.8** Explain what makes a dangling modifier.
- **8.9** Demonstrate when a sentence with a list has faulty parallelism.
- **8.10** Identify pronoun-case errors.
- **8.11** Recognize situations where a shifted tense causes confusion.
- **8.12** Use pronouns properly to avoid vague pronoun errors.

HELPFUL HINT: For more help with grammar issues, you can use the Handbook in *Writing Today*, or you can go online to the Purdue OWL (owl.purdue.edu).

Why Is Grammar Important Anyway?

8.0 Explain why using proper grammar is important in college and your career.

Learning grammar is like learning how to drive a car. Once you know the rules of the road, you don't need to think much about them when you're driving. But, if you're on the road and you get into a weird situation, you and the other drivers can usually figure out what to do—if you follow the rules. If you don't follow the rules, you might get into an accident, or you might be pulled over and issued a ticket.

Grammar rules are the "rules of the road" for writing. Once you know how to follow those rules, you will hardly ever think about them.

There are literally hundreds of grammar rules in English, but we are going to boil all those rules down to a Dirty Dozen list. If you can find and fix this dozen grammar errors, your writing will be almost error free.

The Dirty Dozen Grammar Errors

1. Comma Splice
2. Fused Sentence
3. Sentence Fragment
4. Subject-Verb Disagreement
5. Pronoun-Antecedent Disagreement
6. Apostrophe Error
7. Misused Comma
8. Dangling Modifier
9. Faulty Parallelism
10. Pronoun Case Error
11. Shifted Tense
12. Vague Pronoun

That's it! If you can find and fix these twelve grammar errors, your teacher, your boss, and your know-it-all sister or brother will leave you alone.

Plus, it's just nice to know that you can write without making grammar errors. Reality check: Even if you have grammar errors in your writing, your readers will usually figure out what you're trying to say. But, those errors make your ideas difficult to understand because they keep stumbling over mistakes. Your readers need to work harder to figure out what you're saying, and they don't like that.

Plus, if your work has grammar errors, your readers will wonder whether you know what you are talking about. Again, knowing grammar rules is like knowing how to drive. When you see a driver who isn't following the rules of the road, you don't trust them. They look like they don't know what they are doing.

Knowing these dozen grammar rules will make your writing easier to understand and help you become a better writer. Your readers will trust you and take your ideas seriously.

Activity 8.0.1

Think About This: If You're Losing an Argument, Start Correcting Their Grammar!

If you search the Internet, you will find the funny but true saying "If you're losing an argument, start correcting their grammar." In fact, some people point out that this is the "#1 Rule in Arguments," often showing pictures of ex-boyfriends or ex-girlfriends who are clearly losing an argument and have resorted to correcting grammar problems in whatever the other person is saying or writing. Why do you think this argument tactic works? Why would correcting someone else's grammar help someone avoid losing an argument? Describe a time when you have seen someone use this tactic.

Comma Splice

8.1 Recognize a comma splice so it can be fixed.

A comma splice happens when a writer has "spliced" together two *independent clauses* with only a comma.

An independent clause is a group of words that can stand alone as a complete sentence. To stand alone, it needs a subject and a verb. Here are a few simple examples:

The dog ran.

Flavia was young but eager.

Rodrigo's beard grew back longer than before.

Each of these has a subject ("the dog," "Flavia," "Rodrigo's beard") and a verb ("ran," "was," "grew"). Each can stand alone as a complete sentence.

Remember that a comma splice has at least two independent clauses that are joined by just a comma. Here are a few examples:

Comma Splice: Logan bought a new car, we thought it was cool.

Comma Splice: The test on American history was hard, I probably failed.

Comma Splice: The coach was happy about Braidon's goal, he said we might need a few more to win.

How can you tell these are comma splices? First, look at the part before the comma. It can independently stand alone as a separate sentence. Second, look at the part after the comma. This part can also stand alone as its own separate sentence. So, you have two independent clauses, and the comma isn't strong enough to connect them.

OK, how do you fix this? The most common correction is to use a conjunction, such as *and, or, but, so,* or *yet*. The conjunction (underlined in the sample sentences below) works with the comma to connect the two independent clauses together.

Fixed: Logan bought a new car, and we thought it was cool.

Fixed: The test on American history was hard, so I probably failed.

Fixed: The coach was happy about Braidon's goal, but he said we might need a few more to win.

You can also use a period to turn the clauses into two separate sentences.

Fixed: Logan bought a new car. We thought it was cool.

Fixed: The test on American history was hard. I probably failed.

Fixed: The coach was happy about Braidon's goal. He said we might need a few more to win.

One correction we don't recommend is using a semicolon, like the following:

Fixed: Logan bought a new car; we thought it was cool.

This sentence is grammatically correct, but semicolons are uncommon, and most readers will think this kind of correction looks weird. If you do use semicolons, use them very sparingly.

Activity 8.1.1 has some comma splices that you can practice fixing. Try using conjunctions and periods to correct these grammatically incorrect sentences.

Activity 8.1.1

Fixing Comma Splices

Each of the following sentences has a comma splice error. Use a conjunction or period to make the sentence grammatically correct.

1. The tree was hit by lightning, it fell onto the trailer home.

2. Our trip to Florida was amazing, we spent most days on the beach.

3. Woody's, our favorite restaurant, recently had problems with food poisoning, many people won't eat there anymore.

4. The weather was perfect for hiking in the mountains, my feet were in too much pain.

5. Our Labrador retriever leaped into the pond, it grabbed the stick and swam back.

6. The ball flew straight up in the air, Yolanda spiked it over the net.

7. I felt something hit my hair as the bird flew over me, I was afraid to see if it had pooped on me.

8. Shopping for clothing is not my favorite thing to do, Carey made it fun, though.

9. The canoe was hit by the big wave, we held on for dear life!

10. We had a choice: eat the pizza with ants crawling on it, spend our last 20 dollars on a new pizza.

Fused Sentence

8.2 Identify why a sentence is a fused sentence.

A fused sentence is basically the same thing as a comma splice—just without the comma. They are called "fused sentences" because they fuse together two or more complete statements (independent clauses) without a conjunction or proper punctuation. Fused sentences are also called "run-on" sentences.

Sometimes people think that fused sentences are really just long sentences, because they are also called *run-on sentences*. That's not quite true. Many fused sentences are long, but not all long sentences are fused sentences. A sentence with hundreds of words would be hard to understand, but it could still be grammatically correct.

In these examples of fused sentences, you should notice that a second independent clause (a complete statement) begins in the middle of the sentence without a conjunction or proper punctuation.

Fused Sentence: My aunt looked over my homework she didn't understand it.

Fused Sentence: The lion roared loudly my daughter just laughed.

Fused Sentence: Jamal was ready to go on the trip to Colorado but he was unsure about whether he should take warm clothes to hike in the mountains maybe, he thought, it was better to be safe than sorry.

OK, how do you fix this? The most common correction is to connect the two clauses of the sentence with a conjunction, such as *and, or, but, so,* or *yet*. In the examples below, the conjunctions are underlined to show how the conjunction works with the comma to connect the two sentences together.

Fixed: My aunt looked over my homework, but she didn't understand it.

Fixed: The lion roared loudly, and my daughter just laughed.

Fixed: Jamal was packing to go on the trip to Colorado, but he was unsure about whether he should take warm clothes to hike in the mountains. Maybe, he thought, it was better to be safe than sorry.

Again, one correction we don't recommend is using a semicolon, like the following:

Correct but not recommended: My aunt looked over my homework; she didn't understand it.

This sentence is grammatically correct, but semicolons are uncommon, and most readers will think this kind of correction looks weird. For that reason, if you do use semicolons, use them very sparingly.

Activity 8.2.1 will give you a chance to practice fixing some of these pesky fused sentences. Let's see how you do!

Activity 8.2.1

Fixing Fused Sentences

Each of the following items is a fused sentence. Split the sentence into two sentences or use a comma plus a conjunction to connect the two parts into a grammatically correct sentence.

1. My mom made us dinner she never liked to cook, though.

2. The roofers were hammering away I heard them gasp and start shouting.

3. Sam's dog was barking in the back yard they knew something was wrong.

4. The earthquake shook the house stuff was falling and breaking all around us.

5. It seemed like we were going to be fine after the storm the wind had stopped and we didn't see much destruction in the house but then we went outside.

6. We were a bit disappointed with the ending of the movie *Frozen II* too many issues weren't explained.

7. Drake doesn't always get the credit he deserves he's clearly one of the best hip-hop artists of his generation.

8. Living in the suburbs might seem like an ideal life however many dark secrets are hiding inside those tidy houses.

9. Skateboarding was the best way for me to express myself my grandmother never really understood that.

10. Hitting a curveball isn't as hard as people think just keep your eye on the ball.

Sentence Fragment

8.3 Recognize a fragment error.

A fragment is an incomplete sentence. It's missing something important, like the subject of the sentence or a verb. It may be a leftover phrase that should have been included with the previous sentence. Here are a few examples of fragments.

Fragment: The best place in town. [The verb is missing.]

Fragment: Heard the wolf howling in the night. [The subject is missing.]

Fragment: Those were the worst days of my life. After my mother left. [The second sentence is a fragment and should be connected to the sentence before it.]

A fragment isn't just a short sentence. It's a sentence that's incomplete, usually missing a subject or verb. In some cases, a fragment can be a part of a sentence that was separated from the sentence before it.

The best way to detect a fragment is to read it out loud. Read the three fragments above out loud. Your ear will probably hear that something is missing in these sentences. Here are a few ways to correct fragments:

Complete the Sentence

You can add in the part that's missing, like a subject or verb. In this example, a verb completes the sentence:

Fragment: The best place in town.

Fixed: The best place in town must be Sally's Drive-In, where we like to get malts.

In this example, the subject "We" makes the sentence work:

Fragment: Heard the wolf howling in the night.

Fixed: We heard the wolf howling in the night.

Connect the Fragment to a Nearby Sentence

You can also connect the fragment to a sentence around it.

Fragment: Those were the worst days of my life. After my mother left.

Fixed: Those were the worst days of my life after my mother left.

Fragment: Watching the football game. We heard people yelling outside the house.

Fixed: While watching the football game, we heard people yelling outside the house.

Fragment: The mayor promised us major changes in Thomas Park. Such as fixing the soccer goals, putting in lights, and adding bathrooms.

Fixed: The mayor promised us major changes in Thomas Park, such as fixing the soccer goals, putting in lights, and adding bathrooms.

For the record, fragments are not always wrong. Creative writers often use fragments in their stories to change the rhythm or add intensity to the story. But fragments should be used rarely, and only in creative writing.

If you are writing for classes or your job, you should use full sentences to state your ideas completely. That way, your readers won't be confused when they come across a sentence that's missing something important.

Activity 8.3.1 has some fragment errors that you can work on. See if you can fix them!

Activity 8.3.1

Fixing Sentence Fragments

Each of the following sentences is a fragment or has a fragment next to it. Figure out what's missing and add it in. Or combine the fragment with the sentence in front of it.

1. Must have been a great place to go.

2. The explosion about a mile away.

3. The guys who were watching from the sidelines.

4. Because the truck broke down.

5. Our dog ran into the garage completely terrified. The bear on his tail.

6. The car twisted in the air. Coming down with a large crunching noise.

7. I knew I was going to be a swimmer. When they put that medal around my neck.

8. Life can be a challenge in a small town. Especially when you're different.

9. As a person who needs to be with others. Measles were the worst thing that could have happened to me.

10. The sand and water, tan and blue, around us.

Subject-Verb Disagreement

8.4 Explain why a sentence has a subject-verb disagreement.

Subject-verb disagreement errors happen when the subject of a sentence (the noun) and the verb don't agree in number. In other words, a singular subject ("dog") needs to go with a singular verb ("runs"). A plural subject ("dogs") needs to go with a plural noun ("run").

Simple, right? Sure, but sometimes a sentence gets a bit complex and the subject and verb end up separated. In those cases, the subject and verb may end up disagreeing. Here are a few examples of subject-verb disagreements:

Subject-Verb Disagreement: My dogs, which spend most of their day inside the house, jumps on me as soon as I open the door.

Subject-Verb Disagreement: As the alarm rang, the children in the gym was wondering whether something was wrong.

Usually, subject-verb disagreements happen when the writer loses track of the subject of the sentence. In the sentence about the dogs above, the writer simply forgot that the plural subject ("dogs") needed to match up with a plural verb ("jump"). In the sentence about the children, the writer is probably writing how she speaks, which is fine in spoken English. However, in written English, the plural subject "children" needs to have a plural verb "were" to be correct. Let's fix these two sentences:

Fixed: My dogs, which spend most of their day inside the house, jump on me as soon as I open the door.

Fixed: As the alarm rang, the children in the gym were wondering whether something was wrong.

Here's a trickier one. When you use the word "or" to connect two subjects, the verb needs to agree with the final item.

Subject-Verb Disagreement: Almost every day, a few police drones or a helicopter fly through my neighborhood.

Fixed: Almost every day, a few police drones or a helicopter flies through my neighborhood.

If you read this fixed sentence out loud, though, it doesn't sound right even though it's grammatically correct. A good way to fix the problem is to put the plural item last in the subject. Check this out:

Fixed: Almost every day, a helicopter or a few police drones fly through my neighborhood.

If you read this repaired sentence out loud, it should sound better to you. There are times, though, when this rule forces you to live with a weird subject-verb agreement because the nouns in your sentence are required to appear in a specific sequence.

Correct: Depending on how the evening went, the coaches, council members, or the principal was going to talk to the angry parents.

In this case, it may be important for the writer to show the particular order in which school officials would talk to the angry parents. The coaches would be first, then the council members, and finally the principal. So, the singular verb "was" needs to be used with the later item, the principal.

Activity 8.4.1 will give you some practice fixing these subject-verb disagreements. See if you can do it!

Activity 8.4.1

Fixing Subject-Verb Disagreements

These sentences have subject-verb disagreements that you can fix. Revise these sentences so singular subjects have singular verbs and plural subjects have plural verbs.

1. My dad, who really hates to mow lawns, struggle with the lawnmower each Spring.

2. The bakery that we love in town open at 7:00 sharp every morning.

3. Jane and Maria loves the way the light shines on the lake each evening.

4. If the neighbors really care about the environment, they needs to put the cans in the recycling bin, not in the trash.

5. The eagle that lives by the two rivers scoop up fish right in front of our eyes.

6. Painting houses all summer are a difficult job.

7. Your collection of posters from Taylor Swift concerts need to be put in the basement, or I'm putting up my Phish posters.

8. When I'm on campus, I often finds myself wondering how people make friends with people they don't know.

9. I decide right there that the pie or the cookies is going to be dessert tonight.

10. Every year, Lionel's frat brothers or the house mother declare loudly that they can't stand Valentine's Day.

Pronoun-Antecedent Disagreement

8.5 Recognize pronoun-disagreement errors.

The word *antecedent* basically means "before," so this error occurs when a pronoun found later in a sentence doesn't agree with the noun that appears earlier in the sentence. Let's look at a few examples, and then you can practice with Activity 8.5.1:

Pronoun-Antecedent Error: Our soccer team has improved their defense.

Pronoun-Antecedent Error: Each of the books had their covers torn off.

Pronoun-Antecedent Error: If a student wants a great career, you need to study hard in college.

Pronoun-Antecedent Error: Everyone has a bad day, so they shouldn't get down on themselves.

In these four examples, the pronoun underlined later in the sentence doesn't match up with the noun that has been underlined earlier in the sentence.

Fixing this problem is not difficult. In most cases you need to change the pronoun to fit the noun.

Fixed: Our soccer team has improved its defense.

Fixed: Each of the books had its cover torn off.

Sometimes a better way to fix the problem is to change the noun to fit the pronoun.

Fixed: If you want a great career, you need to study hard in college.

And, if that won't work, you can often make the noun plural to fit the pronoun.

Fixed: All people have bad days, so they shouldn't get down on themselves.

Using *They* as a Singular Pronoun

One recent change in the English language is using *they* as a singular pronoun. In the past, students were taught to use *he* when the gender of a person was unknown—even if the person might be female. Some writers would always use *she*. Or, some writers would use *he or she* or *she or he* in these situations.

Today, it's becoming common to use the word *they* as a gender-neutral pronoun. It is also appropriate when a person like Jamie (in the first example below) expresses a preference for the pronoun *they* because it reflects their non-binary gender identity or expression. For example:

Correct: Jamie was bored, so they decided to play some basketball at the gym.

Correct: If a student is unsure about an assignment, they should ask their instructor.

Correct: A person should enjoy their time in college, not work every minute.

Not long ago, these kinds of sentences would have been flagged as pronoun-antecedent errors, but the English language is changing to accept this gender-neutral use of the word *they*.

Over time, the pronoun *they* will probably become the universal pronoun for all genders. To avoid any confusion right now, though, we advise you to first try pluralizing the nouns to match the use of *they*.

Correct: If students are unsure about an assignment, they should ask their instructor.

Correct: People should enjoy their time in college, not work every minute.

Activity 8.5.1

Fixing Pronoun-Antecedent Disagreement

Here are a few pronoun-antecedent disagreements for you to practice fixing. Revise these sentences so the noun and pronoun match up.

1. Any artist would be pleased to have his work displayed in the Tuttle Gallery.

2. After the team scored a goal, they met at the midfield line to celebrate.

3. Before you jump out of the plane, everyone needs to double-check these straps.

4. I asked all violinists in the orchestra to bring her own chair.

5. When you fall while skiing, anyone should expect a little pain.

6. Val and Yunghee like to go shopping at Thrifttown because she always gets the best deals.

7. Each of our rockets experienced broken fins when they were launched.

8. All of the dollar bills had something weird written on it.

9. Some of the mint plants, including my peppermint, lost its pleasant scent.

10. After we lost the game, you just knew the coach was going to be disappointed.

Apostrophe Errors

8.6 Identify when an apostrophe is being used incorrectly.

The purpose of an apostrophe is to signal that something is missing (e.g., *that's* means "that is") or to show possession (e.g., "the cat's toy"). These errors are actually different, so we will handle them separately.

When to Use *It's* vs. *Its* (and Never, Never Use *Its'*)

Most apostrophe errors are due to a simple mistake: using the word *it's* to signal possession. This is one exception where the apostrophe-*s* is not used to signal possession. Here are a couple of examples.

Apostrophe Error: The wind gust hit the house and blew off it's doors.

Fixed: The wind gust hit the house and blew off its doors.

Apostrophe Error: The hawk swooped in to defend it's nest.

Fixed: The hawk swooped in to defend its nest.

This mistake is understandable. After all, we use apostrophe-*s* to show possession, such as "Hassan's phone," "Sadie's motorcycle," or "the dog's bed." But, we don't use apostrophe-s in situations like "her motorcycle," "his phone" or "its bed."

Here's a simple trick to finding and fixing this problem. Whenever you see the word *it's* in a sentence, say "it is" in your mind. If the sentence is correct with "it is" then keep the apostrophe. If, however, you find yourself saying something like, "The hawk swooped in to defend it is nest," then you know the apostrophe doesn't belong. Remove it.

Here's another easy rule to follow. There is no situation in which *its'* is correct. This word doesn't mean "it is," and there's no situation in which it will be plural and need possession. Bottom line: Never use *its'*.

Something's Missing (Contractions)

Apostrophes are used to signal contractions, which means you're cramming two words together by removing one or more letters. Here are some common contractions.

I'd = I would
you'd = you would
she'd = she would
he'd = he would
we'd = we would
they'd = they would

I've = I have
you've = you have
she's = she has
he's = he has
we've = we have
they've = they have

aren't = are not
can't = cannot
couldn't = could not
doesn't = does not
don't = do not
hadn't = had not

you're = you are
he's = he is
she's = she is
it's = it is
something's = something is
we're = we are
they're = they are
there's = there is
what's = what is

I'll = I will
he'll = he will
she'll = she will
they'll = they will

wasn't = was not
weren't = were not
won't = will not

Rules for making contractions exist, but they are hard to remember. You are better off just remembering each of these contractions as single units (e.g., "you're," "doesn't," "he'll"). If you just remember each contraction as a single word, you won't need to worry about memorizing the rules for making contractions. If you aren't sure how to punctuate a contraction, either look it up online or write out both words.

Possession

Possession means a person or thing owns something. The apostrophe signals that ownership. For instance, if you say "Scott's car rolled away," you are referring to the car that Scott owns. "Scott" is singular, so the apostrophe comes before the letter *s*.

If there are several people who possess something, then the apostrophe goes after the *s*. For example, "The players' bus rolled away" means the bus is possessed by more than one player.

Finding and fixing this error is simpler than it sounds. Remember: If the person or thing owning something is singular, use apostrophe-*s* ("my sister's room," "Marco's motorcycle," "her cat's litterbox"). If the people or things owning something are plural, use *s* followed by an apostrophe ("my parents' room," "the officers' motorcycles," "her cats' litterbox").

Note that there are a few exceptions when a plural word has an apostrophe-*s*. Here are the most common situations in which this happens.

The children's bikes . . . .

The women's hats . . . .

The men's feet . . . .

Several alumni's blogs . . . .

The bacteria's effect . . . .

The cacti's needles . . . .

The geese's nests . . . .

This situation only happens when the plural version of the word doesn't end with an *s*. This is rare, but it happens.

And, here is one more weird exception. Sometimes a person's name will end with an *-es* or *-ez*, like James, Jones, Fernandez, or Marques. If you are talking about one person, you always add an apostrophe-*s* (*'s*):

This is Andres's new apartment.

That is Alice Jones's camper.

In the alley, I saw Hector Lopez's cat.

But, if you are talking about a family of people owning something, you first need to pluralize the name and then add the apostrophe:

This is the Johnsons' new apartment.

That is the Joneses' camper.

In the alley, I saw the Lopezes' cat.

Sure, that's weird, but English can be a weird language sometimes, and sometimes you need to look up how to use apostrophes in these unclear situations. The Purdue OWL (owl.purdue.edu) is a good website for looking up how to deal with strange grammar situations.

Activity 8.6.1 will give you some opportunities to fix some of these common apostrophe errors. Give it a try!

Activity 8.6.1

Fixing Apostrophe Errors

Apostrophes can be challenging. Here are some opportunities to practice fixing apostrophe errors.

1. The horse had a mind of it's own.

2. Theyv'e decided to go to the beach this summer rather than the mountains.

3. Haley picked up Pablos' skateboard and threw it over the fence.

4. The childrens' mother was very upset at the speeding car.

5. When Chris is angry, shes really difficult to talk to.

6. Whats really making me upset is that people never stopped to help.

7. When I reached over to get the dogs bone, it growled at me.

8. Somethings seriously wrong with that professor.

9. Because he speaks softly, its difficult to understand what he's saying.

10. The ships mast snapped when it hit the bridge.

Misused Commas

8.7 Recognize misused commas.

Whole books have been written about how commas are misused in English. The comma is probably the most misused punctuation mark we have. So, we are going to keep this simple by focusing on the three main ways in which they are used incorrectly.

Misused Comma Signaling a Pause Between Subject and Verb

Sometimes an author mistakenly adds a comma to signal a slight pause between the subject and verb of a sentence:

Misused Comma: The last laugh, was had by Lucia that night.

Fixed: The last laugh was had by Lucia that night.

Misused Comma: Chad realized immediately, what had happened to his car.

Fixed: Chad realized immediately what had happened to his car.

Your reader will detect the pause without the comma, so it's not needed.

Misused Comma Before a Dependent Clause

A dependent clause is one that cannot stand alone as a complete sentence itself. A comma should not be used before a dependent clause (underlined in the examples below).

Misused Comma: The ice cream was delicious, but melted quickly.

Fixed: The ice cream was delicious but melted quickly.

Misused Comma: We decided to go to the store, and then picked up some dinner.

Fixed: We decided to go to the store and then picked up some dinner.

In these sentences the subjects ("ice cream," "we") still need to go with the verbs ("melted," "picked up"), so the commas should not separate the subjects from the verbs.

Misused Comma Before "That"

The difference between *that* and *which* is one of the trickier usage questions in the English language. Here's a simple guideline for when to use commas in these situations. If you think a comma is needed, use *which*. Otherwise, use *that*.

Misused Comma: The car, that Sharon saw the previous night, had been vandalized.

Fixed: The car that Sharon saw the previous night had been vandalized.

Misused Comma: The ball broke Taye's bat, that was already cracked.

Fixed: The ball broke Taye's bat, which was already cracked.

In almost all cases, a comma before *that* is misused and should be deleted. Let's get some practice with commas. Activity 8.7.1 has some sentences with misused commas. See if you can fix them!

Activity 8.7.1

Fixing Misused Commas

OK, let's practice finding and fixing a few comma errors. See if you can figure out what's wrong with these sentences.

1. To play disc golf, I need my new discs, that aren't chewed up by my dog.

2. Jimmie wanted to hang out at the courthouse, and then go to Faye's house.

3. My grandparents, were hesitant to even ask us about school.

4. To open the door, I leaned my shoulder into it, and pushed as hard as I could.

5. The bear, that finished eating the food on the picnic table, started shaking the camper.

6. The final sandwich sat alone on the plate, and was never eaten.

7. The phrase dead as a doornail, is something I never understood.

8. As they say, where there's smoke, look for fire.

9. Life in high school, can be a real challenge when you're different.

10. The bicyclist saw my truck in the dark, but still rammed into the tailgate.

Dangling Modifiers

8.8 Explain what makes a dangling modifier.

Dangling modifiers are grammar errors that can trip up even the best writers. You probably haven't even heard of this grammar error. But, once you know what a dangling modifier is, you will see them regularly, even in professional documents. Fortunately, they are easy to fix.

A dangling modifier usually happens when an introductory phrase doesn't go with the subject of the sentence. The dangling modifier and the subject are underlined in these examples:

Dangling Modifier: While driving to my parents' house, our stressed-out cat howled in the back seat of the car.

Dangling Modifier: When entering the abandoned building, evidence of heroin usage was all around the social workers.

On first look, these sentences might not even seem wrong to you. But, if you look closer, the first sentence suggests that the cat (the subject of the sentence) was actually driving the car! Bad kitty! In the second sentence, the evidence (again, the subject of the sentence) is entering the building. Of course, that's not what the writers of these sentences wanted to say.

Fixing dangling modifiers is easy. There are two ways. First, you can revise the sentence, so the subject of the sentence matches what is described by the introductory phrase:

Fixed: While driving to my parents' house, we put up with our stressed-out cat howling in the back seat of the car.

Fixed: When entering the abandoned building, the social workers saw evidence of heroin usage was all around them.

The second way to correct a dangling modifier is to mention the subject of the sentence in the introductory phrase:

Fixed: While we drove to my parents' house, our stressed-out cat howled in the back seat of the car.

Fixed: When the social workers entered the abandoned building, evidence of heroin usage was all around them.

Dangling modifiers may not seem like a big deal, but they can cause some confusion. Once you know what they are, you can find and fix these embarrassing grammar errors.

Activity 8.8.1 has some dangling modifiers for you to fix. Some of them are really funny, but you might have to read the sentence twice to figure out what's wrong with them!

Activity 8.8.1

Fixing Dangling Modifiers

Let's fix some dangling modifiers. Revise these sentences so the subject works with the modifier.

1. Shouting loudly that I would be late, my keys were nowhere to be found.

2. While riding horses through the forest, our dogs were searching for squirrels.

3. Almost tearful with her sadness, the old wedding dress and tuxedo were put back in the attic.

4. When hungry, even disgusting food starts to sound good.

5. After enjoying our dinner, the video games were the main attraction for the rest of the night.

6. Getting to class one minute late, the professor glared at me as I took my seat.

7. Hoping to get a free lunch, the restaurant was where I met my parents.

8. Hearing that bit of gossip, the rest of my day was devoted to figuring out if it was true.

9. Hiking down the mountain, the car suddenly came into our view.

10. Chowing down on her bowl of cat food, Jana sat there admiring the beautiful cat.

Faulty Parallelism

8.9 Demonstrate when a sentence with a list has faulty parallelism.

Faulty parallelism usually happens when a sentence contains a list of phrases. Each item in the list needs to be parallel in structure. Otherwise, the sentence will sound strange to the reader. Here's an example:

Faulty Parallelism: We went to the grocery store to buy some fruit, finding some ice cream, and pick up some bread for sandwiches.

Faulty Parallelism: Eating a burrito and a jog in the park are not things I like to do at the same time.

Faulty Parallelism: My parents never fully understood my music, what I believe, and my friends.

Faulty Parallelism: In Hanna's apartment, they found socks under the table, in a closet, under the kitchen sink, and the hallway!

In each of these sentences, you will see a list of similar items, but their structures are not the same. If you read these sentences out loud, your ear will hear that something is wrong.

To repair a faulty parallelism, make sure the items in the list are following the same pattern.

Fixed: We went to the grocery store to buy some fruit, find some ice cream, and pick up some bread for sandwiches.

Fixed: Eating a burrito and jogging in the park are not things I like to do at the same time.

Fixed: My parents never fully understood my music, my beliefs, and my friends.

Fixed: In Hanna's apartment, they found socks under the table, in a closet, under the kitchen sink, and in the hallway!

Let's try fixing some of these parallelism problems in sentences. Activity 8.9.1 has some sentences with faulty parallelism. See if you can figure out a way to make these sentences work!

Activity 8.9.1

Fixing Faulty Parallelism

Here are some sentences that have problems with faulty parallelism. Read them out loud, and your ear will hear that something is wrong. You can fix them by making the lists parallel in structure.

1. All day, we went swimming, hiking, and eat great food.

2. In the hot sun, the carnival had too many people, too much noise, and smell.

3. Hating and to love the same person has always been one of my problems with dating.

4. That summer we worked hard, studied hard, and other things I can't tell you.

5. The parrot sat on the perch and says some naughty stuff.

6. Being a housepainter and mow lawns will make you look forward to going to class again.

7. Someday, I want to see the Sistine Chapel, throw a coin in the Trevi Fountain, and visiting the Roman Colosseum.

8. Patiently, quietly, and firm, she showed us how to sew our own quilts.

9. Sebastian's favorite sports are baseball, soccer, and to bowl.

10. My roommate walked quickly, circled the corner, and unpredictably.

Pronoun-Case Error

8.10 Identify pronoun-case errors.

A pronoun like *he, she, they*, or *it* is frequently used as a substitute for a noun. For example, if you say "Christie called Shaq" you can also say "She called him." The pronouns substitute for the nouns.

Each pronoun has three types, which are called "cases."

Subjective Case	Objective Case	Possessive Case
I	me, myself	my
she	her, herself	hers
he	him, himself	his
it	it, itself	its
you	you, yourself	your, yours
they	them, themselves	their
we	us, ourselves	our

A pronoun-case error tends to happen when the wrong pronoun "case" is used in a sentence. For example,

Pronoun-Case Error: Her and her dad drove to Chicago.

Pronoun-Case Error: Us college students like to stay up late and talk.

Pronoun-Case Error: Federico really loves she.

Pronoun-Case Error: Julianne, Helena, and myself like to go out for sushi.

To fix these grammar mistakes, make sure subjective case pronouns are used in the subject of the sentence (usually early in the sentence).

Fixed: She and her dad drove to Chicago.

Fixed: We college students like to stay up late and talk.

Make sure objective case pronouns are used in the object of the sentence (usually later in the sentence).

Fixed: Federico really loves her.

Fixed: Going out for sushi is something Julianne, Helena, and me like to do.

When should you use *myself* instead of *me*, or *herself* instead of *she*? That's up to you. They are both objective case pronouns that can be used in the same situations. Usually, adding the *self* makes the pronoun sound more important. For instance, compare, "Sometimes, I like to go shopping just for me" with "Sometimes, I like to go shopping just for myself." The second sentence says basically the same thing as the first, but the use of *myself* adds more emphasis.

Let's get some practice fixing pronoun-case errors. Activity 8.10.1 has some sentences with this grammar error. Try fixing them!

Activity 8.10.1

Fixing Pronoun-Case Errors

Let's try fixing some of these pronoun-case errors.

1. Damian will be stopping by later to see you and I.

2. Eventually, an accident will happen to we drivers.

3. Julian and her were walking towards us on the sidewalk.

4. Jamie and myself will be attending the party tonight.

5. Xavier insisted that we stop off to visit she, his sister, and their family the next day.

6. My roommate predicted that Jamel and me would be dating within a week.

7. While flying back from Brazil, Gina and them started planning their next adventure.

8. Between you and I, we can agree that smoking is bad for people.

9. The honest truth is that me and Sharon just never really got along well.

10. As for she and he, they aren't people you will really miss after college is over.

Shifted Tense

8.11 Recognize situations where a shifted tense causes confusion.

English has three basic tenses: past tense, present tense, and future tense. A shifted tense error happens in a sentence or paragraph when the writer shifts between two verb tenses without a good reason. Here are a few examples in which the verb tenses are underlined:

Shifted Tense: She slams into the car in front of her, and then she backed out of the intersection and speeds away.

Shifted Tense: The eagle glided down over the lake, reached down with its talons, and grabs a fish out of the water.

Shifted Tense: Each summer, the wildfire torches the trees in the mountains, especially when the wind was blowing from the southwest.

Usually, tense shift errors tend to happen between past and present tense. Writers forget that they are writing in present tense and shift to past tense in the same sentence. Or, they shift from past tense to present tense without explanation. Shifted tense errors can sometimes be hard to see, especially when the sentence is within a full paragraph. When readers experience these kinds of shifts in tense, they feel like they are going back and forth in time.

Repairing these kinds of sentences is a matter of making the tenses consistently past or present tense:

Fixed: She slammed into the car in front of her, and then she backed out of the intersection and sped away.

Fixed: The eagle glided down over the lake, reached down with its talons, and grabbed a fish out of the water.

Fixed: Each summer, the wildfire torches the trees in the mountains, especially when the wind is blowing from the southwest.

A shifted tense in a sentence isn't always wrong. Sometimes, you need to change from past tense to present tense or present tense to future tense in the same sentence.

Correct: Ian finished his breakfast an hour ago, and now he is jogging by the lake.

Correct: She is running errands right now, but she will visit her grandfather later this evening.

Correct: He finished his exam earlier this morning, and he will be celebrating the end of the semester later this evening.

If you are moving forward in time within a sentence, a shifted tense tends to work. A shift in tense within a sentence is usually fine if you are doing it on purpose.

OK, ready to start fixing a few sentences with shifted tenses? Activity 8.11.1 has some sentences you can practice on. Let's see what you can do!

Activity 8.11.1

Fixing Shifted Tenses

Try fixing the following sentences to use consistent tenses or tenses that properly move forward in time.

1. They are eating calamari as an appetizer, and then they gobbled down a full dinner.

2. I will finish my assignment tonight when I had finished studying for my math test.

3. My teacher was confused, because Ethan is asking ridiculous questions.

4. Everyone thought our strategy will win this time against the state champions.

5. The deer leaps in front of our car, which caused me to swerve and drove into the ditch.

6. Last night, we see the planet Jupiter near the moon, and then we spotted an even brighter planet, Venus, near the horizon.

7. The Spanish Flu is really bad in 1918, and many people around the world died.

8. The reporter was pressing the candidate about the scandal before she will even have a chance to say something.

9. My doctor is concerned that I had a concussion, especially after I knock my head into the wall.

10. My mother walks five miles, and then she went shopping at the mall.

Vague Pronouns

8.12 Use pronouns properly to avoid vague pronoun errors.

A vague word or sentence is unclear to the reader. A vague pronoun happens when the meaning of the pronoun (*he*, *she*, *it*, *we*, *they*) isn't clear. Vague pronouns often happen when the reader knows who performed an action at the beginning of a sentence but isn't clear about who did what later in the sentence. Read these examples where the subjects and pronouns are underlined:

Vague Pronoun: Jamal and Tito went to the game, then he walked home by himself.

Vague Pronoun: Both the Raiders and the Tigers wanted to win the trophy, so they were very disappointed when they lost that game.

Vague Pronoun: The diner specialized in both shakes and hamburgers, and it was especially delicious.

In each of these sentences, the writer has not been clear about who did what. You can usually correct this mistake by substituting the vague pronouns with the name of the doer.

Fixed: Jamal and Tito went to the game, then Tito walked home by himself.

Fixed: Both the Raiders and the Tigers wanted to win the trophy, so the Tigers were very disappointed when they lost that game.

Fixed: The diner specialized in both shakes and hamburgers, and the hamburgers were especially delicious.

Naming a person or thing twice in the same sentence may sound strange, but you need, to be clear about who did what.

Activity 8.12.1 has some sentences with vague pronouns that you can practice on. You may need to guess who each pronoun is referring to, but give it a try!

Activity 8.12.1

Fixing Vague Pronouns

To fix vague pronouns you just need to clarify who did what. Let's try a few out:

1. David and Gino were really upset about the comedian's racist jokes, so he called the management to complain.

2. Emily and Fran worked equally hard on their projects, so she was disappointed when they earned very different grades.

3. Angela told Dana her pants had a huge rip at the knee.

4. I had a choice of root beer, orange juice, or water, so I decided to pick up a glass of it on the way out the door.

5. Dogs and cats can behave quite differently around water, so I was surprised when it just jumped right in.

6. Having a good time and drinking are not necessary, so I avoided it.

7. Brad picked up both his towel and his hat, and then he tied it around his waist.

8. Enrique drove his little brother to the game after he finished eating his dinner.

9. The badger and the rabbit eyed each other before it scurried back into its hole.

10. The sheriff and a local reporter called the house, but they didn't answer.

The QSG

Ahem, it's a Quick Start Guide.

Here are the Top 10 things you should have learned in this workshop:

1. Following grammar rules when you're writing is like following the rules of the road when you're driving.
2. A comma splice happens when two independent clauses are "spliced" together with a comma.
3. A fused sentence is basically the same thing as a comma splice—just without the comma.
4. A fragment is an incomplete sentence that's missing something important, like the subject of the sentence or a verb.
5. Subject-verb disagreement errors happen when the subject of a sentence (the noun) and the verb don't agree in number.
6. A pronoun-antecedent disagreement happens when a pronoun (him, her, it, us, you) doesn't match the noun that was earlier in the sentence.
7. Most apostrophe errors are due to a simple mistake: using the word *it's* to signal possession.
8. Whenever you see the word *it's* within a sentence, say "it is."
9. A dangling modifier usually happens when an introductory phrase doesn't go with the subject of the sentence.
10. A vague pronoun happens when the meaning of a pronoun (he, she, it, we, they) isn't clear.

Workshop 9
Punctuating Correctly

In this workshop, you will learn how to do these things:

- **9.0** Explain why punctuation is needed in written text and how it helps convey meaning.
- **9.1** Recognize when a sentence should be ended with a period, question mark, or exclamation point.
- **9.2** Apply the rules of correct comma usage.
- **9.3** Apply the correct rules of apostrophe usage to signal possession and make contractions.
- **9.4** Recognize when a colon and semicolon are used correctly.
- **9.5** Use quotation marks and italics appropriately.
- **9.6** Apply the rules of dash and hyphen usage.
- **9.7** Apply the rules of correct usage for parentheses, brackets, and ellipses.

HELPFUL HINT: For more help with grammar issues, you can use the Handbook in *Writing Today*, or you can go online to the Purdue OWL (owl.purdue.edu).

What Does Punctuation Do, and Why Is It Important?

9.0 Explain why punctuation is needed in written text and how it helps convey meaning.

When speaking with someone on the phone or face to face, *how you say something* is as important as *what you say*. The words themselves signal only part of the meaning you're trying to get across. When you say something out loud, you can stress certain words and express your meaning with gestures and facial expressions. You can raise your voice or use a gesture like a smile or the wave of your hand.

Writing is a bit different, because your readers cannot see your face or hear your voice. That's why punctuation is really important. Those little marks, such as periods, commas, and quotation marks, signal *how* you, as the writer, want them to read what you wrote.

Take a look at the sentences below. Each one includes the same words in the same sequence but is punctuated differently.

You are angry with me. The period signals a simple observation: "I understand that you are angry with me."

You are angry with me! The exclamation point could signal several meanings. It might indicate a sudden discovery: "I *just now* realized you've been angry with me!"

You are angry with me? The question mark indicates confusion or a request for clarification: "I want to ask you, are you angry with me?"

You are "angry" with me? The quotation marks signal that the speaker is being ironic or sarcastic: "I believe you're pretending to be angry with me."

There are countless ways that punctuation marks can signal to readers how they should interpret the words on a page or screen. We won't cover all of them in this workshop. Instead we'll cover the basics. We'll keep things simple by concentrating on the main punctuation issues and stay out of the punctuation weeds.

Some of the material in this workshop overlaps with the material in Workshop 8 on fixing grammar errors. That's on purpose. Many grammar errors are related to misused punctuation marks, but not all. This workshop will help you use punctuation marks correctly, avoiding grammar errors *before* you make them.

Activity 9.0.1

Think About This: A Time When Someone Misinterpreted Something You Wrote

Think about a time when someone completely missed your point in a text or an e-mail. Maybe you were trying to be funny or sarcastic, but your reader read it the wrong way and got upset. Were you able to settle the misunderstanding? If so, how did you do that? Did you try to explain things through another text, arrange a face-to-face or phone conversation, or do something else? What was the final result? Why do you think the misunderstanding happened in the first place? If you had it to do over again, how might you use punctuation to signal that you were trying to be funny or sarcastic?

The Period, Question Mark, Exclamation Point

9.1 Recognize when a sentence should be ended with a period, question mark, or exclamation point.

Let's start with the most basic marks—the period, exclamation point, and question mark. These punctuation marks signal the end of a sentence or a full stop. Sometimes it helps to remember what these punctuation marks signal to someone who is reading out loud. A period means "take a breath." A question mark signals "raise the pitch of your voice" at the end of the sentence. The exclamation mark signals "say this in a loud or excited voice."

What you want a sentence to do will determine which end punctuation you use. A sentence can have one of four functions. It can

- make a simple statement
- tell someone to do something
- express an emotion
- ask a question

Using a Period to Make a Statement

A *declarative sentence* makes a statement. It declares something. These sentences are the most common you will write and read.

Logan bought a new car, and we took it for a road trip all the way to Miami.

The acid leaked and burned through the metal plate beneath it.

Using a Period to Signal a Command

When you tell someone to do something, you are using a command or imperative sentence.

Don't ever allow a child to handle a knife without adult supervision.

Blend the mixture for 5 minutes, or until the batter is fluffy.

Expressing Emotion with an Exclamation Point

You should use an exclamation point when you want to signal that a sentence is expressing an emotion, such as surprise, pain, anger, sorrow, fear, disgust, pride, etc.

He is such a horrible person!

You are an amazingly hard worker!

I was shocked when Beth ran from the police car!

Don't allow a child to handle a knife without adult supervision!

Signaling a Question with a Question Mark

You should use a question mark to signal when you are asking a question.

Why did Laquan go to the jewelry store today?

Will my house catch on fire if I leave the toaster plugged in?

Using Periods, Exclamation Points, and Question Marks with Quotes

Using quotation marks with periods, exclamation points, and question marks can seem a bit confusing. Here are a few simple guidelines:

Periods almost always appear inside the quotation marks.

Incorrect: He said, "The audit team reported that we are in compliance".

Correct: He said, "The audit team reported that we are in compliance."

With quotation marks, the placement of a question mark or exclamation mark depends on what is inside the quotation marks. If the sentence inside the quotation marks is a question or exclamation, the question mark or exclamation mark goes inside the quotation mark, not outside.

Incorrect: Kiki asked Chris, "Will you take the job"?

Correct: Kiki asked Chris, "Will you take the job?"

Incorrect: Kiki shouted out, "This concert is awesome"!

Correct: Kiki shouted out, "This concert is awesome!"

Question marks and exclamation points are placed *outside* the quotation marks when the question or exclamation is not part of what is quoted. In this example, the writer is asking the question, not the person the writer is talking about.

Incorrect: Did Paloma really say, "I'll take the job?"

Correct: Did Paloma really say, "I'll take the job"?

The same thing happens with an exclamation mark. If the writer is signaling something emotional or surprising, then the exclamation goes outside the quotation marks.

Incorrect: I was shocked when Jenny whispered, "I've been cheating on you!"

Correct: I was shocked when Jenny whispered, "I've been cheating on you"!

Activity 9.1.1 will give you a chance to practice using periods, question marks, and exclamation marks. See if you can get the right answers!

Activity 9.1.1

Using End Punctuation

For the sentences below, choose the appropriate end punctuation: period, question, or exclamation point.

1. What should we have for dinner tonight _____
2. First, take out the garbage and then rake the leaves _____
3. I'm absolutely delighted with the grade I received in computer science _____
4. The weather forecast looks okay today, so I'm not bringing an umbrella _____
5. You're Johnny Fontaine's little brother, aren't you _____
6. What's on the schedule in today's chemistry lab _____
7. How wonderful _____ That's such exciting news _____

Decide whether the appropriate end punctuation should go inside or outside the quotation marks.

8. Jeremy walked into the room and asked, "Has anyone seen my pants _____" _____
9. And then Robert exploded with this news: "I've won the lottery _____" _____
10. Did Maria really say, "I'm going to the party with or without you _____" _____

The Comma

9.2 Apply the rules of correct comma usage.

The comma is probably the most troublesome mark of punctuation because it has so many uses. Its main uses are explained here.

Using a Comma to Join Independent Clauses

A group of words that can stand by itself as a complete sentence is called an *independent clause*. To join two independent clauses in the same sentence, use a comma followed by one of the seven coordinating conjunctions: *for, and, not, but, or, yet,* and *so*.

Incorrect: Xavier rode his bike to the supermarket and Sarah drove to campus.

Correct: Xavier rode his bike to the supermarket, and Sarah drove to campus.

Incorrect: Henri wanted to walk the dogs that evening but Maya had already taken them to the park.

Correct: Henri wanted to walk the dogs that evening, but Maya had already taken them to the park.

Using a Comma with Transitions and Introductory Phrases

Commas are also used to signal where a transition or introductory phrase ends in a sentence.

Afterward, the island's volcano erupted.

When the French colonized Martinique in 1635, they murdered many of the native Caribs.

Without looking back, my mother drove off wiping tears from her eyes.

Using a Comma to Separate Items in a Series

Commas can also be used to separate items in a series:

Martiniquans dance to steel drums, clarinets, empty bottles, and banjos.

Martinique has a population of over 300,000, its main religion is Roman Catholicism, and its languages are French and Creole dialect.

When you use commas to separate items in a series, the items need to be similar in structure. If they aren't similar in structure, the sentence will have a faulty parallelism grammar error.

Using Commas to Set Off Quotations

When you are quoting someone, use a comma before the quotation mark. Meanwhile, the commas at the end of quotations go inside the quotation marks.

Albert Einstein said, "God does not play dice."

"I'm having trouble hearing you," she said, "so I'm switching over to a new phone."

"A wise man," says David Hume, "proportions his belief to the evidence."

Using a Comma to Connect Two Adjectives

Commas separate adjectives that equally modify a noun:

> The food pyramid was designed to be a meaningful, memorable way to represent the ideal daily diet.
>
> My uncle Frank transformed into a sarcastic, bitter old man after my aunt died.

When you're wondering whether a comma should be used, try inserting an "and" between the two adjectives. If it sounds right (e.g., "meaningful *and* memorable"; "sarcastic *and* bitter") then the comma should be used. If it doesn't sound right, then leave the comma out.

Using Commas in Addresses and Dates

Use a comma to separate city and state in an address, but not to set off the zip code:

> Glen Ridge, New Jersey 07028 *or* Glen Ridge, NJ 07028

In a sentence, a state name is enclosed in commas:

> The letter from Glen Ridge, New Jersey, arrived by express mail.

Dates are treated similarly:

> January 5, 1886
>
> The tragic events of January 5, 1886, were eventually forgotten by later generations.

Activity 9.2.1 will give you a chance to practice using commas properly. Let's see if you can figure out where they are needed (and not needed)!

Activity 9.2.1

Using Commas

In each set of sentences, choose the one that is correctly punctuated with commas.

1a. And then she said “I can’t find the faucet valve!”

1b. And then she said, “I can’t find the faucet valve!”

2a. Abe Lincoln was born on February 12, 1809, in a log cabin.

2b. Abe Lincoln was born on February 12 1809, in a log cabin.

2c. Abe Lincoln was born, on February 12, 1809, in a log cabin.

3a. I was going to tell you but then I decided you didn’t care anyway, so I kept it to myself.

3b. I was going to tell you but then I decided you didn’t care anyway so I kept it to myself.

3c. I was going to tell you, but then I decided you didn’t care anyway, so I kept it to myself.

4a. The ingredients for making French bread are, flour, salt, water, and yeast.

4b. The ingredients for making French bread are flour, salt, water, and yeast.

4c. The ingredients for making French bread are flour, salt, water and yeast.

5a. Our company’s CEO the engineering genius, is scheduled to meet with us tomorrow.

5b. Our company’s CEO, the engineering genius is scheduled to meet with us tomorrow.

5c. Our company’s CEO, the engineering genius, is scheduled to meet with us tomorrow.

6a. My grandmother, is still alive and kicking, and she still dances every Sunday.

6b. My grandmother is still alive and kicking, and she still dances every Sunday.

6c. My grandmother is still alive and kicking, and, she still dances every Sunday.

7a. Whenever he visited, the house ended up totally trashed.

7b. Whenever he visited the house ended up totally trashed.

7b. Whenever he visited the house, ended up totally trashed.

7c. Whenever, he visited the house ended up totally trashed.

8a. For great pizza, you need to go to Uncle Pete’s in Naperville Illinois.

8b. For great pizza you need to go to Uncle Pete’s in Naperville, Illinois.

The Apostrophe

9.3 Apply the correct rules of apostrophe usage to signal possession and make contractions.

The apostrophe has two important jobs in the English language: to signal possession and to make a contraction from two words.

Using an Apostrophe to Signal Possession

An apostrophe is used to signal possession. With a singular noun, an apostrophe-*s* is added to signal possession. Joint possession is usually signaled with an *s*-apostrophe (s').

We have decided to take Anna's car to the convention.

The players' bats were missing before the game.

When a plural noun does not end in an *s*, you should use an *s*-apostrophe to create the plural.

We rode the children's bikes because my daughter borrowed our car.

The women's suitcases were loaded onto the wrong plane.

When singular nouns end in an *s*, you should add an apostrophe-*s* to show possession.

The whole team met in Coach Mejia's office.

Charles's computer suddenly caught on fire.

Something to remember is that *it's* always means "it is." When you want to show that an "it" (a cat, a building, a truck) possesses something, you should not use an apostrophe.

Incorrect: The cat slept quietly on it's bed.

Correct: The cat slept quietly on its bed.

Just remember: When you see "it's," say "it is" to yourself. If that doesn't sound right, then remove the apostrophe.

Using Apostrophes to Show Possession with Two or More Nouns

When you are showing possession with multiple nouns, how you use the apostrophe depends on your meaning. If two nouns are acting as one unit, only the last noun needs an apostrophe to signal possession.

We decided to accept Grim and Nether's proposal.

But if you are signaling possession for several separate nouns, each needs an apostrophe.

I found it difficult to buy meaningful gifts for Frida's and Charles's birthdays.

Using an Apostrophe to Signal a Contraction

A contraction is two words fused into one word (e.g., *isn't, they're, wouldn't*). The apostrophe signals where letters have been removed when the two words were put together.

They're going to the flea market today.

Brooks really isn't interested in dating Flora.

Atticus shouldn't have said what he said.

Contractions should mostly be used only in informal writing. They signal a familiarity with the reader that could seem too informal in some situations. Some other common contractions include *won't*, *it's*, *I'm*, *you've*, *wouldn't*, and *couldn't*.

Using Apostrophes to Signal Plurals of Numbers, Acronyms, and Symbols

You can use apostrophes to signal plurals of numbers, acronyms, and symbols, but do so sparingly. Here are a couple of situations where apostrophes would be appropriate:

Coach Smith used X's and O's to explain how to handle corner kicks.

Is it necessary to put ©'s on all copyrighted documents?

In most cases, though, do not include apostrophes to show a plural if they do not aid the meaning of the text.

The police discovered a warehouse full of stolen TVs.

The 1870s were a tough time for immigrants.

In the basement, a crate of dead CPUs sat unnoticed.

Let's get some practice using apostrophes. See if you can figure out which uses of apostrophes are correct in Activity 9.3.1.

Activity 9.3.1

Using Apostrophes

In each set of sentences, choose the one that is correctly punctuated with apostrophes.

1a. That dog wont hunt.

1b. That dog won't hunt.

2a. Cal's essay on the new law is excellent.

2b. Cals essay on the new law is excellent.

2c. Cals' essay on the new law is excellent.

3a. The young bear cub lost it's mother and did not survive.

3b. The young bear cub lost its mother and did not survive.

4a. Our's may not be the best pizza, but it's pretty good.

4b. Ours may not be the best pizza, but its pretty good.

4c. Ours may not be the best pizza, but it's pretty good.

5a. This week's newsletter will be a little late.

5b. This weeks' newsletter will be a little late.

5c. This weeks newsletter will be a little late.

6a. Three days later, the strangers' luggage and all their belongings were found in a closet.

6b. Three days later, the stranger's luggage and all their belongings were found in a closet.

6c. Three days later, the strangers luggage and all their belongings were found in a closet.

7a. Three days later, the strangers' luggage and all his belongings were found in a closet.

7b. Three days later, the stranger's luggage and all his belongings were found in a closet.

7c. Three days later, the strangers luggage and all his belongings were found in a closet.

The Semicolon and Colon

9.4 Recognize when a colon and semicolon are used correctly.

Semicolons and colons are similar but less common than commas and periods, but they can be helpful in some situations. In a sentence, semicolons and colons signal a partial stop.

Using a Semicolon to Connect Two Sentences

A semicolon can be used to combine two sentences with *however* or *therefore*.

> The doctor said Lara's shoulder was completely healed; however, the constant pain signaled something was not quite right.
>
> My boyfriend Nunzio was sick; therefore, I had an extra ticket to the basketball game.

If you are not sure whether to use a semicolon with *however* or *therefore*, try replacing the semicolon with a period. If the sentence still works, then the semicolon is correct. If the sentences don't work, then use a comma instead.

You can use semicolons to combine sentences with other conjunctive adverbs (e.g., *otherwise*, *meanwhile*, *consequently*, *moreover*, *otherwise*). In almost all cases, though, you're better off just ending the first sentence with a period instead of using a semicolon.

Using Semicolons in a Series

Semicolons can be used to punctuate a complicated list in a sentence.

> We have offices in Boston, Massachusetts; Freetown, New York; and Sedona, Arizona.
>
> Kentay was determined to buy groceries at the store; pick up a few chairs at his parents' house and drop off a cake; drive his dog to the veterinarian to get its rabies shot and treatment for fleas; and stop off to buy stamps at the post office while visiting with his friend Lanelle who worked there.

If at all possible, however, we suggest trying to avoid creating these kinds of long sentences with semicolons. In most cases, you can write simpler sentences that avoid using semicolons.

Using Colons to Combine Two Equal Sentences

A colon is like a period, except it is used to connect two sentences that basically say the same or two equal things.

> Commuting to work by car requires nerves of steel: Each mile brings you into contact with people who have no respect for the rules of the road.
>
> Santiago achieved his life goal: He earned a baseball scholarship to attend Syracuse University.

As with semicolons, we recommend only using colons to combine sentences when necessary. In the two sentences above, for example, a period would work just fine.

Using Colons to Lead Off Lists

Colons can be used to signal the beginning of a list.

> Four steps are required to complete the process: (1) preparing the workspace, (2) assembling the model, (3) painting the model, and (4) checking quality.

The main reasons for low morale are the following: low pay, repetitious work, hostile managers, and sexual harassment.

Colons can also be used to lead off a bulleted or numbered list.

Keep in mind the following issues when searching for a job:

- You can't get the job if you don't apply.
- Jobs don't always go to the people with the most experience.
- What makes you different makes you interesting.

Using Semicolons and Colons with Quotation Marks

Unlike commas and periods, semicolons and colons should appear after the quotation mark in a sentence.

My Aunt Martina was known to repeat several one-liners from horror movies, including "Be afraid, be very afraid"; "I see dead people"; "Whatever you do, don't fall asleep"; and "Get out!"

One of my favorite chapters in Leopold's *A Sand County Almanac* is "Thinking Like a Mountain": This essay is his best work.

Whenever possible, though, you should avoid these kinds of situations. Often, sentences can be rewritten with periods to avoid the use of semicolons or colons.

In Activity 9.4.1, you can practice using some of these pesky semi-colons and colons. Give it a try!

Activity 9.4.1

Using Semicolons and Colons

In each set of sentences, choose the one that is correctly punctuated.

1a. That dog is so bad that: He won't even fetch.

1b. That dog is so bad that he won't even fetch.

2a. When I was younger; I never missed a show.

2b. When I was younger I never missed a show.

3a. Bear cubs continue to suckle until they hibernate in fall, father bears do not help in raising the cubs.

3b. Bear cubs continue to suckle until they hibernate in fall; father bears do not help in raising the cubs.

4a. During the meeting we came up with this plan: Liz will lead; Jake will research the issues; Kate will do outreach.

4b. During the meeting we came up with this plan; Liz will lead; Jake will research the issues; Kate will do outreach.

5a. The short story is "A Rose for Emily:" It is one of Faulkner's eeriest tales.

5b. The short story is "A Rose for Emily": It is one of Faulkner's eeriest tales.

6a. Just before departing; the airplane was ready to go.

6b. Just before departing, the airplane was ready to go.

Quotation Marks and Italics

9.5 Use quotation marks and italics appropriately.

Putting words in quotation marks or italicizing them are two ways to indicate that those words are special in some way.

Using Quotation Marks to Signal a Direct Quote

When a quote is taken directly from another source, then it usually needs quotation marks. Quotation marks are used to frame an exact quotation from another person.

In *The Panda's Thumb,* Gould states, "The world, unfortunately, rarely matches our hopes and consistently refuses to behave in a reasonable manner."

"Not true" was her only response to my comment.

He asked me, "Are you really working on that project?"

Use quotation marks only when you are quoting *directly*. A direct quote copies someone's exact words. If you are only paraphrasing what was said, do not use quotation marks.

In *The Panda's Thumb,* Gould argues that nature often does not meet our expectations, nor does it operate in predictable ways.

She rejected my comment as untrue.

He asked me whether I was working on the project.

When you are paraphrasing, don't highlight words with quotation marks. Either paraphrase the text fully or quote the text using quotation marks.

Using Single Quotation Marks to Signal a Quote or Title Within Another Quote

When quoting something within another quote, you should use single quotation marks to set off the inner quotation.

Tim Berra shows the weakness of the creationist argument by quoting one of its strongest advocates: "Morris wrote that 'the only way we can determine the true age of the earth is for God to tell us what it is.'"

One of the physicists at the conference remarked, "I cannot believe that Einstein's 1916 article 'The Foundation of the General Theory of Relativity' is more than a century old."

Using Quotation Marks to Signal Technical Terms or Irony

When you're introducing a technical term that may not be familiar to readers, it's appropriate to put it in quotation marks.

If someone tests positive for the virus but does not really have those antibodies, the result is called a "false positive."

The ESA protects endangered and threatened species and their habitats by prohibiting the "taking" of listed animals, including their parts and products, except under Federal permit. Taking an animal is defined as harassing, harming, pursuing, hunting, or capturing it.

When that technical term is used again in the document, quotation marks are not needed because your readers will have been introduced to the term.

You can use quotation marks to signal irony by quoting another person's misuse of a term or a phrase.

Conservation is more than former Vice President Cheney's notion of a "personal virtue."

The Matrix is an entertaining film, but it's hard to accept the "biblical significance" that Clarke and others claim for this extremely violent movie.

To Emphasize Words and Phrases, Use Italics—Not Quotation Marks

When you want to bring emphasis to a signal word, term, phrase, or sentence, italicize those words. Do not use quotation marks for emphasis.

I was so worried about the exam results, and I thought our instructor would *never* get them graded.

She's great at math and can solve *any* problem.

Using Italics and Quotation Marks for Titles

Titles of all works are indicated either by quotation marks or by italics. There is a simple rule of thumb which is appropriate for a certain work:

- Use italics for titles of works that stand on their own, such as books, plays, movies, paintings, and TV or podcast series.
- Use quotation marks for titles of works that appear within other works, such as chapter titles, magazine and newspaper articles, poems, short stories, and episodes in a TV or podcast series.

Here are a few examples of using italics with titles of books and a podcast:

Even now, my favorite movie is still *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*.

After reading Walt Whitman's book *Leaves of Grass*, we will pay special attention to his poem "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry."

The episode "Divide and Conquer" may be the best one in Malcolm Gladwell's excellent podcast, *Revisionist History*.

Using Italics for Foreign Terms, Ships or Aircrafts, or Scientific Names in Latin

Here are three other instances where italics should be used.

The French expression *l'esprit d'escalier* translates literally to "wit of the staircase," and it is used to indicate when someone has thought of a response after they've left a situation.

The *Bismarck* and the *Tirpitz* were among the largest battleships ever built.

We wanted to understand how commercial levels of honeybees impact the fecundity of *Hylaeus alcyoneus*.

Activity 9.5.1

Using Quotation Marks and Italics

In each set of sentences, choose the one that is correctly punctuated.

1a. My mother's exact words were, "Eat your vegetables!"

1b. My mother's exact words were, Eat your vegetables!

2a. The butcher told us that they were out of ground beef.

2b. The butcher told us that "they were out of ground beef."

3a. My favorite short story is *The Monkey's Paw*.

3b. My favorite short story is "The Monkey's Paw."

3c. My favorite short story is "*The Monkey's Paw*."

4a. Mary Roach's recent book of essays is titled *My Planet*; the strongest essay in it is "The Way I Can't See It."

4b. Mary Roach's recent book of essays is titled *My Planet*; the strongest essay in it is *The Way I Can't See It*.

5a. The scientific classification for dogs is "Canis familiaris."

5b. The scientific classification for dogs is *Canis familiaris*.

6a. Alan said to the patient, "Dr. Jackson said 'all the tests look excellent,' so you should be discharged soon."

6b. Alan said to the patient, "Dr. Jackson said "all the tests look excellent," so you should be discharged soon."

Dashes and Hyphens

9.6 Apply the rules of dash and hyphen usage.

There are actually two types of dashes and one type of hyphen. The "em dash" is the longer of the two (the width of a capital *M*), and it is the more widely used of the two dashes. The "en dash" is a bit shorter (the width of a capital *N*), and it is less widely used. The hyphen is shorter than the two dashes, and it is usually used to connect two words.

Using Em Dashes to Signal Asides or the Continuation of a Thought

An em dash is used to insert comments from the author that are asides to the readers.

> At the meeting, Hammons and Jenkins—this is the ironic part—ended up yelling at each other, even though they both intended to be peacemakers.
>
> Despite its acceptance of evolution, intelligent design is really just creationism in a new form—now using God as the motivating force behind evolution.

An em dash can be made with two hyphens (--). Most word processors will automatically change two hyphens into an em dash. Otherwise, a series of keystrokes (PC: Ctrl + Alt + hyphen; Mac: Shift + Command + hyphen) will create this longer dash (—).

Using En Dashes in Numbers and Dates

It might seem trivial, but there is a difference between en dashes and em dashes. An en dash is almost always used with numbers and dates.

> Copernicus (1473–1543) was the first European to make a cogent argument that the earth goes around the sun rather than that the sun goes around the earth.
>
> Young and Chavez argue conclusively that Valles Bonita is really a dormant sunken volcano, called a *caldera* (pp. 543–567).

As you can see in these examples, the en dash is slightly shorter than the em dash. You can make an en dash with the keystrokes (PC: Ctrl + hyphen; Mac: Option + hyphen).

Using the Hyphen to Connect Prefixes and to Make Compound Adjectives

The hyphen is mainly used to connect prefixes with words or to connect two or more words to form a single compound adjective.

> physician-administered
>
> neo-Platonists
>
> off-the-shelf learning module
>
> one-to-one relationship
>
> trisomy-21
>
> four-volume set of books

One thing you should notice is how hyphens are used to create compound adjectives but not compound nouns. You can write "four-volume set of books," where *four-volume* is an adjective. But if you are saying "The set of books comes in four volumes," then the hyphen is not used because "four volumes" is a noun, not an adjective.

Activity 9.6.1 will give you a chance to choose among hyphens, en dashes, and em dashes. Let's see how you do!

Activity 9.6.1

Using Dashes and Hyphens

In each sentence, the blank lines indicate a possibly missing em dash, en dash, or hyphen. In each of the blanks write "em dash," "en dash," "hyphen," or "blank space."

1. My Aunt Frieda often uses off _____ color humor.

2. My Aunt Frieda's humor could be described as off _____ color.

3. She was a door _____ to _____ door salesperson.

4. She was a salesperson who went door _____ to _____ door.

5. Jeremy glanced at his watch _____ a quick furtive glance _____ as his expression grew more anxious.

6. The relevant discussion in the journal article appears on pages 664 _____ 671.

7. Were you worried about the exam, eager to take it, unsure how you'd do _____ or was it something else?

8. Marie Curie (1867 _____ 1934) was the first woman to win a Nobel Prize.

9. A coupe is a two _____ door car.

10. A coupe is a car with two _____ doors.

Parentheses, Brackets, and Ellipsis Dots

9.7 Apply the rules of correct usage for parentheses, brackets, and ellipses.

Parentheses and brackets are handy for setting off additional information, like examples, definitions, references, lists, and asides to the readers. Ellipses indicate that words have been omitted in a quotation.

Using Parentheses to Include Additional Information

Parentheses are often used to include additional information or refer readers to a graphic.

When hiking through the Blanca Mountains, you will be surprised by the wide range of animals you will see (e.g., elk, deer, hawks, eagles, and the occasional coyote).

The data set we collected shows a sharp decline in alcohol use when teens become involved in constructive, non-television activities (see Figure 3).

These unicellular organisms show some plantlike features (many are photosynthetic), and others show more animal-like features.

Using Parentheses to Clarify a Numbered List

Parentheses can be used to clarify the elements of a long list.

When you encounter a bear in the wild, (1) do not run, (2) raise your arms to make yourself look bigger, (3) make loud noises, and (4) do not approach the bear.

Only three things could explain the mechanical failure: a) the piston cracked, b) one of the pushrods came loose, or c) the head gasket blew.

Using Brackets to Include Editorial Comments or to Replace a Pronoun

Brackets are less commonly used than parentheses, but they can be helpful for inserting editorial comments or replacing a pronoun in a quote.

Though pictures of the moon are often spectacular, *any view of the moon from earth is slightly blurred* [emphasis mine].

Shea points out, "Whether he intended it or not, [Planck] was the originator of the quantum theory."

In this second example, the second *he* was replaced with *Planck* to make the meaning of the quote clear.

Using an Ellipsis to Signal that Information in a Quote Has Been Removed

Ellipsis dots (spaced periods) are used in quotations to indicate where words have been omitted. Three spaced periods mark omissions within a sentence. Sometimes a passage, especially a longer one, includes more information than you want to quote. In those cases, ellipses can be used to trim out the excess.

As historian Holton writes, "What Bohr had done in 1927. . . was to develop a point of view that allowed him to accept the wave-particle duality as an irreducible fact" (117).

When an ellipsis ends a sentence, use an additional dot to make four (. . . .). The extra dot, after the last word, is the period that signals the end of the sentence.

Parentheses, brackets, and ellipses might be new to you. Activity 9.7.1 will give you a chance to practice using them. Give it a try!

Activity 9.7.1

Using Parentheses, Brackets, and Ellipses

In each sentence, the blank lines indicate a possibly missing parenthesis, bracket, or ellipsis. In each of the blanks write in the correct punctuation mark.

1. The campus writing center has posted this on their website: “We strive to promote growth in the writer _____ and emphasize that learning to write is a lifelong process.”

2. The manufacturers have worked to improve the sensitivity _____ percentage of correctly identified positives _____ and specificity _____ percentage of correctly identified negatives _____ of their assays.

3. Laquan pointed out, “She ____ the witness ____ could not have actually seen the accident from two blocks away.”

4. The President stated, “I have never lied to the public, but my opponent’s charge that I am insane shows that it’s my *opponent* who is in fact insane” _____ emphasis mine _____.

5. For example, Webster’s defines the word *aardvark* as “a large burrowing nocturnal mammal (*Orycteropus afer*) of sub-Saharan Africa that has a long snout _____.”

The QSG

Ahem, it's a Quick Start Guide.

Here are the Top 10 things you should have learned in this workshop:

1. Punctuation helps readers understand your meaning by showing them *how* they should interpret the written words on a page or screen.
2. There are three ways to end a sentence: with a period, a question mark, or an exclamation point.
3. Commas have many uses, including joining independent clauses, marking off introductory statements, separating a series of items, and setting off quotations.
4. Apostrophes are used to show possession (*Jordan's* car) or create contractions (*don't, she's,* etc.).
5. The semicolon joins two independent clauses; the colon divides independent clauses and signals the second clause is a list or clarification.
6. Quotation marks are used to mark direct quotes and titles of short works (like short stories and poems).
7. Italics are used to emphasize words or phrases and mark titles of longer works (like books and movies).
8. Hyphens are used to connect prefixes and make compound adjectives.
9. There are two kinds of dashes: Em dashes signal asides and continuations of thought, and en dashes are used for numbers and dates.
10. Parentheses and brackets are handy for setting off additional information; ellipses indicate that words have been omitted in a quotation.