



# Ideas

and

# Communication



A GUIDE TO DR. BORDELON'S ENGLISH I CLASS  
Including Course Information, Assignment Sheets, Handouts, Sample  
Essays, and Various Sundry Items to Lend Succor and Relief  
**Fall 2015 Edition**

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## General Information

### Introduction to Writing

For the next fifteen weeks you will be a writer.

This means two things: you have to write (“Like ‘duh’, I knew that Dr. Bordelon”) and you’ll seldom be fully satisfied with your work (“Uh . . . , what was that you just said?”). Writing is both liberating – it’s a joy to see your thinking on paper – and laborious – to make that thinking clear to someone else takes work. Writers know this, and thus aren’t discouraged (well, try not to get discouraged) when a piece of writing, be it a sentence, paragraph, or essay, doesn’t come out the way they want it to. They know, through long experience, that good writing involves trial and error and that, with enough rearranging and rewriting they will communicate their ideas to readers.

I believe in miracles in every area of life *except* writing.

*Isaac Bashevis Singer*

For beginning writers, this struggle with words usually isn’t the result of poor writing skills: it has more to do with attitude. Experienced writers know that writing consists of two parts: ideas and communication. Writers constantly struggle with getting the message out – harnessing the wild merry-go-round of images, fragments of sentences, and unconnected ideas that’s whirling around in their heads into an orderly procession of words that illustrates their thinking. Beginning writers just want to get off the ride as soon as possible. They get frustrated and say things like “I’m a terrible writer” or “I can’t write,” and proceed to ensure they won’t write well by putting off the work until the last minute. Experienced writers know that the magic of good writing occurs only through revision – and that the only way to get the rabbit out of the hat is to keep sticking your hand in it: in other words, park yourself in front of that computer and write.

You are always going back and forth between the outline and the writing, bringing them closer together, or just throwing out the outline and making a new one.

*Annie Dillard*

Okay, now you’re probably wondering why you should go through all the bother of thinking like a writer. Well, for starters, there’s something called a “final grade” that you’ll get at the end of this course (that’s the stick part of the motivation). More practically, you’ll find that writing requires you to think logically, make critical judgments, and even prods your imagination. The end result? Writing makes you a clearer, more organized and logical thinker (that’s the carrot).

Later in your academic career, they’ll be other courses where you’ll put what you’ve learned in this class to good use, impressing professors with your writing ability (“Who was your writing instructor? Dr. Bordelon? I thought so. . .”). Still later, you’ll move from your McJob to your career. And today, most careers involve communication of knowledge – either through reports, contracts, proposals, or emails and letters. Thus becoming a writer doesn’t necessarily mean earning a living writing for magazines, web site, or becoming a newspaper reporter; it means developing a skill that’s become essential to succeed in life . . . unless, of course, you win lotto. But even then, what’s the point of winning lotto if you can’t write a great letter to the editor about how it hasn’t really changed you? And what will you do when you’ve spent all your earnings on fast cars and slow stocks? Why, write a best-selling self-help book entitled *How I Lost All My Lotto Winnings But Found True Happiness as a Writer of Self-Help Books*.

That happiness is the little secret of writing. Writers know that putting words on the page is the best thing since sliced bread. Why? Because it makes your brain itch . . . it fires up the neurons . . . it puts wrinkles on your gray matter . . . it’s what keeps us alive.

The mere process of writing is one of the most powerful tools we have for clarifying our own thinking. I am never as clear about any matter as when I have just finished writing about it.

*James Van Allen*

**“Yeah, but can I do it?”**

Can anyone learn to write well enough to become rich and famous just by clicking out charmed phrases on a keyboard? Probably not. Can anyone learn to write well enough to get good grades in college and successfully complete the writing tasks demanded in their career? Probably so. Granted, it may take longer than a semester to develop into the kind of writer you want to be (we all learn at different rates, and some of us need more than fifteen weeks of instruction to make the change from a lifetime of not writing into a lifetime of writing), but if you're willing to work at it, you can become a competent writer. Let me repeat this – anyone can learn to write competently.

You'll find your writing continues to improve after the course is finished. That makes sense because this course is designed to instill in you the habits of good writing in the hopes that, by the end of the semester, you'll have internalized these skills, and can draw upon and continue to develop them.

## **“Okay, How do I do it?”**

### ***The Importance of Reading***

Writers know that improving their prose means learning to read. No, not that the letters c-a-t spell a furry domestic creature that likes to purr, but learning to read their own writing as if someone else wrote it. This welcome schizophrenia allows good writers to “see” and/or “hear” what’s not working in their prose, whether it’s something as general as organization (“Doh! I knew I should have taken out the paragraph on piranhas!”) or as specific as word choice (“Did he ‘hurry’ or ‘charge’ out of the building?”).

. . . both sight and insight derive from fierce consciousness, whether it begins in looking at a small object or in paying attention to all of the implications and resonances of an idea or image.

*Marvin Bell*

One technique we'll use to help achieve this objectivity is borrowing a pair of eyes – your classmate's, to be specific. Throughout the semester, you'll be exchanging drafts with your classmates to find out what's working – and what's not. Looking at someone else's essay will help you focus on what needs to be done to your own: the close attention and critical reading you apply to your peer's essay will train you to look more closely and critically at your own writing, which is what this class is all about.

More generally, get used to reading two ways: 1) read for content. This is the normal way we think about reading, and an important kind of reading for writers. You have to know about something before you can write about it, and the best way to find out about a subject is by reading. But writers read for a second reason: 2) imitation. Writers look and listen for interesting words, sharp phrasing, or different ways of getting an idea across or structuring an essay. Like the introduction of an essay you're reading? Take another look and determine what makes it appealing. Is it the odd example that caught your attention? The repeated questions? The before and after contrast? This reading to discover the way a particular written text works is a key part of developing a “writer's eye:” the ability to know when a piece of writing – even your own – is good.

Speaking of reading. . . as a writer you'll also have to keep up with the world around you. Writers know that bringing in current events (in other words, life) into an essay is a great way to explain to readers how a seemingly boring issue, such as “which is the best civic stance,” affects their lives. The question is, how do you keep up with current events while working at The Gap, delivering pizza on Friday nights, taking an economics and writing class, and playing in a band (Caustic Candy)? Easy. Listen to NPR (see “Brainfood” in *Ideas and Communication* for details); and/or read *Newsweek* or *The New York Times* in print or online. Another way is to pay attention in your other classes; the best essays connect ideas like “supply side economics” from your economics class to the causes of the American civil war in your history course (these kinds of connections make the reader go “Ooooh . . . good point” – which is the kind of reaction you should strive for). And whenever you can read, read, read, and read (Again, see “Brainfood” in *I&C* 15 for some ideas).

The knowledge you accumulate will come to good use as you test your reasoning and question the assumptions and arguments of others, taking your ideas and comparing them with what's gone on in the past and looking for connections. Need an example? Okay. Consider the flapping of jaws on education. We love to complain about education and come up with “magic bullets” – quick fixes that cause no pain – to solve the problem. Try these on

for size: School Uniforms will solve all our ills. No? How about school vouchers. Too expensive? Let's use more standardized tests. No again? Then blah, blah, blah.

Acquiring a body of knowledge gives you the insight to cut through the static and get to the real problem of education in America. Ready for it? Okay, name the most educated person in America. . . . I'm waiting . . . still waiting. . . . Okay, name the best basketball player? The richest person? The sexiest sex symbol . . . see the connection? We talk about the value of education, but value celebrity. Writers know that exposing paradoxes such as this is what keeps readers turning the page – and what generates “Ooohs.”

Writing keeps me from believing everything I read.  
*Gloria Steinem*

### ***Writing as a Process***

You'll notice that the course follows a particular format. This format is meant to mirror “The Writing Process” (see *I&C* 64) which breaks down the different steps of writing an essay, allowing you to work on one part at a time. Each assignment follows roughly the same pattern. You will read and discuss several essays on a specific topic, take notes, take a step back and plan what you want to say; work through a set of instructions on drafting an essay, then revise, revise, revise, proofread, proofread, proofread, and then finally, reluctantly, turn in a draft to be graded.

Notice that I didn't mention staying up late the night before the essay is due and handing it in with fingers crossed and a quick prayer. That's the dangerous way to complete an assignment – and the way most people (including myself when I was a beginning writer) write. Instead of trying to compose the perfect essay in one sitting – sweating it out in front of the computer with a pile of books on the one hand, and a stack of empty coffee mugs on the other – we'll go through the process of writing, first developing ideas through pre-writing, then organizing them, and then putting together a rough draft.

It's through this separation of the two distinct mental aspects of writing – your ideas and then the best way to communicate them – that good essays are born. It's only after you've clarified just what it is that you want to write about that the fun – and the real writing – can begin. We'll work on revision in class, and you'll work on revision at home, using the many suggestions for revision and proofreading in *I&C* and the course site to try out different words, sentences, and paragraphs until you find the best way to communicate your ideas. And communicating your ideas is what this class is all about.

I'm looking forward to reading what you have to say.

See you in class.

## What to Hand In With Final Draft

Note: Completing this will take a while, so give yourself enough time.

When you hand in each out-of-class assignment, you will turn in not only the final revision, but *all* of the writing you did for that assignment. Put this work in a manila folder with your name written clearly on the tab of the folder. Each folder you turn in should contain the following seven (count'm) parts – along with one extra step. From top to bottom the parts should follow this order:

1. **Reflecting:** (Right on top) The “Reflecting on Your Essay” for each assignment which answers the following questions: 1) what are the two most important things you learned from this topic and why? 2) what’s the two most important things you learned about **writing** (not from the topic but about writing as a skill) from this essay and why? 3) how did the research (both assigned and information you found on your own) affect your thinking/essay? This must be typed.
2. **Final revision:** the final, revised version of the essay. Follow sample MLA format essay (*I&C* 80) or “How to Set Up MLA Format in Word” [*I&C* 9) for format. (This, my friends, is a no-brainer: take the sample essay in one hand, and your essay in the other and make your essay match the layout of name, line spacing, page numbering, etc. from the sample essay). All of the essays handed in need to have a title  
Be sure to proofread carefully – as the writer of the paper you are responsible for any grammatical or typographical errors.
3. **Editing check list** (See pages 77, 78 in *I&C*) Take out of *I&C* and insert in folder.
4. **Drafts:** at least one or two rough, exploratory drafts, and in any event, all of the drafts associated with that essay. They must be the original copies and labeled with the assignment title, and draft number.
5. **Critical Reading:** the written response from your classmates and myself on your rough draft.
6. **Research:** For essay three and four, all notes, copies of articles, etc. associated with essay.

And finally . . .

7. **Email final draft to me:** Copy and paste your final draft in an email to me ([dbordelon@ocean.edu](mailto:dbordelon@ocean.edu)) with your first and last name and essay # in the subject line. For example, for Essay #1 you would name the file **Emily Dickinson essay 1**.

Make sure you have each of these before you hand in your paper. Hate to be a stickler, but . . .your paper will not be accepted and will be considered a "late paper" if you do not include all of the items noted above.

## Computer/Word Processing Instructions

### Course site

The course website can be through your regular Ocean Connect Account – click on My Courses. Use [dbordelon@ocean.edu](mailto:dbordelon@ocean.edu) for emails to me.

### Some Basic Editing Commands

#### To highlight text:

1. Hold down shift key and use arrow keys to mark text

#### To copy and paste text:

1. highlight text (see above)
2. Press ctrl+c, and then release
3. Move cursor to where you want to place text and press ctrl+v

#### To move and paste text:

1. highlight text (see above)
2. Press ctrl+x, and then release
3. Move cursor to where you want to place text and press ctrl+v

#### To start a new page:

1. ctrl+enter

#### To indent:

1. move cursor to text you want to indent
2. Press ctrl+m
3. to stop indent, move cursor to where you want indentation to stop and press enter

### To make a works cited entry:

1. Type out complete entry without tabs
2. Move cursor to beginning of entry (i.e. author's last name) and press ctrl+*t*
3. Be sure entry is double-spaced.

### How to Copy and Paste and Email Essay to me

Follow these instructions EXACTLY as written to copy and paste and email in most Windows based systems. Note: do not send an attachment: I realize the formatting will be lost, but for this electronic copy I'm only interested in the text.

If you don't have a computer or need help completing this, bring in the file on a disk and ask myself or a worker in the Writing Lab (R144) for assistance.

1. Open the file containing your essay.
2. Highlight the text you want to copy with mouse and press Ctrl+c (this means holding down both the Control button [*on the bottom row near the space bar*] and the letter *c* at the same time) to copy.
3. Open your internet software (Firefox, Chrome, Internet Explorer, etc)
4. Follow the instructions in your emailer to write a message (usually by clicking on "Compose," "Write Message," etc. at the top of the screen)
5. In the "To" box, type [dbordelon@ocean.edu](mailto:dbordelon@ocean.edu)
6. In the Subject/RE box, type in your full name, and the essay number (ex. Emily Dickinson Essay 1)
7. Move your mouse to the box where you would normally type out a message and click so the cursor is in the box.
8. Press Ctrl+v to paste – your body paragraph/essay should magically appear (ah . . . the wonders of technology).
9. click "Send" (or other appropriate button) to email essay to me.

If this doesn't work, scream out loud, curse computers in general, and stop by my office where I'll show you how to do this – and discuss stress management techniques.

### How to Attach a File and Email Essay to Me – or Yourself

To attach a file, follow the instructions below:

1. Save and close the file you want to send.
2. Open your internet software (Firefox, Chrome, Internet Explorer, etc)
3. Follow the instructions for your emailer to write a message (usually by clicking on "Compose," "Write Message," etc. at the top of the screen)
4. In the "To" box, type [dbordelon@ocean.edu](mailto:dbordelon@ocean.edu)
5. In the Subject/RE box, type in your full name, and the essay number (ex. **Emily Dickinson Essay 1**)
6. Choice time: 1) click on the button marked "Attachments" or "Attach File," and follow instructions or scroll through the files in the box on the screen until the file you want appears. Double-click to highlight and choose file. You may have to press enter to close box and finish attaching the file.  
OR  
2) click into area where you normal type in text and then RIGHT click your mouse. From the menu that appears, click on "Attach File." Follow instructions or scroll through the files in the box on the screen until the file you want appears. Double-click to highlight and choose file. You may have to press enter to close box and finish attaching the file.
7. click "Send" (or other appropriate button) to email essay to me.

### How to save to a flash drive

You often need to move a file from your hard drive to a flash drive. A quick way to move a file is to

1. Insert drive into a USB port
2. Open the file management box of your word processor (for most hold down the Ctrl key and press o once while in the program)
3. Left click on name of file once to highlight it

4. With cursor on highlighted file, right click
5. A menu should appear; scroll down to the "Send To" option and click it
6. Select the flash disk
7. Light on flash drive should come.
8. **CRUCIAL \*\*\*\*** Check if file is on flash drive

## Formatting an Essay

### How to set up MLA Header in most versions of Word

1. Click "Insert " from top of page
2. Click **a**) page number, **b**) top of page, and **c**) Plain number 3
3. Type last name and hit the space key
4. To exit, move cursor out of header box onto the page itself and double click

For the remaining format, go to last pages of *I&C* and follow the pattern from the sample essay.

### How to Add a Works Cited Page in Microsoft Word

Follow the few steps below to attach a Works Cited page to your document.

1. Scroll or page down to the end of your last paragraph
2. Hold down the "Ctrl" key (on bottom of keyboard near the space bar) and press the "Enter" key once
3. You've just created a "hard page break" that will keep your Works Cited page separate from the rest of your essay.
4. Four steps in one: **a**) hold down the "Ctrl" key (on bottom of keyboard near the space bar); **b**) press the letter "E" once (The cursor should now be at the middle of your screen); **c**) type Works Cited (Note: do not bold or underline it); and **d**) press the "Enter" key
5. Press the "Back Space" key once and begin adding your Works Cited entries

### To Indent Works Cited Entries In Word

1. Type out complete entry without tabs
2. Move cursor to beginning of entry (i.e. author's last name) and press ctrl+t
3. Double-space entry.

## Grading

### Grading Guidelines

- A paper: **An A essay is clear with rich content.** The organization is clear yet unobtrusive, and the paragraphs use rich, detailed examples and include explanations which clearly illustrate the writer's points. Transitions, both within and between paragraphs, are smooth, and the writer avoids proofreading errors. Sentence structures are varied, and the specific wording, descriptions and insightful commentary make you eager to reread the essay. In sum, you feel the writer is holding an intelligent, reasoned conversation with you.
- B paper: **In general, a B paper contains all the elements of a C essay, but uses more specific details or examples,** and explains them more clearly so that the reader occasionally forgets they are reading an essay. The reader seldom, if ever, has to ask "huh?" The introduction makes the reader want to read the rest of the essay, and the conclusion leaves the reader satisfied. The writer often varies sentences and uses specific wording, breaking away from the standard five or six paragraph mold, developing a single idea/division in more than one paragraph. The basics, such as formatting and proofreading, are handled competently, with a minimum of errors to impede the reader's understanding.
- C paper: **This is writing that gets the job done – and the way most students write.** The essay has a clear thesis and contains all components of the specific assignment (i.e. counter-argument and rebuttal in argumentative essays or the required number of words or sources). While the essay is organized, more work on transitions and clearer cues to the reader (i.e. topic sentences) are needed. Examples are presented, but not in sufficient detail to let the reader "see" exactly what the writer means, and explanations of them are sometimes perfunctory. Additionally, C essays often show signs of being

rushed with some formatting and proofreading errors, though not enough to prevent the reader from understanding the argument. Note: you do not get a “C” just for handing in the essay (see first sentence below).

D paper: **This does not mean that you haven’t done any work; it means that the final draft needed further revision before it met the standards of a “C” essay.** In general, these essays lack direction and/or have errors which prevent readers from understanding your thinking. Sometimes lacking a clear thesis, these essays have paragraphs (often missing topic sentences) that seem to wander and thus lack focus. The essay may lack a central component of the assignment -- say, a specific counter-argument or insufficient sources. On a more basic level, the essay may have too many proofreading errors (If you make more than the maximum number of major errors for a given essay, you’ve earned a “D”) or may contain too many instances of plagiarism.

F paper: **As in D papers, this does not mean that you haven’t done any work, it means that the essay has serious problems** – missing research, pages, too many logic errors, serious plagiarism, etc. – or demonstrates a lack of understanding of the assignment. They could also be too short (be sure to meet the minimum word requirement) or too filled with grammatical errors to be understandable.

The above is adapted from Holt’s handbook.

NOTE: Essays will be returned in a week to ten days. I will only bring them into class once. If you miss that class, you must come to my office to pick up your essay. It is your responsibility to remember to do so.

Breakdown of point values for letter grades: A=4; A-=3.8; B+=3.5; B=3; B-=2.8; C+=2.5; C=2; C-=1.8; D+=1.5; D=1; F=0

### **A Note on Grading**

The biggest surprise most students have with the difference between college and high school is the difference in the way their work is evaluated. Back in the early Jurassic period, when I was in high school, if you handed something in, you received a B for effort: if it was typed (remember, I used a stone typewriter), you received an A for going that extra mile.

The problem with this attitude is that in real life, effort doesn’t count – results do. If you submit a poorly researched and worded report on the market for water widgets in Mongolia to the division supervisor of WasteYourMoneyOn PlasticThingAMajigsThatYouDon’tReallyNeed™ Inc. and tell her “I spent, like, fifteen hours on this, so it’s like, perfect,” she will show you the door. This is her way of saying “I evaluate your ideas and their communication to others – not your effort.”

Similarly, in a college class (or at least the ones that make you fire off some neurons), the professor respects your intellect instead of your mental sweat. Instead of saying, with a trace of condescension, “Here, take this B and leave me alone – since you can’t learn the material anyway, I don’t want to be bothered,” an honest professor sets a standard and helps you reach it. I am an honest professor. To make it as clear as possible – effort is not factored into the grade of the essay. Of course without effort, your essay will not convey its meaning and you will fail in your primary objective: to communicate, in writing, your ideas to another person.

It may help you to understand how I read your work. I treat any piece of writing that’s placed in front of me as just that: a piece of writing. If it guides me through the author’s argument/vision, it works. If it doesn’t, well . . . it doesn’t and I will a) make suggestions about how to improve the work (if it’s a rough draft), or 2) grade according to how well the words in front of me explain or prove the writer’s point (if it’s a final draft). The author fades away when I read, and it’s the words on the page that engage me. Granted, it is a shock to some students to finally be judged by their words instead of their effort/personality (“but I got “A”s in my AP class!”). . . . yet it is a shock that they must overcome if they want to accurately express themselves in writing. My goal is to improve their aim.

If you have any questions about my comments or your grade remember that I am here to help: make an appointment and bring in your essay so we can discuss it.

### **A Note on My Comments**

## Proofreading Symbols (Dr. Bordelon's Cryptic Markings)

Words or phrases that are circled or have squiggly lines underneath them are problem areas that should be/should have been revised. Underlined words or phrases means you're cooking with gas (Jurassic Age slang for doing well).

You'll note your essays will be returned with numbers on them. The numbers don't refer to a point system, they are just my way of keeping track of the number of major errors.

~~~~~ = idea is sound, but phrasing needs work.

\_\_\_\_\_ = sharp wording and/or idea— good.

Awk = Awkward phrasing or wording -- sometimes ungrammatical, sometimes, a phrase that's a mouthful and should be smoothed out.

Cit. = citation error

Confusing = cannot tell what you are trying to say

C/S = Comma splice: check glossary and appropriate page in *The Little Seagull Handbook*

Frag = Fragment: check glossary and appropriate page in *The Little Seagull Handbook*

huh? = confusing phrasing or sentence

Intro phrase = missing introductory phrase with source

Log. or logic = idea is not logical

M/W = missing word/s

rep. = repetitious

R/O = a Run-on Sentence: check glossary and appropriate page in *The Little Seagull Handbook*

Stet = an oops on my part – remain as is.

S/V = Subject verb agreement error: check appropriate page in *The Little Seagull Handbook*

trans. = Missing or awkward transition: check glossary and appropriate page in *The Little Seagull Handbook*

V/T = Verb tense error: check appropriate page in *The Little Seagull Handbook*

W/W = wrong word (ex. "There" for "Their" or "should of" for "should have")

## Getting Help ( or “Can my girl/boyfriend read my essay”)

While your Aunt Bertha or Uncle Hermie may be considered an “expert” in English (and may even be that rare species, an “English Major”), it's difficult to get honest criticism from family members. Also their standards are probably different from those set by the college. The best place to get help is – surprise, surprise – me. Check my office hours and sign up for an appointment (see sign-in sheet on my door). The next stop is the college's Writing Center (see below). Finally, look around the classroom: your classmates can be good source of advice. They are familiar with the material, familiar with my standards, and familiar with you. Study groups? Peer review groups? Sounds like good ideas to me.

Be sure to study the comments I make on your essay very closely. Before beginning a new essay, look back over these comments, and continue doing what worked, and improve what didn't. One of the best ways to improve your writing is to sit with me both before and after your essay is graded. This gives us a chance to see your writing “in action,” and either address the rough spots in your prose or organization, or discuss ways to avoid future problems.

If you already know that proofreading problems plague your prose, be sure to set up regular appointments with the Writing Center. If you notice after your first or second essay that you're having problems with proofreading, set up regular appointments with a tutor. By now you're probably wondering “Okay, where IS this great Writing Center?” Check in R124, The Writing Center, or call 732.255.0400 x680 to sign up for an appointment.

## Dr. Bordelon's Glossary of Writing Terms

**Bold** words in definitions means a cross-reference (check in glossary for the definition of that word).

**Annotate:** To mark up, comment on, or underline writing. This is your way of communicating with a writer and making sure you understand what is written. Do this with a pen or pencil – hi-lighters prevent you from actually talking with/to the text (ever try writing with one of those yellow markers?) See instructions on 19 of *I&C*.

**Attitude:** Good students have a good attitude – no, I don’t mean the usual definition of attitude as in “Get that smirk off your face – it’s showing your bad attitude.” The kind of attitude I’m talking about is thinking positively about your writing. Thus, if you get a grade you’re not satisfied with, instead of grumbling about what a mean guy I am, accept the fact that your writing needs some work and RUN to my office and make an appointment to discuss how to improve it. It also means realizing that improving your writing and reading skills involves real mental work -- something many shy away from.

**Audience:** Remember, you’re writing for somebody else -- they can’t get inside of your head or ask you “Uh, what do you mean right here?” You have to make it clear to your reader, who is always hungry for more detail and who has high expectations.

**Argument:** A particular point or belief you are trying to prove. This works on two levels: 1) you have the argument for an entire essay (**thesis**): Handguns should be outlawed; 2) you have an argument for an individual paragraph (**topic sentence**): One reason they should be outlawed is because they are too easily concealed.

**Body Paragraphs:** The individual paragraphs that prove your thesis by explaining your arguments or providing the information to readers. Each paragraph is focused on a single idea (usually noted with a **focus word/phrase** to explain what you will be saying about that idea) stated in a **topic sentence**. In turn, each paragraph supports, explains, or proves your **thesis**. You need to keep two things in mind when writing a body paragraph: 1) the overall focus of the essay (**thesis**); and 2) how this particular paragraph supports/proves/ explains it (**focus word/s**). When typed, a paragraph should roughly cover 1/3 to 1/2 of a page. Any more, and the reader probably needs a break; any less, and the reader isn’t satisfied. This, of course, overlooks the occasional one sentence zinger paragraph.

One way to remember what a body paragraph should include is TEEC. Topic sentence, Evidence, Explanation, Conclusion.

Sample paragraph format

1. A main point stated in one sentence (make it an argument/statement -- "*Because handguns are easy to hide, they are more likely to be used by criminals*" a claim that needs to be backed up). I'll call this a **topic sentence**.
2. An explanation of any general words in your main point.
3. Evidence or **details** that support your point (use descriptions, statistics, quotes from people who are involved in the issue)
4. The reader cannot read your mind: after each example, you have to tell him or her exactly what you want it to prove/show. Ask the following question in your head "how does this example prove my point?" and "why is this quote important in this paragraph?" and then it answer in your essay. This is where you prove your argument.

As a sentence starter, try "This" or a restatement of your example (ex. "*This small size*") and then an explanatory word (*illustrates, shows, demonstrates, proves, suggests, defines, supports, indicates, results or reveals*) to begin your commentary (ex. "*This small size results in a firearm that is too easy to conceal, . . .*").

5. A sentence to sum up.

The info on body paragraph is adapted from *Rules of Thumb*

**Citation:** Used to let reader know you have used an outside source. In this class, we’ll be using the **MLA Citation** method.

**Commas:** Not when you pause and not when the sentence is going on for too long. Actually, there are four times when you need a comma: 1) with an introductory phrase; 2) with a list; 3) before a conjunction and between two independent clauses; and 4) with an interruption or insertion (dependent clauses). See *The Little Seagull Handbook* for more info.

**Conclusion:** The last paragraph of your essay. You can ask yourself the question “What’s it all mean?” or bring up something discussed in your **introduction**, or . . . something else.

**Context:** When using a source or quote, you should give the reader some information to 1) set up your argument, Example: As the statistics that follow show, the crime rate has decreased over the last ten years . . . or 2) help identify and give authority to the source or place the source or example in the given work. (Example: David Bordelon, a highly esteemed literary critic, argues that . . . or At the beginning of the story, right before Gregor is transformed into a beetle, he . . .

**Counterargument:** A specific argument against your own position. NOTE: You must always **rebut** a counterargument. For example, if your essay is in favor of gun control, a counterargument could be “Some argue that if we have gun control, only criminals will have guns.” By bringing this up, you show that your position is

reasoned: you have at least considered the other side, and given thought to the whole issue. **REMEMBER:** a counterargument consists of two parts – the counterargument itself and the **rebuttal** (see below for rebuttal).

**Cues:** No, not sticks used in playing pool, but the words/phrases used to direct readers through an essay. For instance, a **thesis** and **division statement** are cues writers use to tell their readers “This is what my essay will be about.” A **topic sentence** is a cue that tells readers “This is what this paragraph will be about.” And a **transition** tells readers “Okay, I’m moving from this topic to that topic.”

**Dependent Clause:** A phrase which cannot stand by itself. Ex. “The dog, *which had sharp teeth*, was bit by the postman.” The italicized phrase “which had sharp teeth,” needs to be set off from the **independent clause** with commas. See #4 in **Commas**.

**Detail:** It’s your job to get the reader to see, hear, smell, taste, feel, exactly what you are talking about, and you do this by supplying specific descriptions, using examples, statistics, etc., that make the reader say “Oh, now I see what you’re talking about.” Remember, the reader is a hungry beast, and it is difficult to satisfy his or her desire to know, so be specific. After supplying details, remember to add **explanations**.

**Direct Quote:** Using the *exact* wording from your source: no words can be taken out (unless you use **ellipsis** dots), and no words can be added (unless you put brackets [ ] around them). You denote where the quote begin and ends with quotation marks. NOTE: YOU MUST USE AN INTRODUCTORY PHRASE and CITE DIRECT QUOTES.

**Discourse:** A particular kind/type of language connected to a particular field or area of study. For example, in the discourse of computers, when someone asks a person to “burn a disk,” it means to create a CD using a CD recorder. In the discourse of fire fighters, it means a fire extinguisher will be needed.

**Division Statement:** A phrase or sentence which lists the separate arguments/reasons which prove the thesis of your essay. Think of it as a road map to the reader so they can see what’s coming. Each of your **body paragraphs** need to be accounted for in your division statement. This can be a part of your thesis or in a separate sentence.

**Ellipsis:** Three dots in square brackets (ex. “The authors [ . . . ] decided to tell the others.”) to tell reader you’ve taken words out of a direct quote. Use four dots if the removed material includes a period.

**Essay:** An essay is a focused and organized presentation of your thinking on a particular topic – with an emphasis on the word focus. It is not everything you know or feel about a topic dumped into a collection of paragraphs, but a body of writing with a clear direction, a direction readily apparent to the reader, logically proceeding from one part to the next. It usually consists of an **introduction**, **thesis/division statement**, **body paragraphs**, and a **conclusion**.

The main difference between academic essays and essays for general readership (such as articles in magazines) is audience. In academic writing, you communicate your thinking by following some basic conventions (introduction, thesis statement, etc.) so that your primary reader, a person who has sought out your essay, can quickly grasp your understanding of, or position on, a specific topic. When writing for general readers, more emphasis is placed on style; unlike the professor, these people don’t have to read the essay: the writer has to make them want to read it – and it has to be good enough to persuade readers to shell out the bucks to do so. The challenge in writing for college lies in combining the two: to follow the conventions without sounding, well, conventional. As the sample student essays and paragraphs included in this packet show, it is possible to stick to a “pattern,” yet retain an individual and interesting voice: it just takes a bit of skill and a lot of effort.

**Evidence:** The facts, descriptions, examples, etc. that support your **argument**. See **explanation**.

**Explanation:** By answering the “why,” “how,” and “what” of your **evidence**, **explanations** prove your **argument**. As you draft and revise each paragraph, literally ask yourself the following questions each time you offer **evidence**: “How does this prove the **focus** of this paragraph?” or “Why should the reader know this?” or “What does this prove?” **Details**, **evidence**, and **sources** are mute: you must give them a voice by telling the reader exactly how and why they prove your point. Remember, the reader is a duh-head: he or she cannot understand what you are saying – ya’ gotta’ make clear. To be blunt, try adding at least two complete sentences of explanation. See #4 in **body paragraphs**.

**Focus Word/s:** For me, the word in the **topic sentence** of a body paragraph that gives the paragraph a direction. Ex. Another reason to limit political advertising is to force the electorate to pay attention to the substance of the candidate's positions when voting. In the preceding sentence, the focus words are “force the electorate to use the substance of the candidate's positions.”

**Format:** The physical way your essay looks on the page. I use Modern Language Association (MLA) format, which is standard for courses in the Humanities. Luckily, this is a no-brainer. Just match the sample essay and you’ll have no problems. Pay attention to spacing, placement of page number, and **works cited page**. Note: those who use Word or Works do not follow the “Report” template: use your brain and follow the sample essay.

**Fragment:** A sentence that doesn't complete a thought -- or more formally, lacks a subject and verb. See *The Little Seagull Handbook*.

**Independent Clause:** A sentence, or part of a sentence, that can stand on its own. Ex. "The dog, which had sharp teeth, was bit by the postman." The independent clause is "The dog was bit by the postman."

**Introduction:** The first paragraph in an essay. Use this paragraph to get your reader interested, or "hooked," on your topic. Beware of the boring start. Usually, your **thesis** and **division statement** are in the introduction (generally the last sentence of introduction), but are not *the* introduction.

**Introductory Phrase:** In my class, a short phrase which sets up a direct quotation; more generally, any short **dependent clause** used at the beginning of a sentence. You should provide a context for your quote by letting the reader know who wrote or said it. Ex. Dr. I. Hurt, head of ophthalmology at John Hopkins University Hospital, argues that "eye care is the most basic part of our program" (qtd. in Smith 12).

**MLA documentation:** The method used by the Modern Language Association (MLA) in this class and other Humanities courses to document **research**. It consists of two parts **parenthetical citations** and **works cited entries**.

**Organization:** The structure of your essay. This includes your **thesis**, **division statement**, and **topic sentences**. If they all connect, your essay is well organized -- if the order of your **divisions** does not match the order of your **paragraphs**, or the essay lacks a clear **thesis** or **divisions** and **topic sentences**, then they have to be revised.

**Outline:** A breakdown of the different parts of your essay. This doesn't have to be a formal, roman numeral affair; it could be as simple as a list of phrases/ideas that only you understand. Interestingly, they are often effective even after you've written your rough draft (I use both -- and find that the one's I use after I've written a rough draft are the ones I usually stick with).

**Paraphrase:** Taking each word of your **source**, and finding a synonym for it. NOTE: THIS MUST INCLUDE A CITATION.

**Parenthetical Documentation (Or In-text Citation):** In **MLA documentation**, this is how the reader knows the author's name (at the very least the last name) and often the page number(s) where the information is located. This usually consists of three steps: 1) the author's name, usually set up in an **introductory phrase**; 2) the actual information from the **source** -- **direct quote**, **summary**, or **paraphrase**; and 3) the page number in parenthesis. See *I&C* "Citing Sources" (75+) for several examples.

**Plagiarism:** Taking the words or ideas from a source without 1) citing it and/or 2) using quotation marks to separate your words from the source's.

**Pre-writing:** Ever had the sensation "I know what I want to say but I just can't get put it into words"? There is a highly technical term for this: "What all writers feel." The difference between beginning writers and more experienced writers is that beginning writers get discouraged too easily. Experienced writers know that the trick is just to write out whatever's in their head, and then work on revising it into something others can understand. They know that what comes out first is rough and unformed, but that's okay because they'll be changing it anyway. So instead of staring at a blank piece of paper waiting for that perfect first sentence to drop from the heavens, jot down notes, brainstorm, make lists, or just write for 10 minutes without stopping to get started. This technique helps you get started -- and comes in handy for **revision** as well.

**Proofreading:** A different way of reading an essay where you concentrate on clarifying wording and punctuation. After you're finished **revising** your essay, go through the essay slowly, ideally, with someone else reading along on another copy, and question **EVERYTHING**. Do I need that comma? Do I need to add a comma here? Did I introduce that source correctly? Couldn't I use a more specific word here?

Get used to reading your work as a workbook exercise, not as something you've written -- in other words, *actively look for and make changes*. Two hints: slowly read essay out loud, listening for confusing or tangled wording, and read essay from the last sentence to the first. You can also separate each sentence on a new line to make it resemble a workbook ("Uh . . . isn't that three hints" "Yes, I'm glad you can count").

**Reasons:** These are the arguments used to prove the validity of your thesis. Try to develop as many different reasons as you can (ask yourself "why is my main focus valid?"), and then choose the ones which you feel will best prove your point. You should revise and refine these as you write your essay. See page 65 (*I&C*) for more suggestions.

**Rebuttal:** The second part of the **counterargument**. Try starting it with a "But," "Yet" or "However," to show readers that the argument offered by the opposing side is wrong.

**Research:** Articles from newspapers, journals, or information from books or other authoritative **sources** that are used to support your argument. Often you use expert opinion to show how your points are valid, or you may argue with someone's beliefs (see **counterargument**). The key in most essays is to avoid using long quotes, or letting the research overwhelm your essay: remember, you, as the writer of the paper, need to determine what helps your overall argument, and what just sounds good. See **source**.

**Revision:** To look at your writing not as the person that wrote it, but as a reader who feels differently than you on any given topic. A good place to start revising is by deleting as much as you can. While this strikes terror in beginning writers' hearts ("It took me forever to come up with this in the first place!"), it is essential for good writing. Almost all drafts have paragraphs and sentences that aren't detailed or don't support the thesis. It's a *very* good sign if you cut out large sections of your prose: it shows that you now know what you want to say. In short, revision entails looking at the entire work and determining what helps and what doesn't -- and being brutally honest about what doesn't. As a student once told me, "All I'm keeping is the name at the top of the page."

After removing the "dead wood," you can work on communicating your thoughts more effectively. This often entails adding descriptions, facts, comparisons, or stories (**evidence**) to make your point, and then **explaining**, in two or three different ways, exactly how these descriptions, facts, etc. prove that point. Remember, the **evidence** makes perfect sense to you -- but not to the reader who looks at things differently than you do. In any case, make changes until you're sure the reader says "Oh, NOW I see what you mean."

**Run-on:** Two **independent clauses** in one sentence. Needs to be separated with a period, semi-colon, comma and conjunction, or rewritten. See *The Little Seagull Handbook*.

**Source:** An individual piece of **research**. This could be anything from an article to an interview with a friend.

**Summary:** Taking the general idea or statement from a source *using only your own words*. NOTE: This must be **cited**.

**Thesis Statement:** The controlling idea of an essay stated in one sentence, usually the last sentence in the **introduction**. See *I&C* (particularly in the planning for each essay) and *The Little Seagull Handbook* for several examples of thesis statements and topic sentences

**Topic Sentence:** The controlling idea of a paragraph. Usually phrased as a statement or claim that needs to be proved, it is related to and helps prove the **thesis**. Often uses a synonym of one of the divisions from the **division statement** to **cue** readers that a particular division is being discussed.

**Transitions:** Words or phrases used within and between paragraphs or sentences that show readers you are changing direction or topic. For paragraphs, a good technique is to mention the topic from the previous paragraph in the **topic sentence** of the new paragraph. Ex. topic sentence with transition. "Not only are handguns easy to hide, they are readily available." The previous paragraph was about how handguns are easy to hide, and the new paragraph will be about their availability. See *I&C* 68 for ideas on transitions

**Working Bibliography:** An ongoing list of possible **sources** gleaned from indexes and computer databases.

Usually, out of four items, you'll find one good **source**.

**Works Cited Entry:** A notation, following MLA format, of a particular **source**. These are located on the **works cited page**. This is detail work: you must follow the guidelines *exactly*, paying particular attention to the placement and order of dates, commas and periods. Luckily, this is a one time deal: do it right and do it once. See *I&C* "Citing Sources (75+)," the course site, and *The Little Seagull Handbook* for sample entries and guidelines.

**Works Cited Page:** An alphabetized arrangement of all the sources actually used in a particular essay located on a separate page at the end of that essay. Follow sample essay and/or textbook for formatting instructions.

**The Writing Process:** Breaking down an essay into small, manageable tasks, such as invention, organizing, drafting, etc. instead of trying to write the whole shebang at one sitting. In other words, writing differently from the way you've probably been writing. See "The Writing Process" in *I&C* (4, 64) for specifics.

## Assignment Overview: Essay #1 (Expository – Reporting Information)

### What You'll be Doing for Our First Essay Assignment

For many, our approach to writing in this course will seem foreign. Instead of just slapping words on a page and then handing in the essay with a “one down three to go!” attitude, you’ll actually learn how to research, plan, draft, revise, and proofread an essay. In other words, you’ll learn the basics of college level writing.

If this sounds like work, it is. But we’ll be breaking an essay into parts, doing work in class, and, in general, providing the time and instruction necessary for effective thinking and writing. My students tell me that if they complete the homework assignments, the essay writes itself. If they don’t complete them . . . have you heard of the phrase “crash and burn”?

To avoid trips to the burn unit, the home and class work will take you through a series of steps before actually drafting the essay. First you’ll be gathering research and taking notes: in this case, reading essays and then pulling out their central themes. This will take about a week.

You’ll spend another week or so reviewing your notes, deciding on a central focus for your essay (called a thesis), and pulling out quotes from the essays to support your thesis.

With all of this material in front of you, the next step – writing the rough draft – will be easy. No more scratching your head deciding what to write or being worried about word counts: you’ll have much of the work already done.

We’ll spend the next week revising your essay – moving from a focus on getting it done, to a focus on making it interesting to a reader. Then, after careful proofreading, you’ll hand in the essay.

### Purpose of Essay

This first assignment will address a topic that should be near and dear to your hearts: “what am I in college for?” More specifically, you will report what a selection of authors believe is the purpose of a college education. Note the word “report.” This means that instead of offering your own opinion about this topic, you’ll be looking for connections expressed among the different readings and then discussing these connections in your own essay. This kind of intellectual work – making connections – is known as synthesizing.

Note that you will not merely summarize the essays in a paragraph – we’re going for higher order thinking skills here. The goal, as noted above, is on connections among different essays. Thus, your paragraphs will not focus on individual authors or essays, but on an idea noted by at least two authors/sources and contained in the essays you’ve read.

This kind of writing is a basic part of academic writing; you’ll encounter it in assignments such as a short biography of Cleopatra for a History course, a review of current research on neonatal care in Nursing, or a description of the latest interrogation techniques in Criminal Justice.

And speaking of objectives . . . remember that the goal in this essay is to remain objective: your purpose is to report on the ideas and opinions of others, not state your own. You’ll be using phrases such as “Educational critics argue,” “The writers believe,” “Professors agree that,” to separate yourself from the material you’re presenting.

And speaking of words and phrases brings me to the next topic: discourse.

### Discourse

Burning a disk. Keyboard. Mouse.

Am I talking about pyromania, a piano, and a small furry mammal that makes people scream?

No.

You know that the words above all refer to computers because the discourse (words used to describe activities or items associated with a particular subject) of computers includes such vocabulary.

Higher education, as a field of its own, also has a discourse that you need to familiarize yourself with and then use in your own essay. Academic writing assumes that you'll dive into the particular field of study, expanding your thinking as you expand your vocabulary. This expansion is connected more broadly to thinking: as the 20<sup>th</sup> century philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein noted, "The limits of my language mean the limits of my world."

To help enlarge your world, you'll notice at the end of the Writer's Notes a section labeled "Discourse." You'll include words that are associated with the topic of higher education.

To get started on the discourse of education, note how often the word "critical thinking" appears in the readings. What does it mean?

## **The Writing Assignment: Essay #1**

You will write an essay which extracts a central idea on the purpose of college from the assigned readings. As noted above, this essay will not include your own opinion: you'll be objectively reporting the information. You must decide the most effective way to categorize the information these writers offer in order to effectively communicate their ideas to your readers.

The most important part of this assignment – and all assignments involving reporting information – is narrowing down your topic. You'll encounter many different views of what an college education should be: your job is to focus on one of them. And since the focus is on reporting information from others, it may be a view you don't even share.

Much of this essay will consist of cited material – it's what readers expect when you're reporting information from other sources.

Again, remember that your purpose is not to present all of the information you've read or argue with the views expressed in the readings; instead, it's to narrow down and find connections among the readings and then to objectively present their views to your readers. (Have I mentioned objectivity enough? Good.)

Unfortunately, this kind of writing can have a narcotic effect on readers – try using examples, specific details from the essays, and specific descriptions to keep the reader from using your essay as a pillow.

Assume that your readers have not read these essays; it is your job to focus on *one* connection among them and show the connections so that the reader doesn't have to read them all.

### **Directions**

For starters, read the assigned essays, taking copious notes (the more notes you have, the easier it is to write a rough draft). Follow the suggestions in this packet and the course site as well. Check over the definitions of Thesis, Body Paragraph, Citation, Division/Forecasting statement, Essay, Parenthetical Citation, Topic sentence, Revision, Proofreading, and Works Cited Entries in the Glossary.

### **Requirements**

Final draft, minimum of 1,150 words. Your essay needs to include citations from at least three of the assigned readings, though you will probably need to use more to effectively present the information. Essay must include a title; an introduction which describes the context/basis of research (with forecasting/division statement); body paragraphs which focus on the division statement; a conclusion; and a Works Cited page. You must correctly cite your sources using MLA format.

### **Feedback**

At the core of writing for others (as opposed to journals or diaries) is getting feedback. This feedback allows you to test ideas and writing techniques, refine your thinking, and finally, present this in clear prose.

To help you with this, there will be several layers of feedback for each essay including peer reviews, written comments from myself, and conferences.

As an incentive to help you get feedback, you must discuss your draft essay in a conference with me or with a tutor in the Writing Center at least one day before final draft is due.

### **Learning Objectives**

After successfully completing this assignment, you will have learned how to

1. annotate readings and accurately summarize their main points
2. recognize and define the key terms (discourse) of a particular topic
3. find connections among different readings and organize them in categories
4. decide on an organizing principle, expressed in a thesis and forecasting/divisions statement, which effectively communicates information from a group of readings to a reader
5. accurately summarize, paraphrase, and use direct quotes in your writing; establish credibility of sources
6. correctly document sources using MLA parenthetical citation
7. begin to identify your grammatical error patterns
8. revise an essay to suit the expectations of your readers
9. use analogies, comparisons, and detailed examples to help readers understand material from other sources
10. separate revision from proofreading
11. manage your time and complete each draft by the assigned due date

### **Grading Criteria**

To receive a passing grade, you must successfully complete the following:

**Organization:** A thesis and forecasting/division statement which clearly states a central theme you will focus on how you will explain it; topic sentences that group your information into logical categories which refer back to the forecasting/division statement.

**Content:** Clear definitions of any specific terms; specific examples that connect to your thesis; accurate summarizations, paraphrases, and direct quotations of the sources; body paragraphs focused around a clear topic sentence; descriptive language to keep reader from dozing off; and clear in-text references to identify a particular writer with his or her idea.

**Proofreading:** Sentences that are clear and no more than 5 major errors (these include sentence fragments, run-on sentences, verb-tense error, subject-verb agreement error, unclear phrasing, and spelling/wrong word error. Formatting errors. Each documentation error counts as 1/2 of a major error).

## Annotating and Taking Notes

### Annotation

My *American Heritage* dictionary (and probably yours too) states that annotate means "To furnish (a literary work) with critical commentary or explanatory notes." To which you'll probably reply "Okay, but what does *that* mean?"

For writers, annotating a text simply means underlining words or phrases that you deem important, agree or disagree with, or find interesting. It's also your chance to "talk" to the writer by writing "No Way!" or "You got that right!" in the margin.

These annotations save time when you incorporate material from these sources by allowing you to focus on particular parts of the reading instead of searching through the entire text for that one sentence that supports your point.

### Questions to ask for annotation

If your focus is on **reporting information** (as in essay one) you might note the following:

1. Definitions of specific terms:  
For instance, in Louis Menand's "Live and Learn" as the theories of college appear add something original like **"def. of theory 1"** in the margin.
2. Specific Examples:  
Mark out examples/facts that you may include in your own essay to help readers "see" your point. How about **"comparison of American college enrollment and European"** in the margin?
3. For this course, answer any particular questions from the assignment by adding a quick note in the margin: ex. **"connection to personal growth." "reason supporting theory 1"**

If your focus is on **argument** (as in essay two and beyond) you would probably note the following:

1. definitions of the issues involved,
2. the position of the author (**"Here she suggests she's for capital punishment"**),
3. the reasons which support the position (**"Good point about the cost of the death penalty"**),
4. and the examples used to support the reason (**"stats. on use of DP by other countries"**).

Annotating also is a way of keeping awake when reading dry, academic texts: actively deciding what to write in the margins and moving that pen across the paper can keep the sleepies at bay.

I typically note sentences that are especially well written or words that are well chosen with green ink (envy, get it?) and use them for inspiration and imitation (the green ink is a joke, but I do mark such sentences/words -- and use them).

### Taking Notes

When taking notes from a source (book, article, news transcript), you need to be aware of three things:

1. quotation marks,
2. author's (or speaker's) names
3. and page numbers.

ANY words (even one) taking directly from the source must be in quotation marks, and you should always note the author's (or speaker's) name and page number.

**SUMMARIES NEED TO BE CITED IN YOUR ESSAY SO MARK THE PAGE NUMBERS OR AUTHOR'S NAME WHEN TAKING NOTES!!!!**

Sorry for shouting, but I wanted to make sure you heard

## **Writer's Notes for Essay #1 Readings (see course site for download of clean copy) – On Campus Version**

For each essay, set up a worksheet with the following categories. Note: not all categories will be filled for all essays. These notes will form the basis of your essay: the more detail the better

At the top of each set of notes, write a works cited entry. Remember that all works cited entries begin with the author's last name and then the title, etc. Follow the directions on how to set up a works cited entry (See table of contents *I&C*) for specific instructions – or “Citing Sources” from the Links menu on the home page.

### ***Works Cited***

#### ***List all the different ways this essay identifies and describes the role of college in America***

Hint: for each essay, look for the following: college as career prep; college as intelligence test; college as intellectual growth; college as preparing citizens – or some other idea. Make categories that you can carry from source to source.

#### ***What are reasons this essay offers to support its argument***

Here you should look for specific **examples** that explain why the author believes college is career prep, etc.

#### ***General information on colleges***

#### ***Connections to previous readings***

#### ***Higher education discourse – word list for this topic (see I&C 17 “Discourse” for more on this)***

## Using Sources Quiz

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**In the executive elite school, work is developing one's analytical intellectual powers. Children are continually asked to reason through a problem, to produce intellectual products that are both logically sound and of top academic quality. A primary goal of thought is to conceptualize rules by which elements may fit together in systems and then to apply these rules in solving a problem. Schoolwork helps one to achieve, to excel, to prepare for life.**

Anyon, Jean. From *Social Class and The Hidden Curriculum of Work. Rereading America*. Eds. Gary Colombo, Robert Cullen, and Bonnie Lisle. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2005. 194-209. Print.

1. From student's essay

**Children in executive elite schools reason through a problem.**

Plagiarism? Why or why not?

2. From student's essay

**The focus in these schools is to conceptualize rules (Anyon 205).**

Plagiarism? Why or why not?

3. From student's essay

**Anyon reports that in an "executive elite school," students are expected "to produce intellectual products that are both logically sound and of top academic quality" (205).**

Plagiarism? Why or why not?

4. From student's essay

**The focus in these kinds of schools is to nurture a child's critical thinking skills.**

Plagiarism? Why or why not?

5. From student's essay

**At this social level, the instruction produces students capable of recognizing patterns and then using them to explain questions (Anyon 205).**

Plagiarism? Why or why not?

## Planning Ideas: Essay #1

### Basic Parts of an essay

Your goal isn't a summary: it's your job to look for patterns in the information presented to you, develop categories to label these patterns (your divisions), and then present it in an organized fashion to the reader.

Note that the focus here isn't on the author but on the ideas in the sources. The best essays are organized not around individual writers/sources; they are organized around the connections among them.

### Introduction

You have to grab the reader's attention. Do this by

1. Telling a story (either personal, or from the readings)
2. Using a "then and now" comparison – historical, economic, or political
3. Making an analogy – a comparison to another idea to: for instance, many economists use a ladder metaphor to describe income inequality
4. Referring to current event
5. Asking a series of questions
6. Opening with an arresting fact or quotation

Avoiding the word "you" (In formal essays, you don't refer directly to the reader – see 32 in *I&C* for more details.)

See the "Revision and Proofreading Suggestions" link on the "Course Documents" page for more on this.

### Overview of research

In text based writing, you're generally reporting or explaining an idea, concept, or belief, and in a college level essay, this information will be coming from sources.

In general, this overview should answer two important questions:

1. What kind of material have you chosen? (Essays? Web pages? Diaries?)
2. Why do you think these sources are appropriate? (Names of writers? Credentials?) Your goal here is to establish your sources as credible – if not, readers will wonder "Why should I listen to this essay?"

### Thesis and divisions

Here is where you set out 1) the focus of your essay – the **thesis** (What one point are you tracing from the essays); and 2) the reasons/ideas that will support your thesis – your **divisions**.

### Body paragraphs

These paragraphs present the information to readers and refer directly back to your divisions. Your goal is to express what the writers are saying, explain connections between their ideas and provide examples to help the readers "see" and "hear" what the writers are talking about.

To help explain your thesis you can – and should – use analogies or comparisons.

And again . . . avoid the word "you" in formal essays.

### Conclusion

You've taken the reader on a journey of ideas: what's it all mean. Avoid restating the thesis.

### "How do I get started? . . . " Expository Essays

#### Take Notes

1. Read essays and take notes: type up relevant quotes and make summaries. Go overboard here: the more notes you have, the easier it will be to find connections.
2. Generate a list of ideas about college as intelligence test, enlightenment, job training or another point. Look for quotes that would support these ideas. This list will form the basis of the essay: go long here.

3. Decide on your focus – do you want to write about college as testing/sorting mechanism, enlightenment/growth, job training or some other point (note “other” = singular).
4. Choose your sources.
5. Group your quotes into categories that support your thesis: these will act as possible divisions. Develop a short phrase or name for each of these categories/divisions, then write a thesis and division/forecasting statement (see below for examples).

**Thesis with divisions:**

Many feel that a college’s role is to foster personal growth. This is shown by their emphasis on \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_.

They believe a college should focus on career preparation because \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_.

**Organize Notes**

6. For each division, find at least two quotes from the readings which explains or illustrates the point. Make a list to organize your ideas or make a conventional outline, using your divisions as headings.

**Write Draft**

7. Main goal here? Get draft finished. Your focus should be on 1) setting up quotes with introductory phrases (identify speaker – let reader know what to look for in the quote) and then explaining connections between the quotes and your division.

Draft body paragraphs, remembering to set up each with a topic sentence, and to use a mixture of direct quotes, paraphrase, and summaries AND to cite all information from the readings.

8. Following suggestions in class and online, write introduction and conclusion.
9. Mop sweat from your brow.
10. Begin revision.
11. Get feedback from peer review and professor.

**Thesis/Division Statements (Expository Essays):**

A thesis is the main idea of your essay; your divisions are the ideas or arguments which explain or prove your thesis.

For your thesis/division statement (usually the last sentence in your introduction), just list the focus of your topic sentences:

These commentators feel that college should focus on personal growth in order to ensure that students graduate with an understanding of multiculturalism, a system of shared beliefs, and a love of learning.

The writers believe college should concentrate on career preparation. This is shown by their focus on practical courses, cost of college, and interest in addressing student needs.

A college’s ability to determine intelligence, according to these writers, is central because it will help employers choose the best workers, allow students to discover their abilities, and limit costs.

**Topic Sentences\Body paragraphs:**

Remember to group your paragraphs around declarative statements such as

The importance of personal growth in college, according to some writers, is its embrace of multiculturalism.

Many feel that developing shared beliefs illustrates the centrality of personal growth in college.

The writers feel that another reason supporting the importance of personal growth in college is that it fosters a love of learning.

Note that a topic sentence should refer directly back to a division.

### Incorporating Quotations

One of the goals in this essay is to learn how to smoothly incorporate quotes into your own writing. Instead of just sticking the quote in, remember that readers like to be prepared before they encounter another voice in your essay.

Try the following three part development strategy to ease readers into the information.

#### 1. Introduce Quote/set up

- a. let reader know who's speaking and when – provide context (any necessary information to set up quote). Note that before readers even get to Menand's quote, they have an idea of its content: democracy.

This is a crucial part of incorporating quotes. Instead of just dumping the quote in, this acts as a "head's up:" it alerts readers, telling them, in effect, "Hey you. Look for \_\_\_ in the quote you're about to read, okay?"

Many feel that developing shared beliefs illustrates the centrality of personal growth in college. For Menand, these beliefs include the civic education that forms the core of a democracy since it helps people understand their larger role in society. He writes that college provides the

The list of verbs below can help you set up a quote. They can also come in handy when providing a context for quotes from the work your writing about. Use some thought when choosing these: for instance, why does "suggests" work better than "argues" in the sentence above?

|         |          |           |            |          |           |         |
|---------|----------|-----------|------------|----------|-----------|---------|
| add     | believe  | criticize | Explain    | Maintain | point out | Show    |
| agree   | charge   | declare   | feels      | mention  | reinforce | stress  |
| analyze | claim    | describe  | illustrate | note     | report    | suggest |
| answer  | comment  | define    | imply      | observe  | reply     | support |
| argue   | conclude | discover  | indicate   | object   | respond   | think   |
|         | consider | emphasize | list       | offer    | reveal    | write   |

#### 2. Insert Quote

"knowledge and skills important for life as an informed citizen."

#### 3. Comment on Quote

Avoid "this quote is saying . . .;" instead, connect with another idea or explain its relevance to your paragraph. In particular, work on linking it to your division.

This emphasis on the skills to fully participate – to be "informed" – ensures that students experience growth. Instead of a focus on grades, Menand notes that concentrating on a student's individual development means that the "only thing that matters is what students actually learn." Since the goal of college, according to Menand and others, is to learn, and since learning entails a growth, the sense of common goals which a knowledge of culture and society imparts is an important aspect of a college education.

Note how repetition (mental>nervousness>suffering) was used throughout paragraph to keep readers focused on the topic

Kahlenberg links the goal of college directly to democracy, quoting Thomas Jefferson's goal of an American which celebrates "virtue and talent." For Kahlenberg, college is a kind of "talent" school where students can develop their personal abilities and become "leaders in our democracy."

### Developing/Organizing Paragraphs

Instead of just pouring the information from the source into your essay, each paragraph should have a specific purpose.

If you're stumped on how to develop the paragraphs, try the ole' who, what, why, when, where, and how approach. This will DEFINITELY generate material for this kind of essay.

For example you could focus on:

- Why do the writers feel multiculturalism is important?
- Why do the writers feel that job preparation is important?
- What is civic engagement? According to the writers, why is it important?
- What do the writers feel is the main reason that job preparation is so important?
- What about a love of learning, according to the writers, is helpful?
- When, according to the writers, did a focus on student needs first develop? Why?
- Where do the writers say practical courses will help students?
- How will, according to the writers, an emphasis on cost help students in college?

Explaining these in a paragraph with examples will help flesh out the ideas in your essay.

### Sentence Starters for Explanation

After you've included a quote, sentences like these can help you explain its connection to your overall point. Check the verb list on page 76 for additional words to use when incorporating sources.

By these examples, Menand shows how a business approach to college can \_\_\_\_\_  
Delbanco reports that some believe students need college to \_\_\_\_\_  
The employment figures, Gutting points out, suggest that \_\_\_\_\_  
This emphasis on critical thinking suggests that \_\_\_\_\_  
This emphasis on soft skills points to \_\_\_\_\_  
Gutting feels that these kinds of courses will \_\_\_\_\_

### Use Report Discourse

Remember that you are objectively reporting the information of others, not making your own observations – avoid making statements such as "College should foster a love of learning." Instead, state "Menand and others believe that college should foster a love of learning."

Phrases that will come in handy include

Professors agree . . . . Delbanco believes . . . .  
Experts argue that. . . . Writers like Gutting feel . . . .

Remember that instead of just sticking a quote into a paragraph, you need to set it up for the reader by providing a context for them to understand why you are using it. This context is the place to add short phrases like those above to emphasize that you're reporting information instead of offering your opinion.

## Peer Review Instructions: Reporting Information

First, number each of your paragraphs in the left hand margin.

Remember that your purpose as a reader is to offer suggestions for additions or deletions – it is not to not to give a grade or say “Good Work,” but to offer suggestions for additions or deletions. Set your standards high: you must include at least two suggestions for each questions.

Write out suggestions on separate sheet of paper marked

Reader: \_\_\_\_\_

Writer: \_\_\_\_\_

Remember that you goal isn't to answer “yes” to every question: it's to make suggestions. Try using “Consider \_\_\_\_\_” or “Try \_\_\_\_\_” to preface your comments.

### 1. Introduction

- a. Does the first sentence draw you in?
- b. Does writer have a structured opening (see 22)? What suggestions could you make?
- c. Is there an idea in the intro that could be used for a revised introduction?

### 2. Context of Research

- a. What information about college education does the writer supply?
- b. Does the writer provide information on the sources that have been used? Does the writer list the authors or let the reader know he/she is reporting on information from others? Where could the writer insert this information?

### 3. Thesis

- a. Does the writer clearly state their focus and list their divisions? Can you tell that the writer is reporting information and not stating their opinion?
- b. Copy out on your comment sheet what you believe is the essay's thesis and division.

### 4. Development of body paragraphs: ask these questions for each body paragraph

- a. Does paragraph open with a clear topic sentence which refers back to the division and thesis?
- b. Is the material organized coherently?
- c. Where does paragraph drift away from focus on thesis and division?
- d. Where is more information from the sources needed?
- e. Where could the paragraph have a bit more “life” – perhaps with a more specific description or with an example?
- f. Where does the writer need to strive for more objectivity (i.e. remove references to their own opinion)?
- g. Does the writer develop one idea over two paragraphs? Where could they expand on an idea to develop an additional paragraph?
- h. Is the information presented accurately? Where are citations missing?

### 5. Conclusion

- a. Does conclusion return to an idea in introduction?
- b. Does conclusion merely repeat thesis?
- c. Does conclusion answer the question “what's it all mean?”?

### 6. General

- a. Does writer include “you” in essay? What could they use instead?
- b. What's the best thing about this essay?
- c. What needs the most work?

## Revision Suggestions Essay #1

Remember to read and follow “Checklist For Conferences” and to sign up yesterday for your meeting.

### See course site for revision samples and suggestions

The main parts of your essay we’ll be working on include

#### Organization

In particular, we’ll focus on using repetition of your division words and thesis to keep readers focused on the topic of individual paragraphs. Think of them as a friendly nudge on the shoulder of the reader that says “Hey you, this is my point – stop thinking about what you’ll have for lunch tomorrow and pay attention.”

#### Maintaining Focus in Body Paragraphs

Your essay serves your thesis: everything in it needs to point back to the thesis.

#### Rough draft

Another factor in college that is crucial towards personal growth is, critical thinking. “[...] but employers overall are most likely to believe there is a need to increase the focus on active skills such as critical thinking, complex problem solving, communication, and applying knowledge to real-world situations” (Hart7). In order to impress potential employers a student must be able to present themselves with proper critical thinking skills that could help them if they begin a career. “Critical thinking and analytical reasoning (82% more emphasis, 7% less)” (Hart8.) Employers that were interviewed, for the most part, stated that they believe more emphasis should be placed onto skills pertaining to critical thinking. “[...] ensuring college students gain experience working with others to solve important problems in their community” (Hart9). Learning to work and cooperate with others is seen as something important in relation to critical thinking by many employers.

Notice the difference between the topic sentence and content of paragraph? Given the topic sentence, the thesis was \_\_\_\_\_. Given the content of the paragraph the focus is \_\_\_\_\_. What’s needed here?

#### Rough draft Thesis and Body Paragraph

These writers believe that college focuses on enhancing personal growth by working with students on their communication skills, showing them how to enjoy life, and working on their problem solving.

An enormous factor in today’s society is communication skills. Employers today not only look for a person who is capable of working in the field very well but for somebody who has good communication skills. Hart Research Associates after conducting polls with employers has revealed that, “candidate’s demonstrated capacity to think critically, communicate clearly, and solve complex programs is more important than his or her undergraduate field of study” (It Takes More 4). The survey says, communication is what makes our world work, it is important to know how to work efficiently, but people need to be able to talk in a meeting and communicate clearly. That is why employer’s, according to Hart Research Associates, “believe there is a need to increase the focus on active skills such as critical thinking, complex problem solving, communication, and applying knowledge to real-world settings” (It Takes More 7). For the future of students in college, this may mean more classes that involve communication skills to graduate.

Louis Menand, author of *Live and Learn*, suggest "people will, given a choice, learn only what they need to know for success" (Menand). Menand makes a very strong point saying this communication skills are the last skill a student in college believes they need for their major. Students need to learn though without the good communicating skills you are not a top priority for most jobs.

### Developing/Organizing Paragraphs

As noted above try the ole' who, what, why, when, where, and how approach. This will DEFINITELY generate material for this kind of essay.

For example you could focus on:

- Why do the writers feel is multiculturalism is important?
- Why do the writers feel that job preparation is important?
- What is civic engagement? According to the writers, why is it important?
- What do the writers feel is the main reason that job preparation is so important?
- What about a love of learning, according to the writers, is helpful?
- When, according to the writers, did a focus on student needs first develop? Why?
- Where do the writers say practical courses will help students?
- How will, according to the writers, an emphasis on cost help students in college?

Explaining these in a paragraph with examples will help flesh out the ideas in your essay.

Consider, for example, how Laura makes changes from her rough draft to her final draft that help explain her point more clearly:

### Rough Draft

Some experts believe that the goal of college is to mold students into responsible, well-educated citizens. An author who supports this idea is Anthony P. Carnevale, director of the Global Institute on Education and the Economy at Georgetown University, who describes the role of educators by writing that "[Educators have] cultural and political missions to create good neighbors and good citizens [...] education should extend educators' ability to empower Americans to do work of the world, rather than to retreat from it." Carnevale means that the mission of both the educators and the students is to prepare students to be the forefront of our society. Carnevale adds that "Educators in [...] postsecondary institutions have cultural and political missions to ensure that we have an educated citizenry that can continue to defend and promote our democratic ideals." He implies here that students should recognize and accept the fact that being a good citizen means doing the work of the world and supporting the rest of our society.

### Final Draft

Some experts believe that the goal of college is to mold students into responsible, well-educated citizens. This responsibility includes an understanding of the role of citizens in a democracy, such as the necessity of paying attention to local and national news and an openness to a variety of viewpoints. Anthony P. Carnevale, director of the Global Institute on Education and the Economy at Georgetown University, argues that educators have "cultural and political missions to create good neighbors and good citizens [...] education should extend educators' ability to empower Americans to do work of the world, rather than to retreat from it." This empowerment stems from the kinds of critical thinking and research skills a college education provides. Carnevale adds that "Educators in [...] postsecondary institutions have cultural

and political missions to ensure that we have an educated citizenry that can continue to defend and promote our democratic ideals." The emphasis on "political" and "democratic ideals" suggests that civic education helps students understand the connection between laws and regulations (the political) and the promotion of social wellbeing (our "ideals"). He implies here that students should recognize that being a good citizen means doing the work of the world and supporting the rest of our society by voting and participating in democratic life by keeping abreast of current events.

In her revision, Laura connected Carnevale's ideas more closely to what college actually does to promote them.

Working from the thesis below, Yesina did a good job of revising by adding examples from college classes to support the idea of the writers.

Many writers such as Louis Menand, Gary Gutting, Alina Tugend, Andrew Delbanco, Richard M. Freeland, Richard Kahlenberg and Loren Pope insist that the real purpose of college is to assist in the personal and intellectual growth of its students. They focus on the need to enrich students, to aid in "self-discovery," and to promote diversity.

Rough Draft

As a result of "self-discovering", college students may also find a passion or even a meaning in life. As Freeland, writing in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, comments that "intellectual pursuits can be, and are for many people, a rich source of meaning in their lives" (2). Kahlenberg believes that college is a setting in which students can develop personal interests in different topics. He mentions that college can also lead them to begin thinking about the areas in which they are skilled. According to Pope, author of *Colleges that Change Lives*, points out that colleges "have helped them [students] find themselves so happily, given them new powers and confidence, and made them better persons" (4). Pope indicates that not only does college result in self-discovery for its students, but self-improvement.

Final Draft

The writers suggest that through "self-discovery," college students may find a passion or even a purpose in life. College provides, as Freeland writes in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, "intellectual pursuits" that "are for many people, a rich source of meaning in their lives." The suggestion here is that the purpose of college isn't just the grade. For instance, learning to pay attention to bias and watch for propaganda in a Media course lead to a fuller appreciation and understanding of current events. Connected to this idea of intellect and passion, Kahlenberg believes that college students can develop personal interests in different topics. In other words, a Math major may find a love for poetry that follows them outside the classroom. Summarizing these ideas, Pope, author of *Colleges that Change Lives*, points out that colleges "have helped them [students] find themselves so happily, given them new powers and confidence, and made them better persons" (4). Looking at the entire college experience, Pope suggests that the skills learned, such as critical thinking, communication, and knowledge of the sciences, result not only in a paper diploma, but in the more intangible sense of self awareness that leads to long term self-improvement.

**To give you a rough idea of how much detail to include, each body paragraph should cover about one half to one third of a typed, double-spaced page. If paragraphs is longer than a page, give reader a break and separate it.**

### **Setting up Quotes/Providing Context**

A major part of helping readers understand your information is setting up a quote so they'll be able to see how it fits with your topic.

In a sense, your goal is to alert readers on what to concentrate on in the quote before they even read it.

Consider the following examples

#### **Original**

College gives the qualifications one needs in order to find a career." A job market that holds much more promise for the educated and trained than for people with fewer skills" (Trumbull).

#### **Revised**

College provides the education and qualifications necessary to find a career. This is important for graduates because, as Trumbull writes, the "job market [ . . . ] holds much more promise for the educated and trained than for people with fewer skills."

Note that in the revised version, the reader is much more prepared for the quote from Trumbull. This kind of set up allows readers to better understand the quote because you, the writer, have framed it for them. Work on providing a similar context to prepare readers for your own quotes.

### **Using part of a quote**

An important skill to work on in this essay involves choosing just what you need from a quote. Consider the draft and revised versions on the sentences below.

#### **Draft**

Some scholars support the idea that college is the medium through which the student gains great opportunity for security in our increasingly demanding job market, in which postsecondary requirements are growing (Carnevale). Freeland stresses the importance of "economic independence" by referring to it as "the first condition of personal freedom" (Freeland). He believes society should encourage and support students who are concerned with what happens after college, writing that "we should stop denigrating their entirely sensible yearning to find their places in the non-academic world and to prepare themselves for adult responsibilities" (Freeland).

Note how in the second quote how the writer focused just on what was necessary.

#### **Revision**

Some scholars support the idea that college is the medium through which the student gains great opportunity for security in our increasingly demanding job market, in which postsecondary requirements are growing (Carnevale). Freeland stresses the importance of "economic independence" by referring to it as "the first condition of personal freedom" (Freeland). He believes society should help students "prepare themselves for adult responsibilities."

### **Establishing Credibility**

An essay like this -- reporting information -- is only as good as its sources. Of your goals in this essay is to let readers know that your sources are reputable. One way to do this is by establishing their credibility early in the essay. See suggestions below for a how-to.

#### **Introduction of essay**

College professor Louis Menand  
Louis Menand, writer for the *New Yorker*,

### In Body of Essay

If you've included the author's full name earlier you can just use the last name. Below you'll suggestions on what to include and a sample phrase which establishes the writer's credentials.

Note both cases, the format is Author's name, \_\_\_\_\_, <<<NOTE THE TWO COMMAS

1) Richard Kahlenberg, a senior fellow at The Century Foundation,

You can also just include the title of the essay, but students tell me the author's job/expertise, etc., is often more effective than just the title

2) Richard Kahlenberg, writing in a *Chronicle of Higher Education* blog,

### Other Examples below

1) Gest, a reporter for *US World News and Report*, argues that

2) In their report "Tough Choices or Tough Times," the NCEE believes that

3) Kantrowiz and Wingert, writing in *Newsweek*, suggest that

4) Barber, professor of civics at the University of Maryland,

5) Dr. Gerald Graff, professor of education at the University of Illinois, notes that ". . ." (qtd. in Archibold).

### Verb List for Setting Up Quotes

The list of verbs below can help you set up a quote. They can also come in handy when providing a context for quotes from the work your writing about.

|         |          |           |            |          |           |         |
|---------|----------|-----------|------------|----------|-----------|---------|
| add     | believe  | criticize | Explain    | maintain | point out | show    |
| agree   | charge   | declare   | feels      | mention  | reinforce | stress  |
| analyze | claim    | describe  | illustrate | note     | report    | suggest |
| answer  | comment  | define    | imply      | observe  | reply     | support |
| argue   | conclude | discover  | indicate   | object   | respond   | think   |
|         | consider | emphasize | list       | offer    | reveal    | write   |

## Sentence Patterns to Use in Expository Writing

The following are from Charles Cooper and Susan Peck MacDonald's *Writing the World*

### Using Verbs Precisely

Note that the choice of verb before the *that* clause allows a writer both to label information as coming from a particular source and to differentiate between what is *suggested*, *argued*, or merely *said*. In constructing your sentences, consider these common verbs for presenting information:

**To indicate neutrality about the ideas presented:** *says that, states that, reports that, notes that, finds that*

**To indicate particularly well supported findings:** *indicates that, finds that, shows that, demonstrates that, concludes that*

**To indicate more tentative findings:** *suggests that, implies that, believes that, proposes that*

**To indicate speculative or theoretical statements:** *speculates that, theorizes that, supposes that, conjectures that*

**To argue tentatively:** *urges that, advises that, claims that*

### Using *That* Clauses

One common sentence pattern used by writers to report information includes a *that* clause: "So-and-so suggests that . . ." This kind of sentence enables you to say *who* said *what* without taking a position yourself as to whether the information is correct or not. Here are some examples of *that* clauses from this chapter's readings:

Barbara and Gene Eakins found *that*, with one exception, men spoke more often and, without exception, spoke for a longer time. (paragraph 4)

—DEBORAH TANNEN

"Put Down That Paper and Talk to Me!"  
Rapport-Talk and Report-Talk"

Dale Spender suggests *that* most people feel instinctively (if not consciously) that women, like children, should be seen and not heard [ . . . ]. (paragraph 9)

—DEBORAH TANNEN

"Put Down That Paper and Talk to Me!"  
Rapport-Talk and Report-Talk"

I discovered *that*, in many cases, they didn't think about or even necessarily know communication "rules." (paragraph 3)

—SUSAN PAGE

"Essential Traits of Couples Who Thrive"

## Introductions

You have several choices for an introduction (see 22 *I&C* and both the *McGraw-Hill Reader* and *The Little Seagull Handbook* for additional suggestions). How about an analogy? A personal example?

Here Thomas uses an analogy

College is like a gym, but instead of training the body physical, it is trained mentally. Every day of college is like a different workout routine for the brain, each day the brain is challenged in a new way. The so called personal trainers of college are the professors and the gym would be the college campus. This is a very expensive gym, or at least most people would agree with that statement. The tuition for

college can leave someone over a hundred thousand dollars in debt and without a job. With college prices rising to even more alarming rates, people need to know the benefits from paying these absurd amounts of money. Analysts such as Dan Berrett, Andrew Delblanco, Louis Menand and Alina Tugend, suggest that a college's purpose is to strengthen a student's intellectual and personal abilities. Colleges will do this by enhancing the students' critical thinking, bringing people together socially and by providing knowledge that the students will use throughout their lives.

See course site for other examples.

## Audiences and Purpose of Writing: Journalism v. Work v. Academic Writing

### Example 1: *New York Times* Sept 2, 2013

Braintree, Mass. -- Conventional wisdom and popular perception hold that American students are falling further and further behind in science and math achievement. The statistics from this state tell a different story.

If Massachusetts were a country, its eighth graders would rank second in the world in science, behind only Singapore, according to Timss — the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study, which surveys knowledge and skills of fourth and eighth graders around the world. (The most recent version, in 2011, tested more than 600,000 students in 63 nations.)

### Example 2: Medical Report

There is severe mucoperiosteal thickening of the right frontal sinus with a bubbly appearance of sinus disease suggesting acute on chronic sinusitis. The left frontal sinus is clear. Severe disease is seen affecting the right anterior ethmoid air cells with near complete opacification of the anterior ethmoid sinuses and opacification of the right frontal recess. There is mild mucoperiosteal thickening of the left ethmoid air cells. The left frontal recess remains patent. There is mild right and moderate left sinus disease affecting the posterior ethmoid sinuses. The sphenoid sinuses are clear bilaterally. Mild polypoid mucosal thickening is seen in the left maxillary antrum. Mild mucosal thickening is seen in the right maxillary sinus. There is opacification of the right ostiomeatal unit The left ostiomeatal unit is patent The mastoid air cells are clear. The osseous structures are otherwise intact There is minimal rightward nasal septal deviation anteriorly.

### Example 3: Mounsey, Rebecca, Michael A. Vandehey, and George M. Diekhoff. "Working And Non-Working University Students: Anxiety, Depression, And Grade Point Average." *College Student Journal* 47.2 (2013): 379-389. *Academic Search Premier*. Web. 4 Sept. 2013.

The number of students who decide to attend a university and attempt outside employment has increased over the years, and now most students choose to work while attending school (Broadbridge & Swanson, 2005; Curtis, 2007; Holmes, 2008; Swanson, Broadbridge, & Karatzias, 2006). Reasons students work include: (a) opportunity, (b) previous employment experience, (c) necessity, and (d) worries about post-graduation loan repayment.

Students work while going to school because there is an opportunity to do so. Jobs requiring manual skills have dissipated, and service jobs have become more prevalent. Many of these service jobs have extended hours, which affords great flexibility in the work schedule (Broadbridge & Swanson, 2005; Holmes, 2008). Swanson, et al. (2006) suggested that some students work because they were employed through high school and are used to balancing employment and coursework. These students continue to work during college because extra income maintains a desirable lifestyle. Robotham (2009) found that as many as 38% of students said working helped uphold the quality of life they were accustomed to before attending a university.

Some students require employment in order to provide for basic needs, such as rent and food (Curtis, 2007). Students who come from lower social classes were twice as likely to work when compared to their financially better-off peers (Callendar, 2008).

### Example 4: OCC Student

The writers feel that college, in addition to knowledge, will increase intelligence by promoting socialization. This is done by giving individuals a place to reflect their thoughts and peers to share those

thoughts with. The Director of American Studies at Columbia University, Andrew Delbanco, introduced the thought of “college as a place where young people encounter ideas and ideals from teachers, and debate them with peers.” He believes this information is not only taught, but learned through interaction: “students have something to learn not only from their teachers but also from each other.” Perhaps this is the reason that Menand believes “there is stuff that every adult ought to know, and college is the best delivery system for getting that stuff into people’s heads” - suggesting that when people are constantly being forced to learn new knowledge, they retain it. While human interaction is a main part of learning in college, time spent alone allows people to reflect on what they have learned. College is a place where people can, as University of Phoenix director says, “sit down and think” (qtd. in Delbanco).

Richard Freeland, former president of Northeastern University, introduces a different point with the way college socializes: he feels that, as students, “we free the mind from bias, that we cultivate rigorous thought, that we teach not only tolerance of difference but appreciation of diversity, and that we give our students the tools they need for a lifetime of intellectual adventure and social contribution.” Freeland believes that if we open our minds and attempt to learn, we will carry that information throughout our lives. College is the basis of “discovering that others see the world differently” (Delbanco). Due to increased diversity, students have to be taught “to interact with people different than themselves,” (Kahlenberg) as well as a “tolerance of different but appreciation of diversity” (Freeland). This skill connects with Kahlenberg’s idea that even if it is not immediately relevant, it will be used and useful in their lifetime.

- What’s the differences in these kinds of writing?
- How is academic writing different from writing you’re used to? How is it similar?

## Proofreading Words to Avoid

|               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| you/we        | This suggests you’re speaking directly to the reader. But what if your reader has no problems communicating? It can also lead to pronoun problems.<br><b>Instead use</b><br>people, a person, some, they, males, females, students, English professors, etc. |
| a lot         | Too general for formal essays. Be specific.<br><b>Instead use</b><br>many, often, several, etc.                                                                                                                                                              |
| One           | Avoid when using to refer to a person.<br><b>Instead use</b><br>A person, a man, a women, people, etc.                                                                                                                                                       |
| don’t         | Avoid contractions in academic writing: a bit too informal.<br><b>Instead use</b><br>do not, etc.                                                                                                                                                            |
| the fact that | A bit wordy – one of those empty phrases that merely slow down the reader.<br><b>Instead use</b><br>Actually, you can usually completely eliminate this phrase                                                                                               |
| being that    | Awkward wording – sounds okay in oral speech, but usually doesn’t work in standard written English<br><b>Instead use</b><br>Since                                                                                                                            |
| in which      | Can be awkward<br><b>Instead use</b><br>which or reword                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Thing         | Too vague<br><b>Instead use</b><br>A more specific word to describe what you’re referring to.                                                                                                                                                                |

## Proofreading Check List

1. Delete: Take out any words which aren’t needed

2. Clarify: Change any phrases that do not read clearly
3. Engage reader: Add analogies, descriptions, examples, sharp phrasing to help readers “see” your point
4. Cohesion: Use repetition to keep reader focused. Supply introductory phrases to quotes and use transitions to move readers through your ideas

### Use Report Discourse

Remember that you are objectively reporting the information of others, not making your own observations – avoid making statements such as “College should foster a love of learning.” Instead, state “**Menand and others believe that college should foster a love of learning.**”

Phrases that will come in handy include

**Professors agree . . . . Delbanco believes . . . .**  
**Experts argue that. . . . Writers like Gutting feel . . . .**

Remember that instead of just sticking a quote into a paragraph, you need to set it up for the reader by providing a context for them to understand why you are using it. This context is the place to add short phrases like those above to emphasize that you’re reporting information instead of offering your opinion.

### Go With the Flow -- Organization Within a Paragraph

Students often need to more consciously arrange the information in their paragraph. One way of doing this is by supplying short phrases to let readers know what you're doing at that point in the paragraph.

The point here is to actively guide the reader through the information instead of just dumping it all in a paragraph. Phrases, like those below, would act as a road signs for readers, providing the guidance that allows your information to flow smoothly.

1. Instead of . . . , Menand believes that college should . . . .
2. This lack of civil education, Gutting suggests, is \_\_\_\_\_
3. He writes that if \_\_\_\_\_, then \_\_\_\_\_.
4. This is a problem, according to Tugend, because \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Kahlenberg believes these intellectual skills are important because they \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Trumbell feels this ability to master a specific skill will help graduates \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Due to this lack of interest, Freeland suggests college students will \_\_\_\_\_.

### On Proofreading Out Loud

From student essays:

1. By having as little as twenty students in a classroom, this helps education because children can focus more.
2. Gottman states that by “speaking without being defensive helps counter several destructive habits” (45).
3. Men don’t mind sitting their with their wife in peace and quite, not explaining their feelings
4. Gottman states that, “. . . a specific remedy for several problems, are mostly related to “flooding” (45). “Flooding is the feeling of being overwhelmed by one’s partner’s negativity and one’s own emotional upset” (45).

### Commas not Comas

Four basic rules for commas – that’s it.

#### 1) In a list

**The writers agree that the main problems in American education revolve around funding, corporate influence, and student apathy.**

**Michael Moore, Jean Anyon, and John Gatto make these problems clear in essays which explore the darker side of American education.**

#### 2) Before a conjunction (and, but, so, etc.) to join two independent clauses

LAME EXAMPLE ALERT

*Original*

Gatto notes that boredom is a common problem in school (156). Moore experienced such boredom in his own schooling (143).

*With comma and conjunction*

Gatto notes that boredom is a common problem in school (156), and Moore experienced such boredom in his own schooling (143).

### 3) With an introductory phrase

As the writers note, corporate interests have moved into areas, such as school curriculums, where they were formerly barred.

If these trends continue, Barber suggests that democracy in this country will falter.

### 4) With an insertion or interruption: (see first example in #3 as well)

Moore notes that students at ivy league colleges, which supposedly attract America's best and brightest, cannot answer high school level history questions (157).

Anyon reports that "executive elite schools," much like Dr. Bordelon's writing course, have a rigorous and demanding curriculum (250). This rigor will serve students well throughout their academic and professional careers.

Moore, along with many other writers, argue that the educational system is not meeting the proper standards that students need to excel due to over advertising, misguided curriculum and lack of school funding.

### Things to Watch for

Be sure that whenever you use any exact words or phrases from your sources, you use direct quotes, and be sure to cite direct quotes, summaries, and paraphrases (and be sure you know what each refers to [see Dr. Bordelon's Glossary 11]).

**Be sure that all forecasting statements and topic sentences are not quotes: you need to decide how to organize each paragraph.**

## Assignment Overview: Essay #2 (Argumentative)

### What You'll be Doing for Our Second Essay Assignment

Now that you're familiar with the basics of academic writing – gathering research, taking effective notes, documenting sources, and then organizing, drafting, and revising a piece of writing – it's time to introduce another skill: making an argument

This reading marks the beginning of a new essay and method of writing. Essay #2 will instruct you on the how's and why's of argumentative writing, also known as taking a position on a stance. Instead of reading to only gather information, you'll be reading to find evidence that a particular position is valid – or not valid. You'll also begin evaluating the readings, taking into consideration such things as the bias of the speaker/writer and the basis (factual/emotional) of their arguments.

Developing an argument – and more broadly, becoming a "college-educated" individual – means learning to challenge your preconceptions. For me, the most rewarding part of college was learning to see beyond the provincial, suburban mindset of my upbringing and use facts instead of assumptions to guide my thinking (though like most, I still engage in daily battle with my assumptions). Get ready to be challenged and thus, get ready to think.

On to more mundane matters. This will be the first essay you'll write under a time constraint. I've incorporated this kind of writing into the course for two reasons: 1) the English Department requires a specific amount of the work be completed in class; and 2) it's good training. There will be many times in your college and work career where you'll have to quickly develop an effective piece of writing. Writing like this demands an understanding of the issue and a clear purpose – and is viewed (i.e. graded) differently than the kind of polished writing that goes through several drafts. That said, you'll have two and half hours, which means you should have enough time (if you plan it right and do not try to write too much) to complete a rough and final draft.

### Topic of Essay

I've been "talking" for a while now and haven't addressed the topic: this is fitting because the emphasis of this assignment isn't on the topic but on the argument. In other words, it's not your position that's important; what really matters here is how well you prove to readers that your thinking on the issue is clear and logical.

That said, our topic for this essay is the death penalty or capital punishment. You'll be reading several essays on this topic, and then developing your own position and arguments based both on the readings and on your own thinking.

Remember that an argument is essentially a sales pitch: and as we all know, the buyer has to beware. Thus read ALL of these essays with a very questioning, very skeptical eye. See Course Site > Course Documents > Essay #2 >Argumentative Fallacies for more on information.

### Purpose of Essay

This essay is designed to develop your reading and analytical skills and develop your ability to communicate your thinking clearly and logically to your audience. Since it's so closely connected to your thinking, writing this essay amounts to a peek under the hood of your brain, a chance for readers to see how the engine's running. Thus, you'll be trying out several arguments and positions, disregarding those that that, to keep the metaphor going, cause misfires.

It's this kind of malleable thinking, this sorting out of different possibilities and consciously choosing the ones which can be supported by evidence, that makes readers trust your judgment – and is thus the kind of thinking that you should strive for.

There are some common errors people make when developing arguments. There's an old *Charlie Brown* comic strip that illustrates some of these problems. Lucy believes that snow comes from the ground up and tries to convince Charlie Brown that this is true. She makes this deduction based on an observation: the snow appears in the morning and it covers things up. She even trots out corroborative "evidence" – grass comes up, etc. – to support her argument. The problem is that what seems to be valid is often just that – an assumption. As Charlie Brown points out (ever notice that it's always Charlie Brown, never just Charlie?), her logic is flawed and he cements his case with a specific example: the snow also covers the concrete – which should block the snow if it came up from the ground.

Her response when confronted with an argument which concretely (couldn't resist this pun) demonstrates her position is incorrect? She changes the subject by attacking the messenger. This is called an *ad hominem* attack -- when you attack the person him or herself instead of the person's idea. Taken as a whole, the cartoon demonstrates Lucy's inability to fully reason through her beliefs and move to logic. Of course, she's just a kid . . . though the "Intellectual Free Lunch" suggests that some people still operate on playground logic.

Moving from thinking to writing, remember that you are making an argument here, not just reporting information as in the last essay. This means that your thesis needs to make clear how you feel about the issue – even if you're wavering a bit yourself. Choose a position ("should" or "should not" are words that come in handy) and choose three reasons that support that decision.

Just as in essay #1, you should work on using "real-life" examples, either from personal experience or from the essays in the textbook, to enliven your argument.

The idea of an argument is important to keep in mind here. Specifically, your goal is to take a position and present the logic of your argument to the reader. Instead of objectively reporting (as in essay #1), in this essay you'll be presenting your own opinions.

A key word to remember when making an argument is "why." Just why do you feel the way you do about the subject? The answer, which should involve several reasons that logically consider the short and long term consequences, is your argument.

Reasons, right? That's the key to making an effective argument: developing persuasive reasons. How do you do this? For starters, think about the subject from different points of view – and again, ask yourself "why." Why, for example, do you feel capital punishment is a good or bad idea? Have you considered the costs of CP vs. life imprisonment? And are costs solely connected to dollars (i.e. political costs, social costs, etc.)? Asking these kinds of probing questions is crucial to developing a reasoned, well considered essay.

How do you come up with these probing questions? Glad you asked. Use the categories in "How Do I Come Up With Reasons" (*I&C* 65) to trigger these kinds of questions.

Oh yes, you can use the dreaded "I" in this essay -- just be careful of overuse.

### **Discourse**

We discussed the importance of entering the academic discourse of topics for the last essay. If you remember, I quoted the 20<sup>th</sup> century philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein who noted, "The limits of my language mean the limits of my world."

For this assignment we broaden our world by entering the discourse of law and criminal justice. Thus, you'll use terms such as "trial," "defendant," "prosecutors," "justice," etc. Because this will involve society, you'll also use words like, well, "society," and associated words such as "citizens" and "justice." And the repetition of justice is deliberate: it means one thing in a legal setting – and another in a society.

For starters, here's a word you'll encounter in several of the essays: Habeas Corpus. It refers to a judicial process, set out in the constitution and enforced by the federal court system, which ensures that all defendants in a criminal proceeding are given a fair trial.

There's another word you'll encounter in the essays: moratorium. What does it mean? . . . That's what dictionaries were made for.

## **The Writing Assignment: Essay #2**

Write an essay which argues that capital punishment helps or hurts America. Another way to look at this question is to ask whether the death penalty is good for our legal system and society or if it harms them. Use statistics and facts to support your claims/opinions. Your facts should come from the required readings on the death penalty.

Your goal is to convince readers that your position is reasonable and valid by using specific reasoning, evidence to support it, and then explanations of that reasoning. Your audience doesn't necessarily have to agree with you: your goal is to show them the thinking that is behind your opinion. Thus, this essay uses opinion, but opinion based upon logic – opinions that are tested and considered before they are offered to the reader. People aren't persuaded with only one reason, and thus you will offer several different reasons to support your position. You will be using examples (both personal and from outside sources), descriptions, and stories to explain how these reasons support your position.

You will probably have mixed feelings about this issue – which is as it should be. Complete the pre-writing exercises (44) to begin forming your own opinion.

Remember, I'm not a mind reader – it's your responsibility to put your thinking into words.

### Requirements

Your essay needs to include at least six (6) paragraphs: an introduction with a thesis as the last sentence; three body paragraphs, each offering a different reason supporting your position and using examples, descriptions and stories to prove that the reason is valid; a counter-argument (one paragraph which brings up the opposing view, and then rebuts this view); and a conclusion.

You must include a minimum of three facts, statistics, or quotes from the readings, but remember that the main basis of this essay is your own argument; you need to develop your own reasons and examples, not merely parrot what was discussed in class. That said, don't stick to your opinions if they are not rational – remember that your goal is to use logic and reasoning to show why your position is correct.

Follow MLA documenting guidelines when citing sources.

### Learning Objectives

After successfully writing this essay you will have learned how

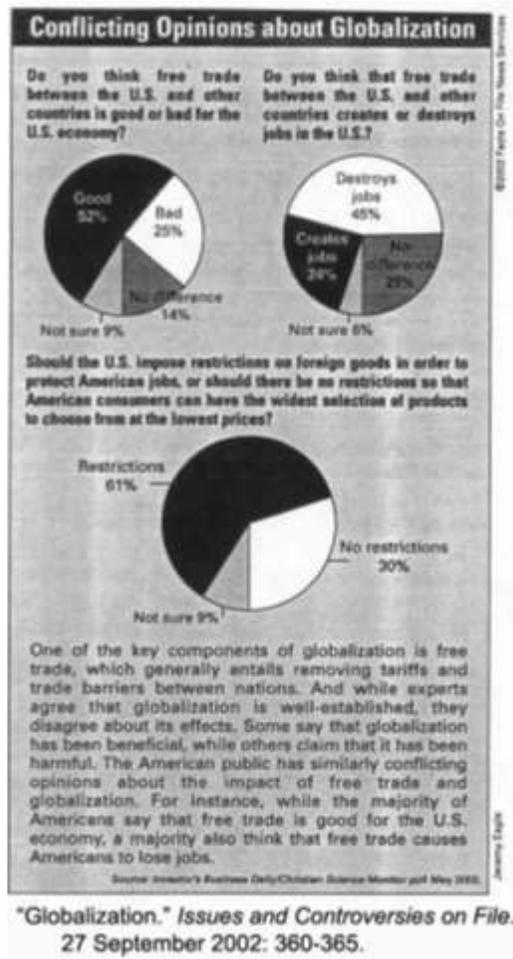
1. to avoid the “intellectual free lunch”
2. to examine and question generalizations
3. choose a specific stance/position on a controversial issue
4. use examples to illustrate your points
5. explain how the examples prove your point
6. explain the reasoning behind your stance
7. effectively use argumentative discourse
8. use counterarguments and rebuttals
9. evaluate sources
10. citing sources correctly
11. plan effectively to write in class essay

### What you can bring in

1. Completed Reasons/Evidence worksheet
2. Completed Thesis/division statement
3. Completed Works Cited sheet
4. Dictionary/Thesaurus
5. Print copies of *I&C*, *The Little Seagull Handbook*, readings for essay #2
6. An Oreo cookie to supply a much needed sugar rush.

NOTE: all work will be collected at the end of each class.  
 NOTE NOTE: if you choose to type up your essay and you've been working with your own laptop, you have to use the college laptops for this assignment.

### Directions



Begin at home!! (Ignore at your own peril)

- Follow 1-8 (*I&C* 53)
- Keep all scrap papers and hand in with essay
- Write in ink
- Write on one side of the page
- Double-space

**Budget your time.** Work on finishing a draft in the first class, and then revising it next class. Leave at least 30 minutes to carefully proofread. Read your essay backwards to catch any errors.

### **Reminder**

All work on the essay itself needs to be completed in class, either by hand or on the college's laptops. You cannot bring in paragraphs from home nor can you take a draft of the essay home to revise. Planning will be done outside of class; all drafting and revision will be during the class times we're working on the essay. Bring in printed copies of your Reasons and Evidence sheet – you will not be able to use your own flash drives to keep a copy of this essay.

### **Grading Criteria**

To receive a passing grade, you must successfully complete the following:

**Organization:** A thesis statement which clearly states the subject, your position and the divisions of your essay. A counter-argument and rebuttal.

**Content:** Clear and balanced arguments, developed with examples, descriptions and stories, and a full and persuasive development of the reasoning behind each of the examples.

**Proofreading:** Sentences that are clear and no more than 5 major errors (Sentence fragments, run-on sentences, verb-tense error, subject-verb agreement error, unclear phrasing, documentation error and spelling/wrong word error).

## **Writer's Worksheet for Essay #2 Readings (see course site for download)**

At the top of each set of notes, write a works cited entry. Remember to first identify the kind of source you're reading (see list on Table of Contents or Citing Sources website) and then follow that format. In general, all works cited entries begin with the author's last name and then the title, etc. See how to set up a works cited entry (*I&C 75+* or Citing Sources from the Course Site) for specific instructions. We'll be checking these in class.

For each essay, set up a Writer's Worksheet with the following categories. Note: not all essays will have information for each question.

**Questions:** For each question below, be sure to take careful notes, using quotation marks if *ANY* words from the original are used and to note page numbers for both quoted and summarized information. See Annotating (19) for more detail.

*General information on capital punishment*

*Reasons why capital punishment is not good for America*

*Reasons why capital punishment is good or doesn't matter.*

*Connections to other readings?*

*Vivid examples in this essay*

*Capital punishment discourse – word list for this topic*

## Parts of an Argumentative Essay

Remember that your goal here is to show your thinking and reasoning to another person.

### Introduction

You have to grab the reader's attention.

Avoid the old “\_\_\_\_\_ is the most controversial topic in America today” unless you then prove it with data on number of articles, or trials, or protests, or some other evidence.

Instead, try

1. Telling a story (either personal, or from the readings)
2. Making an analogy – a comparison to another event or idea that's connected to your own topic
3. Avoiding the word “you” (In formal essays, you don't refer directly to the reader – see 32 in *I&C* for more details.)

Take a look at how the author's in the assigned readings opened their essays. Could you do something similar?

### Explain the Issue

This is similar to an introduction, but it can be a separate paragraph. Remember that you need to make it clear to the reader what, exactly, you'll be arguing. Often, for issues that are easily understood – as in capital punishment – your thesis can both announce your position and explain the issue, but for other topics, you may need to provide background information that will help readers understand what you are talking about.

### Thesis and divisions

For an argumentative essay, your thesis should 1) state your topic and 2) state your position on that topic. Thus, if your topic is the death penalty, you basically have 2 options for a position:

- 1) the death penalty helps America;
- 2) the death penalty hurts America.

Now realistically, regarding the death penalty (and other controversial issues) you may be conflicted about your position – particularly after the readings – and that's good because it shows you're thinking. But for this essay and for most argumentative essays, you have to take a hard look at the pros and cons and decide for yourself that, in general, it is good or bad. As in much of life, you cannot have it both ways.

Your divisions will come primarily from the pro and con list developed in your research.

A sample thesis from Garret Fitzgerald follows.

**I believe that the death penalty is bad for America because it executes innocent victims, its process is racially biased against minority offenders and in favor of white victims, and because it simply is not cost effective.**

*Note that he clearly states his topic and is position and then follows it with a list of his divisions.*

### Body paragraphs

These, of course, will be the main part of your essay. You'll start off with a topic sentence that includes a word from your division statement. From there you'll get to the meat (or tofu, if you prefer) of your essay: the argument. See Toulmin arguments and Induction and Deduction (see Course Site > Course Documents > Essay #2 > Argumentative Fallacies) for a more detailed descriptions of argumentation.

**One of the main problems with the death penalty is the chance of murdering an innocent person.**

Here Garret using direct repetition “innocent” to let the reader see in this paragraph he’s going to focus on his first division.

After your topic sentence, it’s time to roll out those darlings of argument, those twin E’s persuasion, the veritable peanut butter and jelly of reasoning: Evidence and Explanation.

### **Evidence**

This is the easy part. You need to provide proof – statistics, facts, stories – that will illustrate whatever point you’re making .

Picking up Garrett’s paragraph from where we left off above . . . .

According to Mary H. Cooper, in addition to the five hundred prisoners who were executed, there were also seventy-five innocent men and women who were very nearly the victims of wrongful execution (3). She adds that “After evidence showed that they had been wrongfully convicted” (Cooper 3), they were released, but these are only the cases where new evidence could be found before the innocent person could be put to death. As Jane Fritsch explains in her article “Evidence of Innocence Can Come Too Late For Freedom,” “judges are loath to reopen cases, and state appeals courts dislike intervening on anything but procedural issues”. She explains that while DNA testing often creates “incontrovertible evidence” that “has forced the release of the unjustly convicted”, other types of evidence, such as new witnesses or even confessions, have been argued away or ignored.

For instance, in the case of David Lemus and Olmado Hidalgo, “who were convicted in the 1990 murder of a bouncer at a Manhattan night club” (Fritsch), their lawyers eventually found out that another man had confessed to the murder several years ago. “Joey Pilot, a member of the Bronx extortion gang, told a federal prosecutor investigating the gang that he and his friend, James Rodriguez, had murdered the bouncer” (Fritsch). The story was enough to convince a prosecutor and police detective that he was the real killer, but Mr. Lemus and Mr. Hidalgo were still refused a new trial. The fact that evidence as strong as an actual confession from someone who claims to be the real killer is considered so lightly is a perfect example of the way the system is designed more for the purpose of killing inmates and offering victims “closure” than actually finding the guilty party. The fact that Congress “passed a law sharply limiting [...] appeals in 1996” shows an even more callous attitude toward the task of determining who really committed the crime in any given death penalty case.

Garrett offers examples here which suggest that innocence has been an issue in capital crimes. But note that he hasn’t yet argued whether this appearance of innocence is good or bad. He’s saving it for his . . . .

### **Explanation**

Most beginning writers understand that you need examples/evidence when making an argument; unfortunately, most beginning writers stop there. Luckily, you’re reading this and will know that the explanation – a clear discussion of how and why the example supports your position – is the heart of your argument. And without a heart, your argument is, well, dead.

How much explanation is too much? Don’t know, I so seldom see too much explanation that I can’t decide what is too much (get the hint?).

In your explanations, you’re goal is to lead readers through your thinking. One way to understand this idea is to keep in mind “if then. . . .” This questioning leads to logical consequences. An example? Okay. Capital punishment is

expensive. If it is expensive, then \_\_\_\_\_. Filling in this blank results in arguments that are more thoughtful and reasoned.

Let's see how Garrett handled his explanation of the evidence quoted above.

The ramifications of this system are obvious. If the courts are so resistant to giving suspects a second trial, or even just a thorough, reliable review of the trial, then it stands to reason that innocent people are being killed within this system. If evidence as strong as a confession from another man that was believed by both a prosecutor and a detective is not strong enough evidence for the court to review it, then what is? However, when the punishment is life imprisonment, rather than death, there is at least some hope that innocent people may one day be freed by new evidence. They will never get back the years they spent in jail, but at least they will have the rest of their lives ahead of them. Death row inmates have no such option.

*Note that Garrett works through what he sees as the problems with convicting innocent people. This results in a argument which conveys the writer's thinking – the goal of any argument.*

### Counterargument

Look closely at the Counterargument instructions (49). This essay requires you to acknowledge that not everyone feels the same way you do about this issue (surprise, surprise). This helps readers see you as the logical, open-minded person that you are instead of a dangerous, narrow-minded zealot who stands on an apple crate at the corner of Park Ave. and 44th ranting at the pedestrians slogging their way to work (I've seen one of these and he wasn't convincing anyone). Be sure you understand, as well, that a counterargument consists of two parts – the argument against your position AND a rebuttal; in other words, why you think the argument against your position isn't valid.

### Citing Sources

While you can refer to your readings while writing the essay in class, be sure to have the quotes you want copied on your Reason and Evidence sheet.

You will be bring in a completed Works Cited sheet.

### “How do I get started? . . . “ Argumentative Essays

The suggestions above should give you guidelines on what's expected.

For a specific list of suggestions for planning this essay, see page 53 I&C for a tried and tested method of setting up and then drafting this essay. I've kept the suggestions all together on that page for easy reference.

### Tips

If you're nervous about writing in-class, write practice paragraphs on your topic at home. While you can't use them in class, the act of getting down your writing helps you think through possible problems.

The main error students make in this kind of writing is not explaining or “telling” why a particular example proves their point. Remember that to readers, an example is only a group of words describing something. They might look at the exact same data/description, and draw a completely different conclusion. You have to create the story, let the readers see why and how that specific example changed the wiring in your brain and made you adopt your position. See below for sentence patterns that will help you with this.

### Sentence Patterns for Argument

When introducing (providing a context) your examples or explaining them, use the verb list in the “Citing Sources” section of I&C (76) to shift your language into an argumentative discourse. See also sentence starters below.

The problem with \_\_\_\_ is that \_\_\_\_.  
This \_\_\_\_\_ helps/hurts society/America/people because \_\_\_\_\_  
The advantage/s/disadvantage/s of \_\_\_\_\_ is/are \_\_\_\_\_.  
If \_\_\_\_\_ continues then \_\_\_\_\_.

Use repetition of key words (within reason, of course) or synonyms within the paragraph to keep readers focused on the topic of that paragraph. Think of them as a friendly nudge on the shoulder of the reader that says “Hey you, this is my point – stop thinking about what you’ll have for lunch tomorrow and pay attention”

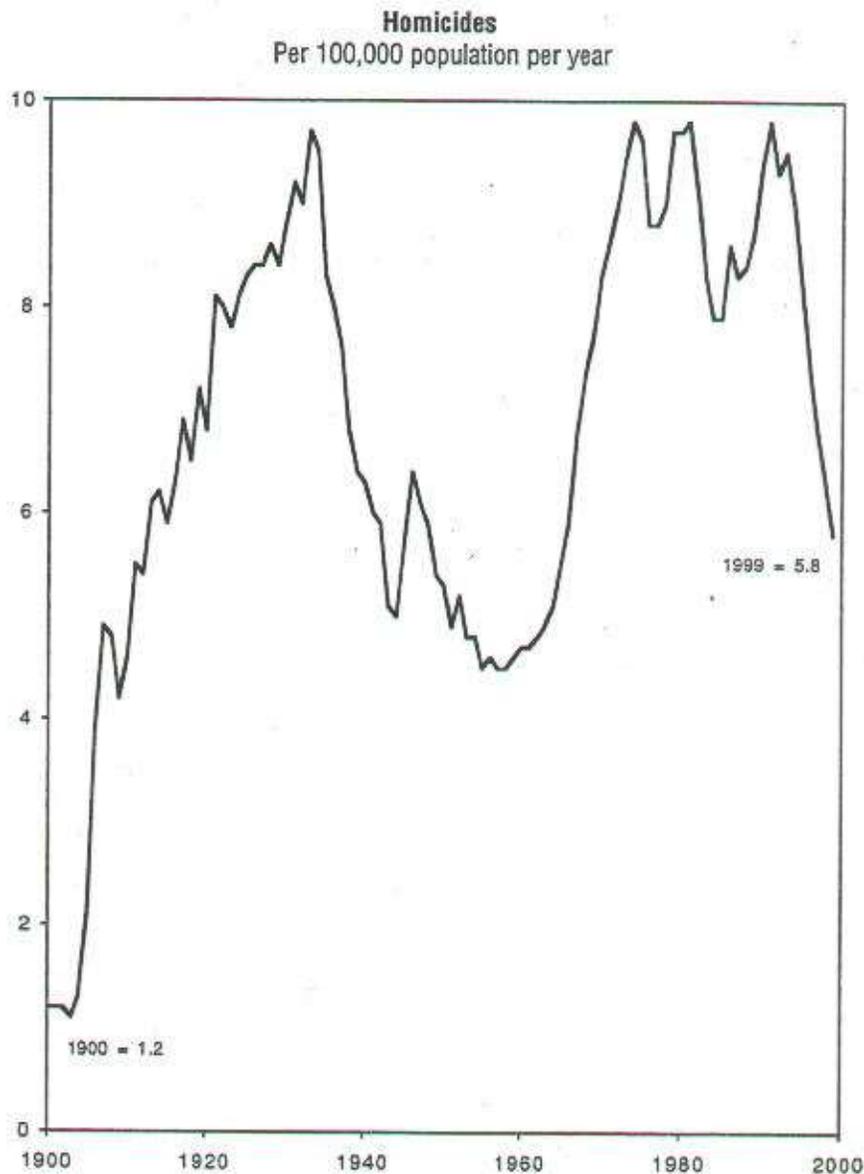
### Historical Background on Capital Punishment and Homicide

And speaking of statistics . . . From

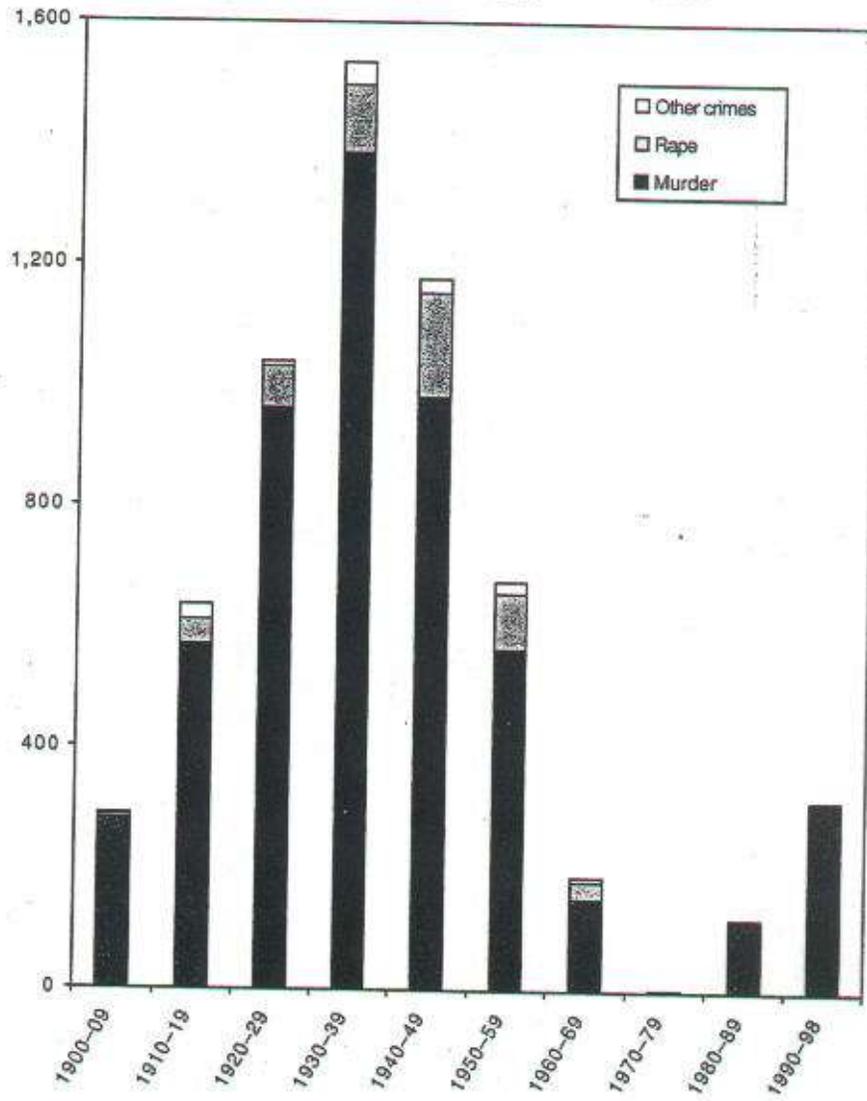
Caplow, Theodore. *The First Measured Century: An Illustrated Guide to Trends in America 1900-2000*. Washington DC: AEI Press, 2001.

Compare this graph of homicide rates with the execution rate on the following page. Why did Johansen begin his graph in the 1950s? Why didn't he begin it in 1910?

### Graph on Execution Rate



**Executions under Civil Authority**  
Number during time period by type of conviction



**Reasons and Evidence Sheet: Essay #2 (Page 1)**

|                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>1. One reason for/against capital punishment is that _____ .</p> | <p>Example: Specific examples from the readings, personal anecdotes, facts, etc. which support your reason<br/> a. _____</p> <p>Explanation of how and why example proves the point of paragraph<br/> a. _____</p> <p>Example<br/> b. _____</p> <p>Explanation of how and why example proves the point of paragraph<br/> b. _____</p> |
| <p>2. One reason for/against capital punishment is _____ .</p>      | <p>Example<br/> a. _____</p> <p>Explanation of how and why example proves the point of paragraph<br/> a. _____</p> <p>Example<br/> b. _____</p> <p>Explanation of how and why example proves the point of paragraph<br/> b. _____</p>                                                                                                 |
| <p>3 One reason for/against capital punishment is _____ .</p>       | <p>Example<br/> a. _____</p> <p>Explanation of how and why example proves the point of paragraph<br/> a. _____</p> <p>Example<br/> b. _____</p> <p>Explanation of how and why example proves the point of paragraph<br/> b. _____</p>                                                                                                 |

**Reasons and Evidence Sheet: Essay #2 (Page 2)**

|                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>4 One reason for/against capital punishment is _____ because</p>                                                                 | <p>Example<br/>a. _____</p> <p>Explanation of how and why example proves the point of paragraph<br/>a. _____</p> <p>Example<br/>b. _____</p> <p>Explanation of how and why example proves the point of paragraph<br/>b. _____</p>                                                                         |
| <p><b>Counter-argument</b></p> <p>One argument against my position is _____</p> <p><b>Rebuttal</b></p> <p>But/Yet/However _____</p> | <p>Example for counter-argument<br/>a. _____</p> <p>Rebut or qualify: why is the example wrong or why isn't it important/misleading<br/>a. _____</p> <p>Example for counter-argument<br/>b. _____</p> <p>Rebut or qualify: why is the example wrong or why isn't it important/misleading<br/>b. _____</p> |

Thesis Statement #1 (remember to include divisions)

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#2

---



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#3

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Completed Works Cited Entries

## Planning Tips Essay #2

### Thesis

A basic pattern? Okay.

Capital punishment should/should not be abolished because of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.

Divisions/forecasting statement needs to focus on the specific reasons you believe the death penalty is good or bad. Using the questions on the Reasons and Evidence sheet will give you some directions and help structure your essay – if I wuz’ you, I’d use it (the sheet, that is).

### Topic Sentences

You are not reporting on what has happened; you’re arguing whether something is positive or negative. Thus, you need to use argumentative discourse (will, should, suggests, predicates, indicates and other words from “Argumentative Word List” in “Using Sources” 76) in your topic sentence to alert readers that you’re, well, making an argument.

### Counterarguments

These consist of **TWO** parts: 1) Counterargument (specific point against your position) and 2) Rebuttal (why/how the counterargument is invalid or doesn’t matter). Both need to be included in a counterargument.

#### 1) The Counterargument

An argument against your position

From an essay **against the death penalty**

##### *Counterargument example #1*

Proponents of the death penalty, such as Richard Cizik, argue that “to not have the death penalty on the books would lower the value of life itself” (qtd. in Cooper 7).

##### *Counterargument example #2*

Some suggest that “until an inmate is executed [. . .] victims’ families are unable to reach ‘closure’” (Cooper 15).

#### 2) The Rebuttal

An explanation of how the counterargument (see left) is not valid. Without this, you weaken your argument.

##### *Rebuttal for example #1*

Yet to equate life with death suggests that our judgment is off balance, that we are too interested in an “eye for an eye” vengeance than in honoring a person’s life.

##### *Rebuttal for example #2*

But this rush for closure masks the real psychological pain caused by violence, a pain that can only be “heal[ed]”, as rape victim Debbie Morris solemnly states, by “[f]orgiveness” (qtd. in Cooper 15).

##### *Words used to set up rebuttals:*

On the other hand/contrary, Although, Yet, However, But

## Argumentative Body Paragraphs

How do you write a convincing argumentative paragraph?

Good question. Let's look at some sample paragraphs and see if we can tell which are convincing and which need more work.

### Example 1

Statistics have shown "that prisoners of all races are more likely to be executed if the victim was with than some other race." (Cooper 3). A crime should not be measured on the race of the victim or the accused, but studies prove that "even though almost half of the homicide victims are people of color, more than 89% of the prisoners executed were convicted of killing whites. A study "also suggests that blacks are the most likely to receive the death penalty regardless of the victim's race." (Cooper 3) Bias is also used against people who are considered retarded or mentally ill, with only 12 states that prohibit the death penalty for the mentally disabled. Susan Smith, who was sentenced to life in prison for drowning her children, was spared a death sentence in South Carolina because she was considered mentally incompetent.

*note: in-text citations need some work here as well*

### Example 2

Seventy-five people who had been sentenced to death have been found innocent and released after charges were dropped when new evidence was found. James Richardson spent 21 years on death row when he was accused of poisoning his children in 1968. Lawyers that later reviewed the case found that the baby sitter who was with the children on the day of their death was also found guilty of poisoning her husband. She then confessed to killing the children. At the time of the murders, prosecutors claimed that Richardson had bought life insurance the day before the murders, and used that information to convict him. (Cooper 8)

Each of these paragraphs contain good specifics/evidence right? Does this make them effective argumentative paragraphs?

No.

What's missing from these paragraphs are explanations of why this evidence proves America shouldn't use the death penalty. For example, what's so bad about the racial imbalance, or the fact that some innocent people are charged but later released? Without explaining these points, readers cannot tell why you feel the death penalty is good or bad. Again, it's the explanation that make up your argument, not the evidence.

This next student sample does a much better job of making an argument. Why?

Another disadvantage many death penalty defendants have is the lack of qualified defense lawyers and money - lots of it - to mount a serious defense effort. State and County prosecutors have an almost unlimited supply of money, in the form of tax dollars, to conduct far reaching investigations and prosecuted capital cases. Eric M. Freedman, writing in *Opposing Viewpoints*, describes the problem with this statement: "the field is a highly specialized one, and since states have failed to pay the amounts necessary to attract competent counsel, there is an overwhelming record of poor people being subjected to convictions and death sentences that equally or more culpable - but more affluent - defendants would not have suffered" (144). Without

highly experienced counsel and a sufficient budget, a capital defendant loses the advantage of hiring expert witnesses, private investigators, and public relations specialist who use the media in an effort to mold public opinion. If there is to be a true "fair trial" that we are all entitled to, the state needs to provide adequate funds to defense attorneys as an incentive for their services, otherwise we have only a small group of magnanimous lawyers overwhelmed by deep pocketed prosecutors. We are all entitled to qualified defense counsel, more so when it means life or death.

Here we have a writer who did a much better job of explaining his point. Note, in particular, that he explains the problem of not having enough money to pay for adequate counsel.

Let's take a look at another paragraph, this one from a pro-death penalty essay.

First of all the death penalty is a deterrent to murder. "In 1967 the death penalty was suspended and the U.S. Department of Justice records show that homicides that same year climbed dramatically, but then in 1976 the supreme court reinstated the death penalty and homicide rates plummeted." (Johansen 135) In other words the U.S. Dept. of Justice records prove that the death penalty is a deterrent to crime.

What missing here? What's a problem with the evidence as well? Is it okay to state this as fact if it was discredited by a review of statistics from the earlier part of the century?

How about one final paragraph.

In the first part of my case I would like to present you with information that shows the death penalty does not deter crime. According to Eric Freedman, "states that use the death penalty have crime rates that are nearly indistinguishable from those states that do not have the death penalty" (139). If the death penalty were a reasonable deterrent, especially a good enough one to warrant its use, there would be significant differences in crime rates between states that have it and states that do not have it. It looks like a scare tactic approach doesn't work in this case, after all, as Eric Freedman stated, "people who commit capital murders generally do not engage in probability analysis concerning the likelihood of getting the death penalty if they are caught" (140)

What works here? What needs more work?

### Three parts of incorporating quotations

1) Introduce quote – supply context so readers can understand why you're about to cite someone else.

Legal professor Eric M. Freedman describes this problem of unqualified defense attorneys:

2) Insert Quote – with citation

"the field [death penalty] is a highly specialized one, and since states have failed to pay the amounts necessary to attract competent counsel, there is an overwhelming record of poor people being subjected to convictions and death sentences that equally or more culpable – but more affluent – defendants would not have suffered."

Note: the writer had to add material – [death penalty] – to the sentence for clarity. The square brackets tell the reader that material added is by the writer. Note as well that no page number is needed because source is from a database.

### 3) Explain how and why quote proves your point

Without highly experienced counsel and a sufficient budget, a capital defendant loses the advantage of hiring expert witnesses, private investigators, and public relations specialist who use the media in an effort to mold public opinion. If there is to be a true "fair trial" that we are all entitled to, the state needs to provide adequate funds to defense attorneys as an incentive for their services, otherwise we have only a small group of magnanimous lawyers overwhelmed by deep pocketed prosecutors. We are all entitled to qualified defense counsel, more so when it means life or death.

## Punctuation Workout – Colons, Commas, and Semi-colons

### Colons and clarity

Consider these two versions of the same sentence:

The fact of the matter is that there are flaws in most every process; including the justice system.

The first phrase "The fact of the matter" gets in the way of the powerful statement "there are flaws in any system;" and the semi-colon isn't used correctly (**they are used between two closely related complete sentences or to divide items in a complicated list**)

There are flaws in any system: including the justice system.

Note how the sentence above drives the main point home by eliminating the rhetorical flourish of "The fact of the matter" and then uses a **colon** to set up a definitive statement/example.

### Commas

And what about the following sentence:

The man normal by any visual standards had killed two teenage children.

Here we find a sentence that reads confusingly – but can easily be corrected with commas. Remember **one rule is to use a comma before and after an interruption or insertion**. The phrase "by any visual standards" is an insertion which modifies or describes the "man" in the preceding clause. Another way of explaining this is to remember to separate a dependent clause from an independent clause. Since "normal by any visual standards" does not form a complete thought by itself (it's a dependent clause), it needs to be set off with commas – see below.

The man, normal by visual standards, had killed two teenage children.

Adding the commas before and after the clause clarifies the sentence (note that I also removed the unnecessary "any" – if the word doesn't help the sentence, it hurts it), making it clear that phrase refers back to the man.

### Semi-colons

And since we were talking (okay, since I was writing) about semi-colons a few minutes ago, let's see how they can be used effectively in argumentative writing.

The criminal's family has done no harm; why are we forcing the same grief and torment on them as the victims family has endured?

Notice how the semi-colon separates two independent – yet closely related – clauses. This makes for a very effective pair of sentences. Here, the student rebuts the argument on closure for victim's families by setting up a tough, though pertinent, comparison.

## Suggestions for Writing an In-Class Essay

Complete 1-8 at home. At the end of each class, I will collect your work and then give it back to you the next class.

**General Note:** You need to explain all of your thinking. Think of me as a blockhead – I don't understand anything unless you clarify it in detail.

For a rough guideline, keep in mind these questions:

1. What are you talking about? (introduction)
2. What's your point? (thesis -- remember to include division statement)
3. Can you prove that? (body paragraphs)
4. What's it all mean? (conclusion)

### Directions:

1. **Thinking on paper:** After reading the assigned essays and completing the writing exercises based on them, jot down your thoughts on the issue – don't be afraid to ramble: the goal here is to get your thinking down on paper. Try the following questions: Which of the readings surprised you? Which of the arguments were the most engaging? What examples really made you think? Has your opinion of the issue changed after the readings – how? What are some reasons both for and against the issue.  
While you probably won't be using these exact words in your essay, this pre-writing will help you collect your thoughts on the issue by letting you "see" what you're thinking.
2. **Making a list:** Looking over the writing generated from the question above, the previous exercises and from just ruminating on the issue yourself and/or talking it over with friends, start grouping them into categories. Write a list of reasons showing why the capital punishment is a good idea, then a list of reasons showing why it isn't. If you have trouble coming up with reasons, try this sentence starter: **One reason the death penalty is/is not a good/bad idea is \_\_\_\_\_**. You should (note: whenever a teacher says "should," that's a nice way of saying you need to do it) look over the section titled "How Do I Come up With Reasons" (*I&C* 65) for categories to jolt your brain cells awake.
3. Okay, now it's **decision time**. Based upon your listing of reasons, the long and short term effects, the categories in "How Do I Come up With Reasons" (*I&C* 65), decide your stance.
4. **Review readings:** Look over the readings again, this time with your list of reasons alongside of you. Since you now know what you'll be writing about, different facts, statistics, and examples will jump out at you. As they leap off the page, grasp them by their ankles and fasten them to your paper with your ink pen. Failure to do this step will result in the dreaded "bland as warm white milk and toast" essay.
5. **Thesis Statements:** Try out three different thesis statements to organize your thoughts and guide readers through your argument. Choose the clearest one and include on your "Reasons and Evidence Sheet." If you're stumped, try this starter sentence **\_\_\_\_\_ is good/bad because \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_**.
6. **Transfer time:** Copy out the three reasons and corresponding evidence you will be using onto the "Reasons and Evidence Sheet." Decide on a controlling word to set the focus of the paragraph. Remember, the Worksheet is the only pre-writing you can use in class.
7. **Practice:** Practice writing several body paragraphs. You cannot use them in class, but the work put in will result in a much improved in-class essay.
8. **Titles and Introduction:** Come up with idea for title (make a list of five and choose the best one). For introductions, look over the suggestions in *I&C* (**Error! Bookmark not defined.**), and be sure to develop a focused introduction that points toward your thesis/position.

### In-class:

9. Using **Body Paragraph** definition from Glossary as a guide, draft body paragraphs of essay, making each topic sentence a claim which the rest of your paragraph supports. Then you get to play show and tell. Each paragraph needs to show readers what led you to your decision. Try to include the specific descriptions, numbers, etc. from the readings that made you think "This is why I think \_\_\_\_ is a good idea."

Then, you need to "tell" the reader why and how each particular example persuaded you to adopt your position. Remember, your reader can only read words, not minds, and therefore you need to fully explain your

reasoning. **You should provide at least two sentences of explanation for each example. Try explaining the importance or connotations of particular words or actions.** Beware of including too many examples: one or two examples presented and explained in detail make for more persuasive writing than three or four examples that are left gasping on the page like a fish out of water. After your example, try repeating a key phrase from it or using (but not overusing) the word “This.” And be sure to use the words from “Verb List for Citing Sources” (*I&C 76*) to shift to an argumentative mode.

Remember to provide a **Context** (see Glossary) for your examples and to use quotation marks around direct quotes -- even if you just use a word or a phrase. Ex. From an essay on consumerism:

For example, one shopper at a mall in Virginia, Rebecca Michalski, “see[s] nothing wrong with” consumerism. She feels it’s “a good way to spend time together” with her family (Masci 1003). But her remarks point to the problem with consumerism. She feels quality time with a family involves spending money instead of something that will foster communication among family members like playing a board game together, or even, though it sounds old-fashioned, just going out for a walk (Masci 1003).

Or instead of the sentence beginning with “But her remarks,” you could add

This nonchalance about spending time building up debt instead of building a family illustrates the danger of consumerism. Now the parents will have to spend more time at work to support their spending habit, a practice which just feeds the cycle of work too much - miss family - spend money - work too much. Work too much - miss family - spend money, etc. And unfortunately for some families, this cycle becomes a perpetual motion machine.

10. **Revise essay:** pay particular attention to the explanation of your examples. Remember, examples do not speak for themselves. You have to write down *your* reasoning -- the why and how that particular examples proves your point. My crystal ball has been at the shop for years now, so I cannot read your mind: you have to write out the thinking behind your reaction to the text. This is the heart of a good essay.
11. In the time remaining, **proofread essay.** You may cross out words and write corrections in the blank lines above or below.

If all this sounds formulaic, it is. You can do two things. Ignore the formula and wing it. Or work within the formula, yet still use all your skills as a writer to capture the reader's attention and leave a vivid impression of your intellect: your call.

## Suggestions In Class essay: Day 1

Be sure to come in with a completed Reasons and Evidence sheet.

### Focus on **Body Paragraphs**

If you're a bit stuck on how to develop a paragraph, try the following suggestions

Topic Sentence:

*The death penalty should not be allowed because it is immoral.*

1. Define immoral/moral
2. (Evidence) Proof that DP is immoral
3. (Explain) Explain why/how the evidence equals immorality – and then, most importantly:
  - a. why/how this would hurt America if it continues.

- b. What are the, in this case negative, effects?
- c. What problems could it lead to?
- d. How would not being, in this case immoral, help America?
- 4. Use analogies, story, description to help prove your point.
- 5. Sentence to wrap up paragraph

Remember to explain your thinking: don't stop with the evidence. And remember to keep explaining your reasoning. As the examples we reviewed in class showed, that's where the argument is made.

**Suggestions In Class essay: Day 2**

- **Counter argument:** Remember to include your counter argument, usually as a separate paragraph after your body paragraphs. And remember that the counter argument consists of two parts: the counter argument AND the rebuttal.
- **Sentence Patterns for Argument**  
When introducing (providing a context) your examples or explaining them, use the verb list in the "Citing Sources" section of I&C (copied below) to shift your language into an argumentative discourse. See also sentence starters below.  
  - The problem with \_\_\_ is that \_\_\_\_.*
  - This \_\_\_\_\_ helps/hurts society/America/people because \_\_\_\_\_*
  - The advantage/s/disadvantage/s of \_\_\_\_\_ is/are \_\_\_\_\_.*
  - If \_\_\_\_\_ continues then \_\_\_\_\_.*
- **Use repetition of key words** (within reason, of course) or synonyms within the paragraph to keep readers focused on the topic of that paragraph.
- **Argumentative Verb List and Signal Phrases**  
In the box below you'll words that can be used to explain an argument: remember that once you present evidence, you need to explain it.

|         |           |            |                        |                                                           |
|---------|-----------|------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| Add     | conclude  | feels      | object                 | Jost reports that the death penalty "..."                 |
| agree   | consider  | illustrate | offer                  | The main problem, Freedman argues, is that ". . ."        |
| analyze | criticize | imply      | point out              | . . ."                                                    |
| answer  | declare   | indicate   | reinforce              | This kind of public opinion hurts America because ". . ." |
| argue   | describe  | list       | report reply           | Johansen points out that ". . ."                          |
| believe | define    | maintain   | respond                | Robert Dieter, head of _____, argues that "..."           |
| charge  | discover  | mention    | reveal think           | (qtd. in Jost 948)                                        |
| claim   | emphasize | note       | write show             | Freedman reinforces this idea by claiming that "..."      |
| comment | explain   | observe    | stress suggest support |                                                           |

## Assignment Overview: Essay #3 (Argumentative)

### What You'll be Doing for Our Third Essay Assignment

For our third essay, you may choose from two topics, but the purpose (argument) and requirements will be the same for all.

The assignment sheets and instructions for each are posted on the course site on the "Course Documents" link. You'll notice that the syllabus assignments will be more general (i.e. "Read the first three essays in your topic"), but will still refer to I&C when necessary. Most of the planning and revision instructions will be accessed online.

One difference here is that you'll be using a mix of assigned sources, and sources that you search and retrieve on your own. And yes, the sources you find yourself will mainly be either from the college's databases (more on this in the assignment sheets) or print sources (newspapers, magazines, books anyone?).

### Specific Instructions

Read and annotate "Essay 3 Assignment Sheet" for the topic you've selected (listed below and posted individually on the Course Documents page "Essay 3 Topics and Readings").

You'll note some repetition in the assignment sheets -- the purpose and requirements of the assignment is the same for each: the topics and readings vary.

### Topics

#### Income Inequality

Economists now agree that the income gap between the very rich and everyone else is growing -- and at an exponential rate. They do not agree if this is good or bad for America. You're going to help them.

#### Civic Stances

Conservative. Liberal. Libertarian. You've probably heard these words before and may even identify with one of these labels. Now's the chance to find out how each of these innocuous sounding words effect America's economic, moral, social, and political decisions. In short, how the values associated with these words control your lives.

## Peer Review for Essay #3 (Argumentative)

Remember that your goal isn't to answer "yes" to every question: it's to make suggestions. Try using "Consider \_\_\_\_" or "Try \_\_\_\_" to preface your comments.

### 1. Introduction

- a. What changes could be made to help the intro grab your attention?
- b. Does it provide enough background information to set up the issue? Do you understand the topic? Are two or more paragraphs needed to provide information?
- c. Is the background material cited?

### 2. Thesis

Copy out what you think is the thesis and division statement.

- a) Comment on its clarity
  - can you tell the position of the writer?
  - Are the divisions really distinct and separate, or could two of them be combined into one?

### 3. Support your position

For each paragraph complete the following:

#### a) Topic Sentences

- Does the topic sentence set up an argument based on the divisions?
- Is there a focus word which connects back to the division and thesis in the first sentence (or so)?

#### b) Definitions

- Do any terms from the topic sentence need to be defined? For instance, economic/social mobility; supply side economics; worker safety laws? etc.

#### c) Evidence/Details

- Where can more specific information from the readings to connect the division to \_\_\_\_\_(thesis) be included?

#### d) Explanation

- The #1 item that usually needs work is the explanation: where can a more specific explanation on why \_\_\_\_ (topic of paragraph) helps or hurts America be added?
- What kind of argumentative language is used to explain the logic behind the argument? Do they use any of the following:

The problem with \_\_\_\_ is that \_\_\_\_\_.

This \_\_\_\_\_ helps/hurts society/America/people because \_\_\_\_\_

The advantage/s/disadvantage/s of \_\_\_\_\_ is/are \_\_\_\_\_.

If \_\_\_\_ continues, then \_\_\_\_.

Where could they include such language?

- Where can more explanations – analogies to other events, reference to economic, social, political, moral arguments, etc. (see *I&C* 65) – be included? Remember that it is the explanation, not the evidence, that shows your reasoning.
- Ask yourself "How does this division prove the argument in the essay?" or "Why is this division important to the thesis?" Make suggestions based on these answers.

### 4. Counterargument and Rebuttal

- Could these be worked more smoothly into the essay?
- Does it need to be treated separately at the end, or could it be included in more detail throughout essay?
- Is the counter argument a specific argument or is it general?
- Is it cited?

### 5. Conclusion

Avoid merely repeating the thesis.

- Does the writer refer back to the introduction?
- Does the writer address the question "What's it all mean?"?

### Proofreading Essay #3

It's the details that count . . . Each error breaks the illusion of directly communicating with the reader. In a good essay, the voice of the writer comes through and it seems as if the person is actually talking to you. In an essay filled with good ideas but marred with proofreading errors, the voice comes through like a cell phone at the edge of its calling area, breaking up and misheard through the static – which leads to aggravation instead of communication.

How do you proofread? For starters, you have to read your essay differently than before. Instead of reading for organization or content, you have to slowly read aloud, paying attention to word choice and experimenting with each sentence until you're satisfied with the sound. This is tedious work, but it pays off; instead of static, your reader will hear your voice clearly (“Can you hear me now?”).

Look over the suggestions on “Overview on Proofreading” (*I&C* 69) for some pointers – and be sure to come into class on the proofreading day with a “finished” essay.

### Proofreading Check List

1. Delete: Take out any words which aren't needed
2. Clarify: Change any phrases that do not read clearly; check punctuation
3. Engage reader: Add analogies (see below), descriptions, examples, sharp phrasing to help readers “see” your point. Vary the sentence structures: use colons to set up a point. Work, as well, on including short transitional/descriptive phrases in your sentence (be sure to separate them from the main sentence with commas). Grab the reader. Try short sentences to get the reader's attention – and use dashes to add a quick additional comment at the end of sentence. Dashes – in moderation – can also be used to set off a quick aside within a sentence.
4. Cohesion: Use repetition to keep reader focused. Supply introductory phrases to quotes and use transitions to move readers through your ideas

### Words to Avoid

|               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|---------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| You/we        | This suggests you're speaking directly to the reader. But what if your reader has no problems communicating? It can also lead to pronoun problems.<br><b>Instead use</b><br>People, a person, some, they, males, females, English professors, etc. |
| a lot         | Too general for formal essays. Be specific.<br><b>Instead use</b><br>many, often, several, etc.                                                                                                                                                    |
| One           | Avoid when using to refer to a person.<br><b>Instead use</b><br>A person, a man, a women, people, etc.                                                                                                                                             |
| Don't         | Avoid contractions in academic writing: a bit too informal.<br><b>Instead use</b><br>do not, etc.                                                                                                                                                  |
| the fact that | A bit wordy – one of those empty phrases that merely slow down the reader.<br><b>Instead use</b><br>Actually, you can usually completely eliminate this phrase                                                                                     |
| Being that    | Awkward wording – sounds okay in oral speech, but usually doesn't work in standard written English<br><b>Instead use</b><br>Since                                                                                                                  |
| in which      | Can be awkward<br><b>Instead use</b><br>which or reword                                                                                                                                                                                            |

### Before and After Essay #3

Before proofreading:

Income inequality has many negative results, one being the prevention of social mobility. Social mobility is the possibility for any individual in a society to change their class or social status within their lifetime. In its absence, the opportunity for advancement in our society becomes grossly limited. Our incomes are a direct link to status in our society, influencing our chances for elevation, such as pursuing an education in an affluent career or buying a new house in a safer or nicer neighborhood. Having wealth increases our chances for success and not having money can bring failure. In the writer Elizabeth Gudrais's article "Unequal America" she notes that "In a society where the average person has a cell phone, it can hurt one's job chances not to have one. Wearing old clothes to a job interview might be interpreted as a sign of not taking the interview seriously, when in fact the problem is inability to afford a new outfit". "Bad teeth, which require money to fix, can trigger disgust in prospective employers and even hold people back from making friends" (26). These examples clearly illustrate what it takes in society to succeed, revealing how important it is to have money and how it can hurt your chances to move ahead if you do not. I agree with Nancy Krieger's statement "Your income" [...] "can decline to a point where you're no longer able to participate meaningfully in society" (qtd. in Gudrais 28). I am sure that many Americans that are on unemployment or jobless can sympathize with this idea.

After proofreading:

One problem with income inequality is that it hinders social mobility, or the ability to change their class or social status within their lifetime. Income is a direct link to status in society, influencing the chances for the most common form of upward movement: getting a better job. And the absence of seemingly minor convenience, like a "cell phone," as Elizabeth Gudrais points out in "Unequal America," "can hurt one's job chances" (26). While people always say "looks don't count," Gudrais argues that in the real world, clothes and appearances do matter. She writes that "Wearing old clothes to a job interview might be interpreted as a sign of not taking the interview seriously, when in fact the problem is inability to afford a new outfit" (26). While new clothes can be quickly purchased or borrowed, many procedures that the middle or upper classes take for granted, like dental work, require years of care and thousands of dollars. Yet the effect of "Bad teeth [ . . . ] can trigger disgust in prospective employers and even hold people back from making friends" (26). These examples clearly illustrate that ability is not the only rung that's needed on the ladder of success. A lack of money - or more specifically the way that money can help you communicate or improve your appearances - can slow or end the climb to a higher social level. As the economist Nancy Krieger's notes, "Your income [ . . . ] can decline to a point where you're no longer able to participate meaningfully in society" (qtd. in Gudrais 28). And since participation in society is essential to moving in it, a lack of money limits your mobility.

As you can see, proofreading can look a lot like revision - with an emphasis on deletion.

It can also be short and sweet.

Before

If there was an equal opportunity everybody, rich and poor should have the same chance to move between classes.

After

If there was an equal opportunity, everybody -- rich and poor -- would have the same chance to move between classes.

Before

Most people would think that these top income earners would have a huge problem with this.

After

Most people believe upper income taxpayers would reject this.

## Punctuation Workout

The power of a colon – From Lynne Truss’s *Eats, Shoots and Leaves*

A woman, without her man, is nothing.

A woman: without her, man is nothing.

### Colons

Consider these two versions of the same sentence:

The unemployment rate reflects the same pattern. Those with college degrees are .5-2.5 times more likely to stay employed compared to those with a high school diploma (“Education”).

The second sentence is an explanation/definition of the “pattern” mentioned in the first sentence. To set this up more clearly for the readers, try a colon: AKA the emphasize.

The unemployment rate reflects the same pattern: those with college degrees are .5-2.5 times more likely to stay employed compared to those with a high school diploma (“Education”).

A bit more forceful, and definitely grammatically correct.

Consider the following original sentence and then revision as well.

While money is something that is important to every American, there is another issue equally as important to any member of our society, health care.

While money is something that is important to every American, there is an equally important issue: health care.

Colons also come in handy when setting up a list:

There are many different civic stances, but I will be concentrating on the three most popular stances in America: liberalism, conservatism, and libertarianism.

And I am proud that for all the mention of colons, I avoided any cheap “poop” jokes.

### Dashes

When making a more offhand comment, dashes can separate and emphasize a point:

Liberals agree with the libertarian stance on individual

rights to an extent.

Liberals agree with the libertarian stance on individual Rights - to an extent.

### Comma(kazi)

The two main uses of commas in this essay will be with an introductory phrase,

If the federal government stopped making and enforcing so many rules and regulations, the American people would be free to make choices in our society.

and to separate a dependent from an independent clause – usually in a descriptive phrase.

The core of libertarianism, as described by David Boaz, revolves around “a society of liberty under law in which individuals are free to pursue their own lives so long as they respect the equal Rights of others” (qtd. in Cooper and Peck MacDonald 284).

### Transitions

How do you move the reader from paragraph to paragraph? Do you just drop them off and say “I’m starting a new topic so pay attention!”? One technique is the mention a main idea or key word from a previous paragraph in the first sentence of a new paragraph.

Example: *The two sentences below are topic sentences from body paragraphs*

1. Not only will liberalism create more jobs, it also promotes individual freedom.
- or
2. But tyrants and dictators are not the only people who like conservatism. Many American politicians who want to keep the working class oppressed also follow conservative doctrines.

For one, the previous paragraph dealt with creating jobs; for two the previous paragraphs dealt with \_\_\_\_\_?

### Checking Previous essays

Now is the time to pull out your previous essays, look over the kinds of errors you made, and work on avoiding them. Did you forget to include introductory phrases with direct quotes on the previous essay? Do so for this essay. Did you forget to put quotation marks around quotes in your previous essay? Carefully review the readings and your essay and be sure you separate the words from your sources from your own words with quotation marks. Review the overview of proofreading and the proofreading instructions in *I&C*: follow the directions.

## Assignment Sheet Essay #4 (Expository/Explanatory or Argumentative)

### Assignment

Time to show your stuff.

We've worked on several different issues as a class and we've worked through different ways of developing an essay.

It's time for you to choose a topic and method of presenting information to the reader.

### Choosing a Topic

Using any *CQResearcher* issue as the core source for a topic, narrow down to specific thesis and write either an expository or argumentative essay which supports it.

After choosing your subject, email the following to me (copy and paste directly into email).

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Name:

Topic:

1. Why is topic important?
2. How does topic connect to my life/major/career?
3. What courses would this essay fit into? Why?
4. Two possible questions for Writer's Notes sheet

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### Requirements

Minimum words: 1,250. Your essay needs to include an introduction, a thesis and division statement, body paragraphs which develop your thesis and divisions and which use examples, descriptions and stories to prove that the reason is valid, counter-arguments (if writing an argumentative essay), and a conclusion.

### Sources

You must include a minimum of four sources, one of which must be *CQResearcher*. See below for guidelines on internet sources.

**If taken from the internet, any outside research MUST be from OCC library's databases (see "How Do I Find Sources" I&C 110+), accessible through our library's home page. ANY other internet source MUST (that's MUST) be approved by me before (that's BEFORE) you include them in your essay. The penalty? A substantially lowered grade (i.e. in the "D" range).**

Follow MLA documenting guidelines when citing sources.

### Learning Objectives

After successfully completing this assignment, you will have

1. demonstrated an ability to annotate readings and accurately summarize their main points
2. demonstrated an ability recognize and define the key terms (discourse) of a particular topic
3. demonstrated an ability to find connections among different readings and organize them in categories
4. learned how to decide on a purpose for writing (exposition or argumentative), and an organizing principle, expressed in a thesis and forecasting/divisions statement, which effectively communicates information or presents an argument
5. demonstrated a repertoire of writing techniques (analogies, comparisons, and detailed examples, introducing sources) that clarifies your own thinking to others
6. demonstrated competency using MLA parenthetical citation
7. demonstrated your ability to write an essay with a minimum of proofreading errors.
8. improved your ability to manage your time

### Planning

Okay, we've gone over several different methods of planning and revising essays. You have here an essay topic and requirements: what do you need to do write a competent essay? (hint – remember to check directions for essays one

through three and remember the two part body paragraph development: connect your division to facts and then explain/argue why that division is worthwhile – or negative. And above all, research, plan, draft and revise).

### **Grading Criteria**

To receive a passing grade, you must successfully complete the following:

**Organization:** A thesis statement which clearly states the subject, your position and the divisions of your essay. A counter-argument and rebuttal.

**Content:** Clear and balanced arguments, developed with examples, descriptions and stories, and a full and persuasive development of the reasoning behind each of the examples.

**Proofreading:** Sentences that are clear and no more than 5 major errors (these include sentence fragments, run-on sentences, verb-tense error, subject-verb agreement error, unclear phrasing, documentation error and spelling/wrong word error).

### **General Research Plan**

**Regardless of the topic, your work will follow the pattern below:**

#### **1. General overview of topic**

Use this to determine the terms used in the discourse surrounding your topic, the current state of research, and the current debates your topic.

In our case, we'll start with *CQ Researcher*. Generally, an article from a special topic encyclopedia (*Encyclopedia of Psychology*, for instance) or a book-length (hopefully short) overview is the place to start.

#### **2. Articles or books that take different stances on a specific aspect of the issue**

Use these to understand in greater detail the debates surrounding the topic.

Try using a pro and con article from the *Opposing Viewpoints* database.

#### **3. Other articles or books that provide more information (examples, etc.) to flesh out your understanding of the particular issue**

Use these to provide material to further your understanding of the issue and to make your writing more engaging by finding information to support your own position.

Articles from the newspapers (*New York Times* or Lexis database) and from the SIRS database are great places to start.

## How To's and Assorted Tips

### Quick Overview of the Writing Process

1. FAILURE
  - a. Unable to write, frustrated (you think “I can’t write”)
  - b. This leads to quitting before even starting – a self-fulfilling prophecy.
2. LEARNING FROM FAILURE
  - a. How did I get stuck in writing? (“what makes me think I can’t write?”)
  - b. What can I learn from this experience? (“do I need more time thinking? Drafting? Organizing?”)
3. MAKING A MESS  
Just go with whatever comes to mind – let it flow; just write, write, write. . .
4. CREATING AND CRITICIZING
  - a. Be creative, generative, put lots of ideas down on paper.
  - b. Be critical of what you’ve written: question, look at from other points of view
5. WHEN THE LIGHTENING TRAIN STRIKES, BE A CONDUCTOR  
Whenever an idea, question, sentence, hits you, jot it down: if you wait, you lose.
6. FREE WRITING: A VOYAGE INTO THE UNKNOWN
  - a. When you’re stuck, write without stopping for 15-20 minutes
  - b. Write to the other side of what’s on your mind
7. AN AUDIENCE: THE MOST PRECIOUS GIFT
  - a. Honest readers: people who will be honest and frank about your writing (and who you will both love and hate [well, maybe not hate but wish they were less honest . . . until you get your grade]): bake these people cookies and write nice letters about them to their employers.
  - b. Peers: mixed bag – the best thing is to ask them to strive for the above
  - c. Allies: most friends, some parents. Think everything you write is “Okay” – or worse “Good.” Great for your ego; not-so-great for realistic criticism . . . or good grades
8. FOUR KINDS OF AUDIENCE RESPONSE
  - a. Private writing with no response – just yourself
  - b. Shared writing – giving it to someone but with no response
  - c. Response but no evaluation – questions such as “what does this mean?” “What do you get out of it?” – not “is it any good.”
9. REVISING
  - a. Throw away everything but the best – no matter how difficult it was to write in the first place!
  - b. Be open to any new ideas that emerge and develop them
10. VOICE AND POWER IN WRITING  
Finding your voice means putting words on paper that powerfully express how you feel and think about something.
11. WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM – (WRITING FOR OTHER COURSES)
  - a. Forget formality; concentrate on content – get your thoughts down first – find your own voice.
  - b. Try to construct a specific argument or focus essay around a VERY specific point (remember, a deep well is better than a bunch of shallow wells that run dry).
  - c. Now revise what you’ve written with your audience in mind; focus on the form and style of the piece.
12. GRAMMAR AND SPELLING
  - a. Forgive ‘bout grammar and spelling in the first draft.
  - b. Fix errors and clarify wording in later drafts.
13. WRITING FOR LIFE  
Writing can be an important part of your life far beyond school. It is a means of being in touch with what is going on in your head. It allows you to have a conversation with yourself. It keeps you company.

These can be broken down into about five parts (definitions can be found in Dr. Bordelon’s Glossary)

1. Pre-writing 2. Organization 3. Drafting 4. Revision, and 5. Proofreading

This process is recursive – in other words, you might not follow these steps in order. Instead, you might follow steps 1, 2, 3, then realize your essay needs more work, so go back to 1, 2, etc. (This information is adapted from Peter Elbow’s *On Writing*)

## “How Do I Come Up With/Explain Reasons?”

One way of coming up with reasons is to think of your topic from different points of view. Try the following views and see what you can come up with. As an example, I'll use genetically engineered food for each perspective.

### **Economic**

This view involves

- class issues
- wages and jobs (what's the poverty rate/line in America?)
- costs – as in cost of living (rent, food, etc.)
- who pays (as in taxes, or for a particular service)
- who benefits financially
- who suffers financially

Be sure to think of the long term financial costs as well.

One additional note: when using these categories, it's best to be specific. In other words, instead of using “for economic reasons” in your division statement, use “the financial costs to farmers.”)

*Genetically modified (GM) foods make money for the seed manufacturer, and thus cost consumers more. In the long term, may cost consumer more because it makes them rely more on the seed manufacturer. May save money for consumers if GM foods can prevent illness and disease. May make food cheaper as well, but because of cost of seed, may cost more as well. May cost more due to unforeseen health/environmental effects.*

### **Political**

This view involves

- Constitutional issues (see Bill of Rights on Course Site>Course Documents>Readings for fun and mental profit)
- Who benefits – the powerful or the people? (i.e. corporations v. consumers, the rich v. middle class)
- legal questions (Is what you suggest legal?)
- input of lawmakers
- voice of the people (forget apathy: if enough people talk, the politicians listen)
- global issues (IMPORTANT POINT – let's stop staring at our own navels and realize there's a world out there)
- realpolitik (politics based upon practical, not ethical moral or legal considerations – example: remaining trading partners with countries known to use slave labor or which repress rights).

*To stop GM foods would require laws, which means input of lawmakers, which means the voice of the people will have to override the voice of the lobbyists and campaign contributors (see realpolitik). For global issues, the European Union is now outlawing GM foods, so it could mean trade wars.*

### **Social**

This view involves

- Education (How would this effect pre-schools? Colleges? Etc.)
- Crime (could this lead to more or less crime? Different kinds of crime?)
- Public and individual health/medical issues (Could \_\_\_\_ have long-term health effects?)
- Cultural attitudes (How would people from different cultures view or be effected by this question/problem/issue?)
- Religious attitudes (How would different religions – or atheists – view or be effected by this issue?)
- Media – how would the issue be covered – or would it be covered at all?
- Gender issues – would a man and women view or be effected by this issue differently?
- Racial issues – would people from different races view or be effected by this issue differently?
- Family – how would this effect families and children?

*Health issues cut both ways: can benefit, can harm. There might be some religions against adulterating food. Cultural attitudes vary and swing according to what's been on the news and fears of technology v. a fascination with it.*

### **Moral**

This view involves

- Basic questions of “right and wrong” (in quotation marks because what's right and what's wrong varies according to who you ask).
  - Follow the “Golden Rule”
  - Harming another person is wrong

*Is it right to tamper with nature? Should humans try to divine all the secrets of nature?*

## Organization and Revision

### Overview on Revision

Adapted from *The Concise Guide to Writing*

The goal of revision is simple: to make your essay more accurately express what is on your mind to another person. You'll find that even though you've spend hours planning and writing a first (or second, or third) draft, your essay will still need work if your goal is (as it should be) to fully communicate your ideas. You have two choices: 1) give up and watch reruns of *Happy Days*, or 2) roll up your sleeves and get work. Surprisingly, experienced writers know that good writing takes many drafts, and thus know that the real writing doesn't begin until the first drafts are out of the way. Then they discover ways to delete, move, rephrase, and add material in order to say what they want to say more clearly and thoughtfully.

While a first draft (or zero draft) is a time for low expectations, when you shift from drafting to revision, the times change: it's now time for high expectations. Don't be satisfied with what's written: keep pushing yourself to make it more interesting and more specific. In fact, I've found that the students who are sure that "this is the best paper I've written" often need more work on their essays, while the students who aren't fully satisfied with their work often do well.

What these latter students have is a positive attitude towards writing. They realize that essays aren't "born" (i.e. written in one or two sittings), but are "made" by attention to details. This positive attitude is crucial when you look in despair at your first draft and think "Uh oh!" Don't just give up if you think most of your essay isn't any good (most writers feel this way). **The key is to divide the work into a series of steps:** start with just your organization, then rest, then work on individual paragraphs, one at a time. This makes the revision process seem less onerous -- it may even make it fun.

#### ***View the Draft Objectively***

To revise, you must read your draft objectively, to see if it actually says what you intended it to say. If you can, put the draft aside for a day or two. Getting critical comments from another reader (get them to answer the specific revision questions in the textbook instead of just reading it and then asking "well, whadda' think?") can also help you to view the draft more objectively.

#### ***Reconsider Your Purpose and Audience***

Take another look at the assignment sheet and the textbook. Are you fulfilling the purpose? Ask yourself what you are trying to accomplish. Does your purpose still seem appropriate for these particular readers? How could you modify the essay to make it more effective? Consider each problem and possible solution in light of your overall writing strategy.

#### ***Revise in Stages***

After your organization is clear, focus on one paragraph at a time, make sure it is focuses on one topic and logically moves from sentence to sentence. Now's the time to add those descriptive details that help the reader "see" your point.

#### ***Look at Big Problems First***

Organize, organize, organize. Identify major problems that keep the draft from achieving its purpose. Does the essay have a clear thesis, clear divisions, and clear topic sentences? Are the ideas interesting and well developed? Does the essay have all the features that readers will expect? (again, look at assignment sheet and textbook).

#### ***Focus Next on Clarity and Coherence***

Consider the beginning. How well does it prepare readers for the essay? Look at each section of the essay in turn. Do the paragraphs proceed in a logical order? Are there appropriate transitions to help readers follow from one point to the next? Are generalizations firmly and explicitly connected to specific details, examples, or supporting evidence?

#### ***Save Stylistic Changes and Grammatical Corrections for Last***

Do not focus on word choice or sentence structure until you are generally satisfied with what you have written. Then carefully consider your style and diction. Focus primarily on key terms to be sure they are appropriate and well defined.

### Basic Revision Plan

- 1) Outline what you've already written
- 2) Revise introduction and title (Textbook and *I&C*)
- 3) Revise context/overview (Textbook and *I&C*)
- 4) For each body paragraph: (*I&C* and Textbook)
  - a) Define any specific terms (*I&C*)
  - b) Provide more specific examples/details to help readers "see" what you're talking about (*I&C*)
  - c) \*\*\*Clarify argument with explanations of examples (*I&C*). Try making analogies/comparisons to "real life" and/or historical/current events. You need to let the reader "see" your thoughts and logic. Without this
  - d) Smooth out transitions between sentences using repetition and transition words. (Textbook and *I&C*)
  - e) Smooth out transitions between paragraphs using repetition and transition words (Textbook and *I&C*)
- 5) Repeat step 4 several times
- 6) Revise conclusion (Textbook and *I&C*)

*Diane Ackerman*

Without the details nothing can be known, not a lily or a child – *The Rarest of the Rare*

### Organization Exercise

#### "Could you repeat that?" Repetition/Transitions

##### *Transitions within paragraphs*

Let's start with an example

If we were to follow liberalism the nation would not advance. In fact, it encourages changes in social order through expansion of authority (Cooper and MacDonald 251-252). Practicing traditional roles of the 1950's is not based on inequality for women and minorities, it is based on tradition and wisdom of the past (Cooper and Peck. MacDonald 230). Yet, a libertarian believes that anyone should be able to perform any kind of behavior as long as the person respects his or her neighbor and is willing to accept the consequences. For example, if an individual wants to use marijuana they should be able to (Cooper and Peck. MacDonald 273, 274). Essentially, conservatism is derived from conserving tradition of the development of mankind.

What's the main point of this paragraph? Can you "follow" this writer's argument?

Remember that when moving from sentence to sentence, readers must be able to follow your logic. This is accomplished by using transitions. The "This" in the previous sentence illustrates one way of knitting together your thinking/writing – and is an important word to keep in mind. By referring back to "follow your logic," the "This" acts as a bridge, a connection between the two points you're making in your sentences. Another way to make a connection is to use words like "another" (for a list of such words, see below). Connections can also be made by repetition, as in this sentence where I repeat the word "connection" from the previous sentence. Using repetition and transition words keep readers focused on the main topic of your paragraph/idea, which in turn makes it easier for readers to follow your logic.

By now you should be wondering, "well, how do I come up with effective transitions?" Easy. Working one paragraph at a time, develop/brainstorm a list of synonyms or words/phrases associated with the focus of that paragraph (Example? In a paragraph on "work" you might include words like job, wages, time-clock, employer,

employee, labor, etc.). Keep this list handy as you revise/proofread, and be sure to insert these words throughout the paragraph.

### **List of Transition Words**

**Adding a point:** furthermore, besides, finally, in addition to, for example

**Emphasis:** above all, indeed, in fact, in other words, most important, in particular

**Time:** then, afterwards, eventually, next, immediately, meanwhile, previously, already, often, since then, now, later, usually,

**Cause and Effect:** as a result, therefore, thus, since, because of this, consequently

**Examples:** such as, for example, for instance, one example, as an illustration, in particular

**Contrast:** but, however, in contrast, instead, nevertheless, on the other hand, though, still, unfortunately, on the contrary, yet

**Similarity:** like, also, likewise, similarly, as

**Compare:** also, similarly, likewise, as well, both, in the same way

**To concede a point:** certainly, granted, of course, no doubt

### ***Transitions between paragraphs***

Between paragraphs, the best technique is to repeat a word or idea from the previous paragraph. As usual, this is best illustrated with an example. Take a look at the following:

(1) And that is one of the problems with working a McJob.  
(2) But low wages aren't the only problems with such jobs. The job skills learned at these places only prepare you for other McJobs.

Without even reading the paragraph 1, you can tell the subject of it was \_\_\_\_\_. That's the advantage of repetition between paragraphs: you keep reminding the reader of your focus which means you keep reminding the reader of your argument, which means you keep your reader happy.

## Proofreading

**“No Iron can pierce the heart with such force as a period put just at the right place.”**

*Isaac Babel*

### Overview on Proofreading/Editing

First and foremost, proofreading means paying attention to what you’ve actually written. The problem is that we’re just not used to the kind of sustained concentration to the written word that proofreading requires. So your first goal is the take a mental deep breath, and focus on getting your words right.

Save editing until the end. Turn your attention to editing only after you have planned and worked out a revision. Too much editing too early in the writing process can limit, even block, invention and drafting.

Since your goal is to communicate with clarity and authority to the widest possible range of readers, your language should be in Standard American English.

While most people think only of commas and grammar when proofreading, the main thing to focus on is clarity of expression – usually the punctuation and grammar will fall into place once you’ve clearly said what you want to say.

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

#### ***Keep a List of Your Common Errors***

Note the types of grammatical and spelling errors you discover in your own writing. Most likely you’ll soon recognize error patterns, things to check for as you edit your work.

#### ***Begin Proofreading with the Last Sentence***

To focus your attention on grammar and spelling, it may help to read backwards, beginning with the last sentence. Most writers get diverted thinking about what they are saying rather than how they are presenting it. Reading backwards makes it harder to pay attention to content, and thus easier to recognize writing problems.

Polonius: “What do you read my Lord?”

Hamlet: “Words, Words, Words”

#### ***Exchange Drafts with Another Student***

Because it is usually easier to see errors in someone else’s writing than in your own, you might consider trading essays with a classmate and proofreading one another’s writing.

### Proofreading Instructions

The number one tip is to read differently when proofreading. You’re not reading for content when you proofread, you’re reading to smooth out the wording and correct any grammatical errors.

Treat your essay as a grammar handbook exercise – try reading the pages out of order. You should also get someone else to carefully read your essay, concentrating not on content, but on correctness. Try the Writing Skills Workshop, R123 and as always, remember my door is open.

#### **On proofreading Sources:**

Put a star in the margin next to each source and check for the following:

1. Trick question – look over your essay again. ANY phrasing or wording that is taken from a source (let me repeat this ANY words or phrases) needs to be quoted and cited. If you put the ideas into your own words, now is the time double-check your summary/paraphrase: be sure EACH word taken from a source is in quotation marks AND be sure to cite any summaries/paraphrases. Can I stop SHOUTING now?

2. Is each source introduced by a phrase which mentions the author's name? Check each time a particular source is used: the first time, use the entire name; thereafter, use just the last name.
3. Check for page number in parenthesis. Remember, there is no (p. ) or (page ) in the parenthesis, just the number itself. If you use the author's name in the essay, then it doesn't have to be repeated in the parenthesis. NOTE: period goes AFTER parenthesis.
4. Does quote or summary fit in grammatically with sentence? Oftentimes the word "that" is needed to smooth out connection between introductory phrase and quote.
  - Check punctuation with introductory phrase -- usually a comma or a colon is needed. When in doubt, consult *The Little Seagull Handbook* or your handy English instructor (hey, that's me!) *Reminder: period goes outside of parenthesis (check examples).*
  - If you need to add an "s" or "ed" at the end of a word to make the quote fit grammatically with your sentence, put brackets around it. Example: "The boy[s] were tired"
  - You don't need to use the entire sentence from a source – use just the part/s you need. Use ellipsis dots when editing a quote from a source. (see *The Little Seagull Handbook*)
5. Make sure you've commented on the quote, explaining how it fits into the argument of your paragraph.
6. Check each works cited entry: physically compare it with the variety of samples you have both in the textbook and on the Citing Sources site. Each must correspond with a parenthetical citation in the essay itself, and each parenthetical citation must have a works cited entry.

**On correctness:**

1. Read each sentence slowly out loud, listening for missing words, confusing or wordy passages, and check for sentence clarity.
2. It's better to remove words than to have wordy sentences. Concentrate on deleting and/or condensing each proofreading session. Ideas for words/phrases to remove? Okay. Question each time the following words are used:

|               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|---------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| You/we        | This suggests you're speaking directly to the reader. But what if your reader has no problems communicating? It can also lead to pronoun problems.<br><b>Instead use</b><br>people, a person, some, they, males, females, English professors, etc. |
| a lot         | Too general for formal essays. Be specific.<br><b>Instead use</b><br>many, often, several, etc.                                                                                                                                                    |
| One           | Avoid when using to refer to a person.<br><b>Instead use</b><br>A person, a man, a women, people, etc.                                                                                                                                             |
| Don't         | Avoid contractions in academic writing: a bit too informal.<br><b>Instead use</b><br>do not, etc.                                                                                                                                                  |
| the fact that | A bit wordy – one of those empty phrases that merely slow down the reader.<br><b>Instead use</b><br>Actually, you can usually completely eliminate this phrase                                                                                     |
| Being that    | Awkward wording – sounds okay in oral speech, but usually doesn't work in standard written English<br><b>Instead use</b><br>Since                                                                                                                  |
| in which      | Can be awkward<br><b>Instead use</b><br>which or reword                                                                                                                                                                                            |

3. Check for introductory phrases and commas (see section on commas in Glossary and *The Little Seagull Handbook*).
4. Notice in #2 I mentioned "each" session? You won't catch all errors the first time. Plan on proofreading several times.

5. Watch out for whatever error you know you make often: run-ons, comma splices, fragments, possessive errors, missing commas with introductory phrases, etc. Tell your partner or whoever you get to read your essay to watch out for them.
6. Read through your essay concentrating only on commas. Try these two ideas: 1) If you've been having trouble with run-ons, circle each comma and be sure it isn't separating two complete sentences. 2) Circle every sentence that starts with a word that ends with -ing, or a preposition (*During, Over, Toward, Before, Across, Within, Inside, Above, Near, Close, By, Through, From, At, If, Since, For, Because, In*). Place a comma between the dependent clause and the independent clause.

Ex. Since we were going inside, I decided to eat lunch.

                    Dependent clause                      Independent clause

Ex. commas with descriptive phrase: The dog, which was quite large, was bit by the cat.

## Ideas For Adding Sentence Variety

- 1) BEGIN SOME SENTENCES WITH PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE -- and note punctuation (comma at end of phrase)  
*During, Over, Toward, Before, Across, Within, Inside, Above, Near, Close, By, Through, From, At, If, Since, For, Because, In, ??*
  - Since the terrorists who attacked on 9/11 are Muslim, does this mean all Muslims are terrorists?
  - Within the confines of what could loosely be considered folk music, Victoria Williams creates a rich tapestry of sound and poetry.
- 2) BEGIN SOME SENTENCES WITH AN -ING VERB OR PHRASE
  - Writing well means trying out new ideas: it also means pushing yourself even after you think no more changes can be made.
  - Surfing the Internet is a lot like channel-surfing.
- 3) INCLUDE "REASONING" WORDS TO EXPLAIN YOUR EXAMPLES:  
*illustrates, shows, demonstrates, proves, suggests, defines, supports, indicates, or reveals*
  - The experiences of children such as Marion suggest that the problems with sexual identity many associate with being raised by lesbian parents are ill-founded.
  - The high cost of these new drugs reveals a hidden danger of genetic research.
- 4) BEGIN SOME SENTENCES WITH SUBORDINATING CONJUNCTION.  
*When, After, Because, Before, Even though, Until, Unless, Than, Though, Where, While, Since*
  - Because of problems like these, many feel that state lotteries should be eliminated.
  - Until the medical community accepts non-traditional treatment as a way to treat pain, many patients will feel the sting of unnecessary pain.
- 5) BEGIN WITH A CONJUNCTIVE ADVERB  
*Consequently, However, Nevertheless, Furthermore, Similarly, Then, Subsequently, Therefore, Thus*
  - Similarly, Mary Ann from Gilligan's Island was supposed to represent the American heartland in all its hayseed glory.
  - Thus, Attack of the Killer Tomatoes is a vegetarian snuff film; an orgy of tofu violence.
- 6) BEGIN SOME SENTENCES WITH ADVERBS (-LY WORDS)
  - Slowly we have begun to realize the dangers of global warming.
  - Luckily, timely corrections help avoid a more serious problem.
- 7) BEGIN SOME SENTENCES WITH TO (INFINITIVE PLUS VERB OR VERB PHRASE)
  - To reach the detonator, Stephen had to cross a field riddled with mines.
  - To break bread with Lenin was all the peasant wanted.

## Using Sources

### “Uh. . . Dr. Bordelon, where do I find sources?” A List of Sources At OCC Library

It's best to have an idea of a particular fact, statistic, or example instead of just going on a trawling expedition for essays on your topic. For example, in an essay on the dangers of the internet and children, one fact readers would want to know is how many households (in America?) with children have internet access? Then, to give that number some meaning, you'd have to find out what percentage is that of all children.

You need to focus your research: use your divisions as search subjects. Instead of looking under “liberalism,” look under entitlement programs. If you're examining the causes of voter apathy, and your divisions are consumerism, lack of civic education, and distrust of government, you could research how history/government is being taught (or not being taught) in high school to prove your point, how consumerism is dominating American culture, and/or get poll reports on American's distrust of government.

Remember that your economics, psychology, sociology, history textbook is a fine source, as are the variety of specialized encyclopedias (*Psychology Encyclopedia*, etc.) in our library— though Wikipedia, *Encyclopedia Britannica* and other general encyclopedias are not.

And when you're stuck, turn to that great analog, carbon based reference: a librarian.

Above all, do not give up until you have checked ALL the sources listed below for information. Do not wait until two days before the essay is due to look for research. Check with me EARLY if you are having trouble finding sources. Remember to check with the reference librarians as well.

### Online Sources

Again, as I've stated in class, the WORST possible way to find information for college level essays is to do a basic search (through Google, Yahoo, etc.) on the web. Unless the information was first published in print form or is from a government site (designated by .gov), I will probably not allow it.

### Home Access of Online Sources

You can access all of the college's databases from home. Click on Library Services at the end of Ocean Connect menu.

The databases you'll find most helpful include:

- **CQ Researcher:** (Our good friend) for argumentative essays. A weekly magazine that takes an in-depth look at a particular issue in the news. Its balanced coverage, quotes from authoritative sources, and annotated bibliography (which tells you about related articles) make it an excellent first place search.
- **SIRS online:** Full texts articles of newspapers from around the nation and articles from general and specialized journals as well. The keyword search returns many (often too many) hits, so try the subject/topic search or the handy “Leading Issues” box and use the “Descriptors” button at the top of articles that you find helpful to narrow your search. Access through your campus portal account.
- **Opposing Viewpoints:** Each volume of this series covers a specific topic, such as gun control, and offers two opposing essays on different aspects of the issue. A good choice to find counter-arguments and to understand the basic issues/arguments surrounding your topic. Access online through your campus portal account.
- **New York Times:** A fantastic source for statistical information, quotes from authoritative sources, and interviews with the *vox populi*. Access through your campus portal account.
- **Academic Search Premier or EBSCOhost:** A mixture of full-text and bibliographical sources. Access through your campus portal account. **NOTE:** Be sure to use the “Subject” (see button at top of EBSCO screen) instead of the default keyword search – or be prepared to sift through 2,938 entries which include your keyword.
- **Lexis-Nexis:** a HUGE database that offers newspapers and other sources from around the world. Though a bit complex to use, it is an incredibly rich source. Access through your campus portal account.

## Paper Sources

### Periodicals

***CQ Researcher***: A **Must See** for argumentative essays. A weekly magazine that takes an in-depth look at a particular issue in the news. Its balanced coverage, quotes from authoritative sources, and annotated bibliography (which tells you about related articles) make it an excellent first place search. Available in the Reference area of OCC library (and online). Use the blue index to see if your topic is included.

### Books

***Opposing Viewpoints***: (now available online as well) Each volume of this series covers a specific topic, such as gun control, and offers two opposing essays on different aspects of the issue. A good choice to find counter-arguments and to understand the basic issues/arguments surrounding your topic. Conduct a keyword search using “opposing viewpoints” on OCCAT (the college’s online book catalog) to find specific titles. Access online through your campus portal account.

***Taking Sides***: Similar to *Opposing Viewpoints* but more detailed and scholarly, this series offers pro and con essays showing two sides of a controversial issue. Conduct a keyword search using “taking sides” on OCCAT (the college’s online book catalog) to find specific titles.

***Information Plus***: A series of volumes on specific topics (ex. *Aging in America, Youth in America*), which offers a wealth of statistical data in one text. To find if your topic is covered (and keep in mind that *Youth in America* covers everything from numbers of high school dropouts to spending of teens), conduct a keyword search using “information plus” on OCCAT (the college’s online book catalog) and scroll list to find matches for your subject. Many of these are located in the Reference section of the library.

## Citing Sources

### "When do I cite a source?"

Whenever you include a word, phrase, or idea from a source, it needs to be cited. That source can include a web page, classroom lecture, an interview with your Uncle Pete, a quote or summary from a book, magazine, etc. And note that I wrote "a" word -- singular. Even a single word from someone else, when included in your own essay, needs to be set off with quotation marks and then cited.

### "How do I cite using MLA?"

The number two is important to remember when using MLA citation because it consists of **two parts**: an in-text citation (which includes the author and page number) and works cited entry, as shown in the examples below:

1) Sample In-Text Citation (the part that goes in your essay)

**Work for a living? Feeling a bit poor lately? The link between the two is not difficult to explain when you examine recent pay raises. In 1997, the average worker received a raise of 3 percent. Her CEO? Many earned a 21 percent raise (Cooper 339).**

Note that the author's name and page number is enclosed in parenthesis (no p. or page is needed) and that the period goes to the right.

2) Sample Works Cited Entry (the part that goes on a separate page at the end) for In-text Citation above

**Cooper, Mary H. "Income Inequality." *CQ Researcher* 10 (1997): 337-360.  
Print**

Together, these two parts let the reader know who wrote your article, where they can find it, and approximately how long the article is.

This two part citation method works like a code. In general, the reader looks for the author's name and page number in the in-text citation, and then goes to the works cited entry for additional information. Your job is to supply the correct parts of the code in the correct order. You have to be sure that the name/word you include in your in-text citation will match the first word of one of your works cited entries. Thus, the word "Cooper" in the in-text example above (check in parenthesis) matches the word "Cooper" in the sample works cited entry. Get it? Readers would see the citation (Cooper 339) and instantly know that the information before the citation is from a writer named "Cooper." If they wanted to check your source, they would turn to the Works Cited page and scan the first word of the alphabetically arranged list of Works Cited entries until the word "Cooper" appeared.

***You must correctly document your sources to receive a passing grade. I'm more than willing to help you with this: just check with me.***

### How to Create a Work Cited Entry

Follow these questions and steps to quickly set up your entries.

1. Is it a print or online source?
  - If print, determine the general source. Common print sources include
    - a) Anthology: Collection of essays in a book – need editor's name, author's name, title of book and title of essay.
    - b) Book
    - c) Weekly Magazine
    - d) Monthly Magazine
    - e) Journal
    - f) Government Document
  - If online, determine the general source. Common online sources include

- a) Database: collection of essays from many different sources. OCC’s databases include *Opposing Viewpoints*, *Proquest*, *Sirs*, *EbscoHost*, *CQResearcher*, etc. See the “Library Link on the course site for additional databases.
  - b) Essay from online site of a print source. New York Times, Newsweek, Washington Post are all print sources that post much of their material online.
  - c) Essay/information from the general web
2. Go to appropriate sample entry: see list on page 5-6 of I&C for specific sources
  3. Follow pattern set in sample entry. In general, all works cited entries follow a general format; your job is to pay attention to the details (placement of periods, commas, etc.) and to follow the specific examples exactly as they are written.
  4. Alphabetize all entries on a separate page and attach to your essay. See page **Error! Bookmark not defined.** for sample Works Cited page

### How To Incorporate Sources Into Your Prose In a Few Easy Steps

Follow these step by step directions and soon you'll be citing sources like the pros!

1. Use the sample in-text citations from "Citing Sources" (see below) as a model
2. Use author's or speaker's name to start sentence (or use transitional phrase)
3. Choose verb from list which best explains what the person is saying
4. Write out introductory phrase: use colon or comma to end it
5. Insert quotation/summary/paraphrase (be sure to include quotation marks if appropriate)
6. Insert page number in parenthesis – if necessary add (qtd. in Miller 39) and then add punctuation
7. Comment on quote using verb “List of Verbs for Citing Sources” below. Remember that the quote itself does not prove anything – it’s more important how it fits into your argument, and the only way the reader can tell how it does so is for you to explain it.

### Verb List for Citing Sources

Use a verb from the following list when introducing outside sources and then commenting on them. It can also come in handy when providing a context for quotes from the work your writing about.

|         |          |           |            |          |           |         |
|---------|----------|-----------|------------|----------|-----------|---------|
| add     | believe  | criticize | explain    | maintain | point out | show    |
| agree   | charge   | declare   | feels      | mention  | reinforce | stress  |
| analyze | claim    | describe  | illustrate | note     | report    | suggest |
| answer  | comment  | define    | imply      | observe  | reply     | support |
| argue   | conclude | discover  | indicate   | object   | respond   | think   |
|         | consider | emphasize | list       | offer    | reveal    | write   |

For a web site containing examples of how to cite most of the sources at OCC’s library, check “The Source for Citing Sources,” accessed through the Links section of our course site.

Our writing textbook also contains ample instructions on citing sources.

## Editing Checklists

### Editing Checklist Essay #1

After you've made the major changes in your paper (revising), follow each of the steps in this list and check off the appropriate column. Be honest -- if you didn't follow the suggestions, let me know. These should take at least a couple of hours to complete, so plan accordingly. It would help if a classmate could use this guide and work through your paper as well (it's difficult to catch all of your own proofreading errors [see what I mean]). Be sure to finish revising your paper at least a day before the final draft is due so you can put this final polish on it.

#### Format

Yes No

- Does my title grab the reader?
- Does my first sentence catch the reader's attention?
- BE HONEST HERE Have I held my essay next to the sample essay (*I&C* 80) to make sure the format (the way it looks on the page) is the same?
- Does essay meet minimum word requirements?

#### Paragraph

- Does the first line of each body paragraph refer back to the previous paragraph (smooth transition)?
- Does each of my body paragraphs have a clear topic sentence?
- Is each topic sentence illustrated with specific examples or descriptions?

#### Sentence

- Have I slowly read each sentence out loud to ensure that there are no confusing passages or missed words?
- Have I checked each sentence for my personal grammatical "demons" such as verb errors, subject-verb agreement errors, run-ons or fragments?

#### Words

- Have I changed several words to make them more specific?
- Have I eliminated all unnecessary words from each sentence?

#### Using Sources

- Does my essay have enough sources (two are required)?
- Have I made sure that ANY words or phrases which are taken word for word from an outside source are clearly separated from my writing with quotation marks? Ex. Bill Powell argues that "any time we strike back" we should strike back hard (34).
- Is each direct quote introduced by a phrase which 1) identifies who wrote/said it, 2) provides a context for the source, and 3) concludes with the proper MLA parenthetical documentation? Ex. Jim Brown argues with this, concluding that ". . . ." (34).
- Have I avoided page numbers for HTML based sources, but included them for any print sources?
- Have I placed the period to the right of the parenthesis? Es. ". . ." (qtd. in Tugend).
- Is every statistic or specific fact which I learned from a source documented?
- Have I checked the placement of dates, periods, commas, and colons for each of my works cited entries?
- Have I compared my Works Cited page with the sample works cited page included in *I&C* (**Error! Bookmark not defined.**)?
- Is my works cited page alphabetized?

#### Final Check

- Have I run my essay one final time through the spell check?
- Am I having fun yet? ("Fun" is defined here as being challenged and learning)

## Editing Checklist Essay #3

After you've made the major changes in your paper (revising), follow each of the steps in this list and check off the appropriate column. Be honest -- if you didn't follow the suggestions, let me know. These should take at least a couple of hours to complete, so plan accordingly. It would help if a classmate could use this guide and work through your paper as well (it's difficult to catch all off your own proofreading errors [see what I mean]). Be sure to finish revising your paper at least a day before the final draft is due so you can put this final polish on it.

### Format

Yes No

- Does my title grab the reader?
- Does my first sentence catch the reader's attention?
- BE HONEST HERE Have I held my essay next to the sample essay (*I&C* 80) to make sure the format (the way it looks on the page) is the same?
- Does essay meet minimum word requirements?

### Paragraph

- Does the first line of each body paragraph refer back to the previous paragraph (smooth transition)?
- Does each of my body paragraphs have a clear topic sentence?
- Is each topic sentence illustrated with specific examples or descriptions?
- Are each of the examples and descriptions explained -- do I show my thinking or vainly hope that the reader can read my mind?

### Sentence

- Have I slowly read each sentence out loud to ensure that there are no confusing passages or missed words?
- Have I checked each sentence for my personal grammatical "demons" such as verb errors, subject-verb agreement errors, run-ons or fragments?

### Words

- Have I changed several words to make them more specific?
- Have I eliminated all unnecessary words from each sentence?

### Using Sources

- Does my essay have enough sources (four are required – one taken from outside the textbook – and no sources from internet if not approved by me)?
- Have I made sure that ANY words or phrases which are taken word for word from an outside source are clearly separated from my writing with quotation marks? Ex. Bill Powell argues that "any time we strike back" we should strike back hard (34).
- Is each direct quote introduced by a phrase which 1) identifies who wrote/said it, 2) provides a context for the source, and 3) concludes with the proper MLA parenthetical documentation? Ex. Jim Brown argues with this, concluding that ". . . ." (34).
- Does each of my parenthetical citations contain only the page number and, if needed, author's name or qtd. in? Ex. (34), (Langer 34), (qtd. in Langer 34).
- Have I placed the period to the right of the parenthesis?
- Is every statistic or specific fact which I learned from a source documented?
- Have I checked the placement of dates, periods, commas, and colons for each of my works cited entries?
- Have I compared my Works Cited page with the sample works cited page included in *I&C* (**Error! Bookmark not defined.**)?
- Is my works cited page alphabetized?

### Final Check

- Have I run my essay one final time through the spell check?
- Have I slept more than three hours in the last two days?

## Checklist for Conferences

So I can help your writing on an individual basis, you must bring in rough drafts of your out-of-class essays before handing in the final. This is not an option and is considered a regular part of the writing process. Your essay will not be complete and thus will not be accepted if we have not reviewed it together.

I will post a sign-in sheet on my office door with meeting times. While I will have some slots available during class-times, you will probably need to meet with me during my office hours – or make special arrangements. Plan on spending about fifteen pleasurable minutes to discuss your essay – more if you want to chat. Give yourself at least four days before the final draft is due so you have time to make revisions. I look forward to meeting each of you.

Before our meeting, you should complete the following checklist to be sure you're prepared by having the following ready.

- All drafts of current essays (It's hard to help improve your essay if you don't have it)
- All drafts of previous essays from our class (You can ask questions about my comments; we can refer back to what you've been doing well)
- A written list of three things you think are good about the essay
- A written list of three things you want to change/improve in your essay
- A written list of any other questions you may have

**Sample Format Essay:**

The main features are: 1 inch margins all around; 11-12 Times Roman font/size; double space

Zvolensky 1

Wendy Zvolensky

Dr. Bordelon

English 151-31

August 21, 2000

The Aftermath of Megan's Law

The death of Megan Kanka sparked outrage throughout the country. Megan's death saddened and infuriated millions of people. What made the murder of this little girl so outrageous was the fact that her killer was previously convicted of sexual assault on a child. Her parents and parents around the state of New Jersey demanded a law to help protect their children from convicted sexual predators. So Megan's Law was rushed through the legislature and passed. This law made it legal to notify people that a sex offender was living in their neighborhood. Mostly, Megan's Law was passed to appease outraged voters instead of on its merits to protect children. Since Megan's Law, many other states have enacted similar community notification laws. Soon though, people will come to realize that community notification laws are ineffective in protecting children from sex offenders.

Community notification laws are ineffective for many reasons. Identifying someone as a sex offender may violate their constitutional rights. Second, notification laws might lead neighborhoods to vigilante justice. Third, identification will not prevent them from committing more crimes. Fourth, these laws might provide parents with a false sense of protection if they believe a sex offender does not live in their neighborhood. Finally, all sex offenders do not end up on community identification lists.

One problem with community identification laws is that there are questions about its constitutionality. Authorities notify residents by distributing flyers, altering local organization, and door-to-door canvassing when sex offenders who are at high risk of reoffense move into their neighborhoods (Bernstein 24). Opponents like the ACLU say that notification laws run roughshod over a sex offender's civil rights, such as the right to due process, privacy, and equal

protection, and provisions against after-the fact and cruel and unusual punishment (Bernstein 25). Sex offenders who have been convicted and served a jail sentence for their crime(s) have received their punishment. They will now have to suffer an additional punishment. Once out of prison sex offenders still legally have the same rights as everyone else. That includes the right to live in any neighborhood without their neighbors knowing their criminal past. We don't identify neighborhoods when a murderer, drug abuser, or thief is going to live in the neighborhood. Why is it acceptable to single out one group of criminals? Many people think that sex offenders have committed crimes so horrendous that they should have to forfeit their rights. But that is not how the law works. U.S. Federal District Judge Nicholas Politan of Newark, NJ ruled on February 28, 1995 that community notification laws are unconstitutional. He maintained that it would prevent offenders who had served their time from ever returning "to a normal, private, law abiding life"(qtd. in Jerome 48).

People who are notified that a sex offender is living in their neighborhood might resort to vigilante justice. The neighborhood might try to drive a sex offender out of town using threats and physical intimidation. Andrea Bernstein states, "that is what happened in Washington State the day convicted child rapist Joseph Gallardo was released from prison-his Lynnwood home was burned to the ground" (25). Last year in Philipsburg, New Jersey an off-duty corrections officer and his father broke into a home and severely beat a man they thought was a sex offender who had recently been identified. As it happens, they beat the wrong man (Jerome 50). In these cases, community notification laws did not prevent any crimes but actually led to crimes being committed. Some people believed that such actions are appropriate because they are dealing with a sex offender. But it is the court's job, not the public's, to punish criminals. John Q. La Fond, a professor at the Seattle University School of Law states "There is a fine line between vigilance and vigilantism"(qtd. in Jerome 50).

Another reason these laws are ineffective is that it will not prevent sex offenders from committing more crimes. Experts say that anywhere from 40 to 75 percent of convicted sex

Works Cited

- Bernstein, Andrea. "Should You be Told That Your Neighbor is a Sex Offender?" *Ms.* Nov./Dec. 1995: 24-26. Print.
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