Tiger Style Guide

A WRITING GUIDE AND STYLEBOOK

Grand Junction High School
1400 N. 5th Street
Grand Junction, CO 81501
970-254-6900

Contributors

Prepared by Lyndsay Thompson & Steve Brown in coordination with the GJHS Language Arts department.

Special thanks to Denver's East High School, who allowed us to use their entire style guide and incorporate their work into our own. Without their dedication and efforts, our task would have been daunting.

Tiger Style Guide

Literary Terms

FOR PRACTICE:
Come up with your own examples for *alliteration*, *allusion*, *assonance*, *hyperbole*, *metaphor*, *oxymoron*, *personification*, *simile*, and *understatement*.

THE DEVIL'S DICTIONARY

If only all dictionaries could be more like Ambrose Bierce's *The Devil's Dictionary*. Some entries:

Achievement: The death of endeavor and the birth of disgust.

Bore: A person who talks when you wish him to listen.

Coward: One who in a perilous emergency thinks with his legs.

Discussion: A method for confirming others in their errors.

Egotist: A person of low taste, more interested in himself than in me.

Idiot: A member of a large and controlling tribe whose influence in human affairs has always been dominant and controlling.

Kleptomaniac: A rich thief.

Peace: In international affairs, a period of cheating between two periods of fighting.

Plagiarize: To take the thought and style of another writer whom one has never, never read.

Politeness: The most acceptable hypocrisy.

alliteration — the repetition of initial consonant sounds. (*Poetry and prose are painless words to ponder.)*

allusion — reference to something in history or the arts (*Algebra was Mike's Waterloo*.)

analogy – a point by point comparison between two apparently dissimilar things made to clarify a certain point about one of them. In "Amigo Brothers," Felix draws an analogy between the boxing match he and his friend Antonio must fight and the match in the boxing movie *The Champion* in order to put himself into a competition frame of mind.

allegory — the expression by means of symbolic fictional figures and actions of truths or generalizations about human existence

anecdote – a short, entertaining account about a person or an event. Anecdotes are often included in large works to entertain or make a point.

antagonist— one that contends with or opposes another : ADVERSARY, OPPONENT

antithesis — establishing a clear, contrasting relationship between two ideas by joining them together or juxtaposing them, often in parallel structure. *To err is human; to forgive, divine. --Pope That's one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind. -- Armstrong*

apostrophe — direct address to an inanimate object or idea

archetype — an image, a descriptive detail, a plot pattern, or a character type that occurs frequently in literature, myth, religion, or folklore and is, therefore, believed to evoke profound emotions.

bias — a particular tendency or inclination expressed by a writer. A writer's bias may be favorable or unfavorable, as it relates to a particular topic, and communicates a strong inclination of the mind or a preconceived opinion about something or someone.

carpe diem — Latin for "seize the day," a theme present in many poems ("To the Virgins to Make Much of Time")

conflict / problem — in narration, the struggle between opposing forces that moves the plot forward. Conflict can be **internal,** occurring within a character, or **external**, between characters and an abstraction such as nature, society, technology, or fate.

connotation — emotions and ideas associated with a word.

couplet — a two-line stanza, usually rhymed, or a pair of rhymed lines.

denotation — dictionary definition of a word.

diction — word choice; the characteristic pattern or effects of word choice.

epic -- a long narrative that tells of the deeds and adventures of a hero or heroine.

epic hero – the main character in an epic whose legendary or heroic actions are central to his/her culture, race, or nation.

epithet — a characterizing word or phrase accompanying or occurring in place of the name of a person or thing

euphemism -- the substitution of a mild and pleasant expression for a harsh and blunt one, such as 'to pass away' for 'to die'.

extended metaphor – a comparison between unlike things that serves as a unifying element throughout a series of sentences or a whole piece. An extended metaphor helps to describe a scene, an event, a character, or a feeling.

figurative language — writing or speech that is not meant to be taken literally, such as metaphor, simile, and personification.

foreshadowing — a writer's use of hints or clues to indicate events that will occur in a story. Foreshadowing creates suspense and, at the same time, prepares the reader for what is to come.

genre — a category of artistic, musical, or literary composition characterized by a particular style, form, or content

hero/heroine — a mythical or legendary figure, often of divine descent, that is endowed with great strength or ability. The word is often broadly applied to the principal male or female character in a literary or dramatic work.

hubris — exaggerated pride or self-confidence

humor – a quality that provides laughter or amusement. Writers create humor through exaggeration, amusing descriptions, irony, and witty and insightful dialogue.

hyperbole — an intentional exaggeration for emphasis or comic effect. An overstatement.

motif — a usually recurring salient thematic element (as in the arts); especially : a dominant idea or central theme

Literary Terms

FOR PRACTICE:

Come up with your own examples for *alliteration, allusion, assonance, hyperbole, metaphor, oxymoron, personification, simile,* and *understatement*.

WORDPLAY

Oxymorons
Compact contradictions

student teacher, rush hour, civil war, instant classic, anxious patient, roaring silence, pretty ugly, daily special, free market, fire water, real phony, Swiss Army

Malapropisms
Word-substitution errors

—The flood damage was so bad they had to evaporate the city.
—At least half of the customers who fly to New York come by plane.
—Louis Pasteur discovered a cure for rabbis.
—Shhh! I hear footprints.

Anagrams
Words and phrases formed by rearranging letters in words and phrases.

debit card = bad credit
geologist = go get oils
astronomer = moon starer
Christmas = trims cash
Justin Timberlake = im a jerk but listen

Palindromes
Backwards or forward, the letters follow the same order

—Madam, I'm Adam.
—Rise to vote, sir.
—A man, a plan, a canal--Panama!
—Do geese see God?
—A nut for a jar of tuna.
—Dennis sinned.
—T.S. Eliot, top bard, notes putrid tang emanating, is sad. I'd assign it a name: gnat dirt upset on drab pot-toilet.

monologue/soliloquy – a speech in a dramatic work in which a character speaks his or her thoughts aloud. Usually, the character is on the stage alone, not speaking to the other characters and perhaps not even consciously addressing the audience. The purpose of a soliloquy is to reveal a character's inner thoughts, feelings, and plans to the audience.

mood – the feeling or atmosphere that a writer creates for the reader.

motif – one of the dominant ideas in a work of literature; a part of the main theme. It may consist of a character, a recurrent image or a verbal pattern.

narrative – writing that relates an event or a series of events: a story. Narration can be imaginary, as in a short story or novel, or factual, as in a newspaper account or a work of history.

onomatopoeia – the use of a word whose sound suggests its meaning, as in clang, buzz, crash.

omniscient narrator — a literary technique which gives the author or speaker infinite awareness, understanding, and insight; the reader is allowed into each character's perception

oxymoron — a figure of speech that fuses two contradictory or opposing ideas (*freezing fire, happy grief*)

parable — a usually short fictitious story that illustrates a moral attitude or a religious principle

paradox — an apparent contradiction that conveys truth (*To have peace, one must prepare for war*.)

parody — a literary or musical work in which the style of an author or work is closely imitated for comic effect or in ridicule

parallelism — the repetition of a grammatical pattern or unit.

personification — a type of figurative language in which a non-human subject is given human characteristics (*The clouds cried raindrops*.)

point of view — the perspective from which a story is told. When a story is told from the **first-person point of view,** the narrator is a character in the story and uses first-person pronouns. When a writer uses the **third-person point of view,** the story is told by a narrative voice outside of the action, not by one of the characters.

protagonist — 1: the principal character in a literary work (as a drama or story) 2 : a leading actor, character, or participant in a literary work or real event

pun — a joke that comes from a play on words. With it, one can make use of a word's multiple meanings or a word's rhyme.

quest — in literature, a journey or adventure that a character goes on to achieve a specific goal is called a quest.

rhetoric — the art of analyzing all the choices involving language that a writer, speaker, reader, or listener might make in a situation so that the text becomes meaningful, purposeful, and effective; the specific features of texts, written or spoken, that cause them to be meaningful, purposeful and effective for readers or listeners in a situation.

rhetorical question — a question that is asked to make a point rather than to solicit an answer.

sarcasm — a device writers use to express irony. Sarcasm may use either understatement or exaggeration but with the purpose of upsetting or even offending someone.

satire — 1 : a literary work holding up human vices and follies to ridicule or scorn; 2 : trenchant wit, irony, or sarcasm used to expose and discredit vice or folly

simile — a figure of speech that makes a direct comparison between two unlike subjects using either "like" or "as." (*She ran like the wind.)*

stanza — a group of lines in a poem, considered as a unit.

symbol — anything that has a meaning in itself and that also stands for something larger, such as a quality, an attitude, a belief or a value.

syntax — the way in which linguistic elements (as words) are put together to form constituents (as phrases or clauses)

theme — the statement about life a particular work is trying to get across to the reader

tone — the attitude a writer takes toward his or her subject, characters, and readers.

understatement — a statement which means less than what is intended having the appearance of truth

Parts of Speech

FOR PRACTICE:
Form sentences based on the following structures:
Adj. + N + Adv. + V
N + V + Adv.
Art. + Adj. + N + V + Conj. + N + V + Adv.
Int. + Pron. + Adv. + V.

TRIVIA OF SPEECH

Korean does not contain adjectives as a distinct part of speech.

The Greeks identified eight parts of speech, but the Romans dropped articles (*a, an, the*) and added interjections (*Wow! Jumping Jupiter!*).

Words can shift from one part of speech to another. For example, in this paragraph:

I was having a real fun time until I totaled my car, which was a rare make, a quality ride, and a collectible. Shoot! Then my parents started to guilt me. The whole thing weirded me out so bad that I couldn't stop swearing.

Shifts in the words above: *Real, bad*: adjective to adverb. *Totaled, weirded*: adjective to verb. *Collectible*: adjective to noun. *Shoot*: verb to interjection.

—from Ben Yagoda's *When You Catch an Adjective, Kill It*

A **NOUN** is a word that is the name of something—a person, place, thing, or idea: Mayor Hancock, Dove Valley, cliff, excitement.

The five classes of nouns are proper, common, concrete, abstract, and collective.

A **proper noun** names a particular person, place, thing, or idea. Proper nouns are always capitalized: Ryan Gosling, New York, World Series, Judaism.

A **common noun** is any noun that does not name a particular person, place, thing, or idea. Common nouns are not capitalized: person, woman, president, volleyball, government, love.

A **concrete noun** names a thing that is tangible (can be seen, touched, heard, smelled, or tasted). Concrete nouns are either proper or common: Flannery O'Connor, Grand Canyon, speedboat, aroma, pizza.

An **abstract noun** names an idea, a condition, or a feeling—in other words, something that cannot be touched, smelled, tasted, seen, or heard: New Deal, greed, poverty, progress, freedom, hope.

A **collective noun** names a group or unit: United States, Denver Nuggets, team, crowd, community.

A **PRONOUN** is a word used in place of a noun. Some pronouns are **personal**: I, you, he, she, it, me, they, my, mine, ours, your, yours, its, him, his, her, hers, we, their, theirs, us, himself, themselves.

All pronouns have antecedents. An **antecedent** is the noun that the pronoun refers to or replaces.

> *The judge coughed and reached for the glass of water. The water touched his lips before <u>he</u> noticed the fly that lay bathing in the cool liquid.*
> *(*Judge *is the antecedent of* his *and* he.*)*
>
> *Bill brought <u>his</u> gerbil to school.*
> *One of the rowboats is missing <u>its</u> oars.*
> *A person must learn to wait <u>his</u> or <u>her</u> turn.*

Demonstrative pronouns: this, that, these, those
Interrogative pronouns: who, whose, whom, which, what
Relative pronouns: who, whose, whom, which, what, that
Indefinite pronouns: all, another, any, anybody, anything, both, each, each one, either, everybody, everyone, everything, few, many, most, much, neither, nobody, none, no one, nothing, one, other, several, some, somebody, someone, something, such

Parts of Speech

continued

FOR PRACTICE:
To help distinguish conjunctions, write two sentences each for each of these types: coordinating, correlative, and subordinating.

LOTS OF PREPOSITIONS

aboard	about
above	against
across	alongside
after	amid
along	at
along with	back of
around	before
away	below
from	beside
because of	between
behind	by
beneath	despite
besides	during
beyond	except for
concerning	for
down	in
except	inside of
excepting	instead of
from	like
inside	near
in spite of	near to
into opposite	on onto
out of	over
outside of	owing to
over to	prior to
past	through
regarding	till
throughout	to
under	unto
until	up to
up	upon
underneath	within
without	
in addition to	
in front of	
in regard to	
according to	
across from	

A **VERB** is a word that expresses action or state of being.

Joe ran while Emilio hid. Sally grew bored.

An **ADJECTIVE** describes or modifies a noun or pronoun. Articles *a*, *an*, and *the* are adjectives.

The green tree grows in crowded Brooklyn.

An **ADVERB** modifies a verb, an adjective, or another adverb. An adverb tells how, when, where, how often, and how much.

Time: today, yesterday, daily, weekly, briefly, eternally
Place: here, there, nearby, yonder, backward, forward
Manner: precisely, regularly, regally, smoothly, well
Degree: substantially, greatly, entirely, partly, too

A **CONJUNCTION** connects individual words or groups of words.

Elmo loved chocolate, but he hated fudge.
When we came back to Paris, it was clear and cold and lovely.

Coordinating conjunctions: and, but, or, nor, for, yet, so
Correlative conjunctions: either, or; neither, nor; not only, but also; both, and; whether, or; just, as; just, so; as, so
Subordinating conjunctions (dependent clause markers): after, although, as if, as long as, as though, because, before, if, in order that, provided that, since, so that, that, though, till, unless, until, when, where, whereas, while

An **INTERJECTION** is included in a sentence in order to communicate strong emotion or surprise. Punctuation (often a comma or an exclamation point) is used to set off an interjection from the rest of the sentence.

Oh, no! The TV broke. Good grief! I have nothing to do. Yipes, I'll go mad!

A **PREPOSITION** is a word (or group of words) that shows the relationship between its object (a noun or a pronoun that follows the preposition) and another word in the sentence.

A prepositional phrase includes the preposition, the object of the preposition, and the modifiers of the object.

Some people run from caterpillars.
However, little children with inquisitive minds *enjoy their company.*

Punctuation

FOR PRACTICE: Punctuate the following lines.

Our vacation was miserable On the first day of our trip for example it rained so much that our cabin was flooded That night after drying off our clothes and suitcases we found bugs everywhere we looked in the bathroom in the sheets in the kitchen etc By the end of the week we just wanted to be back in our own house safe happy and warm

MORE ON SEMI-COLONS

Generally, semi-colons **link** and colons **announce**. Do not confuse the two.

The game was over quickly; her inexperience led to the loss.

vs.

He played three positions: quarterback, safety, and linebacker.

Also, be sure that the words on either side of a linking semi-colon can stand on their own as complete sentences.

Every punctuation mark should help the reader. Just like Stop and Go signals at an intersection, marks of punctuation keep the reader, like the traffic, from getting entangled.

1. Put a **period** at the end of a declarative sentence, an imperative sentence, an indirect question, or a polite request.

   The class completed the test with time to spare.
   Answer the door.
   She asked whether anyone had invented time travel yet.

2. Put a **period** after most abbreviations and initials.

   Wed. Dr. Jan. etc. T.S. Eliot

3. Put a **question mark** after a direct question, but not after an indirect one.

   "Who's there?" she asked. (the exact words of the speaker)
   She asked us who was there. (not the exact words of the speaker)

4. Put an **exclamation point** after an expression that shows strong emotion.

   Wow! You made varsity!

5. Put a **semicolon** between two closely related independent clauses not connected by a coordinating conjunction (and, but, for, or, nor, yet, so).

   You may help him; I will not be able to at this time.

6. Put a **semicolon** between pairs of independent clauses not connected by a coordinating conjunction, especially when a conjunctive adverbs (therefore, nevertheless, however, for example) is present.

   You may help him; nevertheless, I expect the work to be his.

7. Put a **semicolon** to separate word groups when the elements of each word group are already separated by commas or other marks of punctuation.

   She is taking Algebra 2, a required class; Ceramics I, an elective; and English, her favorite class of the day.

8. Put a **colon** after a complete statement when a list or long quotation follows.

   They bought the groceries on your list: milk, sugar, bacon, bananas, and cereal.

9. Put a **colon** at the end of a salutation or between numbers used to indicate time.

   Dear Sir: 7:30 a.m.

Punctuation
continued

FOR PRACTICE: Punctuate the following lines.

For someone who is so clever you sure are an idiot when it comes to the opposite sex I mean really you thought that would work Haven't you ever seen a romantic comedy Sure they are filled with clichés and ridiculous insulting situations but you could at least use one as a starting point Well what's done is done Let's try to wash off your face paint

From "Oxford Comma" by Vampire Weekend:

Who gives a *#%! about
an Oxford comma?
I've seen those English
dramas too
They're cruel
So if there's any other way
To spell the word
It's fine with me, with me

Why would you speak to
me that way
Especially when I always
said that I
Haven't got the words for
you
All your diction dripping
with disdain
Through the pain
I always tell the truth

Who gives a *#%! about
an Oxford climber?
I climbed to Dharamsala
too
I did
I met the highest lama
His accent sounded fine
To me, to me

10. Put a **dash** to indicate an abrupt shift or break in the thought of a sentence or to set off an informal statement.

The driver made a fatal mistake—he did not turn on his headlights. She told me—if you can believe it—all the summer gossip.

11. Put a **dash** to set off an appositive or parenthetical statement that is internally punctuated.

The team captains—Joe, Chris, and Alfonso—are choosing uniforms.

12. Put a **dash** to indicate hesitant or interrupted speech.

"I told him at least once, I—we—aren't very happy with the decision."

13. Put **quotation marks** before and after direct quotations.

I said, "I will be a little late, but I will be there."

14. Put **quotation marks** around the name of a short story, poem, song, essay, TV program, radio program, or other short work. For a longer work such as a book, newspaper, magazine, play, album, or movie, italicize or underline the title.

Many students say "The Yellow Wallpaper" is their favorite story.

15. Use a **comma** to separate words, phrases, and clauses written as a series of three or more coordinate elements. This is called the serial comma or Oxford comma

The work was tedious, hot, and exhausting.

16. Use a **comma** to separate two or more coordinate adjectives that modify the same noun.

The exhilarating, challenging hike was near its end.

17. Use a **comma** to highlight sharply contrasted coordinate elements.

The hero was brave, not egotistical.

18. Use a **comma** before any one of the conjunctions (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so) when it joins a pair of complete sentences.

The concert has been sold out for weeks, and I doubt we'll find any tickets.

19. Use a **comma** after an introductory adverbial clause, verbal phrase, or absolute phrase.

When the team finished its first practice, many athletes were exhausted. For selling the most boxes, she received a bonus.

The Word

FOR PRACTICE:
Write as badly as you can for half a page. Make your language as generic, clichéd, wordy, and empty as possible. Then rewrite the paragraph as masterfully as you are capable. Aim for fresh and forceful words to propel your ideas.

RESISTING SYLLABLES

As your teachers encourage you to increase your vocabulary, remember as well the value of smaller, more familiar words. Contrast:

Scintillate, scintillate, asteroid minific,
Fain would I fathom your nature specific.
Exaltedly set in ether

capacious,
A reasonable facsimile of a gem carbonaceous. Scintillate, scintillate, asteroid minific,
Fain would I fathom your nature specific.

Or, as you may know it:

Twinkle, twinkle, little star, How I wonder what you are. Up above the world so high, Like a diamond in the sky. Twinkle, twinkle, little star, How I wonder what you are.

George Orwell conjured a similar distinction with a passage from *Ecclesiastes*:

I returned and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all.

Versus Orwell's modern English parody:
Objective considerations of contemporary phenomena come to the conclusion that success or failure in competitive activities exhibits no tendency to be commensurate with innate capacity, but that a considerable element of the unpredictable must invariably be taken into account

Jonathan Swift wrote that good writing consists of putting "proper words in proper places." So it all begins with the word. When choosing which words to use and which words to discard, a writer must consider many factors, including context, tone, rhythm, clarity, connotation, force, and nuance. When you write, be sure to consider some of the suggestions below.

HOW VERY: By avoiding such words as *very, extremely,* and *really*, a writer can emphasize verbs and nouns. Contrast:

I am very tired.	I am exhausted/spent/beat.
I am extremely hungry.	I am starving/famished/ravenous.

INTERROGATE YOUR MODIFIERS: You may likewise improve your verbs and nouns by eliminating many adjectives and adverbs. When you use modifiers, always check to see if a stronger verb or noun makes them unnecessary.

Desiree quickly ran across the finish line, where she was immediately greeted by a cheering, adoring crowd.
Desiree sprinted across the finish line to a crowd exploding in cheers.

DO NOT SETTLE: When we write, the first words that come to mind are often automatic and pedestrian. So think twice. Consider the many shades of meaning available in synonyms; consider precision; consider rhythm and force. Whether using a thesaurus or simply reading more widely, expand your vocabulary. Add to your tools and weapons.

EMPLOY THE FIGURATIVE: One of E.B. White's great lessons is to ground or amplify an idea with a visual, concrete image. Two of his examples:

Idea: Humor is ruined by analysis.
Expression: Humor can be dissected, as a frog can, but the thing dies in the process and the innards are discouraging to any but the pure scientific mind.

Idea: Humorists utilize mishaps and pain.
Expression: Humorists fatten on trouble.

READ AS WRITERS READ: When you read passages you admire, pay attention to how certain words convey force and meaning. Play the substitution game: imagine the sentence with a different word and consider how the impact changes. The dark/charcoal/black sky was lit/punctured/battled by the blazing/roaring/hungry fire.

The Sentence

FOR PRACTICE:

Provide examples for each of the following sentence types on this page.

IN PRAISE OF SENTENCE FRAGMENTS

A **fragment** is not a sentence at all. Sentence fragments are groups of words that are missing either a subject or a verb, or they do not express a complete thought.

Thinks he's really funny. My brother and his bright ideas. Not my definition of success.

Sentence fragments can be useful, however, for emphasis and rhythm. Just be sure you know when you're writing one, and be sure to use them sparingly.

I stepped out on the balcony hoping to talk to her. She, of course, was gone. Story of my life.

In academic writing, fragments are particularly discouraged. But in both fiction and nonfiction, fragments may be quite effective.

For example:

A clock. I can almost see the hands ticking around the twelve-sectioned face of the arena. Each hour begins a new horror, a new Gamemaker weapon, and ends the previous. Lightning, blood, rain, fog, monkeys—those are the first four hours on the clock. And at ten, the wave.
—Suzanne Collins

Lolita, light of my life, fire of my loins. My sin, my soul. Lo-lee-ta: the tip of the tongue taking a trip of three steps on the palate to tap, at three, on the teeth. Lo. Lee. Ta.
—Vladimir Nabokov

A sentence is made up of one or more words expressing a complete thought. (Note: A sentence begins with a capital letter; it ends with a period, a question mark, or an exclamation point.)

> *The boys passively flopped onto the couch.*
> *(*Boys *is the plural subject.* Flopped *is the verb.)*

There are four kinds of sentences easily remembered by the sentence "I DIE." I = Interrogative. D = Declarative. I = Imperative. E = Exclamatory.

> **Interrogative** sentences ask questions. (*Did you know that the Statue of Liberty is made of copper?)*
>
> **Declarative** sentences make statements. (*The statue is in New York Harbor.*)
>
> **Imperative** sentences make commands. They often contain an understood subject (you). (*Go see the Statue of Liberty*.)
>
> **Exclamatory** sentences communicate strong emotions or surprise. (*Climbing 168 stairs to reach the top of the Statue of Liberty is stupid!*)

A **simple sentence** may have a single subject or a compound subject. It may have a single predicate (verb phrase) or a compound predicate. But a simple sentence has only one independent clause, and it has no dependent clause.

> *My back aches*. (single subject; single predicate)
> *My teeth and my eyes hurt.* (compound subject; single predicate)
> *My hair and my muscles are deteriorating and disappearing.* (compound subject; compound predicate)

A **compound sentence** consists of two independent clauses. The clauses must be joined by a coordinating conjunction, by punctuation, or by both.

> *Energy is part of youth, but both are quickly spent.*
> *My middle-aged body is sore; my middle-aged face is wrinkled.*

A **compound-complex sentence** contains two or more independent clauses (in italics below) and one or more dependent clauses (in boldface).

> *My body is rather old,* and *age is not a state of mind*, **unless my bald head is an illusion.** (two independent clauses; dependent clause)

The Paragraph

FOR PRACTICE:
Write a single paragraph about either your morning routine or your thoughts on the school dress code. Include a topic sentence and arrange your support by order of importance. Next, write another paragraph on the same topic, but this time support your topic sentence with a different arrangement of details (chronological order, cause and effect, comparison, contrast, or illustration).

A CLASSIC PARAGRAPH

In Moulmein, in lower Burma, I was hated by large numbers of people – the only time in my life that I have been important enough for this to happen to me. I was sub-divisional police officer of the town, and in an aimless, petty kind of way anti-European feeling was very bitter. No one had the guts to raise a riot, but if a European woman went through the bazaars alone somebody would probably spit betel juice over her dress. As a police officer I was an obvious target and was baited whenever it seemed safe to do so. When a nimble Burman tripped me up on the football field and the referee (another Burman) looked the other way, the crowd yelled with hideous laughter. This happened more than once. In the end the sneering faces of young men that met me everywhere, the insults hooted after me when I was at a safe distance, got badly on my nerves. The young Buddhist priests were the worst of all. There were several thousands of them in the town and none of them seemed to have anything to do except stand on street corners and jeer at Europeans.

—"Shooting an Elephant"
by George Orwell

The **PARAGRAPH** is a unit of thought. It can be compared to a building block that is made up of separate smaller units (called sentences). Paragraphs help the reader to follow your thinking as you describe, support, or explain your specific topic or idea.

Paragraphs should include a topic sentence that tells the reader what the paragraph is about. Often, the topic sentence should come first. The body of your paragraph is where the writer provides specific details that support the topic sentence. The details must all relate to the rest of the paragraph, and they should be organized in the best possible order (see below for strategies). A closing or clinching sentence comes after all the details have been included in the body. This sentence should reinforce the paragraph's main idea without repeating anything that has already been expressed.

Types of Paragraphs:

Descriptive—to describe your subject
Narrative—to relate a story
Expository—to clarify or explain
Persuasive—to persuade your reader

Methods for Arranging Details:

chronological order
order of location
order of importance
cause and effect
comparison contrast
illustration (general to specific)
climax (specific to general)

EXAMPLE ONE:

What is so consistently striking about the way Eskimos used parts of an animal is the breadth of their understanding about what would work. Knowing that muskox horn is more flexible than caribou antler, they preferred it for making the side prongs of a fish spear. For a waterproof bag in which to carry sinews for clothing repair, they chose salmon skin. They selected the strong, translucent intestine of a bearded seal to make a window of a snowhouse—it would fold up for easy traveling and it would not frost over in cold weather. To make small snares for sea ducks, they needed a springy material that would not rot in salt water—baleen fibers. The down feather of a common bird, tethered at the end of a stick in the snow, would reveal the exhalation of a quietly surfacing seal. Polar bear bone was used anywhere a stout, sharp point was required, because it was the hardest bone. —*Barry Lopez*

Note that in the paragraph above, the first sentence is the topic sentence, and every word that follows supports it.

The Paragraph
continued

FOR PRACTICE:
Characterize each of the four example paragraphs in this section. Identify their topic sentences and how they arrange their support.

THE BEST WAY TO IMPROVE AS A WRITER?

READ.

Read for pleasure. Read for fun. Read every day, if possible. Read authors you find especially engaging, including some who challenge you, and read everything they have published.

Spend time in the company of good writers. If all you ever read is mediocre writing, your chances of writing anything better are slim. If all you ever read is bad writing—well, you get the idea.

Rereading develops your ear. It gives you a feeling for the rhythm and cadence and flow of language. It suggests the range of possible sentence structures and patterns. It helps you realize the possibilities for imaginative use of figurative language and various figures of speech. Perhaps most important, reading expands your vocabulary.

—Stephen Wilbers,
Keys to Great Writing

EXAMPLE TWO:

One night a moth flew into the candle, was caught, burnt dry, and held. I must have been staring at the candle, or maybe I looked up when a shadow crossed my page; at any rate, I saw it all. A golden female moth, a biggish one with a two-inch wingspan, flapped into the fire, dropped her abdomen into the wet wax, stuck, flamed, frazzled and fried in a second. Her moving wings ignited like tissue paper, enlarging the circle of light in the clearing and creating out of the darkness the sudden blue sleeves of my sweater, the green leaves of jewelweed by my side, the ragged red trunk of a pine. At once the light contracted again and the moth's wings vanished in a fine, foul smoke. At the same time her six legs clawed, curled, blackened and ceased, disappearing utterly. And her head jerked in spasms, making a spattering noise; her antennae crisped and burned away and her heaving mouth parts crackled like pistol fire. When it was all over, her head was, so far as I could determine, gone, gone the long way of her wings and legs. Had she been new, or old? Had she mated and laid her eggs, had she done her work? All that was left was the glowing horn shell of her abdomen and thorax—a fraying, partially collapsed gold tube jammed upright in the candle's round pool.

—Annie Dillard

EXAMPLE THREE:

And as we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall march ahead. We cannot turn back. There are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, "When will you be satisfied?" We can never be satisfied as long as our bodies, heavy with the fatigue of travel, cannot gain lodging in the motels of the highways and the hotels of the cities. We cannot be satisfied as long as the Negro's basic mobility is from a smaller ghetto to a larger one. We can never be satisfied as long as a Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and a Negro in New York believes he has nothing for which to vote. No, no, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.

—Martin Luther King Jr.

EXAMPLE FOUR

Science involves a seemingly self-contradictory mix of attitudes: On the one hand it requires an almost complete openness to all ideas, no matter how bizarre and weird they sound, a propensity to wonder. As I walk along, my time slows down; I shrink in the direction of motion, and I get more massive. That's crazy! On the scale of the very small, the molecule can be in this position, in that position, but it is prohibited from being in any intermediate position. That's wild! But the first is a statement of special relativity, and the second is a consequence of quantum mechanics. Like it or not, that's the way the world is. If you insist that it's ridiculous, you will be forever closed to the major findings of science. But at the same time, science requires the most vigorous and uncompromising skepticism, because the vast majority of ideas are simply wrong, and the only way you can distinguish the right from the wrong, the wheat from the chaff, is by critical experiment and analysis.

—Carl Sagan

Usage

FOR PRACTICE: **write a short paragraph using each of these words correctly:**

There they're their accept except you're your its
it's whose who's good well then than

ERRORS THAT MAKE YOUR TEACHERS WEEP

Affect vs. Effect

Among vs. Between

e.g. vs. i.e.

Fewer vs. Less

Its vs. It's

They're vs. Their vs. There

Your vs. You're

2 + 2 = 5

accept/except: The verb *accept* means "to receive or believe"; the preposition *except* means "other than."

I accept your apology. All papers were turned in except for Stan's.

affect/effect: *Affect* means "to influence"; the verb *effect* means "to produce." The noun *effect* means "the result."

The story affected the class. Mark's outburst effected a stern look from his father. The effect of the budget cut was larger classes.

allusion/illusion: *Allusion* is an indirect reference to something; *illusion* is a false picture or idea.

The allusions to mythology made the story more meaningful. He had illusions about the prestige of the out-of-state school.

alright/all right: *Alright* is the incorrect form of *all right*.

All right—let's get ready to go.

among/between: *Among* is used when speaking of more than two persons or things. *Between* is used when speaking of only two.

The winner is between Carlos and Deon. Among all the students in the class, they are the two who received the most support.

beside/besides: *Beside* means "by the side of." *Besides* means "in addition to."

I put my backpack beside my bed. No one besides Chiffon understood the poem.

can/may: *Can* suggests ability while *may* suggests permission.

Can you do 100 push-ups? You may leave only with my permission.

capital/capitol: The noun *capital* refers to a city or to money. The adjective *capital* means "major or important." *Capitol* refers to a building.

They had enough capital to start the business. Denver is the capital of Colorado. There was a huge protest on the capitol steps.

compare with/compare to: Things of the same class are *compared with* each other; things of a different class are *compared to* each other.

Serena Williams, compared with Andy Roddick, is similar in strength. The value of a man compared to a flea is not usually debated.

Usage
continued

FOR PRACTICE: Choose the right words.
(You're/Your) my favorite dancer. (Accept/Except) for the first song, the CD is terrific. The team gained (it's/its) reputation after the title game. I have (fewer/less) dollars (than/then) I did this morning. (It's/its) time to buy a new clock. The (affect/effect) of the weather (affected/effected) my mood. I have (to/too/two) go home for (to/too/two) hours. Bobby does (to/too/two).

BYGONE RULES

It's hard to believe, but sometimes English teachers are wrong. In her book *Woe Is I*, Patricia T. O'Conner lists rules for expression that either were always incorrect or have lately faded away. Feel free to debate their merit with any available grammarian.

Here are rules O'Conner insists are not worth following:

Don't split an infinitive. *To go boldly vs. to boldly go. O'Conner: "Writers of English have been merrily splitting infinitives since the 1300's."*

It's wrong to end a sentence with a preposition. *O'Conner: "This is a rule that modern grammarians have long tried to get us out from under."*

***None* is always singular.** *O'Conner: "*None *is singular only when it means* "none of it." *None of the milk was spoiled* vs. *None of the chickens are hatched—both correct*.

Never use *who* when the rules call for *whom*. *Another dying rule.*

Don't start a sentence with *there*. *Sometimes this choice makes for a weaker expression, but not always.*

complement/compliment: *Complement* refers to that which completes or fulfills. *Compliment* is an expression of admiration or praise.

That color complements the color of your eyes. Many people have difficulty accepting a compliment.

different from/different than: Use *different from* in formal writing.

High school is different from middle school in many ways.

disinterested/uninterested: These words are not synonyms. *Disinterested* means "impartial" or without an interest in an outcome. *Uninterested* means "not interested."

Referees must be disinterested observers. She was uninterested in the argument.

e.g./i.e.: *e.g.* means "for example"; *i.e.* means "that is."

My country has many virtues, e.g., its beautiful coastline, but I am quite happy traveling, i.e., I am never homesick.

every day/everyday: *Every day* is a two-word phrase that refers to time; *everyday* is an adjective used to describe something that is ordinary.

Every day I drink two cups of coffee. One should not wear everyday shoes to a formal dance.

farther/further: Use *farther* to refer to physical distance. *Further* generally refers to matters of degree or metaphorical dimension.

The gas station was a lot farther away than I remembered. Before our relationship goes any further, we should talk.

fewer/less: *Fewer* refers to the number of separate units; *less* refers to bulk quantity.

A salad has fewer calories than a hamburger. I have less coffee in my cup than you do.

good/well: *Good* is an adjective; *well* is nearly always an adverb. When used to indicate state of health, *well* is an adjective.

That color looks good on you. He dances well. I am well, thank you.

imply/infer: *Imply* means "to suggest indirectly." *Infer* means to "draw a conclusion."

She implied that my polka-dot tie was inappropriate. I inferred from her accent that she wasn't from around here.

it's/its: *It's* is the contraction of "it is." *Its* is the possessive form of "it."
It's the first day of the semester. The book has never lost its appeal for me.

Usage
continued

FOR PRACTICE:
Invent examples like the ones in the second "For Practice" section of this Usage chapter.

PO-TAY-TO/
PO-TAH-TOE

At www.popvssoda.com one can find just where in the United States people call carbonated soft drinks "soda" or "pop." The U.S. has many such differences:

In Boston one orders a "frappe" if one wants a milkshake. In Philadelphia sub sandwiches are "hoagies" but back in Boston they are "grinders." In New Orleans, a girl "making seventeen" means she is now old enough to see R-rated movies on her own.

For more, see Wikipedia's "Regional Vocabularies" page.

lay/lie: *Lay* means "to place." *Lie* means "to rest or recline."

I lay the book on the table. I had to lie down I was so tired.

than/then: *Than* is used for comparison. *Then* is used to note time or to clarify a sequence of events.

I love chocolate more than life itself. She knew then that she got the job. Elvis sang "Blue Moon," ate a pizza, and then went home.

that/which/who: *That* refers to people or things*; which* refers only to things*; who* refers only to people. *That* introduces essential clauses while *which* introduces nonessential clauses.

These are the shoes that I want you to buy. She is the teacher who assigns the most work. These tacos, which contain extra hot sauce, are too spicy for me. I love cars that have booming stereo systems.

their/there/they're: *Their* is possessive; *there* is a word that points, locates, or announces; *they're* is a contraction for *they are*.

Look there! They're bringing their own lamb to the barbecue!

to/too/two: *To* is a preposition that can mean "in the direction of." *To* also is used to form an infinitive. *Too* means "also" or "very." *Two* is the number.

The two cooks were careful not to use too much butter in the recipe.

which/witch: which is a dependent clause marker; witch is a noun that refers to a woman who practices witchcraft.

Which one of these is the movie about the witch?

who/whom: *Who* is used as the subject of a verb. *Whom* is used as the object for the preposition or as a direct object.

Who ordered the pizza? To whom do we owe our gratitude?

who's/whose: *Who's* is the contraction for *who is. Whose* is the possessive pronoun.

Who's riding with me? Whose coat is this?

your/you're: *Your* is a possessive pronoun. *You're* is a contraction for *you are.*

Your paper seems complete. You're probably going to get credit for it.

Transitions

FOR PRACTICE:
Write a comparison/contrast paragraph dealing with two artists or performers. Use two transitions from each of the comparison and contrast lists below and be sure to use a transition for your concluding remarks.

LINKING PARAGRAPHS
Sometimes transitional phrases create natural openings to new paragraphs. Consider:

Although
As a consequence
As a result
As we have seen
At the same time
Accordingly
Another significant factor
By the same token Certainly
Correspondingly
Consequently Conversely
Despite these criticisms

Each of these positions
Evidence for this position
Evidently
Finally
For this reason
For these reasons
Furthermore Given
Having considered X
However
In addition to
In contrast
In short
In this way
Indeed
It can be seen above
It is, however, important

In the face of such
Moreover
Notwithstanding such
Nevertheless
Nonetheless
On the other hand
Of central concern therefore
Subsequently
Similarly
The author, in particular,

There is also
Thus
To be able to understand such
Undoubtedly
While such X must be X

Transitional expressions help the reader move smoothly from one idea to another. Choose transitions carefully.

Immediately following the game, we will call home.

Mozart composed many pieces before age ten. Obviously, the kid was gifted.

Until I learned to type, I never turned in my papers on time.

The Olympics are overrun by advertising. Likewise, the Super Bowl seems to have more commercials than players.

Transitions to show location:

above	away from	beyond	into	over
across	behind	by	near	throughout
against	below	down	off	to the right
along	beneath	in back of	onto	under
among	beside	in front of	on top of	
around	between	inside	outside	

Transitions to show time:

about	first	meanwhile	soon	then
after	second	today	later	next
at	third	tomorrow	afterward	as soon as
before	'til	next week	immediately	when
during	until	yesterday	finally	

Transitions for comparison (to show similarities):

as	likewise	like
also	similarly	in the same way

Transitions for contrast (to show differences):

but	otherwise	although	on the other hand
however	yet	still	even though

Transitions to conclude or summarize:

as a result	finally	in conclusion	to sum up
therefore	last	in summary	

Transitions to add information:

again	another	for instance	finally
also	besides	moreover	as well
additionally	for example	likewise	equally important

Agreement

FOR PRACTICE: Correct the following.

The cars zooms fast by our window. Out of all the audiences we have ever had, it is the best. The public know what's right. Everybody love parties. Kittens hates water. (These examples is silly).

FUMBLERULES

By William Safire

- Avoid run-on sentences they are hard to read
- No sentence fragments.
- It behooves us to avoid archaisms
- Also, avoid awkward or affective alliteration
- Don't use no double negatives
- If I've told you once, I've told you a thousand times: resist hyperbole.
- Avoid commas, that are not necessary
- Verbs has to agree with their subjects
- Avoid trendy locutions that sound flaky
- Writing carefully, dangling participles should not be used.
- Kill all exclamation points!!!
- Never use a long word when a diminutive one will do.
- Proofread carefully to see if you any words out.
- Take the bull by the hand, and don't mix metaphors.
- Don't verb nouns.
- Never, ever use repetitive redundancies.
- Remember to never split an infinitive.
- Always pick on the correct idiom.
- A writer must not shift your point of view.
- The passive voice should never be used.
- Place pronouns as close as possible, especially in long sentences, as of ten or more words, to their antecedents.
- If any word is improper at the end of a sentence, a linking verb is.
- Last but not least, avoid clichés like the plague

SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT refers to the grammatical relationship between a subject and its verb. The principle of subject-verb agreement—that a verb agrees in number with its subject—is one of the most important concepts in English usage.

Use a singular verb with a singular subject.

The dog walks slowly. *(dog walks)*
Each of the boys has his own car. *(each has)*

The following words are singular and take a singular verb:

anybody	everybody	one	somebody
anyone	everyone	no one	someone

The following "group" words (or collective nouns) take a singular verb because you are talking about the group as a whole:

audience	crowd	group	kind
band	dozen	heap	lot
class	family	herd	none
committee	flock	jury	public

Measurements take a singular verb if what they are measuring one single thing. They take a plural verb if they are measuring multiple things. For example:

Half of that pie is mine.
Half of those M&M's are my sister's.

Here are other words that work the same way:

all	none	some
most	one quarter	sixty percent

PRONOUN AGREEMENT dictates that a pronoun should agree with the word to which it refers. All pronouns must have an antecedent (the word to which the pronoun refers). If the word referred to is singular, the pronoun should be singular; if that word is plural, the pronoun should be plural.

Each of the students has *his* own book.
Both of the boys have *their* own lockers.

Parallelism

FOR PRACTICE:
Correct the three incorrect examples after the definition of parallelism below.

FORM

Hyphens: Use hyphens to join the parts of a compound adjective (*after-school activities, fast-growing business, seven-year-old girl*).

Do not use hyphens for words with most prefixes (*antismoking, postwar, multicultural, unskilled, nonviolent*). Do use hyphens for prefixes in front of a proper noun (*un-American, pro-American*).

Capitalization: Capitalize proper nouns but not common nouns (*Monday, Passover, summer, jet*). Capitalize a title that precedes a person's name (*Sir Paul McCartney*), but not a title that follows a name (*John Hickenlooper, the governor of Colorado*).

Numbers: Spell out numbers through ninety-nine, numbers that begin sentences, and very large round numbers (*Seventy-five percent of all procedures are performed at the hospital. More than eleven thousand patients have benefited in the past fifteen years.*).

Abbreviations: Use the full words for the first reference, followed by the abbreviation in parentheses: *prisoners of war (POWs)*. Never abbreviate common words in your writing (*esp., thru, st.*).

Parallelism expresses similar ideas in the same grammatical structure. If an idea is expressed by an infinitive, a gerund, or a clause, other equal ideas should be expressed by parallel constructions.

Incorrect: *I like hiking, biking, and to swim.*
I like to sleep, read, and riding with you. I ate an apple and pear.

What to do:

Use the same grammatical structure on both sides of a coordinating conjunction.

I like to hunt and to fish.

Keep members of a series in the same construction.

Michelle is conscientious, fair, and intelligent.
I like reading, swimming, and singing.

Keep members of a list in the same construction.

The committee recommended the following: to keep the original name, to continue community service, to maintain weekly meetings.

Use the same structure on both sides of a correlative.

Josh was neither afraid of nor intimidated by his opponent's size.

To emphasize parallel elements, repeat a preposition, an article, the sign of the infinitive, or the introductory word of a long phrase or clause.

She collected coins from Italy, from France, from Spain, and from Zaire.

Using Quotation Marks & Italics

FOR PRACTICE:
Invent a conversation between two people who are angry at each other. Punctuate for clarity.

SAMUEL JOHNSON ON WRITING

What is written without effort is in general read without pleasure.

Read over your compositions, and wherever you meet with a passage which you think is particularly fine, strike it out.

A man who uses a great many words to express his meaning is like a bad marksman who, instead of aiming a single stone at an object, takes up a handful and throws at it in hopes he may hit.

Language is the dress of thought.

The greatest part of a writer's time is spent in reading in order to write.

To an aspiring writer: Your manuscript is both good and original. But the part that is good is not original, and the part that is original is not good.

No man but a blockhead ever wrote, except for money.

PUNCTUATING DIALOGUE

"What's up?" asked Maria.
"I'm just learning how to write dialogue," answered Fritz. "Well, what have you learned so far?"
"When writing dialogue," said Fritz, "one must punctuate properly."
"Why?"
"So the reader knows who's talking, silly. For instance, whoever wrote this dialogue knows what he's doing, because he indents every time we start to speak."
"Like now. I see. Obviously I'm Maria, because the writer just indented these words."
"Exactly," said Fritz. "Of course the writer may also mention who is speaking, as in right after I said 'exactly.' And because there is a period after my name, the next word I speak will be capitalized."
"So far it's pretty simple. What else is there to know?" Maria asked. "You tell me."
"Placing the quotation marks, commas, and periods is certainly important. The whole point of punctuation is so that the reader doesn't notice it," said Maria thoughtfully. "He or she should concentrate on what is being said, not on how it is punctuated. If a writer doesn't know how to use punctuation marks, the reader slows down, stumbles, and loses track."
"So we begin and end the quote with quotation marks," said Fritz. "But sometimes," he pondered, "we break the quote up. Like just now."
"That's so the writer can create a variety of rhythms," agreed Maria. "Or maybe the writer wants to tell how a person is saying something," she giggled.
"Easy enough," said Fritz. "Just as long as the punctuation—the commas and periods—stay inside the quotations." " Never do it like this".
"But Fritz, what about writers like Cormac McCarthy and Toni Morrison who ignore some of these rules?"
"That's a story for another time, Maria."
"Whatever."

NAMING TITLES

Use quotation marks to designate the titles of short stories, poems, essays, and songs. Use italics or underlining for the titles of books, movies, plays, and albums. Never use quotation marks or italics for the names of performers (The Rolling Stones, Outkast, Penn & Teller).

"Smells Like Teen Spirit" is the first track on Nirvana's CD *Nevermind*.
Chris Rock produced the show *Everybody Hates Chris*.
Of all the jazz standards, I like "Someone to Watch over Me" best.
Mark Twain's story, "A Dog's Tale," is funnier to me than *Tom Sawyer*.
Rent is an updated take on Puccini's *La Boheme*.
Jay-Z and Kanye West collaborated on *Watch the Throne*, featuring the single "Otis."
The essay "High School Is Great!," in the collection *Things That Are Sometimes True* is written with force and candor.

Active & Passive Voice

FOR PRACTICE:
Write five sentences in passive voice, then rewrite them using the active voice.

THE SLIPPERY AND THE SINISTER

Sometimes speakers, writers, bureaucrats, presidents, smoke blowers, and tyrants use the passive voice to avoid responsibility, disguise intention, or inflate empty ideas. By removing the actor from the action, passive-voice users aim for responsibility-fee certitude.

For example:

Trespassers will be shot.

Mistakes were made.

You are hereby informed that all non-licensed repairs ae required to be registered.

All protesters are subject to arrest.

I wanted my parents to know, but somehow the principal's message as deleted from our answering machine.

The primary reasons writers and teachers prefer the active voice over the passive voice are:

1. **The active voice requires fewer words.**
   PASSIVE

   A wallet <u>was given</u> to me by my father.

   You <u>are loved</u> by me.

2. **The active voice assigns an actor to action.**
   PASSIVE

   The football <u>was thrown</u> and caught.

   The bill <u>was passed</u> on Thursday.

From *Pinckert's Practical Grammar:*

Too frequently the passive is used to cover up a mystery about who is doing what is being done. (*It is thought. Mistakes were made. Trespassers will be shot.)* When the verb is vigorous, the passive voice can be ridiculous. (My *nose was being punched by you. Hot dogs are hated by her.)* In short, the passive voice may be used (I just used it) when the verb is unexciting and the agent unimportant or unknown. In good writing these conditions don't often occur, and that's why the passive voice is seldom used. (I did it again.)

Sometimes, however, the passive voice serves what the writer wants. In the book *Woe Is I,* Patricia T. O'Conner writes that the passive might work better in cases like these:

"1. When there's a punch line. You might want to place the one performing the action at the end of the sentence for emphasis or surprise: *The gold medal in the 500-meter one-man bobsled competition <u>has been won</u> by a six-year-old child!*

2. When nobody cares whodunit. Sometimes the one performing the action isn't even mentioned: *Hermione <u>has been arrested.</u> Witherspoon <u>is being treated</u> for a gunshot wound.* We don't need to know who put the cuffs on Hermione, or who's stitching up Witherspoon."

Pre-Writing

FOR PRACTICE:
For any assignment you are working on for a teacher, perform the Cubing exercise below.

ORWELL'S ADVICE

1. Never use a metaphor, simile, or other figure of speech which you are used to seeing in print.
2. Never use a long word where a short one will do.
3. If it is possible to cut a word out, always cut it out.
4. Never use the passive where you can use the active.
5. Never use a foreign phrase, a scientific word, or a jargon word if you can think of an everyday English equivalent.
6. Break any of these rules sooner than say anything outright barbarous.

—George Orwell, "Politics and the English Language"

"I don't know so well what I think until I see what I say." *—Flannery O'Connor*

Once we have our topic, how do we discover what we have to say? How do we figure out how to say it? Planning, either through mapping or writing complete sentences, will help us save time, arrange and prioritize our ideas, and determine connections.

Mapping

Clustering or webbing

Write the topic in the center of the paper and circle it. Write main parts or ideas around the topic and circle these. Draw lines connecting them to the topic. Then, write facts, details, examples or ideas and connect them with lines to the relevant parts.

Listing

Write the main topic or idea. Under this, as quickly as possible, jot down any and all possibilities without judging. Consider the list. Star the most promising items and cross out the least promising. Number the items in order of importance. Group like items. Add new items.

Scratch or informal outline

Simply list the essay's main points in order. One item may take two paragraphs, or two items may be developed in a single paragraph. Scratch outlines are also useful for analyzing difficult reading passages.

Writing Exercises

Cubing

Explore a subject through six perspectives:

- Describing – color, size, shape, appearance, texture and names of parts
- Comparing – similarities and differences of the subject
- Associating – what the subject brings to mind, how it connects to experience
- Analyzing – origins, functions, significance or relationships of its parts
- Applying – ability or uses of the subject
- Arguing – pros and cons

Limit writing to no more than 3 – 5 minutes per perspective. Continue until all perspectives are complete. Include current knowledge, needed information and possible sources for that information. Reread for an angle, an insight or a surprise. These may supply a focus or detail to include in a draft.

Dramatizing

The philosopher Kenneth Burke developed this as a way thinking about how people interact and as a way of analyzing stories and films. A five-pointed star represents five points of dramatizing: action (what), actor (who), setting (where and when), motive (why), and method (how). Although these are typically journalistic, dramatizing examines the relationship between and among the five elements. For example, how does the setting inform the action? What does the actor's language or actions reveal about him or her? How do the other actors affect the main actor?

Pre-Writing
continued

FOR PRACTICE:

Make a formal outline of a published essay. Comment on the author's organizational choices.

MORE WISDOM

By writing much, one learns to write well.
—Robert Southey

The art of writing is applying the seat of the pants to the seat of the chair.
—*Mary Heaton Vorse*

Good prose is like a windowpane.
—*George Orwell*

There are three rules for writing a novel. Unfortunately, no one knows what they are.
—*W. Somerset Maugham*

The wastebasket is a writer's best friend,
— *Isaac Bashevis Singer*

When something can be read without great effort, great effort has gone into its writing.
—*Enrique Jardiel Poncela*

I hate writing. I love having written.
— Dorothy Parker

Writing is a struggle against silence.
— Carlos Fuentes

Dialoguing
Write a conversation between two speakers. If the conversation flags, have one speaker ask the other a question. Write brief responses to keep it moving.

Keeping a journal
- List new words and ideas; respond to what you are learning
- Respond to readings, assigned and personal, or copy especially memorable passages and comment
- Record observations and overhead conversations; write sketches of people
- Free write for 10 -15 minutes daily
- Organize your time; prioritize and plan
- Follow a particular event – a trial, a campaign, a controversy

Source: St. Martin's Guide to Writing, Short Ninth Edition

STRUCTURED PARAGRAPH OUTLINE
This outline form can be used for an individual one paragraph response essay, or for a supporting paragraph within a larger essay. Each line will create 1-2 sentence in the finished paragraph resulting in an 11-14 sentence paragraph.

Topic Sentence
First supporting point for the main idea in the paragraph
Evidence – quote, fact, statistic, or anecdote that illustrates the first point (citation).
Development – explain the relationship between the point and the evidence, or further develop the connection between the two.
Second supporting point for the main idea in the paragraph
Evidence – quote, fact, statistic, or anecdote that illustrates the first point (citation).
Development – explain the relationship between the point and the evidence, or further develop the connection between the two.
Third supporting point for the main idea in the paragraph
Evidence – quote, fact, statistic, or anecdote that illustrates the first point (citation).
Development – explain the relationship between the point and the evidence, or further develop the connection between the two.
Concluding Sentence

FORMAL OUTLINE
The title of the paper is placed at the top center of the outline. The word *outline* is not necessary. Major divisions are indicated by Roman numerals (I, II, etc.), subdivisions are indicated by English capital letters (A, B, etc), subdivisions are indicated by Arabic numbers (1, 2, etc.), and further divisions are indicated by small letters, Arabic numbers in parentheses, and then small letters in parentheses.

Title of Paper

I.
A.
1.
a.
(1).
(a).

Thesis Statements

FOR PRACTICE:
Pick a controversial topic (war, curfew, censorship) and craft three thesis statements on that single subject. Aim to make each version more specific and pointed than the one before.

Often a good, clear thesis suggests an organization for ideas. For example:

WORKING THESIS: Despite the disadvantages of living downtown, I wouldn't live anywhere else.

FIRST SECTION: Disadvantages of living downtown

SECOND SECTION: Advantages of living there

CONCLUSION: Affirmation of your fondness for downtown city life

A clear thesis helps to organize the essay, keeping it on track while writing. The thesis can then direct details and connect sections of the essay. Its purpose is to guide reader and writer on a quest, not to limit ideas.

While writing, however, it is not necessary to cling to a thesis for dear life. If further investigation changes the thinking, change the thesis. When writing, revise, and revise again.

WORKING THESIS: Because wolves are a menace to people and farm animals, they ought to be exterminated.

REVISED THESIS: The wolf, a relatively peaceful animal useful in nature's scheme of things, ought to beprotected.

FROM *WRITING & REVISING* BY KENNEDY, KENNEDY & MUTH:

The thesis statement is the most important part of the paper. With a bad one, the reader may have trouble finding the virtues of the thinking. With a stimulating thesis statement, the reader will wish to read more and follow the argument.

A thesis statement should accomplish two tasks: it should let the reader know what to expect, and it should focus the writer's skills, tools, and arguments. The rest of the paper should simply and vigorously support whatever the thesis statement has to say.

Follow these guidelines while building a thesis:

- Make sure the thesis statement is specific, interesting, and not at all obvious.
- It should also be debatable, rather than something that can be easily proven or answered via Google.
- Make sure it is a complete sentence and not a question.
- Do not make your thesis statement too broad; it will be impossible to support a vague thesis in a school-length paper.

FIRST EXAMPLE

Bad: Malcolm X was one of the great figures of the 20th century.

Better: Malcolm X was one of the most complex leaders of the 20th century.
Best: Malcolm X's conversion to Islam changed both his life and the trajectory of the civil rights movement.

Comment: The first version is too broad and vague. The writer is in danger of lumping all he or she knows about the subject into an unfocused paper. The second version is much better, focusing on the subject's leadership, not his entire life. The third statement is best because it is the most specific; it makes a strong claim about a specific event in the subject's life and the claim is interesting and debatable. The body of the paper must then support the claim with specific evidence, examples, and insight.

SECOND EXAMPLE
Bad: The poem "Ozymandias" is very ironic.
Still Bad: Shelley ends his poem "Ozymandias" with an ironic twist.
Better: In "Ozymandias," Shelley employs irony to undermine not only his subject's grand proclamation but also the overconfidence present in our own civilization.

MORE EXAMPLES
Good: Urban poverty, whether in Brooklyn, Sao Paulo, or St. Petersburg, has inspired some of our greatest artists.
Good: Clint Eastwood's legacy as a tough-guy actor overshadows how sensitive a director he has become.

Good: Whether it is present in an 8th grade report or a presidential address, sloppy thinking produces weak writing.
Good: Every physicist owes a debt to Isaac Newton.

Introductions & Conclusions

FOR PRACTICE:

Rewrite an introduction and a conclusion to a published essay. Consider applying some of the options listed below.

VIVID NOT VAGUE

Use strong verbs and nouns to enliven writing. Be specific and vivid by avoiding the general and the vague.

Examples:

I am very tired.
vs.
I am exhausted.

The player defended against the shot.
vs.
Howard swatted the ball away.

She gave an amusing speech.
vs.
She packed her speech with humor.

I woke up when the alarm clock rang.
vs.
The alarm clock shattered my sleep.

My sister really likes to eat dessert.
vs.
My sister is ruled by her sweet tooth.
or
My sister lives for chocolate pudding.
or
My sister loves cake, ice cream, and pie.

To both engage the reader and to respect the reader's intelligence, introductions and conclusions should avoid the predictable and the generic.

The **introduction** draws readers into the essay and focuses their attention on the main idea and purpose—often stated in a thesis statement.

> What to avoid in introductions: "This paper is about"; "The thesis statement is"; a list of what you claim; telegraphing your entire paper; "According to Webster's"
>
> What to consider trying in introductions: background information, raising a question or questions, citing a compelling or unusual statistic, visualizing a relevant scenario ("imagine . . ."), relaying an anecdote, citing a provocative or amusing quotation, etc.

The **conclusion** ties together the elements of the essay and provides a final impression for readers to take away with them.

> What to avoid in conclusions: restating the thesis and repeating any information (trust your reader to remember what you have already written). Instead of repeating the thesis, reinforce it by tying ideas together.
>
> What to consider trying in conclusions: citing an interesting fact/statistic not already used, envisioning a relevant scenario, zooming in on a small detail of the argument/subject that reinforces the thesis, zooming out to the big picture of the argument/subject that reinforces the thesis, envisioning or hinting at future consequences, exploring the subject's legacy, spinning the argument to a surprising or amusing finish, etc.

Read the following introduction and conclusion as models. Know that the middle paragraphs have been deleted, but trust that they were well done.

INTRO: It seems as if everywhere we turn, someone is trying to be politically correct. Whether it involves racial minorities or women, racist and sexist comments are no longer tolerated in places such as the schoolyard and the workplace. Why is it, then, that minorities and women are still exploited in everyday advertisements? Television, magazines, and billboards no longer show products, but rather show gimmicks to sell their product. In general, these gimmicks enforce racial and gender stereotypes.

CONCLUSION: The only winners in these types of ads are the advertisers themselves, who make money when customers buy the product. There needs to be a public awakening, for racism and sexism are particularly hazardous when they are inserted into entertaining advertisements. Advertisers need to take responsibility for their own actions and to end this type of exploitation. If they do not, we the consumer can always force them. After all, we have the dollars and the sense.

Rhetorical Analysis

FOR PRACTICE:

Use SOAPSTone to analyze the last piece that you read in your English class.

SO MANY RHETORICAL DEVICES . . .

So how do you get started?

Use SOAPSTone when analyzing the rhetoric of a reading assignment and when planning strategies for writing.

Speaker

Occasion

Audience

Purpose

Subject

Tone

Also consider these rhetorical devices, which help develop ethos, pathos and logos:

Imagery -- consider all of the senses – sound, sight, taste, touch, and smell.

Diction – diction is a fancy term for the choice of words. Is the language appropriate for the audience? Are they the most effective words possible to get the point across? Consider everything from pronoun choice to the strength of the vocabulary.

Syntax – syntax is sentence structure (see page 11). How does your use of sentence structure help further your message?

Repetition – repetition, when used carefully, can help you emphasize the point of your piece.

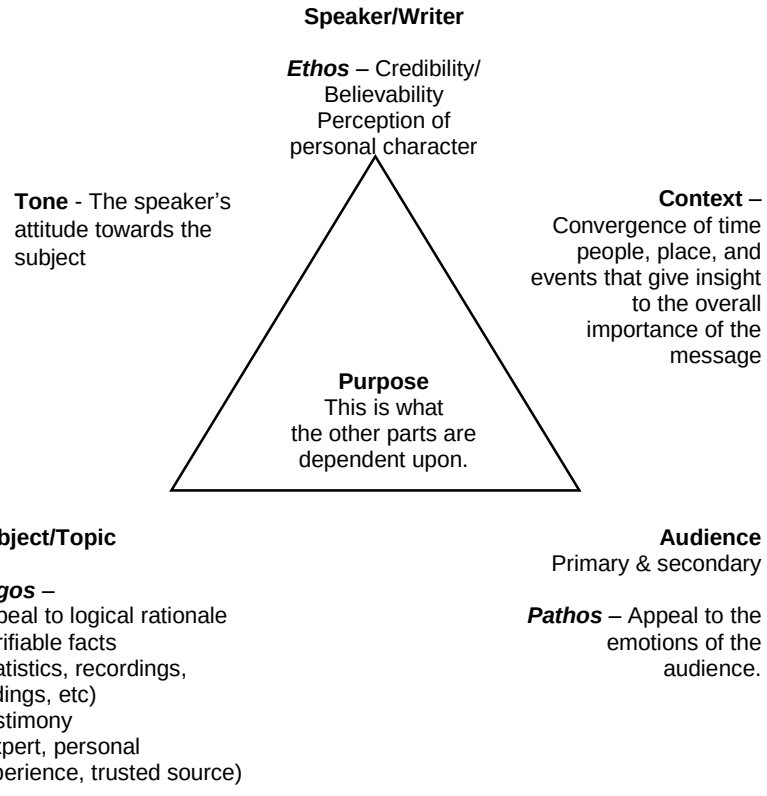
What is Rhetorical Analysis? Let's break it down.

Rhetoric – the art of speaking and writing

Analysis – the process of breaking something down into its components in order to study it more closely

Rhetorical Analysis - the process of breaking down a piece of writing or speaking in order to look at the impacts of specific literary elements and their influence over the pathos, logos, and ethos of the piece. A rhetorical analysis may also consider the content of the message, the tone of the delivery, and the audience to whom it was presented.

In addition to looking at pages 4-5 for specific literary elements, the Rhetorical Triangle is a solid reference for considering the rhetorical impact of the piece.



Argument

FOR PRACTICE:

Find warrants which will interpret the data to support the claim:
Claim: The President should be applauded for his policies on minority owned businesses.
Evidence: The NYT reports that more minorities own businesses today than ever before.

IT'S THE THOUGHT THAT COUNTS?

Sometimes, even people who are used to media attention don't think before they speak. Take a look at these poorly thought out statements:

"Outside of the killings, Washington has one of the lowest crime rates in the country."
---Mayor Marion Barry, Washington, D.C.

"China is a big country, inhabited by many Chinese."
--- Former French President, Charles De Gaulle

"We're going to turn this team around 360 degrees"
--- Jason Kidd, upon being drafted by the Dallas Mavericks

"Smoking kills. If you're killed, you've lost a very important part of your life."
---Brooke Shields

"I haven't committed a crime. What I did was fail to comply with the law."
---David Dinkins, NYC Mayor, discussing his failure to pay taxes

"Whenever I watch TV and see those poor starving kids all over the world, I can't help but cry. I mean I'd love to be skinny like that, but not with all those flies and death and stuff."
---Mariah Carey

"A low voter turnout is an indication of fewer people going to the polls."
---Dan Quayle, Former Vice-President

"I catnap now and then . . . but I think while I nap, so it's not a waste of time."
---Martha Stewart

"I get to go to lots of overseas places, like Canada."
---Britney Spears

"If it weren't for electricity we'd all be watching television by candlelight."
---George Gobel

Effective arguments contain three central pieces: claim, evidence, and warrant. You should use these three pieces as your guide, both in the creation of your own arguments and in your analysis of the arguments of others.

Claim: A claim states your position on the issue you have chosen to write about.

Evidence: The evidence which you cite to support your claim. Like a lawyer presenting evidence to a jury, you must support your claim with facts. An unsupported claim is merely an assertion.

Evidence can include:

- Facts or statistics: objectively determined data about your topic.
- Expert opinion: the media and our essays are full of learned opinions which you should cite frequently, both to support your argument and to disagree with. Authors must be quoted and properly cited in your paper.
- Personal anecdote: the most difficult kind of data to use well, for doing so requires a persuasive argument that your own experience is objectively grasped and generalizable. Personal experience can, however, help bring an argument to life.

Warrant: the warrant interprets the data and shows how it supports our claim. The warrant, in other words, explains why the data proves the claim. In trials, lawyers for opposing sides often agree on the data but dispute the warrants. A philosopher would say that the warrant helps to answer the question, "What else must be true for this proposition to hold?"

Source: www.vandebilt.edu

<u>Here are a couple of examples:</u>

Claim: I think you should join my t'ai chi class.

Evidence: T'ai chi has helped me clear my mind and has brought peace to the soul.

Warrant: As an airline pilot, you need a clear mind and a peaceful soul.

Claim: Forks were not used in France in the fifteenth century.

Evidence: Paintings of banquets from that period show no forks on the tables or people eating with them.

Warrant: Contemporary paintings are an accurate indication of the customs of an age.

Irony

FOR PRACTICE:

With a partner, come up with two examples for each of the irony types below. Choose from life, books, movies, essays, conversations, etc.

IRONY OR SARCASM?
(**simplified**)

If you've ever said to someone, "I love what you're wearing" when you actually think it looks awful, there are three possibilities:

You want that person to believe you, in which case you're **lying**, but probably out of a kindly impulse.

You don't want to be believed: you want to upset the person. In this case you're being **sarcastic**.

You don't want to be believed: you want the other person to share a feeling of amusement. In this case you're being **ironic**.

—LitNotesUK

DEFINITIONS OF IRONY

1. In rhetoric, words with an implication opposite to their usual meaning. Ironic comment may be humorous or mildly sarcastic, as for example when, at a difficult moment, an act of kindness makes things worse, and someone says, "Well, that's a *lot* better, isn't it?" Expressions *heavy with irony* are often used to drive a point home: "I'm really looking forward to seeing him, *I don't think*." In such usages, irony slides into sarcasm. (For a distinction between irony and sarcasm, see the words to the left.)

2. In general usage, the difference between what is expected and what happens, and an outcome that displays such a clash. The sentence adverb *ironically* is often used to draw attention to it: "*Ironically*, his kindness only made things worse."

3. Wry awareness of life's incongruity and irrationality.

4. Another definition that is perhaps easy to remember: *meaningful incongruity*. Irony does not describe simple surprise or disappointment (*like rain on your wedding day*). An event must have some resonance or compounded circumstance (*like rain on a weatherman's wedding day*).

Specific types of irony:

VERBAL IRONY. The use of words to express something other than the literal meaning, especially the opposite of the literal meaning. This type of irony is kind of a combination of definitions 1 and 3 above. An example of this is Jonathan Swift's "A Modest Proposal."

SOCRATIC IRONY. Marked by disingenuousness, a mask of innocence and ignorance adopted to win an argument. In Plato's dialogues, Socrates often plays the weak and wily underdog who pretends ignorance and asks seemingly foolish questions so as to move a debate in the direction he wants.

DRAMATIC IRONY. Occurs generally in theater when the audience knows something important that the characters do not.

COSMIC IRONY. This refers to writing in which life, or God, or fate, or some other powerful force seems to be manipulating events in a way that mocks all the efforts of the protagonist. The phrase *irony of fate* suggests that, like drama, life treats people as if wryly mocking them, delivering at a strategic moment the opposite to what is deserved or at first seemed likely.

Wordiness

FOR PRACTICE: Omit unnecessary words.

In my opinion, the practice of the dress code, which is applied to everyone in the school, is one of those things that should be considered very carefully. The fact of the matter is, students should be able to express themselves according to their own self-identity. There is no doubt that this issue will be a matter of discussion throughout the years we attend this school.

CONTRAST

Note how one can prune unnecessary words from one's writing and preserve meaning.

There was much strife and trouble going on at this time in the former Soviet Union. People in Moscow were revolting against what they thought to be corrupt and unfair government. Boris Yeltsin, the country's leader, was on the hot seat. He responded by fighting back. He sent in tanks, soldiers, and helicopter gunships against rebels who had taken control over Russia's parliament building. All over the world people watched the violent drama unfold on CNN. Some Russians found the whole thing very sad or scary. On the TV one Russian man said, "I'm embarrassed for my country. Great nations should not have civil war in the streets, soldiers firing on rebels, and a capitol city on fire." (133 words)

Because Boris Yeltsin's government was seen as corrupt and unfair, many Russians rebelled. After protesters seized Russia's Parliament building, Yeltsin ordered tanks, soldiers, and helicopter gunships to attack, while CNN broadcast the violent drama around the world. To reporters Russians expressed both fear and sorrow. One man said, "I'm embarrassed for my country. Great nations should not have civil war in the streets, soldiers firing on rebels and a capitol city on fire." (77 words)

A writer should strive for pithiness (*pithy* means "terse and full of meaning"). Write no unnecessary words or phrases. By mastering a few principles, the writer's work will grow more graceful and forceful. Note how the phrases on the left, below, are easily whittled with no loss of meaning. (Some examples come from Strunk and White's *Elements of Style*.)

➢ ***The question as to whether***	➢ ***Whether***
➢ *There is no doubt that*	➢ *No doubt (doubtless)*
➢ ***Used for fuel purposes***	➢ ***Used for fuel***
➢ *He is a man who in a hasty manner*	➢ *He hastily*
➢ ***His story is a strange one***	➢ ***His story is strange***
➢ *This is a subject that*	➢ *This subject because*
➢ ***The reason why is that***	➢ ***Since (because)***
➢ *In spite of the fact that*	➢ *Though (although)*
➢ ***Call your attention to the fact that***	➢ ***Remind you (notify you)***
➢ *The fact that he had not succeeded*	➢ *His failure*
➢ ***The fact that I had arrived***	➢ ***My arrival***
➢ *In order to*	➢ *To*
➢ ***The car, which was known for its racing prowess***	➢ ***The car, known for its racing prowess***
➢ *Gore, who was Clinton's vice president*	➢ *Gore, Clinton's vice president*
➢ ***One of the reasons for this is that it gets cold at night***	➢ ***One reason is that it gets cold at night***
➢ *The phone of my sister kept ringing.*	➢ *My sister's phone kept ringing*
➢ ***The speech by Colbert was filled with a great deal of humor.***	➢ ***Colbert filled his speech with humor***
➢ *My ambition is that I hope to one day become an architect.*	➢ *I hope one day to become an architect*
➢ ***This robs the food of nutrients and makes it either soggy, in the case of vegetables, or tough, in the case of meats.***	➢ ***This robs the food of nutrient, making vegetables soggy and meat tough.***

Executioner's Block

FOR PRACTICE:

Write a paragraph using all of these words from the *executioner's block*. Then write a paragraph where you replace those weak words with stronger diction. See the difference!

WHY THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IS SO HARD

Homographs are words that are spelled the same but have different pronunciations and meanings. Look at how much homographs complicate the human language:

- We must polish the Polish furniture.
- He could lead if he would get the lead out.
- The farm was used to produce produce.
- The dump was so full that it had to refuse more refuse.
- After dessert, the soldier decided to desert his post in the desert.
- No time like the present to present the present.
- A bass and a trout were painted on the head of the bass drum.
- When shot at the dove, it dove into the bushes.
- I did not object to the object.
- The insurance was invalid for the invalid.
- The bandage was wound around the wound.
- There was a row among the oarsmen about how to row.
- They were too close to the door to close it.
- The buck does funny things when the does are present.
- They sent a sewer down to stitch the tear in the sewer line.
- After a number of injections, my jaw got number.
- Upon seeing the tear in my clothes, I shed a tear.
- I had to subject the subject to a series of tests.
- How can I intimate this to my most intimate friend?

Source: www.webenglishteacher.com

Most teachers have a list of words that they don't want you using in your writing. Your teacher may have other words to add to this list, but this is a starter list of words that make your writing weaker, for various reasons.

Some words are vague and don't actually say anything:

Thing	Stuff	Really	Very
Just	Pretty	A lot	Lots
Kind	Kind of	Kinda	Sort of
Sorta			

Some words are redundant and don't actually need to be said:

I believe	In conclusion	Shows	The fact that
In my opinion	I think	Tells	Says

The following are called *expletives*. Expletives start with a vague pronoun (it, this, that, there) and are followed by a *to be* verb (am, are, is, was, were, be, being, been. They create passive writing. For more on passive writing, refer to page 21.

It is	There are	There was
It was	There is	This is
That is	There were	This was

Avoid using first and second person in formal essays. Following that rule, these words should be avoided.

I	My	You
Me	Our	Yours

Clichés

FOR PRACTICE:

A. Go on a cliché scavenger hunt. First person to read or hear a dozen clichés wins. Promising places to look: the sports page of a newspaper, talk radio, campaign speeches, social studies textbooks.

B. Identify three clichés in the following fields: music, movies, art, television, theater, music videos, YouTube clips, education.

VISUAL AND MUSICAL CLICHES

Of course, clichés exist outside of writing and speaking. Hollywood, the radio, and art galleries have their own hackneyed tropes:

In the movies:

When action stars walk in slow motion away from an explosion.

When the teenage girl running away from the monster trips and falls down.

When a car won't start, just when the driver needs that car to start.

When the hero is alone, surrounded by dozens of bad guys, who then take turns attacking one by one.

In music:

When the lead singer yells, "Hello, Denver/Cleveland/etc! Are you ready to make some noise?"

When the rapper says, "Wave your hands in the air like you just don't care!"

When the audience sways their arms from side to side during a ballad.

In art:

When the road in the painting disappears into a distant sunset.

George Orwell writes that some authors use words the way people build prefabricated houses: rather than assembling language word by word or brick by brick, these writers take readymade phrases and plop them together. Some of the easiest phrases to adopt are clichés—hackneyed, overused words and ideas. Avoid them in your own writing. Below is a list of just some of the thousands of clichés that infest the English language. They may have been clever once, but now their usage generally betrays a tired writer opting for the easiest and most automatic words available. When they accumulate, they deaden the page.

- a jack of all trades and a master of none
- a penny saved is a penny earned
- a stitch in time saves nine
- a watched pot never boils
- acid test
- and you can take that to the bank
- at the end of the day
- axe to grind
- barking up the wrong tree
- baited breath
- beat a dead horse
- better late than never
- bite the dust
- bitter end
- break a leg
- broad daylight
- buckle under
- bury the hatchet
- calm before the storm
- caught red-handed
- caught with his pants down
- come hell or high water
- dead as a doornail
- don't burn your bridges
- don't let the bed bugs bite
- eat my dust
- face the music
- fate worse than death
- feel like a fifth wheel
- few and far between
- flown the coop
- free as a bird
- from the frying pan into the fire
- generous to a fault
- get on her high horse
- go the extra mile
- go with the flow
- handwriting on the wall
- harsh reality
- he gave a hundred and ten percent
- he went the whole 9 yards.
- he's always blowing his own horn
- he's chomping at the bit
- he's pulling your leg
- he's pushing up daisies
- I have a bone to pick with you
- I trust him as far as I can throw him
- if I were in his shoes
- if it ain't broke, don't fix it
- if it's not one thing it's another
- if you can't beat 'em, join 'em
- it's not the heat it's the humidity
- jump on the bandwagon
- keep your nose to the grindstone
- kick the bucket
- larger than life
- leaps and bounds
- like a broken record
- like a fish out of water
- live and let live
- look before you leap
- missed the boat
- open a can of worms
- patience is a virtue
- pay an arm and a leg
- playing with fire
- pull a fast one
- pulled the wool over my eyes
- pushing the envelope
- put the pedal to the metal
- raining cats and dogs
- running around like a chicken with its head cut off
- sharp as a tack
- shooting for the moon
- sigh of relief
- silence is golden
- sink or swim
- snowball's chance in hell
- stiff as a board
- that's icing on the cake
- that's just like the pot calling the kettle black.
- that's water under the bridge
- the blind leading the blind
- they're like two peas in a pod
- think outside the box
- tighter than a drum
- wake up and smell the coffee
- we're going to burn the midnight oil
- what goes around comes around
- when hell freezes over

Sentence Sins

FOR PRACTICE: Rewrite so that the sentences vary in length. Down the street there was a car crash. A Honda was hit by a Toyota. The drivers were very upset with each other at first. It happened in front of Pizza Hut. A half hour later the men were laughing together. I kissed him. He kissed me back. It was raining. A dog barked. Cars drove by. The sun was setting. I thought of someone else.

LONG DOES NOT EQUAL BAD

Sentence length has nothing to do with whether or not a sentence is a run-on or not.

Here is a sentence from "A Rose for Emily" by William Faulkner:

They held the funeral on the second day, with the town coming to look at Miss Emily beneath a mass of bought flowers, with the crayon face of her father musing profoundly above the bier and the ladies sibilant and macabre; and the very old men — some in their brushed Confederate uniforms — on the porch and the lawn, talking of Miss Emily as if she had been a contemporary of theirs, believing that they had danced with her and courted her perhaps, confusing time with its mathematical progression, as the old do, to whom all the past is not a diminishing road but, instead, a huge meadow which no winter ever quite touches, divided from them now by the narrow bottle-neck of the most recent decade of years.

That sentence is "only" 128 words long. Sometimes writers go much further. Faulkner himself wrote a 1288-word sentence in *Absalom, Absalom*; Proust often exceeds 700 words; Stanley Elkin loved 500-word sentences as much as he loved two-word sentences; James Joyce ends *Ulysses* with a 12,931-word sentence; and Nigel Tomm wrote an entire novel with just one sentence of 469,856 words. We are told his teachers would have marked it as a run-on.

Here are your English teacher's top three complaints:

Run-on sentences

A run-on sentence contains at least two independent clauses (ideas that can stand on their own) but runs them together without the necessary punctuation or relationships.

You will like that movie it has a lot of action.
Actually I was born in Texas I have a lot of relatives there.
Jack killed the giant the golden goose was his he escaped down the stalk.

Corrections:

You will like that movie because it has a lot of action.
Actually, I was born in Texas. In fact, I have a lot of relatives there.
After Jack killed the giant, the golden goose was his, and he escaped down the stalk.

Comma splices

Comma splice errors occur when the writer inserts a comma between two independent clauses. Generally, the sentence should be broken up or fixed with a coordinating conjunction.

I lost my ticket, it would have won me free tickets to the prom.
I lost my ticket, and it would have won me free tickets to the prom.

Misplaced and dangling modifiers

Place modifiers close to what they modify. Otherwise, you may modify the wrong element (misplaced modifier) or you may forget to add what is being modified (dangling modifier).

Misplaced:

Michael Phelps accepted the gold for swimming with tears in his eyes.
Katniss saw the forest fire approaching through the bathroom window.
Aretha served the dessert wearing a yellow dress.

Dangling:

While surfing in the Pacific, my car was stolen.
Waving hello to my mother, the train carried my sister home.
Running with a fast break, the basket got closer and closer.

Solutions: Re-order and fortify.

With tears in his eyes, Michael Phelps accepted the gold for swimming.
As I surfed in the Pacific, my car was stolen.

Logical Fallacies

FOR PRACTICE:
Using as many logical fallacies as possible, write a page in favor of deporting all puppies and kittens from the United States (or any other horrifying proposition).

AN INTERNET ARGUMENT TRAP

Godwin's Law
Godwin's law originally applied to internet discussions. The law states that the longer a discussion goes, the higher the probability of someone mentioning Hitler or the Nazis. At that point, whoever made that comparison automatically loses the argument.

HOW NOT TO ARGUE: A logical fallacy is an error in argument. Unfortunately, fallacies are often effective. I f one is able to spot such fallacies, one is better armed for any verbal conflict. (Examples below from *Stephen's Guide to the Logical Fallacies: http://onegoodmove.org/fallacy/toc.htm)*

Here are just a sample.

AD HOMINEM
(from the Latin, meaning "against the man" or "against the person")
An ad hominem is a general category of fallacies in which a claim or argument is rejected on the basis of some irrelevant fact about the author or the person you are arguing against. *Example:* Bill: "I believe abortion is wrong."
Dave: "Of course you would say that, you're a priest."
Bill: "What about the arguments I gave to support my position?"
Dave: "Those don't count. Like I said, you're a priest, so you have to say that abortion is wrong."

APPEAL TO FEAR
A fallacy that occurs when fear takes the place of evidence.
Example: "You know, Mr. Smith, I really need to get an A in this class. I'd like to stop by after school to discuss my grade. I'll be in the building later visiting my mother. She's your principal, by the way. See you later."

APPEAL TO FLATTERY
A fallacy that occurs when flattery takes the place of evidence.
Example: "Might I say that this is the best history class I've ever taken? By the way, about those two points I need to get an A . . . "

APPEAL TO NOVELTY
A fallacy that occurs when it is assumed that something is better or correct simply because it is new.
Example: "You should buy the Pretentium 350. It's got a new look and a whole new operating system."

APPEAL TO RIDICULE
A fallacy in which ridicule or mockery is substituted for evidence in an "argument." *Example*: "Sure the defendant's attorney says we should have mercy on his client, but that's just pathetic."

APPEAL TO TRADITION
A fallacy that occurs when it is assumed that something is better or correct simply because it is older, traditional, or "always has been done." This sort of "reasoning" is fallacious because the age of something does not automatically make it correct or better than something newer. *Example*: "Of course our king is the best. He has been on the throne longer than any other king in history, so he has got to be good."

BEGGING THE QUESTION (Circular Reasoning)
A fallacy in which the premises include the claim that the conclusion is true or (directly or indirectly) assume that the conclusion is true.
Examples: "If robbery were not illegal, then it would not be against the law." or "The belief in God is universal. After all, everyone believes in God."

CONFUSING CAUSE AND EFFECT
Committed when a person assumes that one event must cause another just because the events occur together.
Example: It is claimed by some people that severe illness is caused by depression and anger. After all, people who are severely ill are very often depressed and angry. Thus, the cause of severe illness actually is the depression and anger. So, a good and cheerful attitude is the key to staying healthy.

Logical Fallacies
continued

FOR PRACTICE:
Examine any politician's speech for logical fallacies. You may also inspect the arguments of cable news talkers, campaign ads, newspaper columns, and lawyers' appeals to juries.

FROM DAVE BARRY'S "HOW TO WIN AN ARGUMENT"

I argue very well. Ask any of my remaining friends. I can win an argument on any topic, against any opponent. People know this, and steer clear of me at parties. Often, as a sign of their great respect, they don't even invite me. You too can win arguments. Simply follow these rules:

Use meaningless but weighty-sounding words and phrases.

Memorize this list: *Let me put it this way, In terms of, Vis-a-vis , Per se, As it were, Qua, So to speak.*

You should also memorize some Latin abbreviations such as "Q.E.D.," "e.g.," and "i.e." These are all short for "I speak Latin, and you do not."

Here's how to use these words and phrases. Suppose you want to say: "Peruvians would like to order appetizers more often, but they don't have enough money." You never win arguments talking like that.

But you WILL win if you say: "Let me put it this way. In terms of appetizers vis-a-vis Peruvians qua Peruvians, they would like to order them more often, so to speak, but they do not have enough money per se, as it were. Q.E.D."

Only a fool would challenge that statement.

GUILT BY ASSOCIATION
Committed when a person rejects a claim simply because it is pointed out that people she dislikes accept the claim.
Example: Fred and Natalie are discussing for whom they will vote for Student Senate. Natalie hates Bret and Wayne because they make fun of her clothes.
Fred: "So, who are you going to vote for?"
Natalie: "Well, I was thinking about voting for Emma, since we have never had an Eskimo in the Senate. But Johnny is certainly the best qualified. He'd be great."
Fred: "You know, Bret and Wayne are supporting him too. I never thought I'd see you and those two pigs on the same side."
Natalie: "Well, maybe it is time that we have an Eskimo."

HASTY GENERALIZATION
Committed when a person draws a conclusion about a population based on a sample that is not large enough.
Example: Sam is riding her bike in her hometown in Maine, minding her own business. A station wagon comes up behind her and the driver starts beeping his horn and then tries to force her off the road. As he goes by, the driver yells, "Get on the sidewalk where you belong!" Sam sees that the car has Ohio plates and concludes that all Ohio drivers are jerks.

POST HOC
(from the Latin phrase, *Post hoc, ergo propter hoc*, meaning "After this, therefore because of this")
Committed when it is concluded that one event causes another simply because the proposed cause occurred before the proposed effect. More simply, this fallacy concludes that A causes B because A occurs before B, and there is not sufficient evidence to actually warrant such a claim.
Example: "I had been doing pretty poorly this season. Then my girlfriend gave me these neon laces for my spikes and I won my next three races. Those laces must be good luck. If I keep on wearing them I can't help but win!"

RED HERRING (Smoke Screen)
Committed when an irrelevant topic is presented in order to divert attention from the original issue. The basic idea is to "win" an argument by leading attention away from the argument and to another topic.
Example: "Argument" against a ballot amendment: "We admit that this amendment is popular. But we also urge you to note that there are so many amendments on this ballot that the whole thing is getting ridiculous."

SLIPPERY SLOPE
Committed when a person wishes to show a proposition is wrong by presenting increasingly unacceptable events if the proposition is accepted.
Examples: "If I make an exception for you, then I'll have to make an exception for everyone." "If we pass laws against fully-automatic weapons, then it won't be long before we pass laws on all weapons, and then we will begin to restrict other rights, and finally we will end up living in a communist state. Thus, we should not ban fully-automatic weapons."

STRAW MAN
Committed when a person simply ignores a person's actual position and substitutes a distorted, exaggerated or misrepresented version of that position.
Example: "Senator Jones says that we should not fund the attack submarine program. I disagree entirely. I can't understand why he wants to leave us defenseless like that."

Spelling

For Practice:

Write a single paragraph using at least ten words that obey the rules below.

THE PERFECT SPELL CHECKER?

Eye halve a spelling chequer
It came with my pea sea.
It plainly Marx four my revue
Miss steaks eye kin knot sea.
Eye strike a quay and type a word
And weight four it two say
Weather eye yam wrong oar write
It shows me strait a weigh.
As soon as a mist ache is maid,
It nose bee fore two long
And eye can put the era rite
Its rare lea ever wrong.
Eye have run this poem threw it
I am shore your pleased two no.
Its letter perfect awl the weigh
My chequer told me sew.
--- Anonymous

G-H-O-T-I

To demonstrate how disgusted he was by the inconsistency of English spelling, George Bernard Shaw asserted that there are two ways to spell the common creatue of the sea: *FISH* or *GHOTI*. The second word is pronounced just like the first, thanks to these sounds:

GH from laugh
O from women
TI from motion

So the next time you catch and grill a trout or a salmon – you know, a ghoti – think of Shaw.

SPELLING RULES AND ADVICE

Rule 1: Write *i* before *e* except after *c*, unless the vowel sounds like *a* as in neighbor and weigh.

Examples:	*receive*	*perceive*	*relief*

Exceptions: Eight of the exceptions are included in this sentence:

Neither sheikh dared to leisurely seize either of the weird species of financiers.

When the ie/ei combination is not pronounced ee, it is usually spelled ei.

Examples:	*reign*	*foreign*	*weigh*	*neighbor*
Exceptions:	*fiery*	*friend*	*mischief*	*view*

Rule 2: When a one-syllable word (bat) ends in a consonant (t) preceded by a vowel (a), double the final consonant before adding a suffix that begins with a vowel (batting).

Sum – summary	god – goddess

When a multi-syllable word (control) ends in a consonant (l) preceded by a vowel (o), the accent is on the last syllable, and the suffix begins with a vowel (ing) – the same rule holds true: double the final consonant (controlling).

Prefer – preferred	begin – beginning
Forget – forgettable	admit – admittance

Rule 3: If a word ends with a silent e, drop the e before adding a suffix that begins with a vowel

State – stating – statement	like – liking – likeness
Use – using – useful	nine – ninety – nineteen

Note: You do not drop the e when the suffix beings with a consonant. Exceptions include judgement, truly, argument, and ninth

Rule 4: When y is the last letter in a word and the y is preceded by a consonant, change the y to i before adding any suffix except those beginning with i.

Fry – fries	hurry – hurried	lady – ladies
Ply – pliable	happy – happiness	beauty – beautiful

When forming the plural of a word that ends with a y that is preceded by a vowel, add s.

Toy – toys play – plays	monkey -- monkeys

Writing Checklist

FOR PRACTICE:
Trade papers with a classmate and apply this checklist to each other's writing.

WISDOM

I have already made this paper too long, for which I must crave pardon, not having now time to make it shorter.
—*Benjamin Franklin*

The difference between the right word and the almost-right word is the difference between the lightning and the lightning-bug.
—*Mark Twain*

You can always edit a bad page. You can't edit a blank page.
—*Jodi Picoult*

Someone watches over us when we write. Mother. Teacher. Shakespeare. God.
—*Martin Amis*

People say to write about what you know. I'm here to tell you, no one wants to read that, because you don't know anything. So write about something you don't know. And don't be scared, ever.
—*Toni Morrison*

Thirty years ago my older brother, who was ten years old at the time, was trying to get a report written on birds that he'd had three months to write, which was due the next day. He was at the kitchen table close to tears, surrounded by binder paper and pencils and unopened books about birds, immobilized by the hugeness of the task ahead. Then my father sat down beside him put his arm around my brother's shoulder, and said, "Bird by bird, buddy. Just take it bird by bird."
—*Anne Lamott*

QUESTIONS TO ASK AS YOU ADVANCE YOUR WRITING TO ITS FINAL DRAFT:

___ 1. Is my heading complete?
___ 2. Is my format (margins, font size, title) correct?
___ 3. Have I re-checked my teacher's assignment and rubric?
___ 4. Is my thesis clear?
___ 5. Do I have enough support for my argument?
___ 6. Have I checked my spelling?
___ 7. Have I checked my grammar?
___ 8. Have I proofread by reading out loud?
___ 9. Does every sentence make sense?
___ 10. Does every sentence deserve to stay in the essay?
___ 11. Are my sentences varied in length?
___ 12. Does each paragraph have a topic sentence?
___ 13. Do my supporting details focus on each paragraph's main idea?
___ 14. Have I credited all paraphrased ideas and direct quotations?
___ 15. Have I followed the rules for citations and bibliography?
___ 16. Have I used transitions to link ideas and paragraphs?
___ 17. Have I pruned unnecessary words?
___ 18. Have I omitted clichés?
___ 19. Have I expressed my ideas with force?
___ 20. Have I omitted redundant arguments and details?
___ 21. Does my introduction get my reader's attention?
___ 22. Does my conclusion reinforce but not repeat my main points?
___ 23. Can I go outside and play now?

Plagiarism

FOR MORE:
Go to Wikipedia to learn about the book *How Opal Mehta Got Kissed, Got Wild, and Got a Life*. Its author published the book right after high school. It is one of the reasons she was accepted to Harvard. The book was later recalled by the publisher after the *Harvard Crimson* discovered how much of the book was plagiarized. At Wikipedia, be sure to contrast the sampled passages.

CAUTIONARY TALES

Nada Behziz of the Bakersfield Californian plagiarized health columns and fabricated others. She was fired.

Jayson Blair plagiarized stories for the New York Times. He was fired, along with some of his editors who did not catch his wrongdoing.

Doris Kearns Goodwin, historian and Harvard professor, paid monetary damages to another writer she plagiarized.

Vishway Jit Gupta, geology professor, fabricated fossil images and plagiarized others' research. He was fired.

Dr. Dre has paid over $1.5 million in lawsuits over plagiarism.

George Harrison, John Lennon, Brian Wilson, Timbaland, and Led Zeppelin have all had to pay fines and royalties to artists they stole from.

Harvard withdrew admission of a high school valedictorian who plagiarized columns in a local newspaper.

Fareed Zakaria was suspended by CNN and Time magazine for plagiarizing.

Plagiarism is stealing. A writer must never take another writer's work or ideas and claim them as the writer's own. (The word itself comes from the Latin *plagiarius*, meaning "kidnapper.")

Whenever employing another writer's **information** or **insight**, the writer must be given credit.

If caught plagiarizing for the first time, a typical college student will fail that class. A second offense earns expulsion. At a school with an honor code, a first offense is often enough to warrant expulsion.

At Grand Junction High School, we believe that the more students know, the less likely they are to violate academic integrity.

The following situations constitute plagiarism and should always be avoided:

- Turning in another student's paper as your own.
  Turning in any other writer's work as your own.
- Copying a part of another student's paper and incorporating it into your paper.
- Copying a part of a website, book, or article and incorporating it into your paper.
- Quoting a source word for word without using quotation marks and a citation.
- Paraphrasing, adopting, or summarizing a source's ideas without giving a citation.

Certain information need not be cited. For example, if you learn that the Earth is five billion years old or that Babe Ruth hits 714 home runs, you do not have to mention where you learned such facts. Such information is generally available in thousands of publications. It is considered common knowledge. However, if you find information that says sportswriters protected Babe Ruth by concealing his bad habits, that fact is not generally known and a citation is required.

Note: Carelessness and sloppiness are not excuses for plagiarism. Most teachers will punish lazy and incompetent students the same way they punish liars and cheats. Please consult the student handbook for GJHS's plagiarism policy.

Plagiarism
continued

FOR MORE:
Investigate the honor codes that many high schools and universities require of their students. Discuss with your classmates whether or not Grand Junction High School should have such an honor code.

A STUDENT'S VOICE
From Gilmore's book *Plagiarism*:

Plagiarism occurs more than anyone would like, but I will have to admit the majority of the students are much more clever about it than your everyday "print an essay offline and hand it in" scenario. Paraphrasing and the copy-and-paste function become the instant companion to any student wishing to get an assignment done, just to attain the goal of turning it in on time with minimum effort.

My general opinion is that plagiarism is something too idiotic to risk getting caught and being deemed an "immoral" student. I used to be one of the over-achievers who got by sometimes with easy A's by cheating or copying work. I learned the hard way that this not only has large consequences on the teacher-student-parent trust level, but also for someone who spends so much time avoiding doing work, in the end nothing good comes to you in return. I am happy to say I do my own work now, and as an end result have improved my writing and work ethics immensely.

—Beverly, age eighteen

From *Plagiarism: Why It Happens, How to Prevent It* by Barry Gilmore:

TOP TEN STUDENT TIPS FOR AVOIDING PLAGIARISM

1. ***Know the definition of plagiarism at your school***. Check with instructors to determine whether collaboration is permitted and what they expect of your bibliography. Remember that *all* ideas and words must be cited.

2. ***Take good notes***. Develop strategies such as note cards or spreadsheet files that will help you keep track of sources, authors, and websites.

3. ***Paraphrase carefully***. Try not to use more than one or two important words from the original source when you paraphrase material (and remember to cite that source even if your material isn't in quotation marks).

4. ***Learn and attribute correctly***. Ask teachers what citation format they prefer and learn the basics. For more difficult citations, find a web page or book that will guide you.

5. ***Leave plenty of time***. Don't get caught behind a deadline—most plagiarism occurs when students feel desperate or rushed.

6. ***Make sure you understand the assignment***. Ask questions in advance that will help you avoid the feeling of being "lost" or overwhelmed.

7. ***Research wisely***. Use your research skills for more than a quick web search—learn how to use search engines, databases, and the library to find the best possible sources for your projects.

8. ***Make your bibliography as you work***. Type your bibliography as you find sources rather than waiting until the final draft of your paper—there are many websites that can help you format a bibliography quickly and easily.

9. ***Double-check your papers***. Use a search engine or free plagiarism detection software to check your own papers before you hand them in.

10. ***Make the assignment personal***. Try to make assignments important to you. Where possible, tweak topics or arguments to put your own spin on them. Look for what you can learn from the project, not just for the grade you will receive at the end.

Citations

FOR PRACTICE:
Assemble five sources (books, articles, DVDs, etc.). Then create a Works Cited page for an imaginary paper that uses all these sources. Alphabetize your list according to MLA style.

MLA VS. APA?

If your teacher prefers APA style to MLA style, the OWL is here to help:

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/

When you cite outside sources for your research paper you need to make sure you give credit to those who deserve it. Parenthetical citations and a "Works Cited" page will do the job. Some general rules:

Whenever you repeat, word for word, what someone else has said or written, enclose the statement in quotation marks and use a parenthetical citation to give credit to the speaker or writer. **You should also use a citation when you state someone else's ideas in your own words**; this will make it clear to the reader that the ideas are not your own but those of some authority.

To write a parenthetical citation, you do just as it appears in the example below: you type the last name of your source and the appropriate page number that provided the **quotation, idea, or fact** you are employing. The reader can then follow the citation to your alphabetized Works Cited page to see the specific source. The Works Cited page will give complete details, but the citation must be specific.

For example:

> Newspeak is described proudly as the "only language in the world whose vocabulary gets smaller every year" (Orwell 46).

Your Works Cited page at the end of the paper would then have the complete and correct information:

> Orwell, George. *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1949. Print.

If you insist on using footnotes or endnotes instead of parenthetical citations, you may if your teacher allows, but it is more of a bother. Example:

> Newspeak is described proudly as the "only language in the world whose vocabulary gets smaller every year." [2]
>
> [2] Orwell 46

SEE PAGES 49 AND 50 FOR EXAMPLES OF A WRITER USING MLA CITATIONS. SEE PAGE 51 FOR AN EXAMPLE OF A WORKS CITED PAGE.

Paraphrasing

For Practice:

Discuss with your teacher and classmates why the paraphrasing examples below both fail and succeed. Next, practice paraphrasing another writer for a few sentences. Note when and why to give credit.

ADDING COMMENTARY

To ensure that your own voice is at the heart of the paper you write, be sure to interpret the information you convey. Add commentary to the facts you uncover, so that your reader may be shaped by *your* argument, rather than your sources' argument.

For example, consider this paragraph (written years ago, by the way). Support is in **bold,** while commentary is in *italics.*

In addition, *we as Americans must think about the financial state of our country.* After the **rapid growth in the 1980s, our economy has slumped into a recession** that has forced Americans to be more frugal. Meanwhile, **millions of dollars are being sent to our soldiers in the Middle East.** *Already,* **Operation Desert Shield has cost $17.5 million** (Lydon 3). While our allies profess their utmost support in stopping *the madman Hussein*, **it is the United States that is paying for 90 percent of the effort** (Costello 21). *This drainage of resources is increasing out national debt.*

Note how the author above mixes her opinion with the facts. Even the word "already" casts a fact in a persuasive light. Note as well that the author gives credit to her sources.

As Barry Gilmore writes, "The problem with paraphrasing, frankly, is that most students haven't learned to do it well. Paraphrasing is a legitimate practice so long as credit is given."

The value of paraphrasing has partly to do with not overwhelming a paper with excessive quotations. The paraphrasing author may sustain his or her voice as a writer even when conveying other people's ideas or information. However, again, the writer must give credit.

Consider the following examples from Gilmore's *Plagiarism: Why It Happens, How to Prevent It*:

ORIGINAL SOURCE

"Some mention should be made of the notion of common knowledge before we turn to the standard for documenting sources. Observations and facts that are widely known and routinely included in many of your sources do not require documentation. It is not necessary to cite a source for the fact that Alfred Tennyson was born in 1809 or that Ernest Hemingway loved to fish and hunt" (Meyer 276).

INCORRECT PARAPHRASE

It's worth noting that in a research paper, common knowledge need not be documented. Data that is universally learned, like the date of Tennyson's birth or Hemingway's love of hunting, is exempt from the need for documentation.

CORRECT PARAPHRASE

According to Meyer, facts and observations that are widely known, such as Tennyson's birth or Hemingway's love of hunting, constitute a body of common knowledge that does not require documentation (276).

MLA Format

FOR PRACTICE:
Find three books, one song, and one web article and put their information into proper MLA format. Run your results by your teacher.

SOURCES

Some teachers require a certain number of primary sources and secondary sources in your research.

Primary Sources include a writer's original words, eyewitness accounts, videotape of an event, interviews, speeches, diaries, and original documents.

Secondary Sources are works about someone, critical evaluations, historical summaries, reviews, newspaper accounts, encyclopedias, textbooks, and interpretations.

EXAMPLES:

Primary:
Anne Frank's original journal entries

Secondary:
A biographer's interpretation of those entries

Primary:
A Supreme Court justice's written opinion in *Brown v. Board of Education*

Secondary: *The Not So Strange Path of Desegregation in America's Public Schools* by Philip Daniel

Most teachers and your future professors require the Modern Language Association (MLA) format for citations. For a more complete guide go to Purdue's OWL website: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/

Basic Format

Last Name, First Name. *Title of Book*. City of Publication: Publisher, Year of Publication. Medium of Publication.

Book with One Author

Hitchens, Christopher. *Arguably*. New York: Twelve Books, 2011. Print.

Books with more than one author

White, E.B. and William Strunk. *The Elements of Style*. 4th ed. New York: Longman Books, 1999. Print.

Two or more books by the same author

Wallace, David Foster. *Consider the Lobster.* New York: Back Bay Books, 2007. Print.

----. *A Supposedly Fun Thing I'll Never Do Again.* New York: Back Bay Books, 1998. Print.

Book with no author

Encyclopedia of Pseudoscience. New York: Prometheus, 1993. Print.

A translated book

Voltaire. *Philosophical Dictionary*. Trans. Theodore Besterman. Boston: Nabu Press, 2001. Print.

Anthology or collection

Eggers, Dave, ed. *The Best American Non-required Reading 2012*. San Francisco: Mariner Books, 2012. Print.

A work in an anthology or collection

Elkin, Stanley. "Plot." *Writers on Writing.* Ed. James Anderson. St. Louis: Washington University Press, 1988. 71-82. Print.

Article in a magazine

Rosenberg, Alyssa. "The Return of Spike Lee." *The Nation.* 19 April 2010: 45-48. Print.

Article in a newspaper

Rice, Janelle. "Hail to the Veep." *Washington Post* 17 October 2009 late ed.: A7. Print.

Article in a scholarly journal

Rodriguez, Guy. "Roosevelt as Conservationist: A Forgotten Legacy." *California Environmental Studies* 8.3 (2002): 56-71. Print.

MLA Format

continued

FOR PRACTICE:
Visit the OWL website and note all the varieties of resources that students and scholars cite. Note also the explanations for page numbers, edition and volume numbers, etc.
website: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/

CITATION HELP

An excellent site for putting your resources in proper MLA format is KnightCite:

http://www.calvin.edu/library/knightcite/

Just plug in your information and it will generate an MLA-style citation.

Citing an entire website
Felluga, Dino. *Guide to Literary and Critical Theory*. Purdue U, 28 Nov. 2003. Web. 10 May 2006.

A page on a website
"Poltergeist." *The Skeptic's Dictionary*. Bob Carroll. Web. 22 Feb. 2012.

Image (painting, sculpture, photograph, illustration)
Lipski, Donald. *The Yearling.* The NBT Foundation. 1993. Denver Public Library. Web. 13 April 2010.

Email
Cruz, Penelope. "Hi Todd." Message to the author. 15 Nov. 2011. E-mail.

Tweet
Miller, T.J. (nottjmiller). "Just offered a kid 50 bucks to try and fit into the cargo pockets of his cargo pants." 11 Aug. 2012, 2:22 p.m. Tweet.

Personal interview
Diaz, Junot. Personal interview. 1 Dec. 2009.

Speech or lecture
Dawkins, Richard. "The Greatest Show on Earth." Denver University, Denver, CO. 23 May 2007. Lecture.

Painting, Sculpture, or Photograph
Picasso, Pablo. *Guernica*. 1937. Museo Reina Sofia, Madrid.

Film
The Avengers. Dir. Joss Whedon. Perf. Robert Downey Jr., Mark Ruffalo, Scarlett Johansson. Marvel, 2012. Film.

Television Broadcast
"Bringing Up Buster." *Arrested Development.* Fox. KWGN, Denver. 19 Jul. 2011. Television.

DVD or Blu-Ray
"Wrap It Up." *The Chapelle Show*: *Season One*. Writ. Dave Chappelle. Dir. Elgin Wright. Comedy Central, 2004. DVD.

Sound recordings
Sam Cooke. "A Change Is Gonna Come." *The Man and His Music.* RCA. 1988. CD.

Digital file (mp3, pdf, etc.)
Leach, Archibald. "Questioning Authority." *Human Events* 82.2 (1975): 217-241. JSTOR. PDF file.

Inspirations

FOR PRACTICE:

1. Compile a list of five favorite sentences from any books, essays, or stories that you admire. Consider why you chose them and describe their virtues.
2. Imagine the worst possible opening lines for books you would never want to read. Include the book titles.

OSCAR WILDE'S GREATEST HITS

I can resist everything but temptation.

Those who try to lead the people can only do so by following the mob.

What is a cynic? A man who knows the price of everything and the value of nothing.

Experience is the name everyone gives to their mistakes.

The basis of optimism is sheer terror.

There is no such thing as a moral or an immoral book. Books are well written or badly written.

The supreme vice is shallowness.

It is not prisoners who need reformations. It is the prisons.

It is only the modern that ever becomes old-fashioned.

At twilight nature becomes a wonderfully suggestive effect, and is not without loveliness, though perhaps its chief use is to illustrate quotations from the poets.

FAMOUS FIRST LINES

As I write, highly civilized human beings are flying overhead, trying to kill me.
—George Orwell, "The Lion and the Unicorn"

Once upon a time and a very good time it was there was a moocow coming down along the road and this moocow that was coming down along the road met a nice boy named baby tuckoo.
—James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*

Many years later, as he faced the firing squad, Colonel Aureliano Buendia was to remember that distant afternoon when his father took him to discover ice.
—Gabriel Garcia Marquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*

Billy Pilgrim has come unstuck in time.
—Kurt Vonnegut, Slaughterhouse Five

124 was spiteful.
—Toni Morrison, *Beloved*

He was an inch, perhaps two, under six feet, powerfully built, and he advanced straight at you with a slight stoop of the shoulders, head forward, and a fixed from-under stare which made you think of a charging bull.
—Joseph Conrad, *Lord Jim*

The sky above the port was the color of television, tuned to a dead channel.
—William Gibson, *Neuromancer*

Ships at a distance have every man's wish on board.
—Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

Ages ago, Alex, Allen, and Alva arrived at Antibes, and Alva allowing all, allowing anyone, against Alex's admonition, against Allen's angry assertion: another African amusement . . . anyhow, as all argued, an awesome African army assembled and arduously advanced against an African anthill, assiduously annihilating ant after ant, and afterward, Alex astonishingly accuses Albert as also accepting Africa's antipodal ant annexation.
—Walter Abish, *Alphabetical Africa*

If I am out of my mind, it's all right with me, thought Moses Herzog.
—Saul Bellow, *Herzog*

Laughter always forgives.
—Martin Amis, "The Moronic Inferno"

Models

FOR THE STUDENT:
Read each example as a model of one of the dozens of ways to write effectively. Learn how each writer uses language, examples, style, and structure to earn his or her arguments and ideas.

FOR YOUR NEXT GAME OF HANGMAN: A few of the longest words in the English language.
Sesquipedalian (14 letters, meaning "many syllables")
Antidisestablishmentarianism (28 letters: the movement that opposes disestablishment)
Floccinaucinihilipilification (29 letters: an act of judging something worthless)
Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious (34 letters: from *Mary Poppins*)
Hippomonstrosesquipedaliaphobia (36 letters: the fear of long words)
Pneumonoultramicroscopicsilicovolcanoconiosis (45 letters: a volcano-based lung disease)
Chargoggagoggmanchauggagoggchaubunagungamaugg (45 letters: a lake in Massachusetts)
Bababadalgharaghtakamminarronnkonnbronntonnerronntuonnthunntrovarrhounawnskawntoohoordenenthurnuk (101 letters: James Joyce): thunderclap sound)

MODEL: BUSINESS LETTER

Aurora Chamber of
Commerce
562 Sable Blvd.
Aurora, CO 80011
December 15, 2012

(four to seven spaces)

Ms. Debra Webber,
Owner
Webber's Books
Aurora Mall
14200 E. Alameda Ave.
Aurora, Colorado 80012

(double space)

Dear Ms. Webber:

(double space)

Welcome to the Aurora business community. As the Chamber's Executive Director, I would like to thank you for opening your store in the Aurora Mall.

Webber's Books is a welcome addition to the town's economy, especially with the store's emphasis on educational resources. For this reason, I encourage you to join the Chamber of Commerce. As a member of the Chamber of Commerce, you will have a voice in your community's development and access to promotional materials. I have enclosed a brochure about our work in the community.

If you decide to join, I would be delighted to set up a ribbon-cutting ceremony within two weeks. You would meet other members of the Chamber and receive some useful news coverage. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours truly,

(four spaces for signature)

Thomas Smith

Thomas Smith

Models

continued

FOR THE STUDENT:

Read each example as a model of one of the dozens of ways to write effectively. Learn how each writer uses language, examples, style, and structure to earn his or her arguments and ideas.

HOW TO ANALYZE A TEXT

- Read or reread the text with specific questions in mind
- Assemble basic ideas, events, and names
- Think through your personal reaction to the book: identification, enjoyment, significance, application
- Identify and consider the most important ideas
- Return to the text to locate specific evidence and passages related to the major ideas

PRINCIPLES FOR ANALYSIS

After offering an observation or asserting an argument, cite the text and provide context. (Be sure to avoid too much summary.) Then comes the important part: **comment in some way on what you have discovered.** Try a combination of some of the following elements:

- Discuss what happens in the passage and why it is significant to the work as a whole
- Consider what is said, particularly subtleties of the imagery and the ideas expressed
- Assess how it is said, considering the word choice, the ordering of ideas, sentence structure, etc.
- Explain what it means, tying your analysis back to the significance of the work as a whole

—Beth Martin Birky

MODEL: LITERARY ANALYSIS

"The more you suffer, the more it shows you really care" (Offspring "Self-esteem"). Suffering with or for another person is the embodiment of commitment; it creates a bond so strong that even terrible and miserable circumstances cannot break it. Alan Dugan's "Love Song: I and Thou" presents love as such a bond, which provides a refuge from the despicable yet immutable world.

The narrator, likening his life to a house, perceives the inherent flaws in his world. He analyzes the materials he has to create the basic form of his house and finds that "nothing is plumb, level or square" (Dugan line 1). With "bowed" (2) studs, "shaky" (3) joists, and "bent nails" (5) as his resources, the narrator realizes the futility of trying to shape his life; no matter what he does, the nature of the world will prevent his house from achieving perfection. Granted only these deplorable supplies with which to build his life, the narrator reflects on his existence and concludes that "God damned it" (23), meaning that his life was doomed from the start. All the effort and work he dedicated to his house has been rendered meaningless; God has made making a house impossible. As if such formidable obstacles to life were not cruel enough, the narrator must also accept that "[he is] no carpenter" (8); he lacks the skills to construct even a decent abode with what he has been given. Thus, the narrator is forced to recognize his life for what it is: a rickety, dreadful shack.

Despite the tremendously daunting realities of the world that confront him, the narrator discusses his life with an underlying tone of acceptance. He has already seen that anger does not improve his situation; when he "spat rage's nails / into the frame-up of [his] work" (16-17), his house miraculously "settled plumb, / level, solid, square, and true" (18-19) but only for "one great moment" (20). Then, in a typical display of the world's refusal to allow flawlessness, the house "screamed and went on through / skewing as wrong the other way" (22). The narrator understands that his house, formed through years of meticulous toiling, experienced a fleeting perfection that can never be attained again. Yet, the narrator does not condemn the world and its monstrosities but, instead, accepts his "hell" (23). After all, "[he] planned it, [he] sawed it, / [he] nailed it, and [he] / will live in it until it kills [him]" (24-26). He places no blame; while admitting some responsibility for his situation, he also understands that parts of his life – significant parts – are beyond his control.

Because the narrator must trudge through every day of his life suffering in misery, he yearns to discover some solace in his gloomy existence. Utilizing another metaphor, the narrator invokes Christ's crucifixion to describe his attitude toward life. Just as Christ's crucifixion is believed to promise salvation, the narrator reasons that his symbolic crucifixion will result in the salvaging of his life. However, he cannot "do everything [himself]" (29); he can only "nail [his] left palm" (27). Dependent on a "hand to nail the right" (30), he requires "a help, a love, a you, a wife" (31). By offering such help, his wife has the ability to become his savior. If she nails his other hand, she sends the symbolic message that she would rather experience his misery with him than be without him. Such a commitment would dramatically lessen the troubles of the narrator; his world, while still rough and tragic, would appear less daunting with someone by his side, someone who will stay with him regardless of how pitiful their lives become. Her commitment would be his salvation. At last he would have a solid base for his life.

Thus, what ostensibly appears to be a terrifying description of life is actually a request by the narrator for his "love" to provide the only available comfort in his inescapable suffering. The narrator's love song is one last plea for someone to venture inside his rickety, dreadful shack and cut the rope that holds him. Should his "love" do so, he would come crashing down, his feet would plunge through the floor, exposed nails slashing his delicate flesh, the walls would topple at the instant of impact, leaving him exposed to the howling wind, assuming, of course, that he survives the beams tumbling down around him. But, he would be with his "love," and they could build a new house together.

Models

continued

FOR THE STUDENT:
Read each example as a model of one of the dozens of ways to write effectively. Learn how each writer uses language, examples, style, and structure to earn his or her arguments and ideas.

MODEL:
FORMAT FOR AN ARGUMENTATIVE PAPER

At a minimum, your argumentative paper will include:

- A title
- A topic paragraph with a topic sentence that proclaims the argument
- An explanation of the argument
- Some evidence from the text or texts for the explanation of the argument
- A counterargument you swiftly demolish
- Perhaps some sense of the larger significance of your theme
- A conclusion reasserting the truth of the argument you proclaimed in your opening paragraph.

—*David R. Williams*, Dr. Dave's Guide to Writing the College Paper

Note that you can reassert truth in your conclusion while avoiding repetition of information and ideas. In other words, don't repeat—reinforce.

MODEL: PERSONAL ESSAY

My boyfriend Kevin and I went out for a year and during that time, we fought until we got sick of it. We fought about the stupid things all couples fight about, but the main thing that came between us was something that other couples probably don't have to deal with. We constantly argued about whether I was too Americanized.

Kevin and I both came to the United States from Korea five years ago. Although we had this in common, we had different points of view on everything. He would ask me why I couldn't be like other Korean girls. If I were "real" Korean girl, I would listen when he told me to do something, depended on him to do most things, and think his way instead of my way. When I didn't agree with him, we would have another fight. To me, he was too Korean and too narrow- minded. He refused to accept any culture except his own, and he always thought his way was the only way.

I eat Korean food, speak Korean, have respect for my parents as Koreans have, and celebrate Korean holidays and traditional days. I even joined the Korean club in school, so I can observe my customs with Korean friends.

During the past five years, however, I have come to love certain customs of other cultures. For example, I see the way my Hispanic friends greet people with affection. They kiss and hug when they say "hello," and I love this. (In Korea, people are much more formal; they just shake hands and bow to each other out of respect. So I started kissing my friends on the cheek, too.

Kevin didn't like this, and he told me so. He even asked me to stop it. I didn't want to, so I did anyway, but not as much. Later on, he told me not to kiss and hug other people. I asked him why, and he said he didn't like it and other Koreans didn't act the way I did. He couldn't accept it.

Traditional Korean men like to tell their wives and girlfriends what to do. He would always tell me how to dress and how to act in front of others. He wanted me to stay next to him all the time. I would complain that I was not his little toy and that how couldn't just order me around.

When I would go against his wishes, Kevin would say, "Why are you so Americanized?" I didn't know how to respond to this question. He said I must be ashamed of my county and culture. I am proud of being a Korean. I just want to accept other cultures, too.

I can't deny that I sometimes act like an American, trying to be more independent and outgoing than other Korean girls. But I still act like a Korean, too. I want to go with the flow, and that doesn't mean I don't like my culture. I am trying to balance two cultures. Through my boyfriend, I got a chance to think about who I really am. I realized that I am Korean and an American too.

Models

continued

FOR THE STUDENT:
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MODEL: PARAGRAPH WITH TOPIC SENTENCE AND SUPPORT

The fact is that homeless people are not always better off in shelters. Consider Alan, who has lived on the streets for years. He say that he had spent some time in shelters for the homeless, and he reports what they are like. They're dangerous and dehumanizing. Drug dealing, beatings, and theft are common. The shelters are dirty and crowded, so that residents have to wait in long lines for everything and are constantly being bossed around. No wonder some of San Fransisco's homeless people, including Alan, prefer the street: it affords some space to breath, some autonomy, and some peace for sleeping.

Note how each sentence supports the italicized topic sentence. Note also how the last sentence ties the paragraph's points together.

MODEL: INFORMAL ARGUMENT

One swallow does not make a summer, nor can two or three cases often support a dependable generalization. Yet all of us, including the most polished eggheads, are constantly falling into this mental people trap. It is the most common, probably the most seductive, and potentially the most dangerous of all the fallacies.

You drive through a town, and you see a drunken man on the sidewalk. A few blocks further, you see another. You turn to your companion: "nothing but dunks in this town!" Soon you are out in the country, bowling along at fifty. A car passes you as if you were parked. On a curve a second one whizzes by. Your companion turns to you: "All the drivers in this state are crazy!" Two thumping generations, each built on two cases. If we stop to think, we usually recognize the exaggeration and unfairness of such generations. Trouble comes when we do not stop to think – or when we build them on a prejudice.

This kind of reasoning has been around for a long time. Aristotle was aware of its dangers and called it "reasoning by example," meaning two few examples. What it boils down to is failing to count your swallows before announcing that summer is here. Driving from my home to New Haven the other day, a distance of forty miles, I caught myself saying: "Every time I look around I see a new ranch-type house going up." So on the return trip I counted them; there were exactly five under construction. And how many times had I "looked around"? I suppose I had glanced to the right and left – as one must at side roads and so for the in driving – several hundred times.

In this fallacy we do not make the error of neglecting facts altogether and rushing immediately to the level of opinion. We start at the fact level properly enough, but we do not stay there. A case or two and up we go to a rousing oversimplification about drunks, speeders, ranch-style houses – or more seriously, about foreigners, racial minorities, labor leaders, and teenagers.

Why do we overgeneralize so drastically and sometimes so disastrously? One reason is that the human mind is a generalizing machine. We would not be people without this power. The old academic crack, "All generalizations are false, including this one," is only a play on words. We must generalize to communicate and live. But we should be aware of beating the gun, of not waiting until enough facts are in to say something useful. Meanwhile it is a plain waste of time to listen to arguments based on a few handpicked examples.

Models

continued

FOR THE STUDENT:
Read each example as a model of one of the dozens of ways to write effectively. Learn how each writer uses language, examples, style, and structure to earn his or her arguments and ideas.

A FIVE-PARAGRAPH ESSAY FORMAT

Paragraph One
1. Thesis Statement (sentence #1)
2. Topic Sentence (sentence #2)
3. Topic Sentence (sentence #3)
4. Topic Sentence (sentence #4)
5. Concluding Sentence (sentence #5)

Paragraphs Two through Four
1. Topic Sentence (sentence #1)
2. Supporting Detail (sentence #2)
3. Supporting Detail (sentence #3)
4. Supporting Detail (sentence #4)
5. Concluding Sentence (sentence #5)

Paragraph Five
At least four sentences.

Note: The five-paragraph essay approach is just one of dozens of ways to write forcefully and effectively. When your teachers require one, consider the format above as a guide to structure, but take care over time not to write in a formulaic way. Most importantly, note that the principle of ASSERTION + SUPPORTING DETAILS serves nearly every kind of paper you will write for high school and college.

MODEL: FIVE-PARAGRAPH ESSAY

The authors of *Inherit the wind,* Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee, write about the Hillsboro Monkey Trial in which three forceful characters reveal conflicting viewpoints. First, E.K. Hornbeck, a reporter sent by the Baltimore Herald to cover the trial, sees all the events on a cynical light. The prosecuting attorney, Matthew Harrison Brady a fundamental religious supporter, demonstrates to the reader how a literal interpretation of the bible leads ti narrow viewpoints. Lastly, the defense attorney, Henry Drummond, is an open-minded, brilliant lawyer who essentially catapults this court case into the trial of the century. These three characters are all phenomenal in their own right and present unique viewpoints on the issue of evolution and Darwinism.

E.K. Hornbeck, although opinionated, does not express his views on Darwinism but rather criticizes everyone around him. Hornbeck alienates both the town people and prosecutor Brady with disparaging remarks; he insists that the defendant, Bertram Cates, could not have a fair trial because of the biased townspeople and their uneducated views. Furthermore, Hornbeck accuses Henry Drummond, with whom he agrees, of being a hypocrite and a fraud because of Drummond's belief in God. Hornbeck's pessimism is key to his slant in the case; he shouts, "Step right up and get your tickets for the middle ages! You only thought you missed the coronation of Charlemagne!" Hornbeck's view of the events in the case, although somewhat mocking, adds an element of blunt truth to an otherwise bogus trial.

Matthew Harrison Brady, meanwhile, is a religious leader of the fundamental Bible belt southern Christians and the prosecuting attorney in this case. While on the stand, Brady takes every opportunity to mention that the Bible is the final authority and all else is evil; he professes, "The Bible satisfies me, it is enough." Furthermore, everyone in Hillsboro is biased before the trial even begins because Brady is their spiritual leader and preacher. While selecting the jury members, Brady asks each person whether or not he or she believes in the Bible. The prosecutor is both a powerful speaker and has an uncanny ability to twist impressionable minds; he is able to convince the townspeople that his views on the world are the truth.

On the other hand, the attorney defending Bert Cates, Henry Drummond, demonstrates that there are scientific ideas that go beyond the literal interpretation of the Bible. Throughout the trial, Drummond is thwarted because of the judge's preconceived viewpoint. Drummond is not allowed to call a zoologist, geologist, or anthropologist to the stand because their testimonies are irrelevant to the case, which, of course, is not true. With no more options, Drummond calls Harrison Brady to the stand; this brilliant legal move on the part of Drummond not only shows that Brady has no idea what evolution is, but also that his convictions are not accepted by undiscriminating minds; his beliefs are completely unfounded and based on blind faith, Drummond is able to win based on intellect, logic, and scientific method over illogical, emotional views of people such as Brady.

In conclusion, the most important constitutional right, that of free speech, is on trial in Hillsboro. Three strong personalities, Hornbeck, Brady, and Drummond, play important parts in this saga. Hornbeck's skepticism balances the play and connects the reader to the absurdity of the case. Brady's zealousness is his downfall; he dies shortly after the conclusion of the trial. Even though Drummond loses the case, he sets a precedent that is important today. The right to teach evolution in schools is not the only issue; the right to think is the ultimate outcome

Models

continued

FOR THE STUDENT:
Read each example as a model of one of the dozens of ways to write effectively. Learn how each writer uses language, examples, style, and structure to earn his or her arguments and ideas.

PARAGRAPH UNITY

The body of your paragraph provides details that support the topic sentence. These details should be arranged in the best possible order (chronological order, cause/effect, comparison/contrast, orders of size, location, and importance). A closing or clinching sentence comes last that reinforces but does not repeat anything that has already been expressed.

Try arranging the following sentences in effective paragraph order. Also, delete any sentences that do not belong.

___When I choose a career, I expect to make a good choice.
___My parents always wanted the best for their children.
___That's a *bad* choice.
___There are many interesting fields to investigate, and there is much rewarding word to do
___A "good choice" is one made from a variety of options narrowed down by the chooser.
___Doctors are respected members of the community
__If the mayor of my town suddenly told me that I would have to choose between a career of cleaning public toilets and one of digging graves in the dead of night, I would object.

MODEL: RESEARCH PAPER with MLA FORMAT

Few efforts expose injustice as effectively as comedy. For centuries, humor has allowed dissidents to intelligently and scathingly undermine the status quo and insult those in power. From Benjamin Franklin's articles mocking religious hypocrites to Steven Colbert's presidential satires, comedic writers and performers have been honest and direct than most so-called serous critics of power.

Robin Williams offers an explanation of comedians' unique ability to protest. Comedians, he says, are like court jesters (Oloffson 1). Court jesters can mock royalty and challenge their positions because kings and queens do not see them as a threat. The jesters are, after all, just cheap entertainment. As a result, comedians often dodge the wrath of those they mock because they are dismissed as harmless. This phenomenon has worked to the benefit of comedians who, as we shall see, have much more in mind than simply getting laughs. While those in power underestimate comedians' influence, jesters are free to mock, insult, and ridicule their way to progress.

In the 1720s, for example, Jonathan Swift wrote many essays and pamphlets condemning the brutal policies of his day, yet his most famous and anthologized essay is a blast of shocking and outrageous humor (Weddington 217). In "A Modest Proposal," Swift's speaker recommends infanticide and cannibalism as surefire ways to solve poverty and hunger. By ironically (and "modestly" of course) suggesting such a plan, Swift exposes the harshness and stupidity of the policies his government actually recommended. As Bryan Weddington writes,

> Swift primarily targeted the "sensible and reasonable" attitudes of his time. For instance, he was horrified by common views of child labor. Mercantilists insisted that no child was too young to go into industry; consequently, in some areas of London children of four of five could earn a living. Swift saw this condition, supported by serious men with a wealth of statistics, as a crisis worth exposing. (45)

In "A Modest Proposal," Swift builds his own mountain of statistics to defend a heartless and

Models

continued

FOR THE STUDENT:
Read each example as a model of one of the dozens of ways to write effectively. Learn how each writer uses language, examples, style, and structure to earn his or her arguments and ideas.

THE ART OF THE INSULT: WRITERS AGAINST WRITERS

George Bernard Shaw writes plays for the ages, the ages between five and twelve.
—*George Jean Nathan*

On Jack Kerouac's On the Road: That's not writing, that's typing.
—*Truman Capote*

If I thought that anything I wrote was influenced by Robert Frost, I would take that particular piece of mine, shred it, and flush it down the toilet, hoping not to clog the pipes.
—*James Dickey*

On Mark Twain: A hack writer who would not have been considered fourth rate in Europe.
—*William Faulkner*

On Jane Austen: Every time I read *Pride and Prejudice*, I want to dig her up and hit her over the skull with her own shin-bone.
—*Mark Twain*

On Ernest Hemingway: He has never been known to use a word that might send a reader to the dictionary.
—*William Faulkner*

On William Faulkner: Poor Faulkner. Does he really thing big emotions come from big words?
—*Ernest Hemingway*

To a fellow composer: I like your opera. I think I will set it to music.
—*Beethoven*

MODEL: RESEARCH PAPER with MLA FORMAT CONTINUED

murderous society. In this manner, Swift shamed his own time, and his words – satiric, comic, ironic, and outrageous – are still quoted centuries later to expose the shameful.

FROM LATER IN THIS SAME STUDENT PAPER:

The Daily Show with Jon Stewart represents a new approach to political satire that is quick, direct, and especially potent on the age of mass media. Like Swift, Gregory, and the Smothers Brothers, Stewart focuses on the hypocrisy of the status quo. But Stewart's style is so sharp that is allows him to, as reporter Christopher Beam put it, "Be hilarious as he rips his opponents apart" (1). One of Stewart's most impressive satiric assaults was his December 5, 2010, response to the delay of legislation that would provide medical benefits to the firefighters and police officers who first responded to the 9/11 attacks. Senate republicans planned to filibuster the bill until Bush tax cuts were extended. Stewart retaliated with clever wordplays, calling the senators "Worst Responders" and renaming the bill the "Least-We-Can-Do-No-Brainer Act of 2010" (Beam 1). He invited cancer-stricken first responders to his show and played for them a clip of a senator crying over his colleague's retirement. The firefighters stated that they, too, had cried over colleagues – ones who had died due to poor health benefits. Political pundits from both parties agreed the segment was brilliant, and the bill passed shortly after (Beam 2). It is unlikely that a somber article or news story could have exposed the first responders' predicament as devastatingly as Stewart's episode did. By bringing firefighters on the show, Stewart blurred the line between heartbreak of injustice and the humor of exposing it. The clip of the senator crying, next to the responders, was tragic, hilarious, and infuriating all at once. Even though the *Daily Show* piece was in the form of a comedy sketch, Stewart's ability to evoke such strong human emotions to make a political statement is an example of comedic protest at its best.

…AND SO ON. THE WRITER PROCEEDS WITH ASSERTIONS, EVIDENCE, CITATIONS, AND COMMENTARY TO DEFEND HER POSITION.

Models

continued

FOR THE STUDENT:
Read each example as a model of one of the dozens of ways to write effectively. Learn how each writer uses language, examples, style, and structure to earn his or her arguments and ideas.

BEAUTIFUL ENGLISH

In his book *Crazy English*, Richard Lederer writes of the most beautiful-sounding words in the language. After quoting poets ("She walks in beauty like the night/Of cloudless climes and starry skies") and more poets ("The moan of doves in immemorial elms/And murmurings of innumerable bees"), Lederer writes:

Is it possible that we find these words to be lovely just as much for their meanings and associations as for their sounds? Note, for example, that Dr. Funk's list is filled with birds and flowers. Is bobolink really any more attractive a word than condor, aside from associations? Are *hush* and *thrush* any more euphonious than *mush* and *crush*? H.L. Mencken once quotes a Chinese boy who was learning the English language as saying that *cellar door* was the most musical combination of sounds he had ever heard. Clearly the impact that words have upon us is baffling. Sound and meaning work their dual magic upon us in ways that ear and mind alone cannot always analyze. Consider, for example, the foreign couple who decided to name their first daughter the most beautiful word they had ever heard.

They named the child Diarrhea.

MODEL: WORKS CITED PAGE

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“Break any of these rules sooner than say anything outright barbarous.” *—George Orwell*